



Enlarged Session of the OGP Working Group

On 03 March 2015, an enlarged session of the OGP Working Group (WG) was held. The session was attended not only by OGP WG members but also by the representatives of local and international organizations. The event was organized by the RA Government, jointly with Freedom of Information Center NGO, with the assistance of the British Embassy in Yerevan.

The session was aimed at presenting the course of implementation of OGP - Armenia's Second Action Plan to the public and to discuss effective ways of cooperation between the Government and civil society.

[Read More >>>](#)

LATEST NEWS

Government presented the Implementation process of the OGP Action Plan



On March 2015, during the enlarged session of the OGP Working Group, the Government representatives presented the implementation process of the OGP-Armenia second Action Plan's commitments.

[Read More >>>](#)

The process of joining the EITI is at an active discussion stage

In February 2015 several meetings took place between the Armenian Government and the management of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative's (EITI) office. The Civil Society is also discussing prospects for joining the EITI.

[Read More >>>](#)



On 03 March 2015, an enlarged session of the OGP Working Group (WG) was held. The session was attended not only by OGP WG members but also by the representatives of local and international organizations. The event was organized by the RA Government, jointly with Freedom of Information Center NGO, with the assistance of the British Embassy in Yerevan.

The session was aimed at presenting the course of implementation of OGP - Armenia's Second Action Plan to the public and to discuss effective ways of cooperation between the Government and civil society.

In his opening remarks, the First Deputy Minister-Chief of Government Staff of the RA and OGP-Armenia Coordinator Gurgen Dumanyan noted: "Cooperation between civil society and Government within the framework of Open Governance Partnership Initiative is already a tradition and a well-established reality. This is a very important fact since the entire philosophy and logic of the OGP initiative is built on this cooperation and dialogue">

The participants were welcomed as well by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Armenia Mrs. Kathy Leach, who stressed the importance of such meetings and expressed hope that this format of cooperation between civil society and Government will have its positive impact on the promotion of open and transparent governance. [Read More>>>>](#)



Cooperation between civil society and Government within the framework of Open Governance Partnership Initiative is already a tradition and a well-established reality. This is a very important fact since the entire philosophy and logic of the OGP initiative is built on this cooperation and dialogue. We indeed acknowledge that increasing the transparency and accountability of public governance is not an easy process, as it requires political will and consistent efforts. Once again I would like to emphasize that the Government of the Republic of Armenia is adamant in demonstrating the political will and together with you will consistently continue realization of the tasks it faces"- Gurgen Dumanyan, the First Deputy Minister-Chief of Government Staff of the RA and OGP-Armenia Coordinator.



“Our steps should be directed towards monitoring”, Shushan Doydoyan.

On 03 March 2015, an enlarged session of the Open Governance Partnership Working Group took place, which included on its agenda the issue of trilateral cooperation between the Government, civil society and donor organizations. FOICA President and meeting speaker Shushan Doydoyan mentioned:

“Henceforth our efforts will follow three main directions: the first one is the process of implementing the Action Plan where the Government is implementer, civil society and donor organizations are those promoting this process.

Second – our steps should be directed towards monitoring the process, where the role of civil society is immense. Some of the OGP Action Plans commitments are already completed or close to completion but we need to monitor as to what extent they truly meet OGP values, for instance whether or not this or that decision of the government or changes in the working procedures will lead to the main outcome”.

The civil society representatives suggested to organize similar meetings more frequently and to jointly assess ongoing activities. The Government representative Aram Asatryan suggested the civil society to be more active: the Government will regularly present progress with implemented activities but we would like to hear your feedback in a form of an assessment or monitoring, highlighting the shortcomings and positive sides”.

The issue of the donor organizations’ interest and engagement was also discussed. The representative of the USAID Arev Movsisyan noted that from the very beginning the USAID has shown interest to the OGP processes in Armenia. “I believe there has not been lack of interest from the donor organizations’ side. It is indeed important to start the development of the Third Action Plan from today. I would like to urge the civil society and the Government to approach the process with creativity and we will be ready to finance valuable ideas presented as a result of this cooperation”. [Read More>>>>](#)



” The third direction is to get prepared for the development of the Third Action Plan. From mid this year discussions on the draft should be launched. Let us think what it will look like but we definitely want to see our Third Action Plan several steps more advanced. In this context I attach big importance to the trilateral cooperation between the Government, civil society and donors”, - Shushan Doydoyan, FOICA’s President



The Course of Implementation of OGP Action Plan

As of 11.02.201

1. Digitization and publication of data in the “Republican Geological Fund” SNCO
2. Ensuring transparency in mining

Lead agency: Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of the RA

Currently negotiations are ongoing with the USAID with view to implementing relevant activities: a draft Project entitled "Support to the Government of Armenia in increasing transparency of the mining field" has been developed, with an aim to assist the Armenian Government in ensuring the transparency and accountability of the mining sphere. The draft Project is at a discussion stage yet and it's inclusive of activities "Digitalisation and publication of data available at the "Republican Geological Fund" State Non-Commercial Organization” and "Ensuring transparency of the mining sector", related to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. The Project submitted to the USAID is at a stage of finalization.

As the head of the Lithosphere Department in the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources Vardan Vardanyan informed, in the near future all agreements will be signed and implementation of relevant works will start. In February a meeting took place at the Office of the Minister-Chief of Government Staff Davit Harutyunyan with the EITI representatives Jonas Moberg and Richard Dion. They noted that several mining companies in Armenia have provided positive assessment of Armenia's initiative to join the EITI and expressed readiness to work in an open and transparent manner. The Representative of the USAID, Arev Movsisyan, also provided information concerning the jointing the EITI, noting that the USAID assists the Government of Armenia in its activities aimed at increasing transparency of the mining industry and joining the EITI. In response to the question on whether or not joining the EITI will create contradictions with the requirements of membership to the Eurasian Customs Union, Mr. Vardanyan answered “No”.

The Process of Joining the EITI is at an Active Discussion stage

In February 2015 several meetings took place between the Armenian Government and the management of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative's (EITI) office. The Civil Society is also discussing prospects for joining the EITI. On 13 February 2015 the AUA Center for Responsible Mining hosted a lecture-discussion on the theme of the CS's role in EITI. The latter one is an international criterion for the publicity and transparency of the revenues received from natural resources.



The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global Standard to promote open and accountable management of natural resources. It seeks to strengthen government and company systems, inform public debate, and enhance trust. In each implementing country it is supported by a coalition of governments, companies and civil society working together.



3. Ensuring public awareness about health care financing

Lead agency: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia

With an aim to implementing this commitment, a health system financial portal www.sha.am is created, where internet users can receive information about state guaranteed programs on free or privileged medical aid and services. As well, an analytical-reporting website with accumulated data has been drafted, through which relevant reports and analysis will become available both to the public and professional medical circles. Currently the works related with information accumulation and website testing are underway.

4. Ensuring transparency of asset and income declarations of the RA high-ranking officials

Lead agency: Ethics Commission of High-Ranking Officials

As envisaged under point 4 of the OGP Program, a Draft Decree of the Republic of Armenia "On Making Amendments and Supplements to the Governmental Decrees dating 15 December 2011, No. 1835-Ն and 15 December 2011, No. 1819-Ն", has been submitted to the Government, in a letter No. N01/54-14, dating 12 September, 2014.

The new Decree of the Government has been adopted on 19 February 2015 under the number N150-Ն.



“Henceforth it will become possible to check the accuracy of the data included in declarations since we are joining the electronic Civil Acts Registration Office, Traffic Police Car Registry, the Legal Persons’ Registry of the Ministry of Justice and the Real Estate Cadaster. Hence, at a stage of analyzing declarations we will be able to compare them with the data available in the Registries. The connection with the Tax Office is currently at a discussion stage”, - Armen Khudaverdyan, Member of the Ethics Commission for High-Level Officials.



5. Online broadcasting of the State Procurement Appeals Board sessions

Lead agency: Ministry of Finance of the RA

With an aim to implement the commitment versus procurement field, activities are underway towards obtaining equipment necessary for the online broadcasting of the sessions of public procurement Appeals Council.

6. Community microsurvey introduction in 10 communities

Lead agency: RA Marzpetarans (Regional administrations), RA communities

Target communities are being selected, activities are ongoing versus ensuring the program. As per the letter of the Deputy Prime-Minister No.01/16/4383-14, dated 13.08.2014, it was suggested to the Heads of Communities to undertake relevant activities towards implementing points 6 and 11 of the OGP commitments.

The Council of Elderly of Ashtarak city community has adopted Decree No.7-U, 26 January 2015, which envisages conducting of an sms micro-survey, with a view to determining priorities of the mentioned works or services provided by Ashtarak Municipality.



Community Micro-Surveys

SMS surveys are a new method of studying public opinion and for assessing citizens' positions.

- It provides an opportunity to organize short surveys in a more effective and prompt manner.
- Only the respondent takes part in the survey, by using their mobile phone.
- Participation in SMS surveys takes place only upon the consent of the citizens.

[Read more >>>](#)



7. Ensuring open, transparent, participatory and accountable process of state policies and legislative reforms

Lead agency: Staff of the RA Government

The activity: with an aim of ensuring open, transparent, participatory and accountable processes in public policy making and legal reforms, clarifying the functions of boards and councils, composition of participating parties, their rights and responsibilities, open and transparent procedures for the development of Councils, defining criteria for the representativeness and professional qualifications of civil society organizations, as well as introducing an electronic accountability systems in the official websites of the Government and Ministries, the Ministry of Justice presently studies international practices and working modalities.

8. Public awareness on the lawmaking activity of state governance bodies

Lead agency: RA Government Staff

Concerning activities envisaged by point 8, I inform that as per the Protocol Decree No. 13, the Governmental Decree from 05 April 2012, “On approving methodological instructions for developing draft legal acts” and “On considering invalid the Government’s Protocol Decree No. 42, from 28 October 2010”, the rules for developing legal acts have been regulated. Besides, rules for the development of legal acts, concepts, strategies and programs have been defined by the Government’s Protocol Decree No. 2, January 22, 2015. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice, with the involvement of international experts, presently implements activities related with the development of legal acts and public awareness raising. It is worth mentioning as well that point 3.8 of the “Third Program on Public Sector Modernization” envisages digitalization of normative legal acts, including electronic state registration of normative legal acts.

According to the mentioned Program, the process of the registration of normative legal acts will be implemented in electronic format. As a result, the circulation, maintenance and archiving of normative legal acts will be electronic, as well, the “Official Bulletin of the RA” will be published in electronic format. Presently technical solutions are being discussed concerning the creation of this platform.



The Ministry of Justice of the RA has requested the OSCE/ODIHR to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Armenia’s law-making processes. As a result, the OSCE/ODIHR and the Minister of Justice signed a Memorandum of Understanding (henceforth - MoU) on 19 February, where the OSCE/ODIHR became committed to conducting a comprehensive assessment of the law-making processes in Armenia, including recommendations on reforms. Besides, the MoU noted that the OSCE/ODIHR, with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice will organize up to four thematic seminar-discussions on various aspects of law-making processes, with an aim to develop new, additional recommendations, in addition to the recommendations included in the assessment.



9. Ensuring transparency of the election of Governing Boards of the RA general secondary education institutions and of the annual budget planning and expenses of RA general secondary education institutions

Lead agency: Ministry of Education and Science of the RA

Based on the presented recommendation, a change has been introduced to the procedure for formation of “State Public Education Institution” State Non-Commercial organization’s management body – the Board. At the same time I inform that the procedure “For the planning of the annual budget and reporting the annual expenses of the “Public Education Institutions” is underway and will be presented to the approval of the Government within the defined timeframes.

10. Knowledge and capacity building of public servants in the freedom of information and anticorruption field

Lead agency: Civil Service Council of the RA

Since 2009, the “Training for Civil Servants” program is inclusive of classes concerning the application of RA Law on Freedom of Information”, as a training theme. In 2014, 1240 community servants have been trained.

11. Ensuring transparency of local self- government bodies of large communities

Lead agency: RA Marzpetarans

For about 3 years, works related with ensuring transparency of internet websites of communities having 20 000 and more population are being implemented. The number of these communities is 16, among 48 urban communities. 11 communities use Community Governance Information System, which is also applied as a website. Regular monitoring has revealed that 14 out of 16 urban websites are being updated, but with some shortcomings. Gavar Municipality’s website is temporarily out of order. 5 out of the mentioned 16 community websites are developed by other organizations but acknowledging the necessity also include a link to CGIS, which shows implementation of the community budget in a more transparent manner.

All communities basically need upgrading or obtaining technical equipment, hence studies are being conducted as to which communities are able to obtain these equipment , in order to launch the process of online broadcasting of the sessions of the Council of the Elderly, public discussions and LSG sessions without delay.

JFF summed up the Range of Regional Workshops on OGP Initiative



“Journalists for the Future” NGO concluded the range of regional workshops entitled “Open Government Partnership Initiative” with a round table held in Yerevan on February 3, 2015.

Summarizing the results of the OGP project, Suren Deheryan noted that about 150 people – representatives of local CSOs, media outlets, and, merely, interested citizens – have attended the workshops held in Goris, Alaverdi, Gyumri, Armavir, Vanadzor, Gavar and Hrazdan with a goal to introduce the OGP initiative to representatives of regional CSOs. [Read more >>>](#)



Commitments under the Action Plan should be completed by June 2016.

The OGP Headquarters has published the OGP schedule for 2015-2018. According to that schedule, the OGP member countries are divided into odd and even years in terms of implementation dates of the Action Plans.

Since Armenia has endorsed and submitted its Second Action Plan in June 2014, its Action Plan should be completed in June 2016. From now on the Government should start drafting its Third Action Plan.

As informed by Aram Asatryan, Advisor in the Government's staff and OGP Working Group Member: "We should complete our activities till June 2016 and afterwards have a draft Third Action plan developed. I would request all our partners who are responsible for the activities with a deadline of December 2016, to work more effectively and complete all activities by June 2016, otherwise we will need to transfer these activities to the Third Action Plan".

Usefull Links

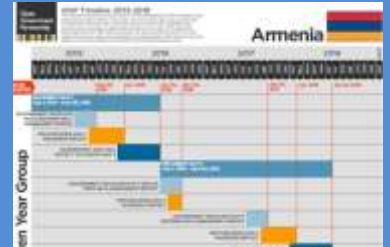
[Open Government Partnership International Initiative >>>](#)

[The official page of Armenia >>>](#)

[OGP Armenia website >>>](#)

[Open Gov Now >>>](#)

You can join the OGP Armenia Civil Society Network with ogparmenia@gmail.com or in [Facebook](#)



The OGP Headquarters has published the OGP schedule for 2015-2018. According to that schedule, the OGP member countries are divided into odd and even years in terms of implementation dates of the Action Plans.

This document outlines the long-term calendar for all Open Government Partnership (OGP) participating countries. The Support Unit, based on rules issued by the OGP Steering Committee, is providing governments and civil society with this information so they can plan accordingly and avoid future delays. This calendar includes three key features:

- A two-year action plan cycle with continuous implementation
- Grouping countries into odd and even years
- Rules regarding delays

[Read More >>>](#)



OGP Armenia Newsletter is developed and published within the “Civil Community for Open and Accountable Government” project implemented by the Freedom of Information Center NGO. The project is supported by British Embassy Yerevan. The ideas expressed within the frames of the project do not necessarily reflect the views of British Government.

© Freedom of Information Center NGO -2015

1/3 Buzand str, Yereva 0010, RA

Tel: +3741 560 360, +3749 43 5136

E-mail: foi@foi.am, ogparmenia@gmail.com

www.foi.am, www.ogp.am