IRM Guidance for Online Repositories

According to OGP's Procedural Review Policy, starting in 2018, OGP participating governments must document, collect and publish a repository on the domestic OGP website in line with IRM guidance.

Procedural Review Policy

"A government is considered to have acted contrary to process when:

- *The government fails to document, collect and publish a repository on the domestic OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance."*

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/procedural-review

The IRM has designed this document to help governments understand what constitutes a repository and how it will be assessed by IRM researchers.

Definition and purpose of repositories

What is a repository?

A repository, for OGP purposes, is an **online** centralized website, webpage, platform or folder where information and **evidence** related to the action plan (including process and implementation) is **publicly** stored, organized, **updated** and disseminated.

What is the purpose of the repository?

The repository should serve as a tool for accountability. It is meant to be a transparent and easy way for stakeholders to access up-to-date evidence related to the government's OGP activities. It can be used to monitor the action plan development and implementation processes in the country or entity.

What method will the IRM use to assess repositories?

The IRM researchers will assess whether governments have taken action in order to meet the standard of repositories, which should be: 1) available **online**, without barriers to access, 2) linked to **evidence** and 3) **updated** regularly. For each one of these three characteristics, the IRM researchers will determine if:

1. The repository meets the standard

2. The repository is in progress to meet the standard

3. There is no evidence of action towards meeting the standard

Governments will be considered **acting contrary** to process **if there is no repository or no evidence of action** towards meeting all three characteristics of a repository. To understand what this means, please continue reading.

Characteristics of the repository

What qualifies as a repository?

Governments may choose any platform or system for their online repository as long as it follows a set of guiding principles. The repository must be 1) available online, without barriers to access, 2) linked to evidence and 3) updated regularly.

1 **Available online, without barriers to access**

This means that anyone should be able to access the repository where the information is hosted. It should not require passwords nor credentials to access.

What do repositories look like?
Governments may choose any platform or system for their online repository. For example, it could be:
- a public website with its own URL
- a public webpage within a government website
- a hyperlink hosted on a government website to a digital platform or folder

Keep in mind that...
- OGP is neutral as to the specific platform or format of the repository. The ideal platform will be archived or perma-linked and provide interoperable data.
- The website, webpage or hyperlink to the repository should be *visible, accessible and findable*, not hidden away in an obscure corner of an agency website.

When is the government acting contrary to process?
The IRM will consider that **there is no evidence of action** towards meeting this standard of repositories **when**:
- the repository is not online
- a password or credentials are required to access the repository

2 **Linked to evidence, with information on development and implementation of the action plan**

Governments are expected to publish evidence to account for co creation processes and progress on their commitments to OGP. Therefore, they should document, collect and publish information on the repository that serves as clear evidence of what happened during the action plan development and implementation processes.

What is considered "evidence"?

'Evidence' is defined as the available facts that justify statements or propositions, proving they are true or valid. In other words, conclusive information that, on its own, compels the reader to come to a certain conclusion. It includes primary sources or direct links to objective information that accounts for the status of completion of activities, commitments or milestones.

What is not considered "evidence"?

Information considered to be a secondary source or an interpretation of a primary source is not deemed as evidence. For example, statements or claims that describe activities without providing proof of the activity itself.

When does a repository meet the standard?
The IRM will consider that it meets the standard when the repository contains:
- at least one piece of evidence to account for the development of the action plan
- at least one piece of evidence to account for the implementation of each commitment

Note: For the IRM's Design Report, IRM will only assess if the repository fulfils the first criteria in order to consider that the government has met the standard.

When is a repository in progress to meet the standard?
The IRM will consider that the repository is in progress to meet the standard when it has at least one of the following:
- one piece of evidence to account for the development of the action plan
- one piece of evidence to account for the implementation of one commitment or more

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When is there no evidence of action towards meeting the standard?
The IRM will consider that **no action has been taken** to meet the standard **when**:
- There is no evidence on the repository to account for the development of the action plan or the implementation of any commitment.

Keep in mind that...
If repositories only include information not considered to be 'evidence' (as defined above), the IRM will conclude that there is no evidence of action towards meeting the standard.

The following list provides examples of evidence to account for the development and implementation of the action plan:

- Plans for public consultations on the development of the action plan
  - Timelines, public invitations, interdepartmental invitations
- Evidence of setting up multi-stakeholder forums (coordinating committees, task forces, working groups, etc.)
  - Terms of Reference for a coordinating group
  - Minutes/memos of decisions to set up working groups
  - Composition of the group, listing organizations and individuals included
- Evidence of public consultation and multi-stakeholder forums
  - Advertising or notice for public consultation
  - Invitations sent out
  - Multi-stakeholder forum meeting agendas and/or minutes

- List of participants (affiliations sufficient in case names cannot be disclosed due to privacy considerations)
- Written proposals submitted by CSOs or other members of public
- Documents, reports and plans that are relevant to establish commitment baseline and government objectives
- Outputs of consultations (proposals, minutes, pictures, memos etc.)
- Feedback on how public inputs or proposals have been considered
- Evidence of how the government has responded to the IRM's 5 Key Recommendations from the previous report
- Documentation for implementation of commitments:
  - Draft of laws and status of legislative process on issue areas relevant to commitments
  - Records of decision making, new regulations or administrative orders
  - Evidence of commissioning research, procurement or consultancy terms of reference, calls for proposals
  - Evidence of technical documents relating to databases, information technology etc.
  - Strategy documents, concept papers and work plans produced in the process or as a result of commitments
  - Monitoring and evaluation material (inter-governmental or third party monitoring reports etc.)
  - Evidence of budget decisions, financial and HR resource allocations
  - External/third-party analysis of documents (CSO shadow reports, independent tracking of commitment progress)
  - Audit reports
  - Photos, videos and multimedia as evidence of progress on commitments, events held
  - User statistics (if relevant)

Response to IRM's 5 Key Recommendations

The IRM strongly recommends governments to include a response to the IRM's 5 Key Recommendations in their online repository.

3 Updated regularly, at least every six months

According to the [OGP's Participation and Co Creation Standards](#), when implementing, monitoring and reporting an action plan, the government should publish via the OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e. at least every six months) on the progress of commitments. It includes progress against milestones, reasons for any delays and next steps.[1]

For stakeholders to know whether the information has been updated, the IRM suggests to include timestamps on the repositories that indicate when it was last updated.

> **When does the repository meet the standard?**

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[1] OGP's Participation and Co Creation Standards, Basic Requirements, Page 12:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP_Participation-Cocreation-Standards20170207.pdf

The IRM will consider that the repository meets the standard when it is updated at least every six months during the action plan cycle.

When is there no evidence of action towards meeting the standard?
If the repository is not updated at least once every six months during the action plan cycle.