

PREPARATORY NOTE FOR THIRD NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

FEBRUARY 2018

BACKGROUND

The OGP is a global effort to make governments better, that is, more transparent, effective and accountable, with institutions that empower citizens and are responsive to their aspirations (citizen engagement). The OGP is a multilateral initiative bringing together 65 governments; its aim is to secure concrete commitments from governments in order to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

The Government of Malta is committed to the Open Government Partnership's (OGP) principles of promoting transparency, empowering citizens, fighting corruption and harnessing new technologies. This commitment was formalised by the signing of the OGP in July 2011.¹

Malta submitted its first National Action Plan (NAP) in June 2012 for the period 2012-2014. The first NAP focused on two grand challenges, namely: 'Creating Safer Communities' and 'Increasing Corporate Accountability'.

The second NAP was launched in June 2015, covering the period 2015-2017. It focused on the following grand challenges, 'Improving Public Services' and 'Increasing Public Integrity'. The two grand challenges were chosen in collaboration with civil society and government stakeholders. A Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report on the implementation of this NAP was submitted in January 2017.

As a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), Malta is committed to developing its Third National Action Plan for the time period between 2018 and 2020. This plan is to be developed in conjunction with government stakeholders, civil society, social partners and the public.

¹ For further information on OGP, visit the website at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>.
Malta's National Action Plans may be found on: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/malta/action-plan>

Third National Action Plan

In an OGP National Action Plan, a country needs to first choose from 5 grand challenges (minimum two, no maximum):

The five OGP grand challenges are:

1. Improving Public Services—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications, and any other relevant service areas by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation
2. Increasing Public Integrity—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom
3. More Effectively Managing Public Resources—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources, and foreign assistance
4. Creating Safer Communities—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats
5. Increasing Corporate Accountability—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement

From the submissions received for the Public Consultation carried out from 28 March to 14 April 2017 on the Third National Action Plan, respondents were asked to prioritise these grand challenges. The majority recommended the following Grand Challenges as Priority: of the respondents did so. However, they both agreed on which are the top two priorities:

- 1. Improving Public Services**
- 2. Increasing Public Integrity**

For this reason, it is being recommended to focus on these two grand challenges for Malta's forthcoming Action Plan.

Commitments & Values

Once the priority grand challenges are identified, it is up to each country to identify those commitments falling under each grand challenge as long as these respect the 4 OGP values which are set as follows:

- Transparency (Access to Information): Government-held information (including on activities and decisions) is open, comprehensive, timely, freely available to the public, and meets basic open data standards (e.g. raw data, machine readability) where formats allow;
- Citizen Participation: Governments seek to mobilize citizens to engage in public debate, provide input, and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative and effective governance;

- Public Accountability: Rules, regulations, and mechanisms in place call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments;
- Technology and Innovation for Openness and Accountability: Governments embrace the importance of providing citizens with open access to technology, the role of new technologies in driving innovation, and increasing the capacity of citizens to use technology.

Milestones

Once commitments are identified, each country is to establish a set of milestones for each commitment. There is no limit on the number of milestones. What is most important is that they are specific, relevant and of significant impact.

Challenges: Third National Action Plan

GRAND CHALLENGE – IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES

Measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services (including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications and any other relevant service areas) by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation²

COMMITMENT – GOVERNMENT SERVICES, FROM QUALITY TO EXCELLENCE

OGP states that “Good quality public services are critical to the lives of citizens,”³. Measures should thus be initiated to provide good quality services, seeking however to always improve and create a ripple effect thereby creating an improvement in the citizens’ life. Failing to invest in government services would

² Reference: OGP Publication: Improving Public Services: Guidance for Developing OGP commitments available at: www.opengovpartnership.org/

³ Reference: OGP Publication: Improving Public Services: Guidance for Developing OGP commitments available at: www.opengovpartnership.org/

entail failing to invest in citizens' quality of life. This lack of investment in improvement in turn leads to a deterioration of service quality. Citizens' Services can be improved through a multitude of ways such as through better use of technologies, addressing reforms or offering new services in accordance with societal needs.

On this note the OGP values, as listed and described above, offer guidance on what should be included as a commitment and accompanying milestones. The milestones explained hereunder are derived from the OGP values, and as stated by that organisation, their overall improvement on government services means a focus on "service delivery," which leads to a more responsive government. The commitment and accompanying milestones cover policy making, service delivery, monitoring and accountability, whilst also contributing to Sustainable Development Goals, such as SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth amongst others. This commitment will address customers' needs with milestones that better cover their experience both in terms of improving access to services, making services more reachable, as well as improving the capability for citizens to be participatory given that services are being designed as citizen-centric.

MILESTONES

Milestone 1 – Electronic Forms and Mobile Services: Titkompla s-simplifikazzjoni/reviżjoni tal-formoli tal-Ministeri sabiex ikunu aktar sempliċi u faċli biex jimtlew mill-pubbliku, filwaqt li jitkompla l-iżvilupp ta' Mobile Applications sabiex ikun hemm aktar aċċess għas-servizzi.

Milestone 2 – Investing in Blockchain Technology: Ser jkun qed jitwaqqaf Blockchain Lab ġewwa l-MITA u Blockchain Hub sabiex jgħin startups li jaħdmu fuq din t-teknoloġija u jipprovdi s-sapport meħtieġ ser jkun qed jiġi varat ukoll programm ta' taħrig għall-impjegati fiċ-ċivil biex jibdew jifhmu l-użu ta' din t-teknoloġija. Malta ser tagħmel użu minn t-teknoloġija fil-każ ta' ċertifikati fl-edukazzjoni għal aktar sigurta'.

Milestone 3 – Pilot Project to Provide Services in the Field of Autism: Ser ikun introdott proġett pilota fi ħdan il-Ministeru għall-Edukazzjoni u x-Xogħol, li permezz tiegħu ser jiġu offruti servizzi godda fil-qasam awtizmu.

Milestone 4 – Measures for Voluntary Organisations: Ser ikun introdott taħrig fi ħdan il-Ministeru għall-Edukazzjoni u x-Xogħol, fl-amministrazzjoni ta' għaqdiet volontarji u fl-immanigjar ta' voluntiera. filwaqt li ser tiwaqqaf Kummissjoni għall-Kummerċjalizzazzjoni tal-Faċilitajiet Sportivi bl-iskop li jkunu mgħejjuna Għaqdiet sportivi.

Milestone 5 – Business First: Wara li twaqqaf iċ-ċentru tal-Business First huwa mistenni li numru ta' servizzi se jtniedu favur in-negozju. Minn n-naħa tal-Malta Enterprise ser tifttex li ttejjeb inċentivi li huma diġa eżistenti u toħloq oħrajn li jindirizzaw l-bżonnijiet preżenti tal-kumpaniji.

Milestone 6 – Gozo Hub: Se jkun qed jingħata bidu għall-proġett tal-hub għar-riċerka u l-ICT fil-binjiet eżistenti tal-eks MDP u proġetti li jwasslu biex ikun hemm aktar spazji ta' uffiċini fiż-żona industrijali tax-Xewkija.

Milestone 7 – Energy iSmartUtilities: ARMS Ltd se tkompli taħdem ukoll fuq servizz li jingħata lill-klijenti billi ttejjeb il-Call Centre tagħha u l-iSmart Utilities Portal filwaqt li żżid il-preżenza tagħha fil-one-stop shop tal-Gvern (Servizz.gov) billi tibda topera f'lokalitajiet oħrajn. Ser jkomplu jttejbu is-sistemi awtomatizzati tal-immanigġjar tal-meters.

Milestone 8 – Infrastructure and Capital Projects: Jitthejja pjan sabiex numru ta' toroq jiġu ndirizzati matul is-sena d-dieħla.

Milestone 9 – Department for Industrial and Employment Relations' Reform: Riforma f'Id-Dipartiment tar-Relazzjonijiet Industrijali u tal-Impjeg biex id-Dipartiment jkun punt ta' referenza u ta' servizz għall-impjegati u min iħaddem filwaqt li jtejjeb s-servizzi offruti.

Milestone 10 – Main Projects: Ser ikompli t-tiħ fis-sistema ta' distribuzzjoni tal-elettriku b' rata iktar mgħaġġla u jkompli jtejjeb il-livell tas-servizz mogħti lill-konsumaturi. Proġetti oħra jinkludu ikommissjonar ta' żewġ solar farms fuq soqfa ta' gibjuni mhux użati u rijabilitazzjoni ta' stazzjonijiet strateġiċi ta' ppumpjar li jinsabu fil-gallariji tal-ilma.

Milestone 11 – Protection Against Domestic Violence: Ser tgħaddi liġi mill-Parlament li ser tagħti lill-Kummissjoni iktar saħħa li twessa' r-remit tagħha. Filwaqt li ser tiġi approvata strateġija dwar il-vjolenza kontra n-nisa u vjolenza abbażi tal-ġeneru

GRAND CHALLENGE – INCREASING PUBLIC INTEGRITY

Measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom innovation⁴

COMMITMENT – BRIDGING THE GAP THROUGH ACCESSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Open access to information is a very important concept in defining this commitment and associated milestones. The reason being, that it promotes a government that is more transparent in its approaches, allowing a citizen to be more aware of what to access and how. It is not uncommon for a gap to be created between public services and the citizen. If not bridged, this gap will transform into distrust with the consequence that resources will not be appropriately used. As part of the Government's commitment towards OGP, the following milestones set a stepping stone towards more accessibility and more transparency in existing services where improvement needs to be addressed. Investment in such milestones is imperative for Malta, as same address services accessed by most citizens. Transparency and Accountability can be improved through many mechanisms including through the reaping of technology advantages. For example, using internet services, citizens' engagement and response can increase in frequency whilst time to attend to queries can decrease, through the use of intelligent systems built on knowledge of citizens' needs. Measures as such are encompassed in milestones in line with the Digital Strategy for Malta 2014-2020 and with the Mobile Government Strategy 2017-2018. Apart from the technological aspect other milestones are also addressed that focus on the various facets of society including Energy, Immigration, and Accountability at Local Level amongst others.

Milestone 1 – Electronic Forms and Mobile Services: Simplifikazzjoni/Revizjoni tal-formoli tal-Ministeri sabiex ikunu aktar sempliċi u faċli biex jimtlew mill-pubbliku, filwaqt li jitkompla l-iżvilupp ta' Mobile Applications sabiex ikun hemm aktar aċċess għas-servizzi.

Milestone 2 – Department for Industrial and Employment Relations' Reform: Riforma f'Id-Dipartiment tar-Relazzjonijiet Industrijali u tal-Impjieg biex d-Dipartiment jkun punt ta' referenza u ta' servizz għall-impjegati u min iħaddem filwaqt li jtejjeb s-servizzi offruti.

⁴ Reference: OGP Publication: Improving Public Services: Guidance for Developing OGP commitments available at: www.opengovpartnership.org/

Milestone 3 – New Immigration Strategy and Action Plan: Dan sabiex l-immigranti f' pajjiżna gradwalment jintegraw ruħhom isiru l-preparamenti sabiex jiddaħħal qafas regolatorju ġdid li ser jipprovdi inċentivi għal tkabbir tas-settur tal-gaming u ieħor li jintroduci l-kuncett ta' VAT Grouping għas-setturi regolati tas-servizzi finanzjarji u tal-gaming.

Milestone 4 – Business First: Wara li twaqqaf iċ-ċentru tal-Business First huwa mistenni li numru ta' servizzi se jitniedu favur in-negozju. Minn n-naħa tal-Malta Enterprise ser tifttex li ttejjeb inċentivi li huma diġa eżistenti u toħloq oħrajn li jindirizzaw l-bżonnijiet preżenti tal-kumpaniji.

Milestone 5 – Renewable Energy Schemes: Il-Gvern se jibqa' jikkommetti ruħu sabiex jipromwovi l-enerġija rinovabbli u l-użu effiċjenti ta sorsi ta enerġija, kif ukoll jinkoraġġixxi l-konservazzjoni tal-ilma fis-settus domestiku, permezz ta' skemi.

Milestone 6 – Access to EU Funds: Issir reviżjoni ta' tali proċessi sabiex ikun iktar faċli li entitajiet u individwi jaċċessew, japplikaw u jkisbu fondi ewropej.

Milestone 7 – Local Councils Accountability: Id-Dipartiment tal-Kunsilli Lokali ikun ta' għajjnuna imma wkoll viġilanti fuq il-kontabilita' tal-kunsilli lokali. Għal dan il-għan ser issir survey mal-kunsilli biex jiġu identifikati htigijiet u nuqqasijiet. Dan ser jgħin fl-overhaul tad-Dipartiment.

Milestone 8 – Customer care process overhaul at the Ministry for Education and Employment: Il-Customer Care issir operations support system b' servizzi li jkunu onlajn biex fost l-oħrajn ikun hemm pont bejn l-iskejjel u bejn l-iskejjel u l-ġenituri.

Milestone 9 – Procurement Reform: Titkompla r-reviżjoni tal-proċessi tal-kuntratti biex l-awards ikunu tabilhaqq mal-medja tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Milestone 10 – Initiation of Consultations on Vote Reforms: Bl-għan li jkun hemm il-possibilita' ta' estensjoni tal-Vot 16 fl-Elezzjonijiet Ġenerali u dawn tal-Parlament Ewropew.

NB: Reference material for action points in the Third National Action Plan have further been drawn from:

- *Independent Reporting Mechanism Report;*
- *Suggestions from the public consultation held in December 2016 for the Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report for the Second National Action Plan;*
- *OGP material such as 'What's in the New OGP National Action Plans – 2016 Edition' – a list of best practices from other countries participating in the OGP;*
- *Active budgetary measures, simplification measures and Key Performance Indicators within different Ministries – in accordance to their suitability and relevancy to OGP's challenges.*

Second Round of Public Consultation/Awareness Campaign

As has already been discussed with OGP Desk, a second public consultation session was suggested following the 1st consultation. This is aimed at raising more awareness amongst the Public and Civil Society on OGP whilst seeking more input from the public. This consultation will be considered as the final consultation before the launch of the 3rd NAP.

Your Input

The time period for this public consultation commences on the Thursday 1st February 2018 and closes on the Thursday 1st March 2018.

We thank you for your collaboration and look forward to hear your views.

Kindly submit your views via the public consultation portal.
