

Open Parliaments Fact Sheet

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Open parliament commitments are quickly growing in the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\)](#), with many parliaments co-creating their own commitments or action plans to further legislative openness.
- ✓ A majority of open parliament commitments focus on increasing transparency and participation within legislatures, but few commitments involve accountability measures.
- ✓ Moving forward, OGP members should aim to involve parliaments as the primary implementers of open parliament commitments and include more public oversight and accountability elements.

WHY OPEN PARLIAMENTS?

An open parliament - one that encourages transparency, participation, and accountability throughout the legislative process - is an essential part of an open government. Ensuring access to legislative information and creating mechanisms for public participation are critical to building an open, trusting relationship with citizens. Parliaments can also lead by example by adopting open government principles within their own processes and practices. Legislative openness reforms are often strengthened by parliamentary engagement in the OGP process.

STATUS QUO

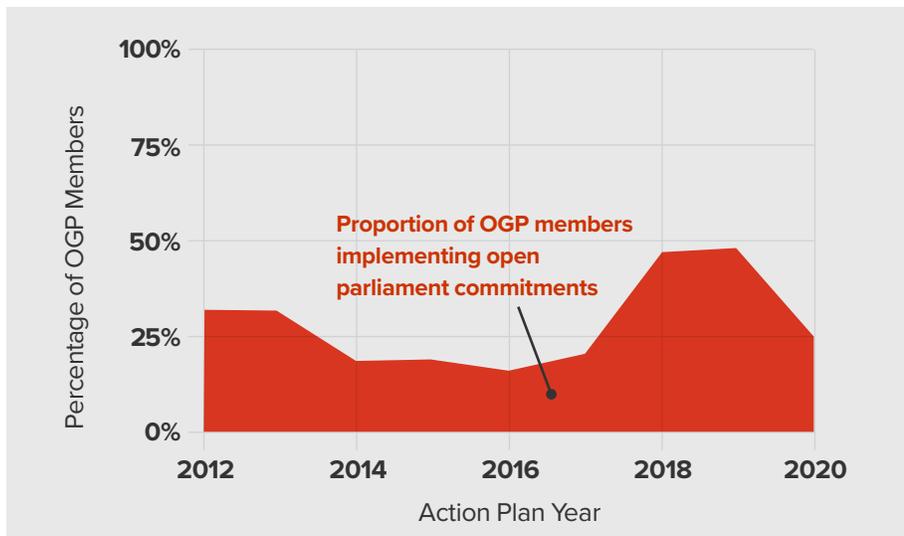
- **Parliamentary leadership:** One in four OGP member countries formally engage parliament in the OGP process. Parliaments have co-created and implemented their own open parliament plans in seven OGP member countries, including [Paraguay](#), [Georgia](#), and [Indonesia](#).
- **Parliamentary involvement creates ambition:** OGP commitments involving parliaments as implementers (passing legislation) tend to be more ambitious – meaning more likely to change the status quo – than other commitments.
- **Low focus on oversight:** Only about one in ten open parliament commitments involve public oversight and accountability.

Commitment data analyzes all commitments through the 2020 action plan cycle. As of 2020, OGP consisted of 98 national and local members.

Open
Government
Partnership

COMMITMENT PROGRESS

The number of members making open parliaments commitments sharply increased in 2018 but has since declined (see figure below). Currently, 12 OGP members are implementing open parliament commitments from their 2019 or 2020 action plans. Altogether, 55 members have made 162 total open parliament commitments since OGP was established in 2011.



WHAT ARE OGP MEMBERS DOING?

→ Implementing OGP commitments through legislation

→ Creating platforms to publish legislative information in an open format

→ Improving asset disclosure and election finance transparency

→ Increasing opportunity for public participation in legislative processes

→ Using parliaments to provide oversight of action plan implementation

WHERE TO NEXT

The following [recommendations](#) summarize key actions for OGP members to implement:

Legislative Transparency

- Ensure all primary and secondary legislation is published online in an easily accessible format.
- Proactively publish information related to parliamentary operations, such as information on lawmakers, meeting agendas, bills, debates, and voting records.
- Adopt legislation that ensures the public access to information from the Parliament, and identify individuals or offices responsible for responding to requests for information.

Participation in Decision-Making

- Raise awareness of the potential mechanisms citizens can use to participate in parliamentary work.
- Adopt legislation that creates a framework for citizen involvement in the legislative process.
- Implement consultations and public hearings that give citizens opportunities to provide feedback and demonstrate their interests, both online and in-person.
- Strengthen communication between legislators and their constituents and give opportunities for citizens, especially vulnerable groups, to give input.

Accountability of the Parliament

- Implement measures such as open budgeting and the publication of annual expenses at the parliamentary level.
- Require each legislator to publish information on their work periodically, such as a comparison between their campaign commitments and their record of legislative activities.
- Strengthen transparency during development of the national budget and create opportunities for citizens to monitor and review budgetary information.

NOTABLE COMMITMENTS

Recent Results



Estonia - Improving Online Legislative Transparency (2018)

In Estonia's 2018 action plan, the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) led a commitment to improve their practices of publishing legislative committee meetings online in a timely manner. As a result of the commitment, meeting minutes are now [available online](#) in an open format within an average of three days, and delays are no longer common. Because of these improvements, the online Citizens' Initiative platform now allows users to keep track of policy proposals sent to the Riigikogu in real time and receive email notifications when certain initiatives are voted on or [discussed](#).



New Zealand - Making Legislation More Open and Accessible (2016, 2018)

Prior to 2016, citizens were only able to freely access primary legislation online; information on secondary legislation (rules and regulations) was varied and incomplete. Through a series of commitments, New Zealand has worked to publish all primary and secondary laws on a single website. This initially included a review of all secondary legislation, and research on how citizens primarily access and use legislative information. From there, New Zealand committed to linking all secondary legislation on the pre-existing website for primary laws to make the information more accessible to the public.

Commitments to Watch



Sierra Leone - Increasing Parliamentary Oversight and Inclusion (2019)

Sierra Leone committed to establishing a parliamentary working group as institutional oversight of their 2019 action plan implementation. The commitment also aims to increase the inclusion and participation of women and other marginalized groups in parliamentary activities through equitable budget allocations and increased diversity in candidates for public office.



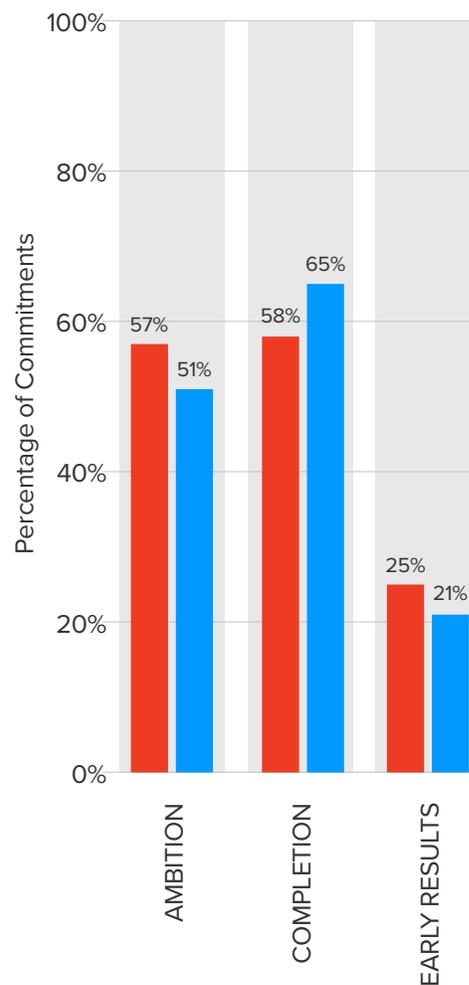
Chile - Increasing Legislative Openness (2020 - [Commitment 1](#), [Commitment 2](#))

Chile's 2020 action plan includes two commitments being primarily implemented by their National Congress. The main objectives include increasing the public traceability of legislation through a new online platform and drafting regulations on the active publication of information.

IRM QUICK STATS

According to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), open parliament commitments tend to be a bit more ambitious than the average OGP commitment, but lag far behind the OGP average in terms of completion.

Commitment Performance



Open Parliaments commitments
All OGP commitments

Ambition - Ambitious commitments are those that the IRM finds would make transformative changes if fully implemented.

Early Results - Strong early results indicate the commitment made significant improvements to government openness.