

**OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP**  
**SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

**August 2013**

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
PROCESS OF OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP/ARMENIA ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS FULFILLMENT.....	6
<b>Fulfilled Commitments.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Representation of a unified payment system (portal) .....	7
Reforms in the sphere of State Car Inspection- introduction of an electronic system for vehicle registration, provision of driving licenses, penalties and payments.....	7
Review of regulatory normative legal acts (Regulatory Guillotine Project) .....	7
Ensuring transparency of asset and income declarations.....	8
<b>Commitments that are in the stage of fulfillment .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction of the system “Mail-Armenia” .....	9
Introduction of the system “E-statistics” .....	9
Introduction of an electronic system for consular services.....	10
Introduction of e-documentation sharing system in urban communities.....	10
Standardization of official websites content.....	11
<b>Commitments supposing continuous works.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Promoting transparency and objectiveness in tax administration.....	11
Improving the internal audit system for the public sector.....	14
Improvement of Procurement Procedures.....	15

Improving the budget planning and reporting systems through full utilization of program budgeting.....	17
Enhancement of knowledge and skills of public servants on freedom of information.....	19
Fight against corruption.....	19
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>20</b>

## I. INTRODUCTION

“---- Any Government program can be a success, if it is previously represented to the public as a subject of consideration and criticism ---

- 1) Any action of authorities not only should be controlled by the society, but also doubted----
- 2) There should be transparency on all levels, as well as public involvement in the process of decision-making---
- 3) While resolving these two major existential problems, at the same time, we are obliged to ensure responsibility and professionalism---“.

*RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan represented the above-mentioned three existential theses, aimed at formation of civil society and ensuring open government.*

The Republic of Armenia joined Open Government Partnership” (OGP) initiative in September 2011. Joining the initiative Republic of Armenia once more expressed their willingness to ensure more transparency and accountability in the sphere of public governance and delivery of public services. Strengthening the efficient and accountable governance system is one of state priorities and is in the center of permanent attention of the Republic of Armenia Government: OGP is another chance to make the governments opener and more responsible, to have such institutes that will promote the citizens’ active participation in decision-making and policy development processes.

Within the scope of OGP initiative the Armenian commitment on creation of open governance complies with their former and current efforts to develop a more effective, transparent and accountable governance system. During the last few years Armenian authorities have implemented a number of measures aimed at this. In particular, the main directions of state anti-corruption policy that include asset and income declaration by high-ranking officials, mandatory fulfillment of legal norms regulating public procurements, fight against shadow economy and economy criminalization, business licensing procedures, state registration of businesses, etc., were outlined in 2000. The accomplished reforms yielded significant results in several spheres.

Moreover, Armenia is one of the five states in the world that has made the state budget expenses absolutely transparent. Since 2010 the on-line system “Interactive Budget” ([www.e-gov.am/intractive-budget](http://www.e-gov.am/intractive-budget)) operates. The system gives an opportunity to get online information from any part of the world at any moment about the purpose, direction and way the state budget money is spent.

With the purpose of civil society consolidation, the Public Council of Armenia was established in July 2008, uniting the civil society on a voluntary basis. The aim of the Council is to confer consultations and hearings on problems, laws and decisions having public response, carry out expertizes of RA laws and other normative acts, involving the citizens, public unions and mass media representatives.

Armenia’s involvement in OGP initiative is remarkable, especially by civil society’s active participation. Over the last decade, perhaps, the civil society in Armenia did not have involvement of such volume in major programs, as Armenia witnessed during the preparatory works of draft OGP/Armenia Action Plan.

With the purpose of developing OGP/Armenia Action Plan in January 2012 a working group was created by RA Prime Minister’s decision (Decision of RA Prime-Minister N 50-A, dated 27/01/2012). It should be noted that both the representatives of state departments and civil society have been equally involved in the working group during the Action Plan development process.

The main provisions of the Action Plan are mostly aimed at enhancement of the public governance system efficiency, transparency and accountability. During the high-level annual convention of Open Government Partnership Initiative, that took place in Brazil on 17-18 April 2012, OGP Armenian Action Plan was officially represented to the international community.

The works arising from OGP/Armenia Action Plan are at present coordinated by the respective working group (established by RA Prime Minister’s decision N 931-U, dated 29/09/2012), headed by deputy head of RA Government staff. Besides state departments, civil society organizations are also included in the working group, in particular, Freedom of Information Center NGO, Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center, Gyumri

Journalists' Club Asparez. During the working group sessions, the group members submit reports on the process of fulfillment of points of OGP/Armenia Action Plan relating to them, proposals and observations for the purpose of promoting the further process of fulfillment of the undertaken commitments, preparation for next OGP sessions, etc. The working group also grants a good opportunity to disclose the problems related to participation and involvement of the civil society in state governance processes, to consider and try to find respective solutions for overcoming thereof, as well as to activate the further cooperation with civil society. It is also a quite effective instrument to consider the priorities and purposes of the policy carried out by interested non-governmental organizations involved in the group within the scope of OGP initiative, as well as to develop the opportunities, that could turn the procedure of OGP commitments' fulfillment into an effective platform to stimulate these purposes.

## **II. PROCESS OF OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP/ARMENIA ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS FULFILLMENT**

With in the scope of OGP initiative the Republic of Armenia has undertaken a number of commitments under their Action Plan, the main provisions of which are mostly aimed at the enhancement of efficiency, transparency and accountability of public governance system in Armenia, in particular, to the increase of efficiency of public resources governance, electronic governance development, refinement of internal audit system, refinement of public procurements' procedure and ensuring transparency thereof, enhancement of public services' quality, development of information freedom, increase of tax administration transparency, fight against corruption, etc.

Commitments under OGP/Armenia Action Plan can be divided into the following groups:

1. Commitments that have already been fulfilled and today are successfully applied;
2. Commitments being in the stage of fulfillment, and the accomplishment of which is anticipated till the end of the year;
3. Commitments that suppose continuous works aimed at enhancement and refinement of specific spheres.

## **1. Fulfilled Commitments**

- **Representation of the unified payment system (portal)**

E-payments system operates for nearly one year. The system makes it possible to make electronic payments for all services delivered by all state bodies. Up to the present about 4,000 persons used this system.

The official website of state payments' electronic system is [www.e-payments.am](http://www.e-payments.am).

The state electronic payment system has been introduced and launched by RA Government decision (of RA Government N 496-Ն, dated April 19, 2012).

Commitment has been fulfilled and accomplished.

- **Reforms in the sphere of State Car Inspection –introduction of an electronic system for vehicle registration, provision of driving licenses, penalties and payments**

One unified center has been established where all functions and services delivered by the State Auto Inspection are centralized. 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.

Commitment has been fulfilled and accomplished.

- **Review of regulatory normative legal acts (Regulatory Guillotine Project)**

The program is aimed at curtailing of excessive regulations, enhancement of business environment and involvement of possible investments.

Since May 2012 the state institution National Center for Legislative Regulation Project Implementation Unit has been launched (RA Government N 1462-Ն, dated October 13, 2011). This institution has been commissioned by the Reform Council to investigate the spheres of public services, transport and healthcare and to draft respective legal acts. 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.

The commitment has been carried out and accomplished.

- **Ensuring transparency of asset and income declarations**

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.

The publications in the press relating the declarations (more than 35 separate articles), were, alas, of informative character, lacking professional approach. More than 20 applications were also presented to the Committee in relation to the action carried out by high-ranking officials. In regard to two of them, proceedings have been instituted, which are in process, and the others were given relevant answers.

As a result of analysis of the declarations 25 incompliances have been disclosed, the main reasons of which were the filling of declaration not in compliance with the requirements or lack of knowledge of declaration filling rules.

At present within the scope of corresponding program with the World Bank works aimed at making the whole system of declaration electronic are carried out. The goal of the program is to ensure the credibility of the declared data, as well as to facilitate the process of placing the declarations on the website.

The commitment has been fulfilled and accomplished.

## **2. Commitment that are in the stage of fulfillment**

### **• Introduction of the system “Mail-Armenia”**

The Republic of Armenia 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 RA NA (National Assembly). According to the indicated draft 2<sup>nd</sup> Article, in cases defined by the law or other normative legal acts, when individual notification is provisioned, a person is considered properly notified also in the case when the notification has been sent on his/her official electronic mail address and there is an electronic confirmation of its being read. If the person or body who has sent the corresponding notification does not receive the electronic notification on reading within a week, but there is an electronic verification on receiving it, the notification is once more sent on the official electronic mail address, at the same time publishing the same notification on the Republic of Armenia public notifications’ official website. On the seventh day after sending the notification on the official electronic mail address once more the person is considered properly notified.

The commitment is provisioned to be fulfilled and accomplished till the end of this year.

### **• Introduction of the system “E-statistics”**

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, the present possible repetitions are revealed, steps are as well taken aimed at exclusion of such repetitions. Start of program drafting works will follow the inventory stage.

The end of the program is provisioned till the end of the year.

- **Introduction of an electronic system for consular services**

Since October 2012 the system “Electronic Consulate” was introduced in RA MFA system. 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. By means of the system the prolonging of the general and foreign country validity date of RA citizen’s passport, granting of RA return certificate is carried out. This procedure has essentially reduced the time of service delivery. In the near future it is intended to enlarge the list of consular services delivered by means of this system.

For the present moment the system is installed in 24 of 45 consular points.

On the basis of the above-mentioned system the component of consular registration will be added. It supposes institutional changes: up to the present RA citizens who stayed abroad for more than six months were obliged to consult the diplomatic bodies about it. Now there is another approach: the mandatory requirement turns into a voluntary principle, and it will be possible to carry out the process of registration by means of electronic website. In connection with the question the package of legislative changes has been sent to RA Government, after which, by decision of RA Government, the stage of development of respective procedures will be started (it is envisaged to make changes in RA law “On Population State Registration”, RA law “On Administrative Offenses”, which stipulated a fine for not informing the diplomatic bodies on being abroad for more than six months, as well as in RA Customs’ Code. According to the changes the registration henceforth has zero rate).

- **Introduction of e-documentation sharing system in urban communities**

In RA 45 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.

The works are still in progress in Akhtala, Shamlugh and Dastakert town municipalities.

The end of fulfillment of the commitment is stipulated till the end of the year.

- **Standardization of official websites content**

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 organizations developed 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.

### **3. Commitments supposing continuous works**

- **Promoting transparency and objectiveness in tax administration**

During the second quarter of 2013 the quantity of those presenting reports in electronic form comprised 43,4 thousand economic entities, comprising the 46.0 percent of those presenting reports. The specific weight of the electronic reports submitted by the

latters during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter within the number of all the tax reports have comprised 71.4 percent (in comparison with 46.6% of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter). Within the same time period the tax revenues of the entities submitting reports in electronic form have comprised 142.8 billion drams, or 95,6 percent of the total amount of tax revenues (in comparison with the 94.2% of the previous quarter).

The quantity of those giving out tax accounts in electronic form during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter has comprised 5.4 thousand economic entities, which comprise 87,4% of the total quantity of those giving out tax accounts.

The SRC (State Revenue Committee) continues taking measures aimed at enlargement of the types of their electronic services and application thereof.

During the year the three-level notification system of taxpayers has been refined. Schemes of informing the taxpayers in electronic way have been installed.

In RA AG SRC at present operate 14 offices of taxpayer service (including 9 in Yerevan and 5 in Marzes/regions). With the purpose of launching offices of taxpayer service in all marzes SRC takes measures aimed at procurement of financing for launching of the offices.

With the aim of making the taxpayers' services more available for the economic entities, on July 18, 2013 the SRC concluded a cooperation contract with the Armenian National Postal Operator "Haypost" CJSC aiming at launching the program of taxpayer points establishment in its postal departments. It is anticipated that the service points will provide the applicants with more required services, which is of particular importance for the economic entities of such localities and territories where there are no taxpayer service centers.

For mass awareness of taxpayers, since 2013 the SRC has launched the "Tax into"- a series of TV programs on the channel "Armnews", aimed at representing the society tax and customs legislative and administrative news and urgent information. This TV project of 15 minutes on average is broadcasted with weekly periodicity and two recurrences.

The SRC journals "Customs' House" and "Taxpayer" are issued with periodicity of three months, where not only are represented the works carried out by the department, but

also the taxpayers themselves make references to the innovations initiated by RA AG SRC, simplification of tax and customs procedures.

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 “ՀՀ”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.

Throughout the entire territory of the republic, with participation of non-profit organizations awareness meetings have been organized for taxpayers on the subject “Tax Legislation and Administration News”, at which, according to average appraisals, more than 10 000 taxpayers have participated. Awareness meetings have also been organized for the members of a number of state bodies, specialized non-governmental organizations, including RA Ministry of Culture, RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia, Union of Banks of Armenia, etc.

In 2013 the quantity of applications serviced by SRC telephone calls’ service center continues to increase. During the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2013 82001 applications have been received

and fulfilled, among which 81390 by telephone communication, 611 in electronic way. The absolute majority of the applications were questions about tax, customs legislation and administration. The 132 frequently asked questions received in the telephone call center and the taxpayers' service centers and the answers to them have been summarized and placed on the official website of the tax body.

Works aimed at the refinement of appealing mechanisms have been continued SRC. During the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2013 the Tax and Customs Interdepartmental Appellate Committee examined 90 claims, 39 of which were satisfied, 10 satisfied partially, 29 waived, 9 quashed and 3 suspended.

▪ **Improving internal audit system for the public sector**

With the purpose of stimulating transparency in the matter of public resource management it is of vital importance to strengthen the internal audit system, which is one of the main components of the State Internal Fiscal Control System (SIFC). On November 11, 2011 RA Government adopted the SIFC strategy, which defines the preconditions and actions necessary for introduction of a unified and up-to-date state internal fiscal control system. Then, 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, 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”.

▪ **Improvement of procurement procedures**

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.armeys.am](http://www.armeys.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.

▪ **Improving the budget planning and reporting systems through full utilization of program budgeting**

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) year-after-year expanding with the purpose of gradual introduction of budgeting components arising from program

budgeting requirements in experimental order and year-after-year expansion of the scope of the state governance bodies included in this experimental program. 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. Accordingly, RA state budget drafts, parallel to the traditional format, have developed also in the format complying with the requirements of program budgeting and are included in the budget documents of respective years.

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.

- **Enhancement of knowledge and skills of public servants on freedom of information**

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. At present (in May) retraining of civil servants is stipulated.

- **Fight against corruption**

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.

### III. CONCLUSION

Thus, summarizing the process of performance of commitments undertaken by OGP/Armenia Action Plan, we can confidently state that Armenia occupies sufficiently leading position both in regard to the volume of commitments and he implementation process thereof. The assistance and efforts of all partners included within the scope of Armenia commitments' performance in this process is highly estimated.

**Main challenges:** Within the general context of performance of the commitments undertaken by OGP/Armenia Action Plan, perhaps the most substantial challenge is corruption fighting. According to the data of World Bank in the list of obstacles for Armenian economy development corruption occupies the first place. For this reason fighting corruption is one of the most important priorities of RA Government. Armenia has finished the 2009-2012 Action Plan of anti-corruption strategy, and now RA Government actively takes steps for development and adoption of a new anti-corruption strategy.

Today people throughout the world demand from the governments to be open, accountable and effective, expecting more active civil participation in state governance processes. In this context it should be noted that the steps taken by Armenia government

serve the above-mentioned demands and imperatives of contemporary world. Nevertheless, within the scope of OGP/Armenia Action Plan implementation the circumstance could be noticed that the offer and readiness to be more transparent and accountable by Armenian government is larger than its demand by the civil society. In this sense it would be more effective if the civil society representatives displayed more active participation in OGP/Armenia processes using the opportunities provided by OGP ideology as fully as possible.

### **Innovative component of OGP/Armenia Action Plan**

In the context of commitments under OGP/Armenia Action Plan, the most innovative component is perhaps electronic governance and the achievements in this system. The system gave an opportunity to change our notion of state governance standard perceptions. Electronic governance greatly fosters the increase of transparency, efficiency and accountability level of public governance processes and activities of state governance bodies. It brings the state-citizen contact to a minimum, which in its turn results in reduction of corruption risks.

At present electronic governance systems have been introduced in different spheres of state governance, such as interactive budget, electronic system of state procurements, state payments' electronic system, tax reports' electronic system, electronic permissions and licenses, "Mulberry" electronic documentation sharing system, electronic registration of business, real estate cadaster electronic system, electronic system for consular service delivery, results of control carried out by RA Control Chamber, system of electronic application submission for intellectual property, CESJA (Compulsory Enforcement Service of Judicial Acts) electronic auction system, etc.

On June 14, 2013 the first OGP/Armenia international assembly took place, in which experts both from Armenia and foreign countries – the USA, Estonia, Bulgaria, Georgia, representatives both from the Government and civil society participated. Within the scope of OGP initiative the Assembly was Armenia's first attempt to unite the representatives of the government and the civil society and to serve as an effective platform for interchange of ideas and experience, as well as for finding of further ways of cooperation.

The Armenian Government is fully conscious that having an open and responsible government, as well as ensuring the citizens' active participation in the processes of decision making and policy development, is not an easy process, as it requires political will, consistent efforts, collaboration between the government and civil society, as well as technological knowledge, skills and sufficient conditions. Although Armenia has recorded significant progress in OGP/Armenia Action Plan implementation, it should be noted that there is still much to do to make the government more transparent and participative, as it is impossible to achieve the government's long-range goals through a one-year program. This is why RA Government has already initiated the process of OGP/Armenia new Action Plan development. RA Prime Minister has committed the respective department to submit their suggestions on inclusion in the new OGP/Armenia Action Plan. We are hopeful that the new OGP/Armenia Action Plan will be adopted till the end of this year. In this sense it should be emphasized that the Armenian Government is unbending in displaying their political will and will consistently continue the fulfillment of the commitments undertaken by them and those that they will undertake in the future within the scope of OGP.