Open Government Partnership

Strategic Refresh of the
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Summary

The OGP Steering Committee, at its May 2016 Cape Town meeting, decided to undertake a refresh of OGP's 2015–2018 strategy. This document identifies what parts of the existing strategy need to be deepened over the remaining two years, and charts a longer term vision to achieve greater impact over the next five years. The principal drivers for the strategic refresh are the need to adapt and learn from the first two years of the current strategy, and to position OGP as a powerful countervailing force for openness in a geopolitical context marked by increasing citizen distrust in government, elite capture, marginalization, and shrinking civic space in many countries. OGP intends to be the home of reformers around the world who want to reshape and strengthen citizen-state relations, and to implement transformative open government reforms that tackle the toughest challenges facing society to make a profound and positive impact on citizens' lives.

OGP has a simple but powerful goal: that governments should truly serve and empower their citizens. The current four-year strategy states, *"OGP's vision is that more governments become more transparent, more accountable, and more responsive to their own citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive."* Consequently, over the next five years, OGP's success will be measured not only by the increase in the number of countries or commitments but by the extent to which ordinary citizens benefit from governments becoming more transparent, participatory, responsive and accountable. This requires a greater focus on supporting government and civil society reformers' efforts in OGP countries to build a national and global movement for open government, and ultimately demand reforms on issues they prioritize.

In OGP's first five years, evidence shows that the national OGP process has helped countries establish institutional mechanisms that give continuity and legitimacy to open government reforms, made dialogue and co-creation regular features of the interactions between OGP reformers, and initiated reforms that change the status quo and benefit citizens. However, OGP has the potential for much greater impact. Co-creation processes need to have meaningful outcomes, the ambition of National Action Plans (NAPs) should be increased, and OGP as a whole must become smarter at navigating the politics of the most complex reforms.

The strategic refresh has been a process of learning from OGP's successes and challenges to date, and has identified the following priorities to support OGP countries to undertake more transformative open government commitments, ensure credible implementation, and improve the lives of citizens.

- **Deepen citizen-centered governance**: OGP seeks to ensure genuine and inclusive co-creation in the organization, enabling citizens and civil society, including marginalized groups, to advocate for commitments that reflect the most pressing issues impacting citizens' lives. For examples, issues could include , such as anti-corruption efforts, health, education, and infrastructure. Through OGP, citizen participation should become institutionalized in decision-making, by, for instance, amplifying the voice of citizens in shaping policy; leveraging digital platforms to crowdsource citizen feedback on government performance; and incentivizing governments to respond. It is essential that governments and civil society provide leadership to protect and enhance the necessary civic space for transformative reforms to succeed in OGP countries.

- **Broaden collective ownership domestically:** A key priority is to broaden collective ownership and coordination of national OGP processes across cabinet and line ministries to reach broader groups of civil society. OGP also seeks to welcome and to integrate new actors, such as local governments, legislatures, private sector, the media, and youth. An overarching imperative for the next phase of OGP is to use open government approaches to advance the most critical governance and societal priorities at the country level (e.g., anti-corruption, responsive delivery of basic services, improved investment climate), which will galvanize collective ownership and reinforce the commitment of reformers in government, civil society and other stakeholders.

- **Strengthen capacity, coordination and coalitions for implementation**: OGP is committed to addressing implementation gaps that may cause potentially transformative OGP commitments to fail to come to fruition. This requires improving national coordination efforts and providing dedicated technical and financial support to government officials facing implementation constraints, including support for civil society to participate in the OGP process and monitor implementation of reforms. It also requires forging multi-stakeholder coalitions to overcome political challenges and other obstacles that prevent potentially transformative reforms from being implemented.

- **Raise collective ambition globally**: OGP intends to foster collective action across OGP countries to scale up transformative reforms in thematic areas, notably regarding issues that governments have been increasingly keen to learn from each other about. Such topics include beneficial ownership, political corruption, open data, open contracts, citizen engagement in budgets, and service delivery. OGP will serve as a vehicle to use open government approaches to advance implementation of related global initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals, anti-corruption efforts and the fight against climate change.

- **Review OGP's rules of engagement and performance incentives**: Reformers in OGP countries require appropriate support, and the rules and guidelines governing OGP should reflect that need. OGP's incentive structure should encourage innovation and risk-taking, while discouraging inactivity and lack of ambition. OGP's rules and guidelines (e.g. the action plan cycle, starred commitments, open government awards, eligibility criteria, IRM reports, response policy and co-creation guidelines) will be reviewed in 2017 with this lens in mind.

- **Strengthen OGP's branding and communications**: OGP's communications strategy should support the sharing of best practices, give credit when transformational reforms are implemented, and galvanize a movement of OGP reformers internationally, nationally and locally. Over the next five years, OGP should move to position itself as the main global actor, convener and thought leader for open government reforms.

These strategic directions will demand action from OGP's central actors: (I) participating governments and civil society; (II) OGP's Steering Committee; (III) strategic partners, such as multilaterals, bilaterals, working groups, civil society coalitions and networks; (IV) the OGP Support Unit; and (V) the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). There is an overarching imperative for the OGP Steering Committee and the partnership more broadly to play a stronger global leadership and political advocacy role. OGP actors must be proactive in advancing open government as a paradigm for effective governance in the current geopolitical context in order to raise collective ambition for implementing transformative open government reforms.

The strategic refresh will be followed by an implementation plan in 2017, which will outline concrete actions

associated with each of the above priorities. This will be accompanied by a financing plan to ensure the goals laid out in this document can be realized.

1. Rationale for a Strategic Refresh

OGP was founded on the strong belief that open governments perform better for the citizens they serve. Open government harnesses collective wisdom, builds trust in government, encourages public action and is essential for a strong democracy. It helps build stronger societies and safer communities, and contributes to citizen well-being and prosperity. These shared values and firm belief in open government drives the participation of many governments and civil society in OGP, and has resulted in the rapid growth of the partnership in its first five years.

During this time, however, many countries have experienced competing global trends of shrinking or restricted civic space,[1] increases in nationalist populism,[2] and a growing sense of citizen marginalization, elite capture, and lack of trust in government.[3]. Uneven economic growth has led to fiscal constraints, and many governments struggle to provide services to the poorest people.[4] In the U.N. My World survey, which polled nearly 10 million citizens on what matters to them, the fourth most popular response was an honest and accountable government, after education, healthcare, and jobs. The World Bank's latest country surveys, which polled around 9,000 opinion leaders in 40 client countries, indicates that public sector governance has risen to the top of countries' policy priorities.[5]

In the context of these global challenges, OGP must serve as a potent antidote and countervailing force. Open government is shifting from being the preserve of freedom of information campaigners and tech leaders to becoming a defining set of values for governments committed to engagement, ideas and reform. OGP, with its emphasis on transparent, accountable and responsive government, is uniquely well-placed to

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[1] Carothers, Thomas. 2016. "Closing Space and Fragility". Fragility Study Group Policy Brief. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Accessed Nov 20, 2016, http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/10/04/closing-space-and-fragility-pub-64774

[2] "League of Nationalists". *The Economist*. Nov 19, 2016. Accessed: Nov 20, 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/international/21710276-all-around-world-nationalists-are-gaining-ground-why-league-nationalists

[3] Hudak, John. "A reality check on 2016's economically marginalized". Nov 16, 2016. *Brookings Institution*. Accessed on Nov 20, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2016/11/16/economic-marginalization-reality-check/

[4] France and the World Resources Institute Co-Chair Declaration, OGP Fifth Anniversary Event, New York, Sep 22, 2016. Available at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/UNGA_CoChairDec_Eng.pdf

[5] Wetzel, Deborah. "The Governance Gap: Can we bridge it?" Oct 5, 2016. *The World Bank.* Accessed on Nov 1, 2016 http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/governance-gap-can-we-bridge-it

be the home of reformers around the world who want to reshape and strengthen citizen-state relations. With the principle of co-creation built into its design, OGP offers a platform that allows fairness; equity; opportunities for citizens in policymaking, including those from marginalized groups; and an ongoing voice in political processes beyond that of voting in elections. In the present geopolitical context, OGP countries demonstrate a model of governance marked by deeper citizen engagement and responsive government willing to undertake reforms that tackle elite capture and overcome citizen distrust. Through a combination of role modeling, advocacy and thought-leadership, OGP reformers shape global norms on the vital role of civil society in effective governance and protecting civic space.

To realize OGP's full potential as a platform for change, global and country-level action need to be working together in tandem. This means OGP co-creation processes must be genuine, and National Action Plans (NAPs) must include transformative open government reforms that will tackle the biggest challenges facing societies. For example, governments can restore confidence and build legitimacy by opening budgets and contracts, and inviting public participation to ensure that constrained resources are spent effectively and reach the intended beneficiaries. OGP NAPs can ensure that public policymaking and service delivery respond to core concerns of citizens, especially the poorest and most marginalized among them.

In charting this way forward, reformers in OGP must be aware that open government reforms are not a panacea for all ills. The process of opening government is fraught with challenges and is rarely predictable. But a genuine desire to listen, engage, and solve problems collaboratively will enable reformers inside and outside of government to have the greatest impact. Collectively, OGP countries have the potential to lead a powerful global movement for transparent, participatory, responsive, and accountable government. They will demonstrate that success in OGP is not only defined by the numbers of commitments undertaken or countries involved, but by their demonstrated ability to make a measurable difference in the lives of citizens.

2. Evidence Review - Lessons from the First Five Years

In order for OGP to refresh its strategy and realize its long-term vision, it is important to reflect on, learn from, and adapt in response to its successes and failures in the first five years. This is a critical first step in the process of the strategic refresh, and underpins the rationale behind every future undertaking. OGP initiated a series of steps to begin this process. In June this year, OGP commissioned an independent mid-

term review (MTR)[6] to evaluate its performance during the first two years of its four-year strategy. Simultaneously, the Steering Committee and the OGP Support Unit held one-to-one and group consultations seeking feedback on OGP's record to date and collecting ideas for the future. These consultations included:

- Steering Committee meetings on the strategic refresh in Cape Town (May 2016), Paris (July 2016) and New York (September 2016)
- Conversations within each of the OGP Steering Committee subcommittees
- Sanjay Pradhan, the CEO of OGP, held one-to-one discussions with every Steering Committee member or representative
- Consultations with government points of contact (PoC)
- Consultations with over 500 civil society leaders in regional and global forums as part of the OGP Strategy Dialogues[7]

In addition, IRM reports, research studies, and in-depth interviews with the open government community, have together created a solid body of evidence for an evaluation of OGP's record in the first five years. The following observations are based on all of those inputs.

2.1 What is Working

The 2015–2018 OGP strategy was an important step in consolidating OGP's work. Guided by OGP's Theory of Change, it was critical to ensure that the basics of OGP participation were clearly communicated to OGP's three key stakeholders, and to build up the OGP Support Unit and IRM to facilitate this role. OGP's record shows that this support had encouraging results:

- **Strengthening global norms and national efforts on open government:** OGP has strengthened the international effort and normative framework for openness in government. One indicator of OGP's influence lies in the reforms that governments initiated to become eligible for joining the partnership. For example, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire have all passed substantial legislation in an effort to qualify for OGP membership. At the domestic level, open government as a

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[6] See Call for Proposals for OGP's mid-term review: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/9371
[7] See OGP Strategy Dialogues: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/alejandro-gonzalez-arreola/2016/08/24/ogp-strategy-dialogues-invitation-co-create-priorities

concept and priority has taken root in several countries. Through the OGP process, countries are carving out basic institutional features, rules and mechanisms that legitimize and establish the foundation for open government reforms to take place. Evidence from IRM reports and external research is conclusive. In those countries where OGP is hosted in agencies with a clear mandate and resources, and is deliberated through permanent dialogue mechanisms, dialogue with civil society is improving and NAPs are of better quality.

- **Securing high-level political commitment**: OGP has been highly successful in securing public commitments from heads of state and other high-level political officials, spurred in part by international peer pressure and the alignment of OGP commitments with preexisting reform proposals or movements. High-level political commitment to open government raises the priority of those reforms and provides valuable "cover" for political leaders and administrators to pursue a reform that may be unpopular with other colleagues or considered risky. High-level commitment also often provides impetus for domestic open government reforms, even if it is not sufficient in and of itself to bring about those reforms. This confirms the importance of investing in this arm of OGP's theory of change. OGP must maintain incentives for high level political support, while making sure that reformers have the broad-based support of government to address obstacles to implementation.

- **Fostering civil society-government dialogue:** What began as a bold and challenging idea to governments—co-creating policy reforms with civil society based on equality and mutual respect—±is now a much more established concept, especially in OGP countries that have gone through several NAP cycles. National OGP platforms have helped to build relationships between government and civil society stakeholders, which has led to better understanding and more constructive dialogue. This cultural shift, at least within the OGP process, has been one of the great successes of the OGP model. The MTR survey showed that a majority of reform-minded officials and civil society groups had become somewhat or significantly more influential as a result of OGP's presence in the country and the NAP process. Nearly half of survey respondents said that consultations between government and civil society on the quality and openness of government had become both more frequent and more productive as a result of OGP.

- **IRM as a learning and accountability mechanism:** IRM reports are widely considered credible and fact-based, where participating countries are judged by rigorous standards common to all. In the MTR survey, 70% of respondents felt that IRM reviews helped make the current NAP better and directly influenced the next NAP. In this regard, the IRM's learning function has been successful. However, IRM's larger impact as an accountability mechanism depends on countries' sensitivity to peer pressure, and is strengthened by external factors such as the reaction of the donor community.

- **Key OGP reforms:** MTR findings show that cooperation and expectations of transparency have strengthened, and that greater citizen involvement and knowledge have at times changed government policy and administration. However, these changes are influenced by a wider range of factors than OGP activities alone. OGP's four-year strategy and a recent publication on Star Reforms in OGP[8] highlight these reforms. A few more are illustrated below:

  Kenya: Through collaboration between government and civil society, Kenya committed to enhancing the right to information by strengthening record management and the access to information law. President Kenyatta signed the Access to Information Bill into law in 2016.

  United Kingdom (UK): The UK convened an Anti-corruption Summit in 2016, and as a result, several OGP countries are taking actions on beneficial ownership transparency, including the UK, South Africa, France, Norway, Kenya, and Slovakia.

  Ukraine: A law on Access to Archives opened up Soviet-era archives, which had been closed for decades. Ukrainians can now examine records on the Soviet state's political persecutions and human rights violations of relatives and friends.

  Georgia: Georgia's Supreme Court is publishing phone tapping records proactively to shed more light on government surveillance activities. This helps ensure that law enforcement agencies are subject to public oversight.

  Philippines: The government used the OGP NAP to publicly commit to reforms to reduce bureaucratic red tape in the cost of doing business. The reform program resulted in the Philippines significantly improving its ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business Report, from 138 out of 189 countries in 2013 to 108 in 2014 and 95 in 2015. Investment in the Philippines increased by 10% over a similar period, thanks to an improved business climate.

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[8] "Star Reforms in the Open Government Partnership". May 2016. Available
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Star%20Commitments_0.pdf

Paraguay: Paraguay adopted an ambitious program of developing more than 50 Municipal Development Councils across the country. The councils will provide citizens with an unparalleled opportunity to participate in local government decision-making. The government has already established 17 Municipal Development Councils, with 40 more underway.

Ireland: In 2015, Ireland committed to implement legislation to regulate lobbying. The government developed a public register, which all lobbyists are required to join, allowing citizens the ability to monitor who attempts to influence whom in government. The Regulation of Lobbying Act was signed into law in 2015.

2.2 What Needs Improvement

At the same time, the evidence suggests that despite progress in the above areas, the Partnership is facing significant challenges.

- **Inadequate ambition**: High-level, public political commitment has not necessarily translated to ambitious reforms at the country level. While rates of implementation are on the rise, the ambition and potential impact of commitments have not improved. According to the latest IRM data, which analyzes progress on 2014–2016 NAPs ,only 17% of commitments are potentially transformative. Only 5% of commitments are starred, meaning they are transformative, relevant, specific and completed.
- **Going beyond transparency reforms:** An often-predicted shift from foundational transparency reforms to the hard work of civic engagement, with government responsiveness to tackle the root of citizen distrust and elite capture, has not taken place at scale. In addition, too few commitments directly affect people's lives. Raw IRM data show that as the 2015–2018 OGP strategy rolled out, the breadth of issues covered increased slightly. Still, too few commitments address the day-to-day needs of citizens in key sectors of government, including service delivery. For example, the last published IRM data shows that health and education each comprise only 2.8% of commitments.
- **Scaling up learning to encourage ambition:** Establishing the rules, mechanisms and institutions to facilitate open government are not enough to produce ambitious reforms. While a focus on helping OGP countries comply with OGP processes is necessary, the processes themselves can have trade-offs with other valuable activities such as peer exchange. As a result, support to OGP reformers on

OGP processes needs to be complemented by a renewed focus on implementing ambitious reforms on the ground.

- **Working politically:** OGP countries' performance depends to a great extent on the incentives, resources and interests facing domestic political actors. Country level reformers need support to navigate the complex politics surrounding major reforms, and the OGP Support Unit needs to be sensitive to discrete political climates and their impact on OGP commitments.

In order to tackle these issues, OGP will need to revisit its original Theory of Change, which focused more on serving individual "agents" (e.g. government Points of Contact [PoCs], civil society), so that it emphasizes fostering collective action by coalitions of reformers at both the national and international level. OGP also needs to bolster its institutional capacity to engage more deeply at the country level to support local actors.

3. Strategic Refresh: Key Directions Forward

The evidence review as well as the in-depth community consultations held to date have enabled OGP to identify the following six strategic directions. Taken together, these strategic directions call for more ambitious use of the OGP platform that has been built in the first five years, so that OGP is increasingly used by coalitions of reformers to implement transformative reforms.

3.1 Strategic Priority #1 : Deepen Citizen-Centered Governance

The open government movement will need to transform itself from a transparency movement to a force for deeper civic engagement, participation and inclusion. Governments must be more responsive in order to tackle the growing problems of citizen distrust and elite capture. This needs to be addressed through several approaches, including ensuring genuine and inclusive co-creation processes; protecting civic space; and institutionalizing civic participation and feedback in policymaking and service delivery, in sectors that matter most to citizens.

- ***Ensure genuine and inclusive co-creation processes***: The partnership between governments and civil society to chart and advance meaningful reform together is at the heart of OGP's Theory of Change. Civil society places a spotlight on key policy issues, brings expertise and plays a watchdog

role—in the process often amplifying the concerns of ordinary citizens. While a culture of co-creating OGP is starting to take root across a majority of OGP countries, it remains weak and *pro-forma* in others. OGP countries need to raise the bar on the co-creation processes to make them inclusive and genuine. This will require broadening the base of actors and issues from within civil society (including democratizing direct citizen participation through digital tools), as well as providing technical and financial support to civil society, to counter fatigue and enable genuine participation and co-creation. Over the next five years, OGP should play a global leadership role in positioning open government as part of the solution to the growing lack of trust in government, sense of citizen exclusion, and rise of extremism and resentment in many parts of the world. OGP's platform and co-creation processes, which at their heart elevate civic voices in government, illustrate how to address public disillusionment and discontent. At the national level, the co-creation process can go farther to include marginalized groups and those at risk.

- **Protect and enhance civic space:** A critical precondition for the transformative effects of open government is healthy civic space, which is shrinking or under attack in many parts of the world, including in several OGP countries.[9] Together, OGP participating governments, civil society and partners need to protect and enhance civic space. Through a combination of thought leadership and action leadership roles, they must make the case that citizen engagement is vital to a healthy democracy.

- **Increase commitments that matter to citizens' day-to-day lives:** In the next five years, more commitments need to focus on service delivery and issues covered in the SDGs more broadly (beyond SDG goal #16 —the "governance goal"), such as health, education, and climate, consistent with OGP's Open Government Declaration to support the implementation of SDGs.

- **Enhance civic participation and accountability across thematic areas**: In the first five years of OGP, commitments that focused on transparency were significantly more common than those on civic participation and accountability. These qualities must also be present for governments to be truly open. OGP must more strongly encourage institutions that mobilize citizen participation and feedback and it must support government responsiveness and accountability to that feedback. This will leverage the strength of OGP as a government-civil society partnership. Several emerging, exciting commitments in OGP have shown the way forward, such as the Philippines' participatory social audits commissioned by the Commission of Audit, or Indonesia's and Uruguay's online

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[9] Civicus Monitor Findings Report. Oct 27, 2016. *Civicus*. Accessed on Nov 1, 2016, http://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/reports-publications/2632-civicus-monitor-findings-report

platform for citizen grievance and government responsiveness. A range of innovations outside OGP, such as citizen report cards, could also deepen citizen engagement in government beyond the participating elites. Taking these commitments to scale will require capacity building for governments and civil society to institutionalize transformative reforms, and innovation contests to incubate new ideas, such as leveraging social media tools for citizen feedback. Countries should work to ensure that government reformers as well as citizens have access to the full potential of the digital revolution to initiate new forms of collaboration and decision-making. Subnational OGP pilots represent a particularly promising opportunity to deepen citizen participation in policymaking and service delivery.

Fostering broad-based citizen participation in government needs to go hand in hand with tackling elite capture and grand corruption at the top, which lies at the root of citizen distrust and alienation from government. In the next phase of OGP, we need credible efforts to tackle these problems, building on inspirational OGP examples such as open contracting and asset disclosures by top officials in Ukraine, lobbying reform in Ireland and Chile, and transparency in political party financing in Mongolia and Georgia.

3.2 Strategic Priority #2 - Broaden Collective Ownership of OGP Domestically

To implement the kinds of transformative commitments most effective in tackling the greatest social issues and impacting citizen lives, it is critical to broaden the currently narrow ownership of OGP at the national level and build strategic linkages among reformers to build coalitions. OGP should nurture a movement whereby over time, a critical mass of reformers will succeed in making open government the default mode of government. To this end, OGP needs to:

- ***Broaden horizontally and vertically across government:*** Recent evidence shows that open government reforms tend to stall unless reformers have the backing of a strong chain of command and formal directives that strengthen their hand across government. Consequently, OGP countries need to engage horizontally (across cabinet, line ministries, legislatures, etc.) as well as vertically (from the national to local levels) in order to coordinate the implementation of open government reforms across ministries and broaden collective ownership of OGP. This work should be anchored in compelling value propositions, incentives, and results stories on how OGP can help achieve key

objectives of government in areas such as investment-growth, service delivery, environmental sustainability, anti-corruption, etc. They should be communicated and co-created through cabinet workshops and capacity building for inter-ministerial committees. At the national level, the OGP host agency should also make clear that all administrations should be engaged and mobilize internal resources to participate in OGP. OGP's efforts to vertically broaden through the subnational pilot is also crucial, and needs to be paired with a deeper focus on cities as a place to advance open government, given their status as centers of proximity between citizens and the government.

- **Broaden across broader network of civil society**: One risk shown by OGP's first five years has been a tendency for national OGP civil society engagement to be dominated by transparency and accountability organizations focused on access to information and open data in national capitals. This has, naturally, led to that focus in NAP inputs. OGP countries should actively bring representative citizen organizations and movements such as trade unions, rural cooperatives, women's movements and faith-based groups into the OGP platform. There are several ways to approach broadening civil society engagement. Priorities should include outreach and better incentivizing of local chapters of international coalitions and networks, capacity building workshops, incentives (including resources for strategic coordination and outreach) and results stories to energize a broader coalition of civil society beyond those already engaged.

- **Broaden OGP to new actors**: OGP countries need to expand their horizons by strategically engaging media, youth, independent oversight institutions, the private sector, and other groups to advance open government reforms. In building a value proposition, the OGP Support Unit should begin to compile best practices on how governments have successfully engaged with these actors on open government reforms, thereby extending its thought leadership role.

3.3 Strategic Priority #3 : Raise Collective Ambition, Peer Exchange and Learning across OGP Countries

OGP needs to address the challenge of low levels of transformative commitments by raising collective ambition, not only across existing thematic areas but also across new thematic areas. A key way to boost these efforts is to scale up peer exchange and learning across countries.

- **Collective ambition in key thematic areas**: OGP offers a unique opportunity for countries to join together to raise collective ambition on different open government reforms, and share experiences

on implementing them. For example, countries can show leadership in shaping innovative anti-corruption regulation and enforcement mechanisms at both the national and international levels. A good illustration of this is the UK's beneficial ownership program. The UK followed up on its 2013 OGP commitment to create a public register of beneficial owners, and at the London Anticorruption Summit, South Africa, Norway, France, Kenya and others committed to join the movement to end anonymous companies. The fourth global OGP summit in Paris is playing a similar role of bringing governments and civil society together to support each other on the implementation of open government reforms.

- *Collective ambition in new transformational areas*: OGP participating governments and civil society should draw inspiration and example from peer countries to raise collective ambition in frontier areas at the very heart of state credibility with citizens. These include transparency in political party financing (Georgia, Mongolia), lobbying and influence peddling (Chile, Ireland), and climate action. For example, one way to raise collective ambition is to strengthen implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by injecting principles of transparency, accountability and participation into climate commitments at the national and subnational levels, as well as lobbying for the implementation of SDGs on climate action and sustainable cities. More broadly, building upon the OGP Declaration for the SDGs and on the London Anticorruption Summit, OGP can contribute to the implementation and accountability of these global goals, translating them, where appropriate, into NAPs through open government approaches.

- *Vibrant peer exchange and learning*: Over the next five years, peer exchange and learning need to translate into more ambitious reforms that are better implemented. Mutual learning and support is highly valued among civil society and government officials alike, and their most frequent demand has been for more involvement and materials, and more tailoring of the inputs to regional and national contexts. There are several ways to scale up and deepen current efforts around this area, which involves a combination of understanding incentives driving involvement in peer learning, leadership and expanded funding. The Support Unit should identify countries that have innovated and excelled in specific reforms, and invest in their ability to bring leadership to and share their experience with other countries in implementing similar reforms. The Support Unit should also consider providing thought leadership and more structured and sustained learning opportunities, rather than one-off opportunities. For example, reformers should be able to take advantage of more real-time support by drawing upon the rich, diverse experiences of all of its participating countries around specific reform areas. This could become part of an OGP Institute to support greater thought

leadership, learning and innovation. The Support Unit could also facilitate fellowship programs whereby reformers are placed in different countries to share experiences and learn from each other.

3.4 Strategic Priority #4 - Strengthen Capacity, Coordination and Coalitions for Implementation

The next five years require a stronger focus on credible implementation of NAPs. As a region, Africa, for example, has the most potentially transformative commitments but faces the largest implementation gaps.[10] To address this OGP needs to:

- ***Enhance technical and financial capacity for implementation:*** The OGP Support Unit and its multilateral partners have recently experienced a significant increase in requests from governments for support on the development and implementation of OGP commitments and for knowledge exchange opportunities with reform-minded peers in other countries. There is also a growing awareness that civil society involved in OGP needs capacity and resources to engage more fully and strategically with governments, on an equal footing. Civil society also needs funding to monitor the implementation of NAP commitments.
- ***Improve coordination of actors and inputs:*** One particular challenge is that with OGP growing in popularity, and thus more actors engaging actively with the national process, there is an increasing need for strategic coordination at the national level. OGP needs to strengthen its strategic partnerships with existing networks and programs to maximize its leverage and country impact.
- ***Foster coalitions to support implementation of transformative commitments***: Increasingly transformative commitments such as open contracting or beneficial ownership transparency will encounter strong political resistance from vested interests, and will therefore require stronger multi-stakeholder coalitions that overcome obstacles. OGP can leverage existing capacity building programs for collaborative leadership and coalition building to help reformers navigate change processes more effectively.
- ***Provide financial resources to support capacity and coalitions for implementation:*** Countries with transformative commitments have often faced implementation gaps on account of technical capacity constraints, coordination challenges, and political economy obstacles as outlined above.

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[10] Baesens, Lesly and Foti, Joseph. "Bridging the Ambition-Implementation Gap in OGP Africa". May 1, 2016. OGP website. Accessed on Nov 1, 2016, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/ogp-webmaster/2016/05/01/bridging-ambition-implementation-gap-ogp-africa

The OGP Steering Committee has proposed that a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) be housed at the World Bank to provide resources to address these implementation gaps.

3.5 Strategic Priority #5: Review Performance Incentives and Rules of Engagement

OGP's rules and protocols need careful review to ensure they are incentivizing better performance, identifying and targeting causes of low performance, and advancing the core theory of change. The recent MTR findings suggest that there is a much stronger incentive for countries to gain entry into OGP than to perform their obligations after having joined, and that this results in part from conscious choices in OGP's design. OGP needs to consider the following:

- *Better Incentives for performance*: OGP should give careful thought to the incentives it is offering to countries for better performance. MTR findings suggest that international peer pressure for reforms is effective when countries compare their own performance with those they consider their peers, rather than with countries whose socioeconomic structure and political culture are substantially different. This implies that OGP needs to review its current incentive structures, such as the Open Government Awards, IRM reports and star commitments, and showcasing of reforms at regional and global events. OGP must determine how and whether these incentives are furthering successful implementation of commitments, the advancement of national reform and government accountability, and encouraging OGP commitments that are most relevant and ambitious.
- *Address rules of engagement:* OGP's model recognizes that countries have different starting points in their efforts to open government. By exercising a more inclusive approach and allowing countries to join, OGP can better influence these countries to improve progressively than if more restrictive entry criteria were adopted. However, many civil society organizations have alleged that OGP's eligibility criteria have hurt its credibility by allowing countries to join that have shown minimal commitment to opening government—or in some cases have even restricted civic freedoms. As a result, OGP will review its eligibility criteria and response policy, and consider whether raising the bar of entry and performance for countries is necessary.
- *Consider standards of participation for civil society*: There are also concerns that in many countries civil society operates in a fractious environment with unhealthy competition. This leads to questions over whether civil society legitimately represents the general interest, and thereby forms an equal counterpart in policy making with the government. OGP should consider suggestions that it

introduce minimum standards of engagement in the OGP process, which highlight civil society's transparency, public accountability, inclusiveness and professionalism.

The MTR team is currently doing a preliminary assessment of OGP's rules of engagement. This will set the stage for deeper discussion in mid-2017.

3.6 Strategic Priority #6: Strengthen the OGP Brand and Communications Strategy

A persistent challenge faced by OGP champions is the low levels of understanding of open government and the national OGP process, both within and across government and also across civil society. OGP is still an abstract concept for many. To address this, the key imperative is to:

- ***Build OGP's value proposition for key stakeholders and communicate and disseminate it to different audiences in a compelling manne****r*. If OGP is to build a movement for open government, its communications strategy needs to make a global and national impact. At the global level OGP ambassadors and the wider OGP network should be mobilized to deliver messages in key global and regional forums. At the national level, strong communications can convey a compelling value proposition (the "what's in it for me") for different stakeholders on how OGP can help them address key challenges their countries face and join a movement for open governance.

4. Implementing the Strategic Refresh

The strategic refresh will be accompanied by an Implementation Plan in 2017. This Plan will lay out concrete activities associated with each strategic priority, and spell out a role for specific actors in OGP to implement them. These activities will be prioritized and sequenced based on available resources and capacity.

4.1 Roles of Key Actors

Participating Governments and Civil Society to Drive Ambition

As OGP participating countries have gone through multiple NAP cycles, the basics of OGP participation have become clearer. In almost every OGP country, there is now a clear government PoC, the quality of civil

society-government dialogue is improving, and NAPs are more focused. Government officials and civil society involved in OGP are at the forefront of change and will now need to play a much more proactive role in generating the capacity, resources, and knowledge to develop transformative NAPs that change the status quo. For example:

- **Government PoCs** can champion a whole of government approach to OGP to broaden ownership, and also look beyond Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to include marginalized groups in the conversation. They can step up to lead peer exchanges in critical reform areas, and share transformative OGP reforms in peer countries with line ministries.
- **Civil society** can advocate for more transformative commitments by demonstrating the experience of other countries in similar reform areas. They can also help create a compelling value proposition to their networks and constituencies on how open government can help address challenges their societies face.

Both government PoCs and civil society will need to leverage the support of OGP and its partners to forge their own coalitions and advance reforms.

Steering Committee - Galvanize OGP Leadership and Governance to Drive OGP

The strategic directions above imply a major and new role for OGP's Steering Committee, led by the co-chairs. The Steering Committee's key challenge will be to reignite the "*esprit de corps*" and passion that the founding members shared, this time with a view towards achieving transformative impact.

- **Play a global and regional leadership and advocacy role to advance open government.** The Steering Committee—along with leaders in OGP more broadly—will need to play the lead role in positioning OGP as: (I) a paradigm for effective governance by implementing transformational reforms; and (II) as a countervailing force against worrying global trends by speaking out and opposing these phenomena, including through persuasion and support in OGP peer countries.
- **Anticipate and manage leadership transition:** OGP's leadership will undergo a test of strength in 2017, with founding heads of state/government and founding civil society members passing on their

roles to new actors. The Steering Committee must anticipate and plan for this leadership transition in order to sustain the high-level political commitment OGP has enjoyed to date. For instance, the Steering Committee can play a much more proactive role through the "buddy system" and use heads of state, ministerial visits, and embassy outreach to continue to make a unified push for open government at the highest levels.

- **Address weak political commitment**: In view of uneven political commitment and limited awareness of OGP across some countries, OGP's regional and global events offer an opportunity for OGP principals to refresh their individual and collective commitment to the partnership.

- **Spearhead the drive to raise collective ambition:** The Steering Committee should spearhead the drive to raise collective ambition in key thematic areas. Co-Chairs can role model this by raising collective ambition in their priority areas. For example, the current co-chairs, WRI and the Government of France, are championing open government approaches to climate change actions. The Steering Committee's role will also be vital in efforts to broaden collective ownership and deepen co-creation. Its members can open political doors for deeper engagement in specific countries and serve as key resources to inspire cabinets and civil society. They can spearhead the shift towards citizen-centric governance. The Steering Committee can also contribute to protecting and enhance civic space and make genuine and inclusive co-creation a global norm by role-modeling it.

Leveraging Strategic Partnerships for Scale and Impact

OGP recognizes that the renewed focus on achieving transformative impact cannot happen without the help of its partners. To that end, OGP must leverage existing partnerships and strategically build new ones to help achieve its goal. For instance:

- **Partnerships with multilateral and bilateral partners:** OGP's partnership with multilateral and bilateral partners needs to focus on technical and financial assistance for NAP implementation, but can also go beyond these areas. OGP can take open government reforms to scale by leveraging its partners' operations, country expertise, and in-country contacts with reformers to understand local political dynamics better.

- ***Partnerships with key civil society networks:*** OGP can leverage the local chapters of international civil society networks such as Oxfam and Transparency International to broaden the base of civil society and advocate for open government reforms

- ***Partnerships with thematic networks:*** By partnering with other multi-stakeholder initiatives and networks that specialize in particular thematic areas such as the Open Contracting Partnership (open contracts) and GIFT (fiscal transparency), OGP can scale up transformative commitments in those areas.

- ***Partnerships with the private sector:*** Private sector participation in OGP will be crucial to deliver stronger collective impact. It will inspire confidence in an open government and attract trade and investment from domestic and international sources. A number of open government reforms, - such as open contracting and beneficial ownership transparency, require multi-stakeholder collective action, with the private sector as a key actor. OGP's Steering Committee members have already initiated thought leadership[11] on this topic, and the strategic refresh will be an opportunity to move forward on some of these ideas.

- ***Partnerships with the media:*** By working with international and local media, OGP can help ensure that its profile is raised in countries, and also encourage media freedom organizations to bring their perspective into OGP NAPs around issues such as freedom of information, privacy, and corporate accountability.

Align the OGP Support Unit to Play a Catalytic and Expanded Role

The refresh of OGP's strategy will also have real implications for the Support Unit's capacity. The Support Unit will have to be able to respond to new priorities support OGP countries to reach the goals of the next five years, all the while remaining nimble and agile. As the MTR report notes, the dramatic growth of OGP over the last few years—across a sizable set of countries with varying degrees of commitment to and understanding of OGP—has already stretched the very scarce capacity of the Support Unit to the limit, with, for instance, less than five staff supporting 70 national governments, 15 local governments, and hundreds of civil society organizations. As OGP seeks to deepen ownership and impact at the country level, its support must also move beyond the basics of compliance support to helping countries raise ambition for a greater number of broader and deeper initiatives. While the support of the Steering Committee and strategic

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[11] Tisne, Martin. "The Missing Link: How to engage the Private Sector in OGP." Mar 19, 2014. OGP Website. Accessed on Nov 1, 2016, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/martin-tisne/2014/03/19/missing-link-how-engage-private-sector-ogp

partnerships with multilaterals, bilaterals and networks will be important, this will inevitably require major new investment in the Support Unit. OGP must build a bigger team for deeper country level engagement across several countries with lagging progress or important windows of opportunity, scale up knowledge sharing and peer exchange, and significantly step up communications. For instance, the Support Unit will need to play a vital role in helping the partnership take key strategic directions forward in the following areas:

- **The Government Support & Exchange (GSX) and Civil Society Engagement (CSE) programs** within the Support Unit will need to make a more intense push for genuine and inclusive co-creation across OGP participating countries, along with facilitating peer exchange for government points of contacts and civil society around transformative reforms.
- **Enhance capacity** to build a knowledge base and incubate innovations in new areas (e.g., citizen feedback loops on service delivery)
- **Leverage partners** to undertake support in countries, such as through cabinet and civil society workshops and multi-stakeholder coalition building
- **Support the proposed expansion of OGP** to engage with legislatures, subnational pilots, etc., which will each require significant, additional support from GSX, CSE, IRM and communications teams
- **Work with OGP principals and partners** to raise resources, reform mechanisms and mobilize support for peer exchange and structured learning, including support to working groups and capacity building for government and civil society (e.g., through boot-camps, e-learning, MOOCs, a revamped online open government guide)
- **Increase investment in evidence-based research** and organizational learning over the next five years, including through performance tracking, adaptive learning and a robust research agenda. A key priority will be to curate results stories that will underpin value propositions for different stakeholders and inspire transformative reforms. These efforts need to continuously provide opportunities to learn, reflect and make course corrections, not only for the Support Unit and IRM, but now more than ever, focusing on the needs of OGP's country-level stakeholders.
- **Mobilize a strategic push on OGP branding and communications**, leveraging the Steering Committee and OGP's partners.

The Support Unit will need to develop an implementation and financing plan to play this expanded role, while simultaneously spinning off from Tides as an independent non-profit organization.

Strengthen IRM as an accountability mechanism

The IRM's role in the strategic refresh is particularly important. OGP must ensure that it incentivizes country performance in the short run, while working as an accountability mechanism and influencing policy change in the long run. The IRM methodology to assess commitments, the format and content of its reports, and the timing and report launch strategies all have key implications for incentivizing country performance in the short run. An overarching priority for the next phase will be to ensure that the rich insights emerging from IRM translate into country actions, including through reformers in government, civil society advocacy and strategic communications. There have been varying calls to modify the IRM approach to best capture the weaknesses and strengths in IRM reporting. To this end, there have been some calls for an early assessment of NAPs (by the Support Unit or IRM) in addition to already-existing mid-term and end-of-term IRM reports, in order to provide continuous feedback and monitoring to improve the quality of NAPs. Alternately, the MTR also calls for a longer-term assessment or synthesis of a country's trajectory after several action plans. Each of these proposals would be time- and labor-intensive and would need to be weighed against the capacity of OGP as a whole to raise resources.

4.2 Financing the Strategic Refresh

Following the completion and launch of the strategic refresh by the OGP Steering Committee, the Support Unit will work with the Governance and Leadership (GL) subcommittee and partners to develop a work plan with financing requirements. The financing will be needed for different parts of the Partnership, including participating governments, civil society organizations, and the OGP Support Unit. OGP will be reaching out to existing and new donors to mobilize financing for implementation, including through a proposed multi-donor trust fund to be housed at the World Bank, as well as through direct support to OGP's Support Unit.