

OGP Resolution on the participation of Azerbaijan in the Open Government Partnership

5 December 2018

The Steering Committee recognizes the recent positive steps taken by the government of Azerbaijan, such as the development of a new one-stop shop e-service platform for the registration of non-governmental actors (NGOs). However, the core issues raised in the [original Response Policy letter](#) of concern filed by civil society organizations in 2015, and validated by the Criteria and Standards (C&S) subcommittee, remain unresolved. The evidence assessed by OGP and third party experts shows that, although there have been sporadic improvements in the operating environment of civil society during the last 12 months, the government of Azerbaijan has not made systematic changes or reforms that would thoroughly address the [updated C&S recommendations](#). All NGOs consulted highlighted that there remain substantial challenges in the overall operating environment for civil society in the main two issues addressed by the updated recommendations: registration and funding of NGOs. It is also worth noting that all local stakeholders, including government and civil society within and outside of the OGP Forum, concurred that despite the challenges faced by NGOs, there is value in the continued engagement and space for dialogue that the OGP forum in Azerbaijan creates.

For these reasons, the Steering Committee hereby resolves to extend the suspended¹ status of Azerbaijan for a full action plan cycle, pending the completion of the following milestones:

- I. By 1 March 2019, prepare a roadmap for the development of the 2019-21 OGP action plan in line with at least the minimum requirements outlined in the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards. This roadmap shall also include a timeline of key meetings for the OGP Forum, and the process for involving other stakeholders outside of the OGP Forum to participate in the co-creation of the action plan. This roadmap shall be published by the government, and submitted to the C&S co-chairs by the established deadline.
- II. By 1 June 2019, appoint a high-level government representative (ministerial level or above) to lead the OGP process in Azerbaijan.
- III. By 1 June 2019, begin the development of an OGP action plan through an inclusive process that engages a wide array of actors beyond the OGP Forum, and includes reforms to address the civic space constraints highlighted in the updated recommendations and other domestic priorities.
- IV. By 31 December 2019, complete, adopt and submit to the Support Unit a finalized OGP action plan.
- V. By 31 August 2021, complete implementation of the OGP action plan. This action plan will be assessed by the IRM.

The terms of this resolution are contingent upon the timely achievement of the milestones outlined above. Failure to adhere to the established timeline of the said milestones would

¹ Reflecting updated terminology from “inactive” to “suspended” in line with the revised language incorporated in the Response Policy review approved by the Steering Committee on 20 September 2017.



automatically result in the finalization of the Response Policy review, making Azerbaijan's suspension from the OGP permanent. Permanent suspension would continue until such a time that the government of Azerbaijan provides evidence of meeting the Response Policy recommendations issued on September 2017. Such evidence shall be validated by external expert review and approved by the Steering Committee.

- *If at any point during that action plan cycle the Criteria and Standards subcommittee determines that the original concerns have been addressed by the government of Azerbaijan, it shall recommend to the full Steering Committee that the country be placed back in active status immediately.*
- *While suspended, Azerbaijan will continue to receive Steering Committee and Support Unit assistance, and the IRM will assess its future action plan.*
- *While suspended, the Government of Azerbaijan would not be eligible to vote in Steering Committee elections, and may only attend OGP events as an observer for learning purposes.*
- *While suspended, Azerbaijan's status would be noted on the OGP website and public information materials, where appropriate (e.g., in a list of participating OGP countries).*

