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Supporting Parliament of Georgia Involvement in Open Government Partnership Initiative
Final Report

(December 10, 2014 – November 30, 2015)



Project Name: Supporting Parliament of Georgia Involvement in Open Government Partnership.

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Introduction

After successful participation of the Government of Georgia in Open Government Partnership (OGP), the Parliament of Georgia started to engage in OGP and followed the examples of the most prominent OGP countries regarding the Parliamentary Openness. The main objective of the project was to support active involvement of the Parliament of Georgia in OGP, increase the openness and transparency of the legislative activities and ensure the citizen engagement in it.

The Project had three specific objectives:

Specific Objective #1: Raising awareness of the Parliament on Open Government Partnership and Legislative Openness.

- ➔ Prepare a study of international practices of parliament-related commitments in National Action Plans
- ➔ Organize an awareness raising workshop on OGP

Specific Objective #2: Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan will be developed and adopted by the Parliament of Georgia.

- ➔ Draft the Terms of Reference of the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group
- ➔ Create Open Parliament Georgia Working Group
- ➔ Develop draft Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan
- ➔ Facilitate public consultations to finalize Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan
- ➔ Support peer exchanges and participation of the WG members at international OGP-related events
- ➔ Finalize the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan for its adoption by the Parliament of Georgia

Specific Objective #3: Implementation of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan will be launched.

- ➔ Support the WG in the implementation of the Action Plan
- ➔ Launch Public Awareness Campaign

Activities carried out within the Project

Throughout the project performance period, the project team was executing activities specifically complying with the objectives of the project and supporting the involvement of the Parliament of Georgia in OGP. The highlights of the project were: formation of the Inter-Factional and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Groups; signing the Memorandum on mutual understanding between the Parliament of Georgia and the Civil Society; joining the Declaration of Parliamentary Openness by the Parliament of Georgia; Joint Workshop in Kazbegi between the Inter-Factional Group and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group; adopting the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan by the Bureau of the Parliament of Georgia; hosting the Legislative Openness Working Group conference in Tbilisi at the Palace of the Parliament of Georgia; Participating in the OGP Global Summit in Mexico; winning the OGP Government Champions Award; and launching the implementation process of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan.

In particular, following activities were carried out:

Specific Objective #1: Raising awareness of the Parliament on Open Government Partnership and Legislative Openness.

- ➔ After strong advocacy of the Project team the Inter-Factional Group of the Parliament of Georgia was created. The members of the Inter-Factional Group were selected from all parliamentary factions, thus making this process accessible to all political groups of the legislative branch of Georgia.
- ➔ Study was prepared by the Project team analyzing the international practice of OGP countries related to Parliamentary Openness and the recommendatory commitments of OpenGovGuide. This study became the basement for further elaborating the commitments of the Action Plan and was actively used by the members of the Inter-Factional Group and the civil society.
- ➔ Project team organized the workshop dedicated for awareness raising activities and for supporting the elaboration process of the Action Plan. MPs and the members of the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group took part in the workshop.
- ➔ OGP Support Unit and World Bank Group organized the Webinar on the topic of “Reviewing 2015, Looking to 2016: Legislative Openness and OGP” that was held on November 17th. Together with the representatives of World Bank and NDI, Director of IDFI, Giorgi Kldiashvili, and Head of the Public Relations and Information Department of the Parliament of Georgia, Nino Beradze, participated in the Webinar. The goal of the webinar was to provide an opportunity to discuss the Working Group's work plan for 2016 and hear ideas on what activities should be prioritized.

Specific Objective #2: Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan will be developed and adopted by the Parliament of Georgia.

- ➔ Open Parliament Georgia Working Group was created. Members of the non-governmental and international organizations were taking part in activities of the Open Parliament Georgia Working

Group. Furthermore, the representatives of the staff of the Parliament of Georgia were successfully involved in the work of the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group.

- ➔ During the project period, the Inter-Factional Group and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group held 7 joint meetings (not taking into account the meetings that were held separately by the Inter-Factional or Open Parliament Georgia Working Groups). These meetings were dedicated to elaborate the commitments and to develop the draft version of the Action Plan. Last joint meeting was held for kick starting the launch of the implementation process of the Action Plan.
- ➔ On July 17th, 2015, after the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan 2015-2016 (including total of 18 commitments, 16 of which was initiated by the civil society) was approved by the Inter-Factional Working Group, it was adopted by the Bureau of the Parliament of Georgia.
- ➔ During the project period 5 international visits were conducted: 6 members (3 representatives of the civil society, 3 MPs and 1 representative of the Staff of the Parliament of Georgia) of the Inter-Factional Working Group and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group participated in international OGP-related events.
- ➔ Project team was actively supporting the Parliament of Georgia both via financial means and with using human resources in organizing the international conference (“Committing to Openness: Parliamentary Action Plans, Standards, and Data”) on Legislative Openness held in Tbilisi, Georgia, September 14-15. About 250 delegates from more than 30 countries participated in the conference. The Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan got a worldwide recognition and approval and Georgia was unofficially proclaimed as leader in Parliamentary Openness in OGP.
- ➔ On October 27-29, with the financial support of the project members of the Inter-Factional Working Group and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group participated in OGP Global Summit in Mexico. Georgian delegates participated in several sessions of Global Summit as speakers and introduced the achievements of Georgia to the OGP community.
- ➔ IDFI nominated (prepared the statement and the video) the Inter-Factional Group of the Parliament of Georgia for the title of OGP Government Champions Award. On 27th of October, on Civil Society Day in Mexico, Inter-Factional Group of the Parliament of Georgia, as semi-finalist of the competition, was granted the OGP Government Champions Award based on the results of public poll. This Award goes to the governmental team, which during the elaboration process of the Action Plan was actively considering the advices of the Civil Society.

Specific Objective #3: Implementation of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan will be launched

- ➔ During the project period, the project team together with the representatives of the Parliament of Georgia and the civil society organized the public awareness meetings in various parts of Georgia, vastly in the regions. 4 public awareness meetings were held (Tbilisi (Ilia State University), Kutaisi (Kutaisi Akaki Tsereteli University), Telavi (Gogebashvili State University) and Samtredia (Samtredia Municipality)).
- ➔ To strengthen the role of society in the process of drafting the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan the project team launched survey via social network which composed the draft commitments for the Action Plan. It should be noted that a survey was read by 1280 persons, while 25 % of them - 320 users participated in it. 62% of participants were female, 38 % - male. The results of the survey were discussed on joint meeting of the Inter-Factional and the Open Parliament Georgia

Working Groups and were taken into account and embellished while finalizing the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan.

- Transparency International – Mexico published the Book titled – Open Parliaments, Results and Expectations. Co-author of the book is Director of IDFI - Giorgi Kldiashvili. In "Open Parliaments, Results and Expectations", Giorgi Kldiashvili analysed Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan (2015-2016) developed by the Inter-Factional Group of the Parliament of Georgia and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group.
- During the project 74 blogs were published <https://ogpblog.wordpress.com/> regarding the updates of OGP, issues of the Parliamentary Openness and illustrations of the draft versions of the commitments for the Action Plan, aiming to raise the awareness of the Parliament of Georgia and the civil society.
- For public awareness purposes, the Project team conducted the competition “Open Parliament-Voice of Youth” in which 43 students from various fields participated. Training (on OGP and Significance of Civic Engagement in Public Policy) and Visit to the Parliament of Georgia was organized for the participants. Final episode of the competition was submitting the initiatives regarding the Parliamentary Openness. 15 initiatives were submitted by the participants and the authors of 5 best initiatives were awarded with various gifts.
- International and local media, including social media, disseminated the information about the project widely. Totally about 50 articles and TV stories were prepared regarding the project. Dozens of online outlets and TV broadcasters covered the activities carried out in the framework of the project.
- On December 14th, Joint Meeting of the Inter-Factional Group and the Open Parliament Georgia Working Group was conducted where participants discussed launching of the Implementation Process of the Action Plan. Authors of the commitments of Action Plan submitted the concepts of their view on the possible ways and steps for executing the commitments of Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan.
- On December 18th, the Parliament of Georgia has enacted the legislation on Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open and Transparent Governance. Establishing the council was the idea of IDFI based on best international practice from OGP countries (e.g., Chile, Mexico). With amending the Rules of Procedure and starting to execute this commitment, Parliament of Georgia has started the implementation process of Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan.

Summary

Project “Supporting Parliament of Georgia Involvement in Open Government Partnership Initiative” was one of the most successful projects of IDFI. IDFI actively mobilized human and financial resources and strongly advocated the engagement of the MPs and the civil society in the elaboration process of the Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan. In this regard, involvement of the Parliament of Georgia in the OGP is now ensured.

Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan is the roadmap to successful engagement of the Parliament of Georgia in the OGP. Having elaborated the action plan effectively, Parliament of Georgia can successfully follow the implemented practice of developing the commitments according to the OGP principles. Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open and Transparent Governance will serve as the parliamentary institution to elaborate, monitor and ensure implementation of the commitments laid out in the Action Plans.

Project Director,

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