

2015

ANNUAL REPORT



Executive Summary

In 2015, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) grew to 69 countries that have collectively developed more than 2,250 commitments to make governments more open, transparent and responsive to citizens. In OGP's fourth year of operation, many countries are continuing to show a strong commitment to the initiative. Twelve countries submitted their second National Action Plan and, for the first time, two countries — the Philippines and the United States — submitted a third Action Plan. The partnership as a whole continued to grow stronger, with record-breaking attendance at the third Global Summit in Mexico City, where a new subnational government pilot program was launched.

The Global Summit in Mexico was the major moment for OGP in 2015. The summit was hosted by the President of Mexico and Mexican civil society organizations who welcomed over 40 ministers and leaders from around the world. Highlights included the second annual presentation of the Open Government Awards, with first prize given to a Uruguayan project providing citizens unparalleled access to the performance indicators of their country's health care providers. OGP also moved swiftly to position itself as one of the main implementing partners for the United Nations newly agreed [Sustainable Development Goals](#). Over 40 governments signed a declaration committing to use the OGP platform to implement the new global goals, and OGP published a [special edition of the Open Government Guide](#) to provide ideas on how to achieve this. Civil society leaders also had a prominent role, ensuring that issues of closing civic space, anticorruption, freedom of the press and access to justice were addressed on the main stages.

Throughout 2015, the Support Unit and Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) staff



OGP 2015 Summit Mexico. [Click here for the Summit in review.](#)

continued to provide international coordination and accountability, while also contributing an increased level of support to government and civil society reformers at the country level. This included coordinating nearly 60 instances of bilateral and regional peer-exchange activities, promoting a wide array of educational tools including webinars and handbooks, and helping the spread of good ideas from OGP partners through events and different communications channels.

The OGP Steering Committee provided strategic leadership to the initiative, with guidance from the lead co-chairs — the government of Mexico and Suneeta Kaimal from the Natural Resource Governance Institute. The support co-chairs were the government of South Africa and Alejandro Gonzalez from Gesoc. Other countries played major roles in supporting OGP in 2015, including Georgia, where the then Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili hosted a European Regional Meeting, and Tanzania, where the then President Jakaya Kikwete hosted an Africa Regional Meeting. High-level leadership was also extended through the

appointment of Winnie Byanyima, executive director of Oxfam International, as a new [OGP Ambassador](#).

In July 2015, OGP held its second election of governments to join the Steering Committee. The governments of Chile and Romania were elected for the first time, and Indonesia was elected for a second term. The governments of the Philippines and Tanzania stepped down. Two civil society Steering Committee members, Cecilia Blondet (formerly of Proética, Peru) and Fernando Straface (formerly of Cippec, Argentina), stepped down from their roles because of changes in their jobs. Alvin Mosioma of Tax Justice Network Africa stepped down due to time constraints. These vacancies will be filled shortly.

2015 also saw the departure of Linda Frey as executive director of the OGP Support Unit. During her tenure Linda built up OGP's infrastructure to include a talented staff, and developed an ambitious four-year strategy and a solid financial footing. Following an intensive international search, Sanjay Pradhan was tapped to lead the OGP Support Unit, starting mid-2016.

OGP by the Numbers in 2015



36 OGP COUNTRIES HAVE ESTABLISHED A PERMANENT DIALOGUE MECHANISM



69
COUNTRIES
IN TOTAL



4 NEW COUNTRIES JOINED OGP

23 WEBINARS

brought together nearly 2,000 practitioners and experts to showcase innovative approaches to solving shared open government challenges.



OGP VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE HAVE BEEN WATCHED BY ALMOST **72,500** PEOPLE



NEARLY **SIXTY** INSTANCES OF BILATERAL AND REGIONAL PEER-EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

33 COUNTRIES
COMPETED
for the

OPEN
GOVERNMENT
AWARDS



47

countries endorsed the Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the

2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



220 POSTS
WERE PUBLISHED
— ON THE —
OGP BLOG
IN 2015

OVER
2,000

PARTICIPANTS
— at the —

GLOBAL
SUMMIT

INCLUDING
GOVERNMENT
MINISTERS
FROM **41**
COUNTRIES



NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

✓ **2,250** TOTAL OGP COMMITMENTS FROM **110** ACTION PLANS (CUMULATIVE)

THE IRM PUBLISHED
18 REPORTS

83 SUBNATIONAL
COMMITMENTS

have already been included in OGP Action Plans (OGP's subnational pilot program launches in 2016).

The **2015 Civil Society** Survey tells us that of the over **600** respondents **12%** said that their latest National Action Plans includes all civil society priorities, **50%** said a majority of priorities and **32%** some priorities.



73%

of respondents reported a *more positive outlook on OGP* in the last 12 months.

OGP Regional and Global Events

LAUNCH OF THE "JOINT DECLARATION ON OPEN GOVERNMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, *September*

Steering Committee members met to launch a declaration led by the government of Mexico linking the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to OGP, with countries committing to implement the goals through their future Action Plans.

GLOBAL SUMMIT AND MINISTERIAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Mexico City, *October*

Over 2,000 participants attended the third OGP Global Summit in Mexico City, including ministers from 41 governments, and civil society representatives from 112 countries. Major themes of the summit included piloting OGP at the subnational level, engaging with the new Sustainable Development Goals, the seriousness of closing civic space, and using the findings from the IRM reports. The summit was opened by Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and other international political, multilateral and civil society leaders, including the UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark. A day prior to the summit, civil society organizations, government officials and the Steering Committee each convened. Over 1,000 people attended a global civil society day, which served as an opportunity for civil society organizations to present challenges faced locally to a global audience and to exchange knowledge on how to best use OGP to achieve their goals. In parallel, 78 government officials from 47 countries discussed their experiences implementing OGP. The officials also met with multilateral partners and OGP Working Groups to understand better what external sources of support are available to them. The Steering Committee also met at the ministerial level and agreed upon a major OGP subnational pilot.*

BALKAN OGP DIALOGUE

Tirana, *September*

Albanian civil society partnered with the government and the OGP Support Unit to host over 250 participants from nine countries to encourage peer exchange among participants in what the organizers called a "learn and show initiative." The meeting ended with a declaration calling upon "governments and civil society organizations of OGP countries that experience immigration or transition of refugees to act upon that humanitarian and human rights crisis in the spirit of proactive openness."

EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT POINTS OF CONTACT EVENT

Tbilisi, *June*

Government officials leading on OGP in their countries gathered to share experiences on how to best engage with civil society, to work with their counterparts in other ministries, and to overcome challenges in implementing open government reforms.

ASIA-PACIFIC GLOBAL SUMMIT PREPARATION MEETING

Asian Development Bank, Manila, *September*

The meeting brought together delegates from government, civil society, multilateral organizations, and foundations to share progress on open government reforms in participating countries and exchange views on how to broaden and deepen OGP in the region.

AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING

Dar es Salaam, *May*

The then President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete, hosted the second regional meeting for Africa, with attendees from across the continent coming together to discuss open data, enhanced accountability, land ownership transparency, and many other crucial issues affecting Africa.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Pretoria, *July*

Working-level Steering Committee members stepped up planning for the Global Summit, discussed the organizational status of the OGP Support Unit, and planned deeper collaboration with multilateral partners.*

MINISTERIAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Mexico City, *April*

The Steering Committee discussed strategies to support OGP country performance and moved forward on OGP discussions regarding access to justice, subnational engagement, and anticorruption efforts. SC members were also keen to promote more rigorous research into the impacts of open government reforms. Linda Frey announced she was stepping down as executive director of the Support Unit in mid-2015.*

* The agendas and minutes of all Steering Committee meetings are published on the [OGP website](#).

Raising the Ambition and Implementation of Open Government Reforms in 69 OGP Countries

15 COUNTRIES
SUBMITTED
ACTION PLANS
THIS YEAR

National Action Plans are at the very heart of OGP and ensuring that Action Plans are ambitious, effective, and relevant to open government is a primary objective of the OGP Support Unit.

Fifteen countries submitted Action Plans this year, containing more than 250 specific policy commitments in a wide array of areas that include public participation, fiscal transparency, access to information, open data, and legislative openness. France submitted its first plan; the 12 countries that joined in 2013 submitted their second plan; and for the first time, two countries — the Philippines and the United States — submitted a third Action Plan. In addition, 44 governments continued to work on implementing Action Plans presented in previous years. 31 participating countries submitted self-assessment reports on the implementation of their Action Plans.

- ✓ ARGENTINA
- ✓ COLOMBIA
- ✓ COSTA RICA
- ✓ FINLAND
- ✓ FRANCE
- ✓ GHANA
- ✓ HUNGARY
- ✓ ISRAEL
- ✓ LIBERIA
- ✓ MALTA
- ✓ PANAMA
- ✓ PERU
- ✓ PHILIPPINES
- ✓ SLOVAK REPUBLIC
- ✓ UNITED STATES

Click a country to see the plan



Ambitious OGP Commitments

In 2015, OGP's efforts helped ensure that domestic reformers had the tools and support they needed to design and implement more ambitious OGP commitments. For example, Colombia's Action Plan incorporated the subnational level with the government of Antioquia committing to holding 125 accountability hearings in each of its municipalities. This shows that subnational governments are willing to incorporate open government principles. Finland committed to engaging children and the elderly in the creation of public policies, making open government principles more democratic and inclusive. France committed to using data visualizations and applications to educate and raise awareness of climate challenges. Liberia's plan outlined creative methods for transmitting information about budgets, open government, and other issues through text messages, town criers, radio, interactive murals, and citizen journalism to ensure that critical information reaches every part of the country no matter the infrastructure challenges. Finally, the United States' plan addressed the recent focus on arrest-related and other police-involved deaths by bringing together top police commissioners around the country to begin standardized publication of critical data on shootings, and deaths due to other causes, when law-enforcement personnel are involved.

Supporting Open Government Reforms



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND EXCHANGE

Improving peer learning and collaboration among OGP countries

In 2015, OGP focused on catalyzing peer learning among partners. Peer learning and collaboration underpin OGP's race-to-the-top model, in which partners are expected to encourage one another to continuously aim higher. Correspondingly, the OGP Support Unit made a concerted effort to assess needs, connect governments, and share expertise and lessons in the service of stronger development and implementation of Action Plans. The result was nearly 60 peer exchanges among governments, civil society, OGP Working Groups, and multilateral partners in 2015, which represented a significant demand for learning from partners. Many of these exchanges were directly brokered by the OGP Support Unit.

In 2015, the Support Unit also introduced two important initiatives to empower government reformers and points of contact (POC), who lead the OGP process on the ground: POC conferences and a POC manual.

POC conferences are designed to create opportunities for lead officials in OGP governments to share ideas, network, and receive training from specialists in open government. In 2015, the Support Unit organized four POC conferences with over 100 government reformers from 50 participating countries.

A **POC manual** was developed with the assistance of several OGP partners to help government officials better understand the OGP process. The manual brings together seven different guidance notes, including: how to best develop an Action Plan, draft a self-assessment report, consult with civil society, collaborate with



POC Manual *First Edition*
[Click here to view the manual.](#)

OGP Working Groups and meet OGP deadlines. The first edition of the POC manual was launched at the Global Summit in Mexico.

EXAMPLES OF PEER EXCHANGE

With support from the World Bank, the governments of Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay embarked on a comprehensive peer-exchange program to share best practices and lessons learned on implementing Access to Information (ATI) legislation following Paraguay's passage of an ATI law in September 2014. During early stages of implementation, responsible agencies often lack the technical knowledge and capacity needed to set up the institutions, processes, and platforms that comprise a successful ATI program. A delegation from Paraguay visited Chile's Council

for Transparency, Brazil's Office of the Comptroller General, and Uruguay's Agency for e-Government and Information Society to learn from their experience and avoid early missteps. A series of videoconferences complemented the study tours, which provided sustained opportunities for learning across various stages of implementation.

The governments of South Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Malawi, and Tanzania formed an African learning caucus that shares experiences in developing and implementing OGP Action Plans. The group met on the sidelines of the OGP Steering Committee Meeting in South Africa in 2015 to discuss how the OGP process can be strengthened in their respective countries.



THEMATIC WORKING

GROUPS Sharing expertise in important open government policy areas

In an effort to deepen country-level learning, OGP modified how Working Groups operate among five important open government policy areas: open data, fiscal openness, legislative openness, access to information, and natural-resources openness. In addition to providing on-demand assistance to governments and civil society, Working Groups will now convene small peer-learning cohorts of countries' representatives in order to deliver focused and sustained learning across Action Plan cycles. In 2015, Working Groups reviewed the Action Plans of Ghana, Liberia, the Philippines, Colombia, and Moldova to provide specific feedback on strengthening commitments from thematic experts in their networks. Working Groups also supported study tours and convened government and civil society representatives from OGP countries to deepen learning on specific issues. To provide an opportunity for exchanging best practices and lessons learned among government and civil society peers, Working Groups organized numerous panels and workshops at international events, including OGP regional meetings, the OGP Global Summit, and the International Open Data Conference.

EXAMPLES OF WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Access to Information Working Group backed a visit by Sierra Leone's Access to Information commissioner to Liberia in order to share tools and learn how to tackle challenges related to instituting an ATI program. In addition to the study visit, the Working Group shared resources such as procedure manuals developed for Liberia, which could serve as an important tool for the information commission in Sierra Leone as it moves forward with its program.

The Fiscal Openness Working Group convened fiscal transparency experts from around the world at a two-day workshop on the sidelines of the Global Summit in Mexico City. Participants shared best practices on such topics as deepening citizen participation in budgetary processes, improving country performance on the Open Budget Index and developing fiscal transparency portals for the proactive publication of fiscal data. The workshop brought together representatives from the ministries of finance of Mongolia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Croatia, Montenegro, Tunisia, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Uruguay, with Mexico as the host. Representatives of information commissions and control and audit institutions from Chile, Honduras, and Costa Rica also participated, as did government and legislative representatives from Costa Rica and Tunisia, and civil society experts from India, Indonesia, Brazil, Cameroon, Croatia, and Mexico.



MULTILATERAL PARTNERS

Supporting Action Plan development and implementation

In 2015, two new multilateral organizations, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Organization of American States (OAS), joined five others — the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) — in developing formal partnerships with OGP to support participating countries with various types of assistance. For example, the IADB provided technical assistance on Action Plan development and implementation in seven countries in South and Central America; the OAS launched the first edition of the Fellowship on Open Government, as well as a [course on Open Government strategies](#); and the UNDP supported parliamentary commitments in Serbia and Chile.

There is an emerging trend among the multilateral partners to align their programs with OGP. For example, the World Bank created the [Open Government Global Solutions Group](#) to ensure an integrated approach to open government, to seek opportunities to align OGP commitments and timelines with the bank's portfolios, and to demonstrate the tangible value of openness for development.

Given the tremendous potential of OGP to help countries around the globe [achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda](#), the UNDP has announced that it will start to focus part of its support on aligning OGP commitments with national strategies and plans.

Expanding Civil Society Engagement in OGP

In 2015, the OGP civil society network grew in diversity, strength and size. To improve tailored support to civil society in OGP's expanding network, the Civil Society Engagement (CSE) team hired two new regional coordinators for Asia-Pacific and Africa & Middle East. The team also completed integration into the OGP Support Unit.

This expansion and integration helped the CSE team explore new partnerships with important global civil society organizations (CSOs) and networks in the fields of development, human rights and media, including [Article 19](#), [Committee to Protect Journalists](#), [Integrity Action](#), [Oxfam](#), [Save the Children](#) and [World Vision](#). Actors that work in a range of OGP countries and are leaders in their fields are crucial for raising the level of ambition in the next round of Action Plans. Arrangements are in place for additional outreach to new sectors of civil society in 2016.

This year, the CSE team developed support materials to help civil society partners in their advocacy and monitoring efforts. These materials included the [OGP Explorer](#), which provides access to all OGP data, and the Civil Society Action Plan review tool, which helps civil society monitor OGP and provides guidance on creating good [consultations](#) and [high-quality, ongoing dialogue](#).

The 2015 Civil Society Survey results indicate that progress is being made in incorporating civil society priorities in Action Plans. Of the over 600 survey respondents, 12% said that all of their priorities were included, 50% said a majority of priorities were included, and 32% that some of their priorities were included. In Liberia, the government went ahead with national consultations in all of the country's 15 counties



OGP global civil society day, October 2015.

(despite the Ebola crisis); in the Netherlands, 10 civil society groups worked together on an Open Government Manifesto with their key asks for the next Action Plan; in the Philippines, the National OGP Steering Committee was expanded to include greater self-selected representation from civil society and academia; and in Costa Rica, representatives from civil society were invited by presidential decree to apply for four of the eight seats on the [National Commission on Open Government](#).

The dialogue between government and civil society that is at the heart of OGP is improving. IRM data show that more countries are meeting the guidelines, and the 2015 Civil Society

Survey tells us that over the last 12 months 73% of respondents have become more positive about OGP's potential to deliver change. There is still much progress to be made to truly improve the quality and depth of the engagement.

To ensure that civil society is included as an equal partner throughout the entire Action Plan cycle, from consultation to assessment, special emphasis was placed in 2015 on promoting Permanent Dialogue Mechanisms (PDMs). The CSE team worked closely with the Government Support and Peer Exchange and IRM teams to develop a database and handbook to help countries build effective PDMs. The CSE team

also conducted PDM workshops, including at the Africa Regional Meeting, the Georgia Point of Contact meeting, the [Western Balkans Regional Dialogue](#) and the Mexico Global Summit. By the end of 2015, PDMs existed in at least 36 OGP countries. While PDMs look different in each OGP country, success is measured by the same criteria: the quality of dialogue and partnership between civil society and government, the degree to which civil society priorities are reflected in the Action Plan, and the level of ambition, relevance, and completion of Action Plan commitments.

Civil society also continued to play a key role in bringing new countries into OGP, including most recently Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea. In addition, in many countries, CSOs played a pivotal role in boosting the level of government attention given to OGP. For example, in Australia, sustained campaigning by civil society resulted in a full recommitment to OGP by the new government. In Ukraine, a national civil society advocacy campaign managed to get the OGP process back on track and onto the political agenda.

Yet despite these achievements, there remains skepticism within some civil society organizations about the ability of OGP to create significant positive changes in the lives of average citizens. And whereas most OGP Action Plans include commitments on participatory decision-making and on strengthening the enabling environment, there are concerns about the recent increase in measures to restrict civic space in many parts of the world — including in some OGP countries. This has led to strong demand for OGP to be more outspoken about civic space and has intensified the pressure on OGP governments to lead by example in their

engagement with civil society. These concerns were outlined by Alejandro Gonzalez, the OGP Steering Committee civil society chair, and Elena Panfilova, vice-chair of the board of Transparency International, in an [opinion piece](#) in the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* at the

time of the Global Summit. The piece tapped into many concerns expressed by the civil society community over challenges to press freedom, the ability of NGOs in developing countries to receive international funding, and restrictive freedom of information laws.

Upholding the Values and Principles of OGP

In 2014, the Steering Committee adopted the [Policy on Upholding the Values and Principles of the Open Government Partnership](#), otherwise known as the Response Policy. This policy was established to help countries re-establish an environment for government and civil society collaboration, and to help overcome difficulties as they implement open government policies. It was also designed to safeguard the integrity of the Open Government Declaration and mitigate reputational risks to OGP. The Response Policy is triggered when a letter of concern regarding a relevant situation in a participating OGP country is filed by a Steering Committee member, a multilateral partner, a Working Group co-anchor, or a civil society or media organization involved in OGP at the national or international level.

A pilot program was launched in 2015 and during the first year, the Response Policy was triggered on two occasions:

- **Azerbaijan:** On March 2, 2015, the OGP Steering Committee received a letter from Civicus, Publish What You Pay, and Article 19 regarding threats faced by civil society in Azerbaijan, and their effect on the OGP process. After an initial review of the claims made in the letter, the concern was upheld. The Steering Committee used the findings from the review to send recommendations to the government of Azerbaijan on how to address the concerns raised in the letter in their new National Action Plan. The implementation of these recommendations by the government of Azerbaijan will be evaluated in early 2016.
- **Hungary:** On July 8, 2015, the OGP Steering Committee received a letter from representatives of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, K-Monitor Watchdog for Public Funds, Transparency International Hungary, and the Sunlight Foundation. The letter addressed the deterioration of space for civil society in Hungary in recent years. A review into the claims made in the letter is due to be completed in February 2016.

In July, the Steering Committee agreed to extend the initial one-year Response Policy pilot. The responsible subcommittee is also looking into ways to further strengthen the policy, including on turnaround time for reviews and external communications.

Independent Reporting on Progress

Often referred to as the “teeth” of OGP, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) plays a critical role in promoting accountability for results and learning among OGP partners by ensuring that each commitment in every National Action Plan is assessed for ambition, relevance, and completion. The IRM does this by issuing regular, objective progress reports drafted by local researchers and peer-reviewed by the [International Experts Panel](#). Once complete, the reports are made public, with the goal of stimulating a dialogue on how to improve a country’s OGP performance.

The IRM hires and trains national researchers who are experts in their national context. 2015 was a year of many achievements for the IRM. There are now trained and active researchers gathering information on the OGP process and the implementation of Action Plan commitments in 63 countries. To keep up with the growing number of OGP countries, the International Experts Panel was expanded with the addition of five new members who will direct the overall function of the IRM in 2016.

REPORT PRODUCTION The IRM published 18 reports in 2015

Prior to 2014, there was some ambiguity in the OGP calendar, and governments published either one or two-year Action Plans. The IRM reviewed Action Plans after the first year in order to inform the development of the next Action Plan. These are referred to as Progress Reports.

In 2015 Progress Reports were issued on the Action Plans of some of the newest countries in OGP, as well as the eight founding governments.

In 2015 the IRM began reporting not only in the middle of the two-year Action Plan cycle, but also at the end. These briefer End of Term reports focus on final accountability for completing commitments. The IRM has begun production of End of Term Reports for Hungary, Finland and the Netherlands, which will be published in early 2016.

18 IRM REPORTS PUBLISHED IN 2015

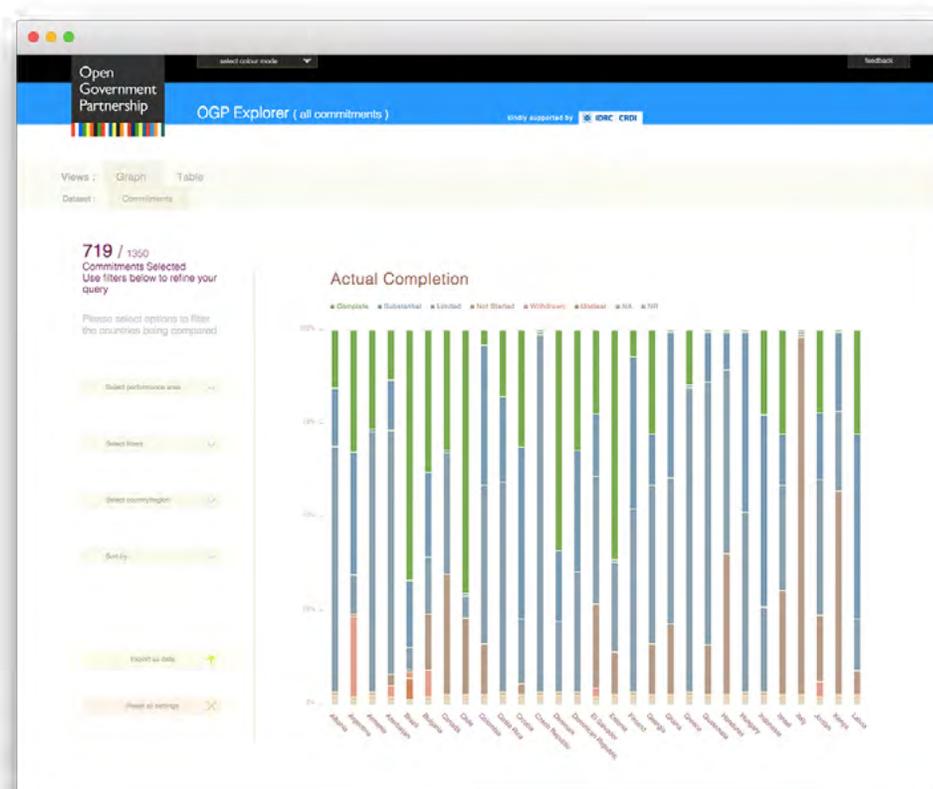
GROWING OUR RESEARCH In 2015 the IRM team focused its efforts on improving research methods. Here are a few highlights

→ **Starred commitments:** the IRM has intensified its efforts to identify exemplary commitments. In 2015, the IRM assigned stars only to those commitments that would significantly transform their policy area by opening government, no longer assigning stars to those that would make a moderate difference. A tighter process for identification of such commitments allows OGP stakeholders reading IRM reports to be able to more easily find them. While this means fewer stars overall, those commitments that get stars are reforms that OGP can be proud of.

→ **Improving readability:** with much of the basic method now in place, IRM researchers and staff have been able to devote more attention to simplifying presentation and improving the readability of the reports.

→ **Tracking outcomes:** the IRM is going beyond looking at whether governments implemented commitments by looking at whether government behavior and performance actually changed when commitments were implemented. This new information will be published in the 2016 End of Term Reports for the first time and will give insight into how OGP is changing business as usual.

→ **Tracking recommendations:** beginning in 2015, the IRM has been working to develop clearly trackable and measurable recommendations. This will give the IRM the capacity in future Action Plans to track how many governments respond to IRM recommendations.



[Click here for the OGP Explorer.](#)

PROMOTING AND COMMUNICATING IRM FINDINGS

In collaboration with the OGP Support Unit, the IRM team worked to support researchers in disseminating their country findings in order to improve countries' future Action Plans. In 2015, 88% of reports had formal launch activities, a 22% increase from 2014, with government ministers speaking at 25% of them.

DATA RELEASE, ANALYSIS AND SUPPORT FOR EXTERNAL RESEARCH

The IRM published data for all the 2015 reports on the OGP website and there has been a great increase in the number of requests for assistance analyzing this data and of papers published in the last year using the data. In addition to government and Steering Committee requests, papers have been written using IRM data on topics such as: **freedom of information reform, fiscal transparency, policy scope of**

action plans, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the effectiveness of multistakeholder forums. The IRM encourages all interested parties to use its data, which is free and easily accessible on **our website** and easily visualizable on the **OGP Explorer**.

The IRM's "**Aligning Supply and Demand for Better Governance: Open Data in the Open Government Partnership**" paper was presented at the 2015 International Open Data Conference. The authors, Sonia Khan and Joseph Foti, highlighted three areas for improving open data commitments in OGP National Action Plans: focusing open data commitments on governance, getting the governance structures right for open data, and focusing open data on critical sectors such as health and environment.

Subnational Pilot Program

Across the world, subnational governments are implementing some of the most innovative and practical applications of open government and public participation. Their activities have great potential to meet the daily needs of citizens. For this reason, in 2015 OGP decided to engage subnational governments by launching a **pilot program**.

The participation of subnational governments in OGP was a major theme of the October **OGP Global Summit** in Mexico City. A well-attended plenary session with civil society leaders alongside mayors from Mexico City, Tshwane (South Africa) and Tirana (Albania), the deputy mayor of Paris and a former mayor of Washington, D.C. focused on the role OGP can play in subnational government reform. There were also a number of very successful smaller workshops and discussions on the topic.

Prior to the summit, the Steering Committee agreed a two-year pilot program for subnational governments. In December OGP launched a **call for expressions of interest** from potential participants.

THE OGP SUBNATIONAL PILOT PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO MEET A NUMBER OF OBJECTIVES

- **1** Foster more diverse political leadership and commitment to OGP from different levels of government.
- **2** Hold governments accountable at the local level, where many citizens are directly accessing services and information.
- **3** Learn how OGP can best support subnational governments in becoming more open, accountable and responsive to their citizens, and determine the best structure for subnational participation in OGP.
- **4** Discover and promote new and innovative open government techniques and practices emerging at the subnational level around the world.
- **5** Create practical opportunities for subnational governments to learn from each other, share experiences, and build upon the open government work of their counterparts.
- **6** Support and empower subnational government reformers with technical expertise and inspiration, and create the right conditions and incentives for them to make concrete commitments to open government.
- **7** Broaden and deepen participation of civil society organizations in OGP.

Evidence-Based Learning

After four years and 2,250 commitments, OGP is now well positioned to demonstrate the effectiveness of its model in generating ambitious open government reforms in participating countries. OGP's **research agenda** describes what we know, and need to know, to ensure the OGP model is producing ambitious, tangible results.

In 2015 OGP worked with research partners, including Global Integrity, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre and Princeton, to gather information about how well countries are meeting OGP process requirements and implementing their National Action Plans. The research helped us better understand key **trends** and **patterns** in compliance with OGP processes and implementation of commitments. A number of qualitative **case studies** were also completed, which attempt to understand changes in behaviors, relationships, and actions of senior political leaders, mid-level government reformers and civil society actors to **explain the success rates** of OGP commitments.

To make sure these efforts to assess OGP's impact in the short and long term come together, OGP invested significant effort in a monitoring and evaluation plan in 2015. In the short term, there are indicators to track OGP's progress towards its **four strategic objectives**. In the long term, the indicators will track expected ultimate outcomes should the strategic objectives be successfully implemented. Monitoring and evaluation have become an integral part of OGP's culture of learning, reflection and adjustment. In the future, OGP plans to commission a midterm learning review that will allow us to better understand the impact of the first two years of the OGP four-year strategy.

This body of research forms an excellent learning resource for government officials and

civil society actors working in OGP, and enables OGP to form a better understanding of where and how its interventions are leading to positive outcomes. In the future, OGP will invest more

time and resources in understanding the long-term impact of open government commitments and OGP's contribution to creating real changes that improve the lives of people around the world.

IDRC

For civil society to be strong and effective at the national level, organizations need to learn from each other and have the right tools and research at their disposal. The Civil Society Engagement team initiates research, and develops and shares tools, resources, and experiences across countries. Support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) made much of the following work in 2015 possible:

→ The OGP Explorer, launched in May at the 2015 International Open Data Conference, provides the OGP community easy access to, and visualization of, the wealth of data that OGP has collected. For civil society, it is a great advocacy tool. At the Global Summit, an updated version was released with an improved user interface and a lot more data on how countries are doing.

→ The report "From Informing to Empowering – Improving Government-Civil Society Interactions Within OGP" (full report/policy brief) critically assesses how governments have interacted with civil society within the OGP process so far. It provides in-depth analysis and recommendations, captures lessons on government and civil society engagement through an overview of all OGP participating countries and in-depth case studies on nine OGP countries. Recommendations include pushing for better and more inclusive Permanent Dialogue Mechanisms, and revisiting the consultation guidelines that guide the interaction between government and civil society.

→ In August 2015, the OGP CSE team launched a call for proposals for six mini-grants to fund research on cross-thematic or cross-country trends within OGP. Over 55 proposals were received, on a range of topics including natural-resource extraction, participatory budgeting, access to justice, and explorations of why OGP succeeds in certain countries and doesn't do as well in others. Six papers were selected to receive the grant, of which the three best papers were presented as lightning talks at the 2015 OGP Global Summit in Mexico.

Communicating the OGP Story



OGP Staff at the Global Summit, September 2015

In 2015, the OGP Support Unit replaced the international public relations firm that had been running outreach with an in-house communications team. To best meet the communications objectives outlined in the [four-year strategy](#), the OGP Support Unit looked for media professionals with a solid background in open government issues, and was able to hire a communications director in March and a communications officer in late October. Early projects included issuing [branding guidelines](#), relaunching the [OGP newsletter](#), and working together with the Civil Society Engagement, IRM and Government Support and Peer Exchange teams to create informational brochures. In addition, the team enjoyed the creative challenge of promoting the OGP Explorer with a series of video teasers, which received great pick-up on social media.

The major communications undertaking of 2015 was the October OGP Global Summit in Mexico. The communications team began working closely with the social media experts in the office of the President of Mexico in August to ensure that the OGP community was kept up to date on the latest summit developments. The team also worked closely

with the [Huffington Post on an OGP Global Summit special series](#) that included blogs by high-level individuals, including two presidents.

The summit also provided a grand backdrop for the OGP Awards, which are a wonderful way to bring to life the impact open government can have on people's lives. This year's seven winners were all invited to Mexico to present [summaries](#) of their initiatives, some of which made headline news in their home countries.

The communications team closed the year working with the IRM team to develop communications tool kits for researchers to use at national-level launches, and with the CSE team on a series of informational videos for broadcast in 2016. A priority in the coming year will be to generate greater media interest in National Action Plan launches, IRM reports and other significant OGP developments around the world.

OGP Financials in 2015

In 2015, 28% of OGP's US\$5.45 million came from contributions by governments, 16% from bilateral organizations and 56% from foundations. As of January 1, 2015, the OGP Steering Committee implemented a [policy](#) requiring all governments to contribute to the Support Unit's annual budget in order to carry out its programs and services to OGP countries.

Private Donors

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Governments

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Bilateral Aid Agencies

Department for International Development (UK)
US Agency for International Development (USA)
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