Introduction

Since its independence Armenia has undertaken the transition path towards democracy. In order to achieve the goal Armenia has been joining different European structures, undertaking international obligations and reforms aimed at democratic principles. Among such commitments is the Open Government Partnership (OGP). In the framework of the OGP Armenia aims at establishing more transparent and open state bodies and create a platform for citizens' participation. The OGP aims at giving the people of the Republic of Armenia to gain an easier access to the public information that they are concerned about. The OGP creates mechanisms of accountability of the Armenian Government. The main goal is to raise awareness of the citizens about the activities of the Government. It is an important instrument for deepening democracy and involvement of citizens in civil and governmental processes.

This research aims at looking on the process that goes in the framework of the Open Government Partnership in Armenia. To show what the Government of the RA has done and what still needs to be done. It shows the online tech tools that are already available and function. The Research also introduces the results of interviews regarding the OGP in Armenia with the civil society and government representatives and journalists.

Chapter 1

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  ministry of justice.png  Official Website of the public notifications of the Republic of Armenia run by the Ministry of Justice |
| The website (ex: www. azdarar.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | The public notification system (www.azdarar.am) allows posting in an online system the announcements of citizens or organizations of cases stipulated by the legislation. Notifications include job announcements, reports, notifications, declarations, decisions and are uploaded by state institutions and legal persons |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** | 2007 |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** |  |
| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  Electronic Government of the Republic of Armenia, run by the Government of the RA |
| The website (ex: www.e-gov.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | The website brings together the electronic governance tools and databases of the Armenian state agencies as well as provides comfortable environment for their use. It publishes governmental expenditures, Decrees and Protocols. The website allows sending a letter to the Government and tracking the application. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** | 2010 |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Eng (partially) |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Government of the RA |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  State Electronic Payment System |
| The website (ex: www. e-payments.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | The Electronic Payment System gives you the opportunity to make online payments charged for the state fees, local duties, the administrative penalties or services provided by state and local self-government bodies. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** | 2012 |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** |  |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | ecadastre.gifType of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo Electronic system of the Real Property Cadastre |
| The website (ex: www.e-cadastre.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | The site is designed to provide e-services by the Committee, including online submission of applications and related documents for state registration of real property rights and restrictions.  Online applications for registration of rights and restrictions and related documents may be submitted by persons who have a digital signature issued in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia by the center of certification of electronic digital signatures and who are registered on the website www.e-cadastre.am in accordance with the requirements of the order of the electronic submission of applications for registration of real property rights and restrictions. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Eng, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | State Committee of Real Property Cadastre of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  State Register of the Legal Entities of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. |
| The website (ex: www. e-register.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | Deployment of the system is aimed at improving the business environment, decreasing duration of registration and through application of One Stop Shop principle ensure registration of legal entities and sole proprietors during only one visit. By deployment of electronic system and administrative reforms we are now able to register Limited liability companies in 20 and Sole Proprietors in 10 minutes.  Here you can submit on line applications for registration of legal entities, track your applications and search existing companies and purchase full information about any company. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Eng, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Government of the Republic of Armenia |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo |
| The website (ex: www.datalex.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | DataLex is an electronic management and public information provision system which allows receiving real-time data regarding court cases in point at all the courts. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Eng, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Government of the Republic of Armenia , government of the Republic of the Netherlands, World Bank |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  Electronic Tax Filing |
| The website (ex: ) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | This tool simplifies tax filing for both tax payers and tax officials by automating the preparation, checking and by online transfer of tax reports. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Eng, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Government of the Republic of Armenia , government of the Republic of the Netherlands, World Bank |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  Electronic auction system of the compulsory enforcement service |
| The website (ex: www.achurd.harkadir.am/) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | This tool simplifies tax filing for both tax payers and tax officials by automating the preparation, checking and by online transfer of tax reports. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Eng, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Government of the Republic of Armenia , government of the Republic of the Netherlands, World Bank |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo  Information Search System of the Intellectual Property Agency |
| The website (ex: www.aipa.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | The information search system of the Intellectual Property Agency enables search in the databases of industrial designs, brand names, inventions, utility models, and trademarks. See the tutorial on how to search for specific information using this system. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Ministry of Economy of RA |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo   Legal information system of the Republic of Armenia |
| The website (ex: www.arlis.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | A comprehensive electronic database of legal acts of the Republic of Armenia enables a user to get familiar with the Armenian legislation ranging from international treaties to the decisions adopted by the local councils. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** |  |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, ENG, Rus |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Ministry of Justice of RA, World Bank |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo Mandate NGO  Parliament Monitoring |
| The website (ex: www.parliamentmonitoring.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | It is a source that provides information on the activities of the National Assembly of the RA, it monitors to which extent the parliament members and coalition parties work effeciantly in the framework of their legislative mandate. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** | 2012 |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Open Society Foundations Armenia |

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| **Name of the tech-tools** | Type of organization (governmental, NGO) Please use for this the complete name and the logo Asparez Journalists Club  Parliament Monitoring |
| The website (ex: www.publicdata.am) | |
| **Short summary (presentation of the main facilities)** | It is a source that provides information on the activities of the National Assembly of the RA, it monitors to which extent the parliament members and coalition parties work effeciantly in the framework of their legislative mandate. |
| **Level of usage (e.g. traffic statistics)** |  |
| **Launch date** | 2012 |
| **Media coverage** |  |
| **Main target group** |  |
| **Available in other languages** | Arm, |
| **Free access or paid subscriptions** | Free access |
| **Open sources/Open data (please insert the link of the code if its available)** | Yes/No |
| **Financial resources. Please explain if the tech-tool is using public resources or private resources** | Open Society Foundations Armenia, EU Delegation in Armenia |

Chapter 2

The Government of the Republic of Armenia joined the Open Government Partnership Initiative in September, 2011. According to the Prime Minister's Decree a working group was established that was in charge of drafting the Open Government Partnership Action Plan. The America department of the MFA was charged with the responsibility to coordinate activities related to drafting of the action plan as Armenia joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) by the invitation of the U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton.

The Protocol Decision of the Government of the RA “On approval of Republic of Armenia program of action under Open Government Partnership initiative.” was approved by the Standing Ministerial Committee on Institutional-Legal Affairs On April 5, 2012. The Open Government Partnership Armenia Action Plan was officially presented to the international community by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ashot Hovakimyan during a session on South Caucasus States on the sidelines of the annual high-level conference of the Open Government Partnership initiative on April 17-18, 2012 in Brazil.

The current Working Group comprises of representatives from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Territorial Administration, Justice, Finance and Economy and etc.

The Working Group also includes civil society organizations representatives that work in the fields of freedom of information, accountability and anticorruption.

So far Armenia has adopted two Action Plans. The Action Plans are foreseen for two years. The second Action Plan was approved by the Government on July 31, 2014. In line with the Action Plan Armenia has undertaken 15 commitments.

15 commitments are developed based on 5 "grand challenges" which are:

1. Improving Public Services (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 (address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom)

3. More Effectively Managing Public Resources—(address budgets, procurement, natural resources, and foreign assistance)

4. Creating Safer Communities (address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats)

5. Increasing Corporate Accountability (address corporate responsibility on issues such as environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement)

The Commitments are divided into 2 major sectors which have its subgroups respectively.

The 2 major block are:

1. Effectively Managing Public Resources

2. Increasing Public Integration

Block 1: EFFECTIVELY MANAGING PUBLIC RESOURCES

*This Block foresees reforms in legislation and implementation towards establishing electronic systems. It consists of 5 main parts with its sub-groups. It is aimed at fostering E-governance, simplification of unnecessary legal norms, development of Audit System and improvement of Procurement Procedures, better budget planning and reporting system.*

1.1 FOSTERING OPEN GOVERNMENT THROUGH E-GOVERNANCE

* *Unified Payment System*

**This section is aimed at establishing a single payment system of state fees (licenses, permits, services, etc.), which will allow payment by bank credit card or a terminal.**

The Government of the RA has implemented the unified payment system within the framework of the second judicial reform project supported by the World Bank together with the funding from the Dutch and Japanese governments. The state electronic payment system (https://www.e-payments.am) was introduced by the Government decision (of RA Government N 496-Ն, dated April 19, 2012). From April 2012 to 1 June 2013, 4,162 payments were executed via electronic payment system, about 11.3 percent of the total number of duties and other similar payments. The system is being developed further to assist in electronic transfer of other payments. Now taxpayers can pay taxes via this system.

* *Improve System for Car Inspection and Licensing*

**This section is aimed at improving state car inspection, vehicle registration, provision of drivers’ licenses, electronic system of penalties and payments.**

The system was implemented on 2 April, 2012 with the framework of Public Sector Modernization project financed by the World Bank. At present, several business processes are carried out exclusively via electronic system. The center grants an opportunity to carry out such deals as vehicle registration, provision of driving licenses, acquisition of a technical passport, purchase and sale, etc.

* *Implement an Electronic System for Consular Services*

**This section aims at achieving electronic system of consular services that will allow online actions connected with changing or obtaining passports, extending the validity etc.**

The system has been implemented since 2011. The electronic system is implemented in more than half of the consular services. Since October 2012 the system “Electronic Consulate” was introduced in system of the Ministry of Foreign Affaires of the RA. The system ensures electronic connection between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassies, as well as grants opportunity to make a number of services delivered to the citizens in more operative way. Previously citizens of the RA who stayed abroad for more than six months were obliged to consult the diplomatic bodies about it. Now it is based on voluntary principle, and it will be possible to carry out the process of registration by means of electronic website.

* *Implement the Mail-Armenia System*

**This section aims at establishing a personal e-mail address that will be provided to citizens who apply for a passport for the first time. All types of state notifications will be submitted to that address.**

The law “On Public and Individual Notification by Internet” was adopted on March 19, 2013. The law provisions one electronic address, where all the citizens will receive all state notifications.

On June 25, 2013 RA draft law “On Making Addition and Amendment in the Republic of Armenia Law “On Public and Individual Notification by Internet” was sent to the National Assembly of the RA. The draft law “about Making Additions and Amendments in the Republic of Armenia Law about Public and Individual Notification by Internet” was sent to the Parliament. A person is considered properly notified if the notification has been sent to his or her official electronic mail address and there is an electronic confirmation of it being read. If the person or body who has been sent the notification does not receive the electronic notification or read it within a week, but there is an electronic verification that it has been received, a second notification is sent to the official electronic mail address and the same notification is published on the official website of notifications of the Republic of Armenia. On the seventh day after sending the second notification, the person is considered properly notified. As of late October 2013, 50 percent of the technical work on the system had been completed.

* *Introduce an E-Statistics System*

**This section is aimed at providing state statistical service reports via electronic filing system.**

With the help of the system the State Statistics Service can represent the reports in on-line variant. Works aimed at fulfillment of the commitment have already started. At present inventory works are carried out, all forms of the statistics service reports are revised.

According to the government’s self-assessment report, this commitment was to be fulfilled by the end of 2013. However, the expert appointed by the Government of Armenia mentioned that the task will not be completed until August 2014.

* *Introduce an E-Documentation Sharing System in Urban Communities*

**This section aims at introduction of e-documentation sharing system in urban communities. It is planned that all 48 urban Administrations of Armenia will be connected to the Mulberry electronic documentation sharing system.**

The implementation of this commitment is based on the 2004 Armenian law “Electronic Documents and Electronic Digital Signature” and the 2005 government decree “Approving the Procedure for Implementation of Electronic Documents and Electronic Digital Signatures in Government Bodies of the Republic of Armenia.”

45 out of 48 town municipalities works necessary for introduction of electronic documentation sharing have been accomplished and there is an opportunity to exchange the electronic documents by “Mulberry” electronic documentation sharing system.

Similar works also have been carried out in 179 rural communities, 34 of which were large communities (having population more than 5000). Moreover, in 108 rural communities the works were carried out in 2013. 81 communities have Internet websites. The community municipalities carry out the documentation sharing through the community governance informational system (CGIS) exploited by them, which together with other subsystems, also has the documentation sharing component.

In general CGIS-s are introduced in 440 communities and works are carried out in direction of installing electronic documentation sharing in all communities too.

1.2. REVIEW THE REGULATORY NORMATIVE LEGAL ACTS (Regulatory Guillotine Project)

**This Section is aimed at curtailing of excessive regulations, simplifying unnecessary legal norms and this way creating better environment for business and involvement of possible investments.**

The state institution National Center for Legislative Regulation Project Implementation Unit has been launched since May 2012 (RA Government N 1462-Ն, dated October 13, 2011). The official website of the National Center for Legislative Regulation is [www.regulations.am](http://www.regulations.am).

The package of laws on public services’ sphere (refers to the spheres of energy and telecommunications) has passed two readings in the National Assembly. Mainly the power circuit works by citizens or business are enhanced; the process of small HPPs construction licensing is regulated. In the sphere of telecommunications two types of licenses are curtailed, and a notification mechanism is installed instead. The idea of “number portability” is introduced in the sphere of communication – being in the field of service of one operator you can voluntarily change the operator without changing the telephone number.

The procedures related to the establishment and activities of taxi services have been essentially simplified – a number of references and steps, which before that a taxi service was obliged to submit to receive a license and carry out activities, have been curtailed. Changes have also been produced in the sphere of cargo transportation.

Projects in the sphere of healthcare are still in the stage of consideration. These mainly refer to drugstore activities, as well as to the drugs registration procedure. Parallel to the above-stated RA Government also accomplishes profound reforms in the discussed sphere.

At present the reforms of land law are before the institution. Corresponding works will start in tax and customs spheres too.

1.3. IMPROVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT SYSTEM FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

**This sections aims at great transparency in managing public resources through internal audit in central governmental bodies, town communities, commercial and non commercial government organization.**

The internal audit system is one of the main components of the State Internal Fiscal Control System (SIFC). The SIFC strategy was adopted by the Government of the RA on November, 2011 which defines the preconditions and actions necessary for introduction of a unified and up-to-date state internal fiscal control system. On December 22, 2010 RA Law “On Internal Audit” was adopted, enhancing the existing system and bringing it into compliance with EU standards. Before this it has been applied only in the sphere of financial audit, but the law stipulated to include also executive, compliance and system audit. On August 13, 2010 by RA Government decision N 1233-Ն, the internal audit professional activity standards, internal audit ethic rule and internal audit introduction schedule were adopted. The instructions for standard application were adopted on December 8, 2011 by RA Minister of Finance order N 974-Ն.

During 2012 the works aimed at introduction and strengthening of internal audit system continued, in particular:

By order N 143-Ն of RA Minister of Finance, dated February 17, 2012 the “Guides for the Republic of Armenia public sector internal audit manuals and internal audit regulations development”, which define all procedures of internal audit organization, implementation and assessment in public sector organizations in compliance with international standards and the best policies.

By order N 165-Ն of RA Minister of Finance, dated February 23, 2012, the “Main requirements to the internal audit subdivision and internal audit committee” were also adopted, which defined the requirements set to the establishment of subdivision, minimum quantity of positions, professional experience and the Internal Audit Committee.

In accordance with the “Internal Audit System Introduction Schedule”, adopted by order 1233-Ն by RA Government, dated August 11, 2011, since April 1, 2012 the internal audit system has been introduced in 52 public governance bodies and the Yerevan City Municipality. Since January 1, 2013 internal audit subdivisions have been established in 44 from 48 urban communities.

With the purpose of ensuring the requirement of point 2, Article 15 of RA law “On Internal Audit” during the year 2012, RA Ministry of Finance organized retraining courses on the subject “Public Sector Internal Audit”, 160 employees of state governance bodies and internal audit subdivisions of Yerevan City Municipality participated therein, and 155 of them received the qualification of an internal auditor. From urban communities 50 employees of internal audit subdivisions participated in the mentioned courses and 40 of them received the qualification of an internal auditor.

RA Government draft decision “On confirming the procedure of organization of internal audit qualification examinations and main requirements set to audit organizations carrying out internal audit” has been developed and put into circulation.

By decision N 896 of RA Government, dated August 8, 2013, the procedures of “Implementation of an organization’s internal audit system assessments by persons having no relation to the organization activities with the purpose of enhancing and guaranteeing the quality of internal audit of the organizations, as well as the procedures of internal audit cooperation with bodies carrying out checking and external audit body”.

1.4. IMPROVE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

**This sections aims at enhancing the institutional capacity of public procurement bodies and the procurement system. It aims to provide more transparency and disclosure of detailed information about procurements made by contracting entities.**

and www.armeps.am

The implementation of an electronic procurement system started in 2004, before the government’s participation in OGP. This was done with support of the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank.

The strategy for reforms in procurement system was approved by the Government of the RA. In 2009 the Prime Minister approved a timetable to implement a strategy by 2013. The Law “About Procurement” (the third law on procurement since 2000) was approved in 2010. Over the last two to three years the Government of Armenia and the Ministry of Finance have adopted several decrees and orders related to public procurements, electronic procurements, and the expansion of information about public procurements. The Procurement Support Center, a state noncommercial organization, developed curriculum and training manuals that are used to train officials responsible for procurements. A code of conduct for procurement officials is under development. On 14 November 2011 the Ministry of Finance officially declared the launch of its e-procurement system which was presented as a big step toward transparency at the eighth Regional Public Procurement Forum in May 2012 in Tirana, Albania.

However the report by the head of the President’s Inspection Service notes that there are structural and administrative problems in the procurement system. The problems were discussed by the GoA on 20 September 2012.11 The 2012 annual report of the Chamber of Control (CoC) mentioned that it “is still uncovering procurement processes, which are anti-competitive, inefficient, nontransparent, non-public and are organized on a discriminatory basis.”12 The CoC characterized the problems in Armenian public procurements as systemic, and stated that the electronic procurement system does not work and declared that the project has failed. The MoF concured with the CoC’s opinion. According to the CoC, previous failures and risks of the existing e-procurement process were not analyzed prior to developing reforms, which significantly reduced the reliability of the reforms. In 2012 the Financial Control Inspectorate of the MoF revealed a number of violations of procurement legislation.13 Other organizations also assessed the e-procurement system. In October 2013, Transparency International’s Anti-Corruption Center (TIACC) published three papers on the Armenian public procurement system,14 stating that: • The e-procurement system did not allow full implementation of all procedures envisaged by current Armenian legislation. • During the first two years of operation, there were 58 announcements of electronic procurements out of which only 35 took place. In some of the contracts the day of awarding the contract is not specified and in some cases only the draft contract is available.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is helping with the implementation of e-planning and e-procurement management components of the system. At a press conference in July 2013, the Minister of Finance mentioned that the Ministry is taking steps to improve the procurement system. The financial requirements for companies bidding for big tenders have been increased. The financial punishment for not completing the awarded contract has been introduced.

Since January 1, 2012 the Republic of Armenia electronic procurement system has been launched, as a result of which the procurement procedures carried out in open procedure by RA state governance bodies are organized in electronic form through the website [www.armeps.am](http://www.armeps.am). In particular, in 2013 RA state bodies organized about 120 procurement procedures in electronic form. RA Ministry of Finance has also carried out monitoring of the procurement system launching and provided the clients and procurement participants with necessary methodological assistance. At present, RA state governance bodies accomplish works aimed at carrying out the procurements in electronic form – through the website [www.armeps.am](http://www.armeps.am) by means of framework agreements stipulated by RA law “On Procurements”.

By order N 1169-Ն of RA Minister of Finance, dated December 25, 2012, the “Order of procurement data analysis and electronic thesaurus conduct(including the report form)”, by which it is stipulated to provide the procurement assistance center with information in regard to procurement procedures in the format confirmed according to the draft by the clients. The latter, on the basis of this information, carries out analyses according to procurement value and(or) quantity indicators and various combinations thereof.

With the purpose of ensuring the overall registration of information by the state clients on procurements in the treasury system, a new program package has been developed and since December 1, 2012 introduced in “CLIENT-TREASURY” –“LSFinance” (Treasury Transaction Day -TTD) systems, through which the state clients independently enter the information on deals arising commitments for the state – the report, into the system. Together with this information, the procurement contract is also entered into the system. For the first time an electronic repository of automatic registration of procurement contracts has been created. The indicated system also gives an opportunity to exclude submitting information, differing both in formal and contextual sense, by state governance bodies to RA Ministry of Finance.

In the procurement electronic thesaurus, on the basis of information on procurements carried out under the framework agreements published in the procurement electronic thesaurus, analyses have been carried out and monthly reports drawn up and published, where you can see the maximum, minimum prices submitted by the participants according to the bodies and procurement items, the weighed and arithmetic mean of the winning participants’ prices, standard deviation, participant denominations.

On the basis of RA Government decision N 1104-Ն, dated August 30, 2012, RA Ministry of Finance publishes the information on procurements carried out from one person, including the contracts signed, in RA Government website [www.e-gov.am](http://www.e-gov.am).

With the purpose of the procurement coordinators’ qualification assessment, during 2013, there have been organized examinations of RA procurement legislation knowledge assessment for procurement coordinators of RA state governance bodies, client organizations operating in the system thereof (PIU, SNCO, CJSC-s, etc.) and RA urban communities. As a result, 9 procurement coordinators of RA state governance bodies and state institutions operating in the system thereof, 113 procurement coordinators of SNCO-s, CNCO-s, CJSC-s, operating in the system of RA state governance bodies, and 7 procurement coordinators of RA urban and rural communities have successfully passed the mentioned examinations, and included into the list of qualified procurement specialists published by RA Ministry of Finance.

During 2012 the SNCO “Procurement Assistance Center” organized retraining courses for procurement specialists of RA state governance bodies, the SNCO-s and CJSC-s subordinate to the latters, and the SNCO “Training Center” organized retraining courses for procurement specialists of urban and rural communities. The mentioned courses are continued in 2013 too.

Since June, 2013 the procurement procedures and signed contracts of RA state bodies and state institutions are monitored on optional principle. Measures are taken aimed at correction of discovered errors.

RA Minister of Finance has confirmed the sample forms of the procurement procedure documents.

1.5. IMPROVE BUDGET PLANNING AND REPORTING SYSTEMS THROUGH FULL UTILIZATION OF PROGRAM BUDGETING

**This section aims at introducing program budgeting. The new system will improve reporting and accountability on the use of public funds.**

Since 2005 RA Ministry of Finance carries out preparation works for creation of necessary conditions to pass from the mode based on budgeting receipts (resources used for service delivery)to the mode based on results (program budgeting). Within the first two years 4 state governance bodies from social sphere were included in the experimental project of program budgeting introduction. At the end of 2007 the number thereof comprised 14, and since RA 2010, all state governance bodies are already included in these works.

On the basis of results of the works accomplished in experimental order, the concept of reform development of the Republic of Armenia state expenditure programming process have been developed and by RA Government protocol decision N 48/18, dated November 27, 2008, in the context of which the works of future deepening of reforms have continued.

During the budgeting process of RA 2012 new components arising from the requirements of program budgeting are introduced in experimental order:

* A system of new program structure for all departments carrying out expenditure programs under RA state budget, and new classifier of these programs, according to which the state budget drafts of RA 2012 and 2013 have been drawn up.
* Within the scope of 2012 budget process in three experimental departments (RA Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture, RA Police at RA Government) one budget program description (passport) in each was drawn up, and in 2013 such a budgeting program description (passport) was drawn up in 8 departments for 10 budgeting programs. All these are inserted on the official website of RA Ministry of Finance. The budgeting program description (passport) defines the necessary reference points and targets describing the current situation under the given budget program, which is an issue of vital importance for effective planning of finance (programming on the basis of the result).

For the purpose of putting the budgeting process on institutional bases and development of the reform results acquired at present and creation of necessary legislative bases, RA draft laws “On making amendments and additions in the Republic of Armenia law “On Republic of Armenia Budget System”” and the Republic of Armenia law “On Republic of Armenia Treasury System” have been developed and presented to RA National Assembly. They are adopted by RA National Assembly on April 30, 2013 and are in force.

Block 2: PROMOTING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

*This block foresees more open data for citizens about the activities and incomes of officials, figths against corruption and better taxation system. It includes 3 subgroups aimed at disclosure of assets, standardized official website, struggle against corruption and better budgeting system.*

* Ensure Transparency of Asset Declarations

**This section aims at insuring disclosure of the asset and income declarations of high ranking officials through publishing it in a publicly accessible way.**

In 2009 the Government of the RA announced that it was “introducing legislative changes on prescribing targeted severe sanctions for senior state officials engaging in business activities.”

The Ethics Committee of high-ranking officials was established on January 9, 2012 according to procedure of RA law “On Public Service”. The members of the Ethics Committee of high-ranking officials were appointed by RA President decree, dated January 9, 2012.

Now all declarations are already published on the Committee’s official website ([www.ethics.am](http://www.ethics.am)) in accordance with the list of data subject to declaration defined by RA Government decision.

A member of the High Level Officials Ethics Commission, who is also a member of the OGP working group, stated that all government officials submitted 2012 asset and income declarations to the commission. However, some declarations were not posted on the commission’s website because it was being restructured. The commission analyzed the declarations for 2011 and 2012 and found that more than 100 officials failed to comply with the requirements of the legislation. The commission returned these declarations to the officials and demanded they submit clarifications and explanations about inconsistencies. The analysis of declarations helped summarize the impact of the law and prepare proposals to eliminate existing gaps and improve the system. However, the commission did not publish the results of the analysis because it 41 was not legally obligated to do so. The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression (CPFE), a CSO, monitored the Ethics Commission website and presented its results at a press conference on 15 October 2013, in Yerevan (at Media Center at Saryan 30), revealing that:

• Declarations of less than half of the high-ranking public officials required to submit them were available on the Ethics Commission website (322 out of 660).

• Missing from the website were the declarations of 89 members of Parliament, several ministers and deputy ministers, the head and 5 members of the Constitutional court, several judges of other courts, the prosecutor general and 3 deputies, and the head and one of the members of Ethics Commission.

• Some of the declarations were incomplete, incorrect, or even false. These and other issues were discussed with the Ethics Commission chairman at a meeting called by CPFE on 15 July 2013. According to the chairman, the commission sent more than 100 reminders to high-level officials to submit declarations, but the commission does not have the necessary powers to hold government officials accountable for not submitting declarations or submitting incomplete or incorrect information. The chairman also claimed that the state officials must feel individually responsible for providing correct information, not only to their supervisors but also to society in general.

* **Standardize Official Website Content**

**This section aims at establishing a unified structure for government website (including budget related information in data formats that will support public expenditure analysis), the publication of essential information on government websites, and the successful usability of the sites for all target audiences. The standards will also ensure regular publication of information prescribed by the “Law on Freedom of Information”, such as budgets, budget implementation reports, vacancies, contact information of officials, etc.**

This issue has been on the agenda of the Government of Armenia since 2011. The Ministry of Transport and Communication was assigned to prepare a draft of the government decree “Approving the Requirements towards Official Internet Websites of the State Bodies.” The need for this decree was based on the order of the President.

In accordance with RA Government N 111-Ն decision, Appendix 1, point 54 “On confirmation of the Republic of Armenia year 2011 activities’ measure program and prior issues, dated January 13, 2011”, in 2011 RA Ministry of Transport and Communication with the assistance of a number of non-profit organizationsdeveloped the draft law “On confirmation of the minimal requirements produced to the official websites of state bodies in Internet ” of RA Government. The draft has been discussed by the republic executive bodies, as well as with technical specialists, the questions raised by them are taken into account in the considered draft. At present the refined variant of the draft, together with the financial reference, has been presented to the consideration of RA Government.

* **Improve Knowledge and Skills of Public Servants about Access to Information**

**This section is aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of public servants on access to information. It aims at organizing training sessions for civil and community servants on how to work openly and accountably with the public, as well as to appropriately process and respond to information requests.**

One of activity directions of information freedom center is the retraining of state and community servants in the information freedom sphere. In this sense the center cooperates with RA Government, as well as with RA Civil Service Council, there is a cooperation memorandum with RA Ministry of Territorial Administration in action. It is already five years that the program is implemented with support of USAID, during which more than 400 state and community servants have been retrained.

In the decade 2003–13, the Government of Armenia collaborated with the civil society organization (CSO), Freedom of Information Center (FOICA) to train 2,843 officials on the “Law about Freedom of Information.” In 2010 FOICA established the Non-Formal Education Center for Freedom of Information to impart knowledge about the implementation of the Armenian “Law on Freedom of Information,” the electronic management of information, and the ethical standards for government officials. Since the center was set up, many civil servants have received training. In 2011, 301 civil servants received training at the center. In collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, 400 community servants finished training during 2011–12. During 13–30 May 2013, the center organized training for 78 civil servants responsible for information and public relations based on programs developed in cooperation with the Civil Service Council.

2.2. PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY AND OBJECTIVITY IN TAX ADMINISTRATION

**This section aims at improving the field of tax administration through establishing code of professional ethics in tax administration. It aims at introducing an online regime process, which means that at least 90 percent of all taxpayers’ reports should be processed online. To raise public awareness and improve customer care, customer service and information centers will be established to provide assistance to taxpayers.**

A number of executive and legislative interventions were adopted by the Armenian government to addresses the issue of the ethics and behavior of the tax service employees—namely, a Law about Tax service and the code of professional ethics approved by the Government of the RA in 2002. In 2013 the chairman of the State Revenue Committee (SRC) approved the ethics and behavior guidelines of the employees of the tax inspectorate. The SRC chairman also established a committee of internal investigations. At the time of writing, the internal investigation procedures of this committee were in the drafting stage.The SRC started establishing service centers in 2011, 14 service centers had been established in Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Yeghenadzor, and Sevan at the time of writing. The SRC does not have a system to 48 record the number of users of its services. However, information about applications received at service centers is available at the SRC website. According to available information, the number of explanations given by the Vanadzor service center to taxpayers in April and May 2013 compared with the same months in 2012 increased by more than 15 percent. The number of taxpayers who submitted online reports has also increased gradually. According to information from SRC, the share of taxpayers submitting reports online in the third quarter of 2013 was 81.3 percent compared with 45.2 percent in the firth quarter and 70.8 percent in the second quarter.

At the same time, since the start of the year the SRC has prepared and published a number of guides for taxpayers that are also available in electronic form on the SRC official website. Including the following:

* The guide “What is necessary to know about the Income Tax”;
* The guide “What is necessary to know about the Turnover Tax”;
* User’s guide for the module providing the employees’ registration (submission of an application for registration) for income tax and mandatory pension payments personalized registration system;
* “Guide for Cash-Register Users”;
* “Guide for getting registered in the system “Law-Abiding Taxpayer”;
* The manual “IT BOOK”.

With the purpose of acquainting the economic entities with the legislative amendments and making them more apprehensible, since the beginning of the year a detailed reporting has been organized by means of TV programs “Capital” and “Urgent Reporting” of accordingly “Yerkir Media” and “Հ2”TV companies. This has given an opportunity to the businessmen to get thoroughly acquainted with the inserted legislative amendments, the main directions of RA AG SRC administration.

2.3. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

**This sections aims at cooperation between law-enforcement bodies and civil society fighting corruption and institutional bribery.**

The Council on the Fight against Corruption is chaired by the Prime Minister. According to publicly available information, the last council meeting was held in December 2012 when the execution report of the 2009–12 strategy was discussed. In the fight against corruption, Armenia is in a transition period. The time period of the previous strategy has lapsed and the government is considering options for the future. These options include adopting a broad strategy (similar to the previous one) or sector-specific strategies for areas such as the judiciary, health, and education. Adoption of a broad strategy would require more resources.

In January 2012 the Committee of Ethic of high-ranking officials was established. The main mission of the Committee is the increase of trust of the society towards the public institutes operating in the republic and introduction of a fair governance system, as well as making the activities of high-ranking officials more transparent and open for the society.

Within the scope of this assumed commitment RA Government has settled to creation of a professional body (Secretariat), which will assist the Corruption Fight Council and the Monitoring Commission attached to it for effective performance of their functions. The Secretariat will also promote the cooperation between state bodies and non-commercial organizations. The economic cooperation and development organization has suggested three models aimed at implementation of anti-corruption policy – universal (includes both prevention and investigation, is in action in a number of countries, including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania), law-enforcing (this is mostly an investigation model) and preventive models. The issue of model selection is still in the phase of discussions, the confirmation thereof is stipulated at the next session of the Anti-Corruption Council. After selection of one of the models respective steps will be taken in direction of creation of the above-mentioned Secretariat.

At the session of the Anti-Corruption Council in December 2012 the results of 2009-2012 action plan implementation of Armenia anti-corruption strategy were summarized. During the session were represented the level of the action plan implementation, the problems that had arisen during action implementation, as well as the reasons for non-performance of improper performance of this or that action.

Although at present there is a certain cessation of implementation of the comprehensive policy of fighting against corruption, many measures carried out by RA Government are aimed at fighting against corruption or reduction of corruption. The main purpose of a number of programs of electronic governance system is the fight against corruption. In particular, for example, the purpose of creation of public registers initiated by RA Ministry of Justice is to unite the services delivered to the citizens by the state on the principle of “one window” (receiving passports, services delivered by Civil Registry Office, other services delivered by the register, services related to movable property registration etc.). At present the conception has been presented to RA Government and is in the phase of concordance.

According to the self assessment report of the Government of the Republic of Armenia is in a leading position in the volume and implementation of the commitments. It cooperates with the civil society and is aimed at openness and transparency (Self Assessment Report 2013).

However Armenia has a problem of implementation process. The laws and procedures are undertaken in a due time and sufficiently however one should also pay attention on how the reforms are implemented.

According to the Independent Report the OGP working group was a new platform that connected the government representative with the civil society members to work on the Action Plan and the reforms however the cooperation was limited to only three CSOs. Apart from that the Report also mentions different areas in the commitments that still need to be implemented. One of the major problems is the assets and income disclosure that do not go in line with requirements. Another problem indicated is in the area of procurement. For instance the Report notes that the meetings of appeal commission are no recorded which creates doubts about transparency of the commission's activities. Regarding the Budget Planning The Report notes that the present format of the budget does not help in understanding whether the Government of Armenia is achieving its sectoral goals and is delivering on promises formulated in different strategic papers.

Chapter 3

Looking at the existing tools and the reports one can see that in some fields Armenia is ahead in others it has scored a small progress and in other cases it still has to work on. But how often do people and mainly those who are involved in the political or civil life use the tech tools? What do they think about the Open Government Partnership and to which extent the Government of Armenia has become transparent?

For having the opinion of the civil and political elites I have interviewed

* 22 journalists
* 20 civil society representatives
* 5 officials

The interviews answered the following questions:

* Is your organization or are you personally using applications/tech-tools designed for monitoring Governments activity?
* Do you think that during the last two years, OGP has improved the Government transparency or no difference has been encountered?
* Given the objective assumed to increase transparency and facilitate access to public data in an accessible format, do you believe that it is desirable that such tools would be funded totally/partially from public sources? Will such an approach impact on impartiality/credibility of the tools/initiators? Is it preferable to target a subscription approach? Both solutions are desirables?
* What seems to be the most important challenge of these groups/platforms nowadays?

From the results of the interviews we learned that most of the respondents use applications/tech-tools designed for monitoring Governments activity, they also use these platforms for their researches. This response shows that the civil and political elite is active and is interested in what the government does.

To the question whether the Government has become more transparent thanks to the OGP initiative during the last years the answers of the respondents can be divided as follows:

1. **yes -** it was answered by some of the journalists and the civil society representatives and all the officials. Some journalists and civil society representatives explained the answer with the fact that these tools indeed provide information, data that some time ago people could not get or could get it through very long processes.

2. **no** - these response was given by most of the journalists and civil society representatives. And it was explained with the fact these tools are formal and the government knows how to erode or hide something, and it is just rough data. Also, it was mentioned that some websites give very complicated data and expert analysis is needed, an ordinary citizen cannot understand it. Apart from that the government gives reports but no visible results in the country.

3. **it got worse-** two people said that it got worse explaining that the websites started to give less information and it worked better in the beginning.

4**. I don't know** - two people were uncertain in their answers

To the question on impartiality and effectiveness in case it is funded by the public resources and whether both subscription and state funded approaches are desirable the answers were:

Most of the respondents were nor against the tools that are funded by public resources and they answered that it is good that government does such steps, it shows its readiness. Some thought that bias question can rise in both cases: if it is a state funded project then it will illustrate state interests and if it is a foreign funded program then it will be based on foreign interest. Besides, they noted that in case of non state funding the government can still hide the data that they do not want to show, it is more the question of the governmental will rather than of the source of funding. Very few people were in favor of subscriptions. They noted that in case of subscription the government might become more responsible in providing data or do it faster but they were still noting that in Armenia the culture of paying for data is not developed or that public property must be available for free. Most of the respondents noted that the information must be accessible for everyone without any charge as in Armenia not everyone will be able to pay and apart from that people pay taxes so it is the responsibility of the state to provide the information for free, the more open for everyone the more transparent.

The following challenges for the online tools were identified:

* updating the information,
* complying the formats of the files with the "open data" standards,
* implementing these tools effectively;
* government gives only the information that is favorable for itself;
* More objectivity is needed
* People don't trust the government
* People do not know about these tools and how to use it
* Transparency is needed
* Providing precise information in due time
* Political will
* Less formal more civil society-government ties
* Cyber security