

## The Open Government Partnership

Open Government Partnership, hereinafter „OGP“ is one of the most dynamically developing international initiatives. OGP was founded on the idea of compelling the governments to perform better and to earn back citizens' trust in government institutions via the principles of **transparency, responsibility and accountability**.

Every OGP member country needs to adhere to a few rules:

- A National Action Plan (NAP) has to be designed every two years, and in cooperation with the civil society.
- The commitments defined in the NAPs are supposed to be implemented according to an envisaged timetable.
- Two assessment reports summarizing the implementation of OGP commitments are supposed to be adopted within each of the two-year long cycles.
- OGP country is required to cooperate on the development of an independent assessment report, prepared by the OGP Main body in cooperation with an independent researcher.

Each OGP country defines which thematic issues to include in their NAPs. Countries currently tend to focus on implementation of commitments in the areas of: open data, protection of whistleblowers, supporting the dialogue between the state and civil society, increasing the availability of e-services and innovations. Furthermore, some countries have started to proactively publish procurement contracts - **The Central Register of Contracts** adopted in Slovakia in 2012 serves as a good example of such commitment.

**The initial OGP vision** – to increase transparency, fight against corruption, build the culture of openness and introduce innovation, **has expanded with the UNGA adoption of 17 sustainable development goals in the form of Agenda 2030**. OGP stands by the development and implementation of commitments, which are in accordance with the sustainable development goals. NAPs represent one of the methods through which the SDGs could be transposed into practice.

### The Slovak Republic and OGP

Slovakia has been a part of OGP since 2011. The **Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Development of Civil Society** (appointed by the Slovak government) is the national authority responsible for the development and implementation of NAPs in Slovakia. The NAPs are developed in a participatory manner, with active collaboration of representatives from the state sector, civil society, and academia. Moreover, discussion with relevant actors on the regional level also takes place.

The NAPs are adopted by the government resolutions, therefore their implementation is mandatory for all relevant government organizations. The NAPs are cross-sectional and the commitments are assigned to the ministers and heads of other central government bodies.

So far, two NAPs had been developed and implemented in Slovakia. The independent international organization Open Knowledge International awarded the first NAP for years 2012-2013 as the most ambitious, and the best implemented NAP.

**Slovakia is currently in the implementation phase of the third NAP for years 2017-2019**, which builds on the previous commitments and introduces new topics. Mainly, it focuses on proactive publishing of information in the form of open data, the use of open software in the state administration, citizens' participation in the development process of public policies on all levels, open education and open access to the results of research and development, open justice, and monitoring of implementation of selected tools or legislative in practice.

In general, Slovak NAPs aim to **increase transparency of public institutions, increase public participation in the creation of public policies, increase transparency of justice**, and to bring educational resources, science and research results closer to the citizens.

### Our successes

**OGP is a leader in introducing new topics in Slovakia** - in 2012, we introduced the topics of open data and participation, in 2015 open education and open access to the results of research and development, and in 2017 open software in the public administration.



Since Slovakia joined OGP, **participatory development of public policies has been approached systematically**. Based on the experience with using participatory approaches, a **guide** designated for the state employees titled **„The rules of engaging the public into the development of public policies“** was developed and adopted by the government. The Office of the Plenipotentiary regularly organizes workshops for state employees, focused on how

to plan and conduct participatory approaches when creating public policies.

Furthermore, **public participation in creating legal regulations** was introduced into the Act No 400/2015 Coll. on the creation of legal regulations as **one of the basic tools for drafting legal regulations**.

**The e-collective request as a new online tool aims to support public participation in the online environment.** Citizens can directly address their requests to the Slovak government, and, more swiftly and effectively participate in decision-making concerning public affairs, or initiate discussion about new, important issues. Following the introduction, it is important to focus on **raising awareness about the use of this online tool**.

One of the crucial parts of open government is functioning law protecting individuals who report unfair practices. **Act No. 307/2014 Coll. on Certain Measures Related to Reporting of Anti-social Activities (Whistle-blower protection act) derived from the commitments defined in the 1st NAP.** The new Act regulates the conditions of providing protection to natural persons from unauthorized retaliation in the labor law relationship as a result of the reporting of criminality or other anti-social activity. Currently the amendment of the Act aiming to increase its effectivity is being discussed in a participatory manner with relevant NGOs.

**Slovakia has been among the countries implementing commitments in the area of open data.** Already in the first NAP, a national catalogue of open data - data.gov.sk was created. Currently, the catalogue hosts more than 1200 datasets used in the state sector. In June of 2017, Slovakia adopted Strategy and Action plan for publishing the open data of public administrations, aiming to increase quality and quantity of open data.

Commitments in the area of **justice** have been a part of Slovak NAPs since 2015. The Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic is responsible for the most of the commitments in this area. **Increased public oversight over the selection process of heads of courts, judges and other judicial employees has been secured by new appointment mechanism.** This new mechanism introduces a rule

according to which the candidates cannot apply for a concrete court. This will lead to more transparent selection procedures, severing possible ties between the candidates and members of the selection committees and local ties of candidates.

Furthermore, **regular publishing of qualitative assessment of the work of judges** has been adopted, as well as changes leading to **thorough, swift and effective application of disciplinary accountability of judges**.

In the area of **education and approach to results of research and development**, new rules regulating the issue of **open licenses** for their sharing and using are being established. Furthermore, regulations for central repositories collecting and publishing the information are being created.

*There are, of course, more successes.*

## What's next?

Below listed commitments originate from the NAP for years 2017-2019, but they cannot be completed without active participation of state institutions responsible for their implementation, and the civil society:

- Creation of Law on data;
- Development of proposal defining minimum standards for publication of open data for municipalities;
- Workshops for government employees focused on publication of open data;
- Execution of 12 pilot projects on participatory development of public policies on national, regional, local and micro regional level;
- Development of a proposal for nationally accredited educational program for government employees in the area of participatory development of public policies;
- Development of central repository for open educational resources and central repository for results of research and development;
- Development of a study concerning open software in state sector;
- Other commitments.

