IRM Procedures Manual

Introduction 3

Section 1: IRM Foundations 4

* 1.1. Values of the IRM 4
* 1.2. Design of the IRM Process 5
* 1.3. Authorship and branding 7
* 1.4. Independence and Conflicts of interest 8
* 1.5. Ethical Research Dilemmas 10

Section 2: The IRM Process 12

* 2.I. Before assessment 12
* 2.2. Report preparation 14

Section 3: IRM Research Guidance 21

* IRM Progress Reports 22
* 1. National participation in OGP 22
* I.1. History of OGP participation 22
* I.2. OGP Leadership in [Country] 23
* I.3. Institutional participation in OGP 25

2. National OGP Process 28

* 2.1. Action Plan Development (Narrative) 34
* 2.2. Ongoing multi-stakeholder forum (Narrative) 34
* 2.3 Self-Assessment (Narrative) 35
* 2.4 Follow-up on Previous IRM Recommendations 35

3. Analysis of action plan contents 37

* Opening text 37
* General overview of the commitments 38
* Themes 38
* Commitment description 40
* 3.3.1. Coding for IRM Variables: Desk Research 42
* 3.3.2. Coding for IRM Variables: After First Year Implementation 50

4. Country context 53

* Stakeholder priorities 53
* Scope of action plan in relation to national context 53

5. General recommendations 54

6. Methodology and sources 55

7. Eligibility Requirements Annex 57

* IRM End of Term Reports 58

Annex A: IRM Charter 64

* I. Overview 64
* II. IRM governance 65

Annex B: Selected Articles of Governance 69

* I. Background and Objectives 69
* II. Participation in OGP 69
* III. OGP action plans and reporting 70

Annex C: Guidance: assessing OGP values for relevance 71

* I. Purpose 71
* II. How to use these values 71
* III. OGP values defined 72

Addenda 75

# Introduction

### About the IRM

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) is a key means by which all stakeholders can track Open Government Partnership (OGP) progress in participating countries. The IRM produces two reports, the first at the end of the first year of implementation (IRM progress report) and the second at the end of the two-year implementation cycle (IRM end of term report). The progress report assesses governments on the development and implementation of OGP action plans and progress in fulfilling open government principles and make technical recommendations for improvements. The end of term report assesses completion at the end of the action plan cycle as well as any changes to government openness during the implementation period. These reports are intended to stimulate dialogue and promote accountability between member governments and citizens.

In order to maintain its status as an independent institution, the IRM reports to different institutions and individuals for the different elements of its mandate. The IRM works under the close supervision of the Independent Experts Panel (IEP), a group of technical experts who design the IRM method, guide the IRM process and provide quality control throughout. The Criteria and Standards Subcommittee of the OGP Steering Committee provides guidance on OGP requirements that form the basis of the IRM assessment method and, when appropriate, provides guidance on IRM governance. The IRM Program Director reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer of OGP for line management issues. The IRM coordinates closely with the Support Unit to promote the findings of individual IRM reports and crosscutting research.

### About the IRM Procedures Manual

This procedures manual aims to combine previously existing relevant documents on OGP’s IRM into one place. By doing this, we hope to assure OGP stakeholders that the IRM works to assess national performance on action plans in an impartial, fact-based manner. The procedures manual also serves as a standing reference for IRM researchers and national stakeholders who would wish to refer to the IRM’s internal processes and standards for producing reports.

To this end, the manual is divided into three parts. The first section, “Structure and Guiding Principles,” deals with crosscutting issues such as IRM governance, values, and overall programmatic goals. The second section, “IRM Process,” focuses on the national level primarily. It illuminates the process for selecting the IRM researcher, assessment, and stakeholder engagement, as well as review and quality control. It also records existing outreach efforts on past IRM reports. The third and final section contains guidance on coding each of the IRM variables and on each area assessed for each OGP country, according to the IRM mandate. Annexes contain the relevant governance documents such as the IRM Charter, selected portions of the OGP Articles of Governance, and the Open Government Declaration.

This manual will be updated periodically as necessary changes are made and will be updated online.

# Section 1: IRM Foundations

## 1.1. Values of the IRM

### A. Goals

* The IRM produces two independent reports for each country participating in OGP to encourage national dialogue on transparency, participation, and accountability with the long-term goal of opening government in all OGP countries.
* The IRM seeks to model openness in its operations, including through timely release of its data and reports as well as proactive publication of its procedures.
* The IRM seeks to promote open government and strengthen OGP by adding credibility and fact-based analysis to OGP activities.

### B. Research standards

1. **Coverage and balance:** IRM reports aim to identify both the strengths and weaknesses in each OGP participating country’s performance.
2. **Independence:** In all cases, the IRM strives to maintain independence of mind and independence of appearance. Where conflicts of interest arise, steps to make those conflicts public and to resolve those conflicts shall be undertaken. Researchers and IRM staff will work to ensure that the IRM conflict of interest policy is applied consistently.
3. **Fairness and context:** Because the IRM aims to improve national dialogue, it is necessarily tailored to the unique case of each country and its action plan. At the same time, the IRM will seek to apply the method in a consistent, fair way that encourages the OGP “race to the top.” The IRM strives to balance these two, sometimes competing, objectives.
4. **Assumptions:** The IRM researchers assume neither honesty nor dishonesty of interviewees when conducting investigations.
5. **Inclusiveness:** The IRM will continually improve its outreach to interested stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental. The IRM will assume a pluralistic, broad definition of stakeholders to include interested and affected, organized and unorganized parties.
6. **Impartiality:** The IRM works to advance the goals of open government, but provides needed criticism where those goals are not being met. This means that where OGP or an OGP-participating country is not meeting its goals in a particular country or across countries, the IRM reserves the right to describe those shortcomings in a constructive, public fashion.
7. **Non-interference:** As part of joining OGP, a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative, each country agrees to undergo an independent review of its progress. The IRM, in carrying out this review, maintains the final say on all contents of IRM research products.
8. **Openness:** The IRM seeks to model openness in its actions. This includes making stakeholder meetings as open as possible and providing opportunities to comment on reports to all stakeholders.

### C. Outputs

1. **Ranking and eligibility:** The IRM will not engage in ranking countries or in working to determine aid eligibility.
2. **Tone:** The IRM seeks to communicate its process and findings in an impartial, evidence-based, simple-to-use format.
3. **Findings:** The IRM aims, through its research, to provide concrete, actionable recommendations that may be undertaken by OGP governments.
4. **Stakeholder feedback:** The IRM will strive to meet the highest standards of researcher responsibility and ethics by ensuring that all interview subjects are aware of the IRM process and findings from evaluation.

## 1.2. Design of the IRM Process

The IRM reports aim to encourage national dialogue on open government with the long-term goal of opening government in all OGP countries. Because the IRM aims to improve national dialogue, its method ensures that each progress report is necessarily tailored to the unique case of each country and its action plan. At the same time, the IRM will seek to apply the method in a consistent, fair method that encourages the OGP “race to the top.” The IRM strives to balance these two, sometimes competing, objectives through an independent but participatory evaluation that takes into account the following characteristics.

### A. Unique country context

Each OGP action plan is made in a country with unique economic, cultural, and political circumstances. The IRM seeks to support the maximum possible ambition and completion of concrete, relevant, and meaningful commitments. IRM reports aim to put commitments into a broader national policy context to inform readers and OGP stakeholders while still respecting each government’s primary responsibility for the OGP action plan.

Because of each country’s unique circumstance, the IRM, through its deep, ongoing engagement with national researchers, will ensure that commitments have direct relevance to the OGP action plan submitted as part of the OGP process. With that in mind, the IRM evaluates the degree of each commitment’s completion with direct reference to action plan text.

At the same time, the IRM is charged with evaluating the relevance of the OGP action plan generally to the state of major open government issues (as defined by the OGP Values and Open Government Declaration). In that sense, for both a national and an international audience, the IRM provides context about where the action plan—as a whole and by its components—fits within ongoing national political debate. The IRM also gathers stakeholder views on the relevance of the action plan to that larger community debate.

### B. Reliability

There are limits to the degree to which reports may be country-specific. For instance, OGP espouses a “race-to-the-top,” which requires countries to learn from one another and to make some comparisons between how they have faced similar challenges. Similarly, while OGP is not a standards-setting organization, OGP does have standard procedural requirements and definitions agreed upon by all countries upon entry to OGP. To be fair and to enhance learning, the IRM works to apply consistently many of its indicators across countries, to create uniform data and encourage learning across all of the OGP’s participating countries.

Similarly, while each researcher brings his/her own experience, the IRM aims to have the same result regardless of researcher in terms of data coding. For that reason, the IRM staff work closely with researchers to assure that indicators and data are produced in as uniform a way as possible while still maintaining the importance of providing feedback useful to the national context.

### C. Participatory methods

The IRM combines a traditional, ‘accounting’ approach, where evaluators audit performance and report results to decision-makers, with a more participatory approach, where evaluators facilitate and record reflective learning for stakeholder empowerment, and report results to all stakeholders. IRM Reports are:

* Tools for accountability, measuring government compliance with stated OGP action plan goals.
* Tools for learning, where governments learn better practices and civil society stakeholders are empowered to advocate for and monitor change.
* Standardized, with an established technical methodology.
* Context-specific, with extensive processes for incorporating stakeholders.

It is for these dual characteristics that the IRM method combines stakeholder participation with the researchers’ technical expertise. Some advantages to this design include:

* Identifying the most relevant open government issues in the country by involving key government and civil society players in evaluation.
* Promoting stakeholder learning about the OGP program and understanding of other points of view, which will improve OGP’s performance over time.
* Mobilizing a shared commitment to act on report recommendations.

## 1.3. Authorship and branding

IRM reports and all derivative products (such as crosscutting analysis or data releases) are the result of a collaborative process between IRM researchers, the IRM program staff, and the IEP. Because the IRM’s primary goal is to stimulate national-level dialogue, the IRM privileges authorship by the IRM national researcher by displaying the author’s name and institutional affiliation (where appropriate) on the front of national-level IRM publications. At the same time, as the IRM is an institutional brand that must maintain standards across the brand, the IRM staff and the IEP reserve the ability to edit reports to ensure consistency in tone, audience, form, and content.

The following standards apply to authorship of IRM reports:

* **Assume a default of researcher expertise.** The IRM staff and the IEP defer to the expertise of the IRM researcher when evaluating an IRM product.
* **Transparency in editing.** In cases where it seems that the IRM national researcher has deviated from the IRM standards in terms of tone, audience, form, or content, the IRM staff will, through the quality control process, make all efforts to come to an amenable presentation and interpretation of the facts to meet both the author’s requirements and the IRM’s standards across reports.
* **Anonymity and credit.** Unless the author wishes otherwise, the author’s (or authors’) name(s) will be prominently displayed on the front of the report. Where the author is associated with an institution or where the author is an institution, the institution’s name and logo will be displayed prominently with that of the IRM. The author may opt out of direct attribution, may opt out of use of an institutional logo, or may chose to engage with the IRM in a personal capacity rather than as a representative of their respective institution if such engagements are allowable within the researcher’s respective institution. Both institutional affiliation and personal authorship are the assumed and encouraged default positions of the IRM publication.
* **Removal of IRM researchers.** In cases where the IRM researcher is unable to meet the terms of their research contract, the IRM Program Director reserves the right to finish the IRM reports. Credit for authorship will be determined based on the level of contribution of the researcher and the wishes of the IRM national researcher. As above, the author may choose to opt out of authorship credits.
* **Intellectual property.** The OGP, as represented by the IEP, remains the ultimate owner of reports produced through the IRM process. All published reports will be published under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license in order to encourage reuse of the data.
* **Branding.** Reports will be branded uniformly in terms of graphic design and layout of content. The IRM national researcher may use the IRM brand and logo to create products (websites, surveys, pamphlets, presentations) during the research, publication, and promotion of IRM findings when acting in an official capacity as the IRM researcher. The IRM researcher will inform IRM staff of additional products and IRM staff may require a review of products before publication. It is assumed that the products will maintain a consistency of quality, tone, and audience with the broader body of work carried out by the researcher.
* **Reuse.** Data collected as part of the research through the online tool will be made available after publication with a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license. The national researcher is strongly encouraged to use information collected during the research and writing process to inform other work they may undertake once publication of initial reports is undertaken.

## 1.4. Independence and Conflicts of interest

### A. Independence, integrity, and safeguards

The OGP IRM depends on both independence of mind and independence of appearance. To maintain independence and integrity, the IRM works to ensure that apparent conflicts of interest are dealt with in a proactive way.

Specifically the IRM faces a number of threats to independence and has developed corresponding safeguards:

* **Self-interest threat** - the threat that a financial or other interest will inappropriately influence an IRM researcher's judgment or behavior. As a safeguard, the IRM requires all serious candidates for the national researcher position to declare outstanding contracts with governments or multilateral organizations with a vested interest in report outcomes. The conflicts of interest policy below is applied to the researcher and the IEP agrees on an appropriate remedy.
* **Bias threat** - the threat that an IRM researcher will, as a result of political, ideological, or social convictions, or ties of familiarity, take a position that is not objective. The IRM passes all reports through multiple layers of quality control, including the IEP. Where reports do not meet the standards of the IRM in terms of tone and content, the IRM team has worked with researchers to develop neutral, fact-based, constructive reports. Where that is not possible, researchers have been replaced.
* **Undue influence threat** - the threat that external influences, or pressures will impact a researcher's ability to make independent and objective judgments. The IRM has worked to assure researchers adequate independence while conducting an IRM report by providing international cover and general standards for review of all documents. Additionally, the IEP, together with the author of each report, maintains final say on the document.

The IRM researcher’s principal role is that of finding facts and disseminating findings rather than advocacy. The IRM researcher will take necessary steps to ensure s/he is not carrying out advocacy activities while bearing the title of OGP IRM researcher and to ensure that his/her affiliated organization is not unduly influencing the process or outcome of the research.

At the same time, it is understood that the IRM does not fully cover a full year’s salary and many researchers have other jobs that may include advocacy activities, in addition to their political rights of citizenship. For that reason, the IRM researcher is asked to clarify to interested public when speaking in their official capacity as the IRM researcher for a particular country.

### B. Conflicts of interest policy

The IRM recognises that an essential aspect of its credibility is its independence, both substantive and perceived.

**Review circumstances**

The IRM staff and IEP review conflicts of interest in four instances:

* **During hiring:** During the process of hiring researchers the IRM staff and the IEP check IRM researcher applicants with governments and other informed stakeholders. If investigation suggests that applicants for a given country include two or more equally qualified researchers, but that one has a more independent profile, the IRM will show preference to that candidate.
* **Annual declarations:** After being contracted, each researcher makes an annual declaration of interests to the IRM.
* **Change in circumstances:** Researchers are required to inform the IRM staff promptly of any new circumstances or developments that may trigger the conflicts of interest policy.
* **New information:** The IRM staff and IEP reserve the right to review, as needed, a case where previously unknown information raises questions of independence.

**Conflicts of interest:**

There are three categories of conflicts of interest. Each leads to a different set of potential actions by the IEP. These are *actual*, *potential*, and *perceived* conflicts of interest. Actual conflicts of interest require immediate dismissal while potential and perceived conflicts of interest may require additional interventions. (See “Safeguards and Mitigations” below.) Conflicts of interest can include the following:

*Actual conflicts of interest*

* An individual currently working in an official capacity or speaking on behalf of an international organization (e.g. Bretton Woods institutions, regional development banks, OECD).
* An individual who works in an official capacity or speaks on behalf of a civil society organization represented in the global OGP steering committee or who has done so in the past year.
* An individual who currently carries out partisan political activities, supporting a particular candidate or political party as part of his or her regular work. This does not rule out individuals who take positions on particular legislation or regulation, or who work for organizations that take positions on issues.
* An individual with direct ties of familiarity to a government employee directly involved with OGP in the country to be assessed.
* An individual who is currently an active civil society participant in their country’s national OGP process, or who is head of an organization that actively participates in their country’s OGP process. The goal of this provision is to avoid a situation in which the national researcher is expected to assess a government-civil society deliberative process in which they are directly involved.

*Potential conflicts of interest*

* An individual who has worked in an official capacity or spoke on behalf of an OGP participating government within the past year in matters relevant to OGP values.
* An individual who has worked as a consultant to the evaluated government in a capacity directly pertaining to OGP or to the national action plan in the past year.
* An individual who is an employee of an organization participating in the country’s national OGP process, without performing or responsibility of any OGP-related programmatic duties.
* An individual who is an employee of an organization that actively participates in their country’s OGP process.

*Perceived conflicts of interest*

Where a third party could form the view that a researcher’s permanent job, official or professional role or private interest could improperly influence the performance of their duties. This includes situations that risks appearance of independence not included in above items.

**Safeguards and Mitigations**

During the process of hiring researchers, the IRM staff and the IEP check applicants with governments and other informed stakeholders, and the applicants make an initial declaration of interests.

In cases where a possible conflict triggers the policy, the IEP and IRM staff will work with the national researcher within the framework of this conflicts of interest policy to identify appropriate mitigation measures. If such mitigation measures cannot be mutually agreed, then the IRM may request the resignation of the researcher.

Actual conflicts of interest situations will be cause enough to disqualify a potential candidate from being an IRM researcher.

In cases where a potential or perceived conflicts of interest trigger the policy safeguards and mitigations include, but are not limited to:

1. Withhold use of organization branding, only using the researchers name.
2. Include a disclaimer in the report disclosing that while the researcher is an employee of the organization, the views and content of the report reflect her or his position as the IRM researcher and not the organization’s view.
3. Submit a written agreement committing the potential researcher to step down form active participation in the OGP process, redistribute any OGP-related programmatic duties allocated to the potential researcher as an employee of the organization, or to refrain from adopting public statements directly related to specific action plan commitments.

Safeguards are to be entered voluntarily and will be proportional to the risk of potential or perceived conflict of interest and framed accordingly to the specific context or country case. If such mitigation measures cannot be mutually agreed, then the IRM reserves the right to withdraw from hiring process and re-post the position.

## 1.5. Ethical Research Dilemmas

In addition to the above policies, the participatory nature of the IRM review also implies some ethical risks and gray areas, which IRM researchers should bear in mind to guarantee reports are of the highest quality. This section briefly reviews these ethical challenges, in order to reassure stakeholders that the IRM takes these challenges seriously.

### A. Evaluation Fallacies

The literature on monitoring and evaluation has identified three evaluation fallacies or risks that are of special relevance to IRM researchers:

* **Methodologicalism:** IRM researchers should not believe that simply by following the IRM Procedures Manual, they are behaving ethically. Actually, the IRM method is subject to many ethical risks, detailed in this section.
* **Relativism:** IRM researchers do not treat all opinion data with equal trust and weight, but rather seek to verify and describe the nature of those opinions. For example, IRM researchers cannot report the government self-assessment or a civil servant’s interview statements as conclusive evidence. Similarly, one opinion from a single civil society representative should not be represented as a majority opinion of a country’s civil society. At the same time, all participants’ voices should be given equal opportunity and reported.
* **Pluralism/Elitism:** IRM researchers should not give the most powerful (or loudest) voices more priority because they are seen to hold more prestige or power than more marginalized (or quieter) voices.

Finding the right balance to avoid these fallacies requires patience, deliberation, and awareness.

### B. Evaluation Politics

Any evaluation is closely tied to power relationships, so understanding the influences and mechanics of those power dynamics is vitally important. IRM reports must identify those commitments and associated staff or programs that are excelling as well as those commitments and associated staff or programs that are not achieving the same level of success. Since careers, funding, and projects can be tied to evaluation results like the IRM progress reports, IRM researchers take great care when discussing sensitive issues, challenges to performance, or situations in which an individual, department, or organization stands to benefit from a certain evaluation.

Other aspects of human nature may unduly influence the IRM evaluations’ results. The following human weaknesses can affect both interviewees and the IRM researchers:

* **A ‘Look Good, Avoid Blame’ mindset:** People want to do well, and they do not want to be associated with failure. IRM researchers must be willing to write a true report that accurately assesses government progress. This requires researchers to be aware of the tendency of those involved in evaluations to rationalize setbacks as beyond their control or otherwise pass blame. If stakeholders criticize the OGP process or IRM method, timeline, scope, or design, IRM researchers should record and report these critiques, but they should also try to identify the validity of such critiques in each specific circumstance.
* **Subjective Interpretation of Reality phenomenon:** Both evaluators and stakeholders have preexisting beliefs and attitudes about open government, policies, political parties, and specific commitments. The IRM researchers must strive to be clear and fair and to rigorously explain conclusions or opinions that may be rooted in prejudices, including their own.

# Section 2: The IRM Process

An independent researcher under the guidance of the IEP produces the IRM progress reports. In each country, a researcher or team of researchers carries out consultative processes with government, civil society, and the private sector in order to review government progress. The goal of the IRM is to deliver credible, non-partisan description of the OGP process and results of commitments, and to provide technical recommendations based on the input of government, civil society, and the private sector. Each report is written to inform civil society and government input in the design of the next action plan, identifying areas of accomplishment and key areas for improvement.

## 2.I. Before assessment

### A. Researcher hiring and recruitment

The IRM seeks to hire public policy experts in the governance field to produce reports of the highest quality and integrity. In order to do so, each candidate is vetted through a review process, as detailed below.

Applications are sought from individuals and organizations. The IRM also solicits third-party nominations. There is a strong preference for nationals of the county and for those with experience relevant to country action plans.

The hiring steps include:

* **Open call:** IRM staff updates the standard call for applications with the specifics of the current call. The call includes a brief overview of OGP and the IRM and details, qualifications, and duties of the IRM researcher as well as a brief overview of the decision making process.
* **Posting:** The call for applications is posted on the OGP website for a minimum of four weeks. The call is circulated to CSO networks and government contacts in relevant countries.
* **Selection:** Applications received are reviewed by IRM staff against the list of qualifications posted in the call. In countries with few or no qualified applicants, the call is circulated again to CSO networks and government contacts in relevant countries.
* **Interview:** A telephone or Skype meeting is scheduled with each of the finalists in each country. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the scope of work, compensation, applicant’s experience, and more. Based on these interviews, the IRM staff identifies a short list of finalists. Often, these lists may have between one and three candidates.
* **Vetting process:** The CVs of the short-listed finalists are sent to the government contact point in the country. Governments are given five business days to raise any issue of conflict of interest (see Section 1, IV for full conflicts of interest policy) relating to the proposed candidate. The IRM reserves the right to check applications with other parties.
* **Conflict of interest:** In cases where a potential conflict of interest has been raised, the IRM staff gathers more information and submits the application to the IEP for review. The IEP makes a final decision on whether a potential conflict of interest warrants the non-appointment of a potential researcher.
* **Final approval:** The list of finalists is sent to the IEP for approval.
* **Contracting:** The IRM staff sends the contract and terms of reference to the IRM researcher for signature.

Following the end of each research cycle, the IRM decides whether to

1. renew the current IRM researcher’s contract
2. invite the IRM researcher to compete again in an open call, or
3. open the call to new IRM researchers and not renew the contract.

Criterion for renewal include

1. an assessment of the researcher’s fulfillment of the prior contract and quality of reports,
2. researcher’s expressed interest to continue working, and
3. an evaluation of the IRM researcher according to the conflicts of interest policy.

Quality of reports is based on quality of research and writing, timeliness, professionalism, and quality of stakeholder consultation.

### B. Researcher training

IRM researchers are required to participate in training before the research process begins. The IRM organizes in-person group trainings that IRM researchers are strongly encouraged to attend. Participants who cannot attend in person are offered the option of a virtual meeting.

The training provides an in-depth look at a variety of topics including IRM mission, research ethics, research method and process, and writing style. Individual and group exercises as well as real-life examples are provided. Ample opportunities for questions are provided and one-on-one sessions are offered with IRM staff for IRM researchers who have questions related to their country.

### C. Initial contact with government

In cases where IRM researchers do not have existing contacts with government, the IRM staff helps make formal introductions or provides the researcher with a letter of introduction. IRM researchers must reach out to the government contact person prior to the beginning of the research process to introduce him/herself and present a research plan (see Section 2.2).

### D. Initial contact with civil society

In cases where IRM researchers do not have contacts with civil society in the country, the IRM can help make formal introductions or provide the researcher with a list of CSO contacts. Ideally, the IRM researchers will send the research plan to CSO stakeholders involved in OGP who can forward it to their relevant networks as appropriate.

## 2.2. Report preparation

### A. Research plan

Based on the action plan published to the OGP website, IRM staff will break down the action plan content into a research plan template. IRM researchers will review, complete, and return the template within 2 weeks (14 calendar days).

The research plan will cover all aspects of the research process, including:

* The list of documents to be reviewed (which will expand during the research process),
* The list of interviews to be conducted and with whom,
* Ideas for conducting stakeholders consultation including format, topic outline, questions, and potential list of invitees (more on stakeholders consultation below), and
* An outline of the final report, according to the sequence detailed in the research guide

The research plan maps how the research process will be conducted and should be shared with government once approved by IRM staff.

Because the IRM serves both roles of fact-finding and listening to the viewpoint of various stakeholders, the IRM researcher should be conscious of the following elements in developing the research plan:

* Care should be taken in inviting stakeholders outside of the "usual suspects" list of invitees already participating in existing processes.
* Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g. online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews).
* How the IRM researcher will gather end-user input on commitment activities (when possible).
* The IRM researcher should be conscious of the amount of time he/she spends educating the public about OGP, with care not to displace the primary responsibility for raising awareness from civil society and government.

### B. Document review

The IRM researcher will review documentation pertinent to the action plan to be evaluated. This includes, but is not limited to, the government’s self-assessment report, official websites, news articles, and where they exist, independent civil society reports on progress of OGP implementation or third party reports, studies or research on policy or thematic areas related to commitments in action plan.

### C. Government interviews

In order to solicit the broadest feedback possible, the IRM researcher will make every effort to interview at least one government officer of the appropriate level for each commitment.

The IRM researcher will also interview the official OGP government point of contact in the country to gather feedback on the OGP process more broadly, as relevant to Sections I and II of the Progress Report.

### D. Stakeholder meetings

Each lRM researcher will carry out at least one stakeholder meeting at the national level with a variety of stakeholders. It is recommended that at least one of any potential meetings take place with civil society organizations that are not already heavily involved in OGP. At the same time, some stakeholder meetings should involve non-government individuals and organizations that have been close to the OGP process.

The format of the meeting is left to the IRM researcher’s discretion. Suggestions include organization of consultations by sector, geographic location, and commitment, as illustrated in the table below.

In addition, IRM researchers may choose to conduct a survey to reach a broader audience, for instance in countries where relevant stakeholders are very dispersed geographically. The table below shows approaches to arranging stakeholder meetings used for past progress reports.

**Table: Differing approaches to stakeholder outreach**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Logic** | **Forum 1** | **Forum 2** | **Others** | **Advantage** | **Disadvantage** |
| **Brazil** | Geographic | In Brasilia | Sao Paolo |  | Two most influential cities | They may not be representative |
| **Canada** | Geographic & linguistic | Forum in Ottawa | Webinar/  discussion with translation | Questionnaire for regional groups | Collecting information from a smaller group | Virtual meetings are challenging, particularly with translation |
| **Mexico** | Per commitment cluster | Forum with tripartite commission | Interviews with every official partner CSO | Questionnaire for government and CSOs | Groups are well informed | Focused on the capital |
| **Norway** | Per commitment cluster | Gender (including government) | Extractive industries (including government) | Forum 3: Corruption control (including government)  Questionnaire (4th approach) with written response | Very complete; the written format allows for a larger group | Not possible in countries with more than a few topics in action plan |
| **Philippines** | Per social sector | CSOs | Public servant unions |  | Good, specific information | Focused on the capital |
| **South Africa** | Geographic | Cape Town | Durban |  | Brought in new groups that hadn’t participated (especially in Durban) | English-speaking in a country where English is not the only language |

2.3. Quality control

All IRM progress reports undergo a process of quality control. See [flowchart](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/search?q=combined%20database%20with%20new%20schema) for a visual representation of the quality control process.

### Stage 1: IRM staff review and quality control process

The IRM staff also tracks and manages quality for in-country research and the drafting of reports for each OGP participating country, to enhance, formalize, and develop quality control processes for IRM reports. For each IRM report, the program staff ensures the following:

1. The report accurately describes the institutional context of the OGP in each participating country, including:
   1. Date of joining.
   2. The lead agency in charge of coordinating the OGP process and implementing the OGP action plan.
   3. Making clear the relationship of the researcher to the IRM review process.
2. Relevant and accurate due dates for the development process of the action plan and whether views of civil society were included.
3. The report includes multiple stakeholder views in the process of implementation of the action plan.
4. With respect to commitments in each OGP country action plan, the report describes, using rigorous evidence:
   1. Where grouping together of various commitments under themes.
   2. That the researcher has clearly addressed the guiding research questions in the progress report template to describe:
      1. Context & objectives
      2. Completion
      3. Early results
      4. Next Steps

For the end of term report the following research questions must also be addressed:

* + 1. Completion at the end of the implementation cycle
    2. Did the commitment open government?

1. In reviewing the government’s self assessment activities:
   1. All relevant, accurate due dates are provided in the government self-assessment report.
   2. Whether the self assessment report is shared with stakeholders, either:
      1. In the national/administrative language, in English, or in both.
      2. Online and/or through other channels.
   3. Whether views of civil society are included in the self-assessment process.
   4. How recommendations from previous IRM reports were incorporated in the country’s action plan
2. That in the Recommendations section, the progress report covers three areas:
   1. Relevant government actions.
   2. What stakeholders want from the next action plan.
   3. IRM recommendations for general next steps.
3. The methodology for each report is reviewed, in particular the data gathering activities, and fact-checked for discrepancies.
4. Preparation of executive summaries for each report.

### Stage 2: IEP review

An International Experts Panel (IEP) directly oversees the IRM. This panel is made up of ten renowned experts in transparency, participation, and accountability with five Steering Members and five Technical Advisors. The former’s mandate is to defend the credibility of IRM research and IRM reports, and the latter focus on quality control. Overall, the IEP plays the principal role of guiding development and implementation of the IRM process. Taking a hands-on approach to developing and revising the structure of the IRM report and research method, they guide the IRM program staff on how to integrate lessons from cycle-to-cycle how to improve the IRM review process, and how to produce meaningful and high-quality reports.

The Steering Members play a role in promoting uptake and discussion of results at the national level. When necessary, the Steering Members work together with the IRM Program Director and OGP Chief Executive Officer to identify countries where IRM findings are likely to merit further dialogue (and potentially mediation) between government officials, civil society, and researchers.

With respect to the country-level reports, the IEP members, as experts in the fields of transparency, participation, and accountability, ensure that each national researcher adequately:

1. Provides the necessary evidence to examine the extent to which the implementation of the commitments adopted by OGP participating governments in their country action plans matches the milestones laid out by the government in its action plan.
2. Examines the extent to which the action plan and its commitments reflect, in a country-specific way, the OGP values of transparency, accountability, and civic participation, as articulated in the OGP Declaration of Principles and the Articles of Governance.
3. Provides technical recommendations regarding how countries can improve implementation of each commitment and the plan as a whole, as well as how to realize better the values and principles of OGP, with specific reference to the OGP Articles of Governance and the OGP Declaration of Principles.

The following questions guide the IEP during their review of each IRM report.

1. General: How ready is the document for publication?
   * + Very good with very minor revisions
     + Passable with minor revisions
     + Needs substantial revisions
     + Needs urgent action with IRM staff
2. Style: Is the report clear, concise, and precise?
3. Tone: Is the report written diplomatically and based on evidence?
4. Content:

* Structure: Are commitments organized sensibly?
* Substantiation: Are claims substantiated from the IRM research? Is the ‘Country Context’ adequate for giving meaning to findings? Is the contextual data linked to findings and discussion?
* Internal Consistency: Between the ‘Recommendations’ section and all foregoing sections? All subsections within Section III: Analysis of action plan contents? Throughout all sections when applying the IRM method to interpret specific terms such as ‘transformative potential impact’?

### Stage 3: Pre-publication review

After the IEP review, each IRM report undergoes two commenting periods. In the first, each OGP-participating government and 3-4 civil society organizations are invited to review IRM reports in draft form before they are put out for broader comment. The process of gathering comments during the pre-publication review period for each country report entails the following:

Scope of commentingThe pre-publication comment period ensures that governments and civil society organizations have the opportunity to offer additional information, clarifications, and other evidence; however, neither party has veto power over any section of the reports. IRM researchers take into account pre-publication comments before finalizing the draft reports for publication. These comments will not be made public with the IRM report and can be considered confidential. During this period, the IRM retains the right to share copies of the draft report on an embargoed basis with experts in the country who can help to ensure the highest quality of reporting.

Time frame for first commenting periodFor a period of three weeks (21 calendar days) following receipt of the report, the government and civil society are given an opportunity to identify possible factual errors in their country report. This review period is optional and further opportunities for comments will be provided when the report is available for public comments. Governments need to alert the IRM if they wish to waive this optional comment period. IRM recognizes the time frame is not ideal, but due to the tight schedule of the OGP reporting process, no extensions can be granted.

Post-comment communicationIn cases where comments merit additional verification, the IRM researchers and the IRM staff may need to contact government representatives in charge of the OGP process and CSOs that participated in the pre-publication review for additional information. In order to facilitate ease of communication, there is a strong preference for informal communications. The IRM staff, national researchers, and IEP take each comment seriously in the interest of producing fair and usable reports.

Due to the volume of reporting, the IRM is unable to respond to individual comments in writing. However, IRM staff will communicate informally with governments and/or civil society to provide general feedback on incorporation of pre-publication review comments.

### Stage 4: Responding to pre-publication comments

The IRM takes all comments during the pre-publication period very seriously and evaluates each one based on a standard approach. As a matter of course, the IRM does not publish comment-by-comment responses, but makes staff and researchers available to respond to particular queries. In some cases, IRM researchers have responded independently to government comments.

From the IRM staff perspective, comments that come in from governments or civil society fall into one of three categories shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Green light  (To be added) | * Simple corrections where we clearly made a mistake (e.g. eligibility requirements, basic math, date of joining, mistranslation of OGP documents, etc.) * Additional simple, non-controversial information worth integrating into the report that will not affect coding * Requests to make low-ranking public officials anonymous |
| Yellow light  (Will be considered, weighing evidence for change) | * Information that would change data coding * Information on consultation practices, summaries, or websites that is undocumented * New information on activities that would change coding * New information on activities that does not specify when a task was completed * Requests to expand certain sections to cover more information * Requests for recoding relevance and ambition |
| Red light  (Will not be considered) | * Information on activities that took place well after the implementation period (2-3 months) * General requests for redaction (especially in Section IV: Context areas) * Requests to remove stakeholder viewpoints * Requests to change recommendations and next steps sections * Requests to remove anonymity |

### Stage 5: Public comment

For the second phase of comments on IRM reports, there will be a space on the OGP website for broader public comment on reports, including formal responses by governments. Comments made in this later period will be published alongside a final version of the report.

All reports are put out for public comment in English and the primary national administrative languages. From the date of publication of the report in the primary administrative languages, the comment period is open for two weeks (14 calendar days). Comments received will be collated and published, except where the requester asks to be anonymous or the comments contain abusive or off-topic language. Commenters are asked, but not required, to differentiate comments asking for changes to report contents from comments that they would prefer to be published with the reports.

Where relevant, comments will be integrated into a final version of the report.

# Section 3: IRM Research Guidance

The IRM research guide contains all questions to be answered by national researchers in each OGP participating country’s IRM reports. Researchers will adapt these questions for use in document review, a series of stakeholder meetings, and interviews. The IRM researcher will work with IRM staff to produce two “printable” reports. The first of these documents is the Progress Report on the development and first year of implementation of the country’s OGP action plan. The second is the End of Term Report published following the end of the two years covered by the action plan, which addresses any unfinished commitments or OGP-relevant developments since the publication of the Progress Report.

All reports will be in the national administrative language with executive summaries in both the national language and English.

The original version of this methodology built on the OGP Proposal and Guiding Principles (Approved 12/12/12), public participation on the IRM Concept Note in August 2012, the IEP’s consultation with the Steering Committee in January 2013, as well as a series of opportunities for public participation in February and March 2013. The 2.0 version of this methodology took into consideration the “lessons learned” from the first IRM reporting process, including researcher feedback. This 3.0 version is included as part of the IRM Procedures Manual and has been further refined through use and feedback during the publication of the OGP Cohort Two IRM reports.

The sections are laid out in the order in which they appear in the final version of the report. Each section notes the responsible party for completing the section. Some sections also include hypothetical sample text in red, based on the IRM’s experience. Additional examples can be taken from previous IRM reports.

## 

## IRM Progress Reports

## 1. National participation in OGP

IRM staff will update Section 1.1, “History of OGP participation,” by updating the underlined text in the example text below, which uses the hypothetical country of ‘Taprobane.’ Researchers will verify this section, adding any relevant additional details and translating when applicable. Researchers then complete Section 1.2, “OGP Leadership in [Country]” and adapt Section 1.3, “Institutional Participation in OGP” where necessary.

## I.1. History of OGP participation

**Example of boilerplate text:**

*The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder international initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and sharing among governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, all of which contribute to a common pursuit of open government.*

*Taprobane began its formal participation in July 2011, when President Anula declared her country’s intention to participate in the initiative [Link to Letter][[1]](#endnote-1).*

*In order to participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government by meeting a set of (minimum) performance criteria on key dimensions of open government that are particularly consequential for increasing government responsiveness, for strengthening citizen engagement, and for fighting corruption. Objective, third-party indicators are used to determine the extent of country progress on each of the dimensions. See Section IX: Eligibility Requirements for more details.*

*All OGP-participating governments develop OGP action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Action plans should set out governments’ OGP commitments, which move government practice beyond the status quo. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete on-going reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.*

*Taprobane developed its national action plan from September 2011 to April 2012. The effective period of implementation for the action plan submitted in April was officially 1 July 2014 through 31 July 2013. This mid-term progress report covers the first year of implementation of this period, from [dates]. Beginning in 2015, the IRM also publishes end of term reports to account for the final status of progress at the end of the action plan’s two-year period. Any activities or progress made after the first year of implementation [date] will be assessed in the End of Term report. This report follows on an earlier review of OGP performance, “Taprobane Progress Report 2012–13,” which covered the development of the first action plan and implementation from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.The government published its self-assessment in April of 2013. At the time of writing, July 2013, [describe current status].*

*In order to meet OGP requirements, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) of OGP has partnered with [name of researcher and organization], who carried out this evaluation of the development and implementation of Taprobane’s first action plan. It is the aim of the IRM to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP-participating country. Methods and sources are dealt with in a Methodology and sources (Section VI) in this report.*

*To gather the voices of multiple stakeholders, TSR organized two stakeholder forums, in Tarachi and Galibi, which were conducted according to a focus group model. TSR also reviewed two key documents prepared by the government: a report on Taprobane’s first action plan[[2]](#endnote-2) and the self-assessment published by the government in April 2013.[[3]](#endnote-3) Numerous references are made to these documents throughout this report.*

## I.2. OGP Leadership in [Country]

A) Please use the following coding system to respond to variables in “Table 1.1. OGP leadership in [country]”. These variables all analyze institutional ownership of OGP within the country.

### Structure

*Note: IRM staff inputs researcher responses to these question into the IRM database, coding “1” for “yes” and “0” for “no”.*

1. Clearly designated lead: The variable tracks whether there is a single office or well-structured organization leads OGP. Possible values include:

Yes = A single government agency or a well-structured collaborative organization with representatives from a variety of agencies leads the OGP efforts.

No = No single clearly definitive leader organizes OGP efforts.

1. Single lead vs. shared leadership: Some countries have a multiparty commission or a decision-making body (with or without civil society). This variable tracks that difference. Possible values include:

Single = A single government agency leads the OGP efforts. This is coded as “1” in the database.

Shared = Multiple parties share decision-making duties for OGP efforts. This is coded as “0” in the database.

1. Head of government lead: The variable indicates whether the office of the Chief Executive (or Head of Government) is the leading organization organizing the country’s OGP initiatives. Possible values include:

Yes = The Head of Government or chief executive is the leader of the country’s OGP efforts. If “Yes”

* Yes = The Head of Government or chief executive is the lead implementing agency.
* No = The implementing agency is not the same agency that initially developed the OGP action plan.

No = The Head of Government or chief executive is not the leading office behind the country’s OGP efforts.

### Legal mandate

1. Officially mandated: The variable indicates whether the government’s commitment to OGP is established through an official, publically released mandate. This would include any mandate that government employees would see as binding, regardless of whether it has the force of administrative law. Possible values include:

Yes = The government has established an official mandate for OGP goals that may or may not be legally binding.

No = The government has not established a non-legal mandate related to OGP.

1. Legally mandated: The variable indicates whether the government’s commitment to OGP is established through a legally binding mandate. This would include anything that would pass through administrative law or through legislation. Possible values include:

Yes = The government has established a legal mandate related to OGP goals.

No = The government is not legally mandated to complete OGP activities.

### Continuity and instability

1. Multiple arrangements: The variable indicates whether there was a change in the organization(s) leading or involved with the OGP initiatives during the development and implementation of the action plan. Possible values include:

Yes = One or more government agencies involved with the OGP action plan were removed or replaced by other government agencies.

No = No shift in the organizational structure of involved institutions or agencies occurred during the development and implementation of the action plan.

1. Change of executive: The variable indicates whether the executive leader changed during the duration of the OGP action plan development and implementation phase. Possible values include:

Yes = The government experienced a change in executive leadership during the OGP action plan development or implementation phase.

No = The government did not experience a change in executive leadership during the OGP action plan development or implementation phase.

B) Building on the yes/no answers given for Table 1.1, please describe the lead institutions responsible for the action plan, explain their powers of coordination, and describe how well this fits the challenge laid out by OGP using clear fact-based analysis.

1. *Briefly* orient the reader to the following:

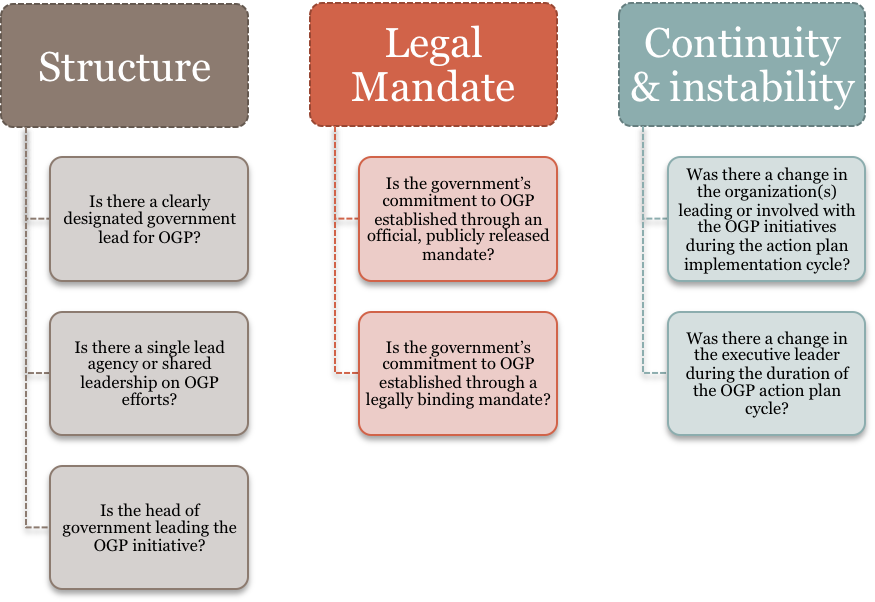
* Form of government (federal/unitary, separation of powers)
* The branch in charge of OGP
* The agency or offices in charge of OGP and whether the head of government is involved
* Whether OGP is led by a multi-agency or single agency operation
* Whether OGP is legally mandated
* If Applicable: whether elections or other significant political events helped or hindered the administration

1. In addition, please comment on your understanding of the following, with the understanding that in most cases these will be approximations:
   1. Amount of budget dedicated to OGP.
   2. Amount of staff dedicated to OGP.

Researchers on their second report should make a brief reference to OGP leadership and mandate during the previous action plan cycle. You do not need to do a full recap, simply highlight any differences in leadership structure or mandate between the previous and current action plan cycles.

**Example:**

Table 1.1: OGP leadership in [Country]



Single

✔

✔

✔



✔



*The Executive Office for Transparency was the leading office responsible for Taprobane’s OGP commitments. However, this Office had little legal power to enforce policy changes on other agencies within government. (See Table 1.1 on the leadership and mandate of OGP in Taprobane). At the current time, its mandate is largely around implementing technological solutions to improve transparency, but it does not have the ability to compel other agencies to enter in commitments. As a result of the limited mandate, the action plan is heavily oriented toward technology and there are few commitments on transparency or accountability. The Executive allocated three staff to oversee implementation of the action plan, however there is no dedicated byline in the Executive’s budget for OGP-related activities.*

*During the latter half of 2012, the government developed an interagency working group and a multi-sector advisory panel. Section 1.3 describes the activities of the working group.*

*The Executive put out Circular A-220 on Open Government Procedures in January 2013. However, this circular does not go into effect until 1 January 2015. It is unclear whether this circular had an impact on the formation of commitments for the second action plan.*

*Finally, it is important to note that Taprobane is a highly federalized system, meaning that the national level government has few “sticks” to compel subnational governments, but a few of the commitments involving subnational government levels show that the national and subnational governments can coordinate when needed. This is not to imply, however, that the consultation (even within government) took place beyond the capital (see Section II on “Development of Action Plan.”).*

## I.3. Institutional participation in OGP

A) Please respond to variables in “Table 1.2. Participation in OGP by government institutions”. These variables describe which government (state) institutions were involved at various stages in OGP. The next section will describe which non-governmental organizations were involved in OGP.

### How did institutions participate in consultation…?

1. **Consult** How many the institution(s) were invited to either participate (1) as attendees or observer in action plan development event or (2) were consulted on the content of the action plan? Which institution(s)?
2. **Propose:** (as a subset of Consult) How many institution(s) proposed specific commitments or activities related to the development of the national action plan? Which institution(s)?
3. **Implement:** (as a subset of Propose) How many institution(s) were identified in the national action plan as the institution responsible for implementation of action plan activities, Which institution(s)? In the narrative note the ones that were assigned implementation responsibilities but did not participate in the design process for the commitments.

### Institutions involved:

1. **Ministries, Departments, and agencies:** A bureaucratic organization subordinate to the Executive tasked with managing a specific sector of public administration
2. **Legislative**: A deliberative assembly with the authority to make laws for a political entity such as a regional administrative area or a country.
3. **Judiciary:** The system of courts in a country (Supreme, Circuit, and local level courts) that interprets and applies the law and serves as the mechanism for the resolution of disputes. This includes quasi-judicial bodies such as arbitrator or tribunal boards.
   1. Examples of quasi-judicial agencies include the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, the Philippines Commission on Elections, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, and the European Patent Office.
4. **Other constitutional, independent, or autonomous bodies:** Public bodies that have autonomy from other branches of government and are created by law or through Constitutional Law.
   1. Examples include the U.S. Environmental Protections Agency (independent regulatory agency) and the Attorney General of India (constitutional body),
5. **Subnational governments:** A portion of a country or other region delineated for the purpose of administration while remaining an integral part of the state. These entities are granted a certain degree of autonomy for managing internal administrative affairs through a local government.

*Note: Under ‘which ones?’ Please list in the table up to four institutions per cell. If more than four institutions participated in during a phase of the consultation process, please write in the cell “see endnote” and include a complete list of all participating institutions as a section endnote.*

B) Building on the answers given for Table 1.2, describe and provide a clear, fact-based analysis of which institutions are involved and at what phases, and whether this had any impact on the content and implementation of the action plan.

*Note: Save recommendations on who should be involved for the final section of the report. Note this somewhere you can keep track of it if you plan to include in your final recommendations.*

**Example:**

Table 1.2 Participation in OGP by government institutions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Were institutions invited to…? | | Ministries, Departments, and agencies | Legislative | Judiciary (including quasi-judicial agencies) | Others, including constitutional independent or autonomous bodies. | Subnational governments |
| **Attend/ consult[[4]](#endnote-4)** | Number | 12 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 0 |
| Which ones? | See endnote[[5]](#endnote-5) |  |  | See endnote[[6]](#endnote-6) |  |
| **Propose[[7]](#endnote-7)** | Number | 6 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 5 |
| Which ones? | See endnote[[8]](#endnote-8) |  | Commission on Elections | See endnote[[9]](#endnote-9) | See endnote[[10]](#endnote-10) |
| **Implement[[11]](#endnote-11)** | Number | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Which ones? | Ministry of Foreign Affairs  Ministry of Justice | Parliament | Commission on Elections | International Trade Commission  Environmental Protections Agency  Securities and Exchange Commission  Social Security Administration |  |

*In Taprobane, participation in OGP was limited to a handful of executive agencies and several independent commissions. While there were judicial commitments, the judiciary participated only indirectly. Table 1.2 above details which government institutions were involved in OGP.*

*Early participation in OGP was ad hoc. The Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs sent out blanket invitations to all Chief Technology Officers in each ministry, department, and agency. Agencies who wished to participate sent individuals to the kickoff meeting. At this meeting, they were unable to bring proposals, and there was no clear channel to make proposals later in the process. Rather, MoJ and MoFA chose the particular agencies for implementation that they wished to work with. Additionally, they included commitments on judicial processes, but none of the relevant judicial bodies (e.g. College of Judges and Chief Statistician of the Supreme Court) were involved in development of the commitments.*

*During implementation there were some improvements. As noted above, a multi-sector, interagency panel began meeting quarterly. This panel was developed too late to influence the commitments that entered into the action plan. Some agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Energy Regulation Commission, which were involved in later consultation, have a mandate that expands well beyond technology and transparency to cover accountability, participatory processes, and service delivery, although commitments remained limited to technological interventions.*

# 2. National OGP Process

Addendum C of the OGP Articles of Governance defines a set of eight consultation requirements for OGP-participant countries to follow during the development, implementation, and review of their national action plans.

A) Using the guiding text, taken verbatim from Addendum C, please fill out “Table 2.1. National OGP Process”.

*Note: IRM staff inputs researcher responses to these question into the IRM database, coding “1” for “yes” and “0” for “no”.*

Box 1. Timeline process & availability:Countries are to make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at a minimum) prior to the consultation.

#### Questions:

1. **Timeline and process available online prior to consultation?**

* Yes: Timeline and process was available online prior to start of consultation
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: Timeline and process was not available online prior to start of consultation
  + (Code as “0” in database)

1. **Timeline available online?**

* Yes: Timeline for consultation was available online during consultation.
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: Timeline for consultation was not available online during consultation.
  + (Code as “0” in database)

1. **Timeline available through other channels?**

* Yes: Timeline for consultation was available through other channels (radio, television, gazette, government annexes, etc)
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: Timeline for consultation was not available through other channels (radio, television, gazette, government annexes, etc) (
  + Code as “0” in database)

*Note: if “yes” to any of the questions, please include citations with links as section endnotes*

Good Example: Peru published a brochure online with a detailed Gantt chart of dates of meetings and opportunities for stakeholder input into the second action plan. See [in Spanish]: <http://bit.ly/1ky3TYc>

Box 2. Advance notice of public consultation and variety of mechanisms:Countries are to consult the population with sufficient forewarning and through a variety of mechanisms—including online and in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage.

#### Questions:

1. **Was there advance notice of the consultation process?**

* Yes: The government provided advance notice of the consultation process
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: The government did not provide advance notice of the consultation process
  + (Code as “0” in database)

1. **How many days of advance notice were given for participation?**

* Provide the number of days of advance notice given before the consultation process
  + (Code number 0-999 in database)

*Note: if “yes” to any of the questions, please include citations with links as section endnotes*

Good example: Estoniaused the government consultation website and cooperation with the Estonian Civil Society Roundtable to inform stakeholders about opportunities to contribute to the first action plan. See [in Estonian] <http://bit.ly/1rLYTV8> for the first action plan consultation and <http://bit.ly/1kMkByy> for the second action plan consultation.

Box 3. Public awareness-raising activities: Countries are to undertake OGP awareness-raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation.

#### Questions:

1. **Were there awareness-raising activities?**

* Yes: The government carried out awareness-raising activities
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: The government did not carry out awareness-raising activities
  + (Code as “0” in database)

*Note: if “yes” to any of the questions, please include citations with links as section endnotes*

Good Example: Tanzaniacarried out a variety of awareness-raising activities around dates and opportunities for input into the first action plan, including a letter from the President’s Office (<http://bit.ly/Te9eJV>), commercials (<http://bit.ly/1kMkJ10>), and blog posts (<http://bit.ly/1kCVG5g)>.

Note: An email from government asking stakeholders to share the timeline and consultation process is not an awareness-raising activity.

### Box 4. Multiple channels

Were consultations on the development of the action plan held through a variety of channels (i.e. online, in-person, etc)?

#### Questions:

1. **Were consultations held online?**

* Yes: The government held consultations through online forums (ex. Skype, webinar session, comments/feedback webpage)?
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: The government did not hold consultations using online forums
  + (Code as “0” in database)

1. **Were consultations held in-person?**

* Yes: The government held consultations through in-person forums (ex. Town hall meetings, public hearings, congressional testimony)?
  + (Code as “1” in database)
* No: The government did not hold consultations in-person
  + (Code as “0” in database)

*Note: if “yes” to any of the questions, please include citations with links as section endnotes*

### Box 5. Breadth of consultation

During the action plan consultation period, did countries consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector and seek out a diverse range of views?

#### Questions:

1. **Was the consultation “invitation-only” or open to all interested parties?**

* Open: The consultation was open to all interested parties
  + (Code “1” in database)
* Invitation-only: The consultation was open only to a select group of stakeholders invited by the government to participate
  + (Code “0” in database)

1. **Based on evidence provided by the government and stakeholders, please evaluate the country’s action plan consultation process based on the IAP2 spectrum of political participation[[12]](#endnote-12)**

* Inform: The government informed stakeholders of the content of the action plan
* Consult: The government consulted with stakeholders on the content of the action plan
* Involve: The government involved stakeholders in the development of action plan content
* Collaborate: The government collaborated with stakeholders in the development of action plan content
* Empower: The government empowered stakeholders to develop action plan content

### Box 6. Documentation & feedback

Countries are to make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online

#### Questions:

1. **Was a summary of public consultation, including all individual submissions, available online?**

* Yes: a summary of all public consultation submissions was made available online
  + (Code “1” in database)
* No: a summary of all public consultation submissions was not made available online
  + (Code “0” in database)

*Note: if “yes” to any of the questions, please include citations with links as section endnotes*

Good Example: Croatiaused a variety of consultation types and invited government, academics, media, and business representatives to participate. All minutes were published online and clearly attributed inputs and who provided them. See First Progress Report, Section II: <http://bit.ly/1pjRNQT>

### Box 7. Regular multi-stakeholder forum

This section assesses implementation of the action plan and the government self-assessment, with an emphasis on opportunities for access to information and public participation. Guiding text on process requirements is taken verbatim from the OGP Articles of Governance, Addendum C, as well as the [OGP Guidance Note on Consultation During Implementation](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP_Con_dur_imp%20(1).pdf).

#### Questions:

1. **Did a multi-stakeholder forum convene regularly during the implementation phase of the action plan?**

* Yes: a regular multi-stakeholder forum was held during the implementation phase
  + (Code “1” in database)
* No: there was no regular multi-stakeholder forum held during the implementation phase
  + (Code “0” in database)

1. **Was participation in the multi-stakeholder forum “invitation-only” or open to all interested parties?**

* Open: The multi-stakeholder forum was open to all interested parties
  + (Code “1” in database)
* Invitation-only: The multi-stakeholder forum was open only to a select group of stakeholders invited by the government to participate
  + (Code “0” in database)

1. **Based on evidence provided by the government and stakeholders, please evaluate participation in the multi-stakeholder forum based on the IAP2 spectrum of political participation[[13]](#endnote-13)**

* Inform: The government informed stakeholders of the content of the action plan
* Consult: The government consulted with stakeholders on the content of the action plan
* Involve: The government involved stakeholders in the development of action plan content
* Collaborate: The government collaborated with stakeholders in the development of action plan content
* Empower: The government empowered stakeholders to develop action plan content

Good Example: USAThe USA’s Open Government Working Group, a government committee meeting regularly for collaboration and feedback, opened up its meetings to civil society on a quarterly basis (<http://1.usa.gov/1umJBqX>). As one result, a further consultation mechanism was created in the form of the public US Open Government Google Group: <http://bit.ly/1l0TYrk>

### Box 8. Self-assessment report

All participating OGP governments are to publish an annual progress report approximately three months after the end of the first 12 months of action plan implementation. This report should be made publicly available in the local language(s) and in English and deposited on the OGP portal. (See Articles of Governance, Addendum C.)All countries are required to have at least a two-week public comment period on draft self-assessment reports before finalizing, for public input on implementation performance into account.

#### Questions:

1. **Annual self-assessment report published?**

* Yes: An annual government self-assessment report on action plan implementation progress was published
  + (Code “1” in database)
* No: An annual government self-assessment report on action plan implementation progress was not published
  + (Code “0” in database)

1. **Report available in English and administrative language?**

* Yes: The government self-assessment report was published in English and the administrative language(s) (if relevant)
  + (Code “1” in database)
* No: The government self-assessment report was not published in English and the administrative language(s) (if relevant)
  + (Code “0” in database)

1. **Two-week public comment period on report?**

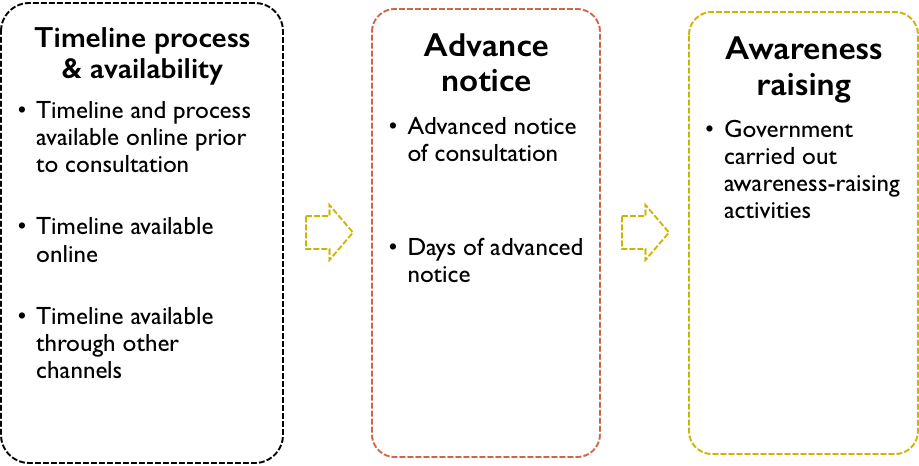
* Yes: The government provided a two-week public comment period on the self-assessment report
  + (Code “1” in database)
* No: The government did not provide a two-week public comment period on the self-assessment report
  + (Code “0” in database)

1. **Report responds to key IRM recommendations?**

* Yes: The government self-assessment report responds to key IRM recommendations from previous IRM progress report
  + (Code “1” in database)
* No: The government self-assessment report does not respond to key IRM recommendations from previous IRM progress report
  + (Code “0” in database)

**Example Table 2.1**

The questions above will, in the final versions of the IRM progress reports, have the following form:



✔

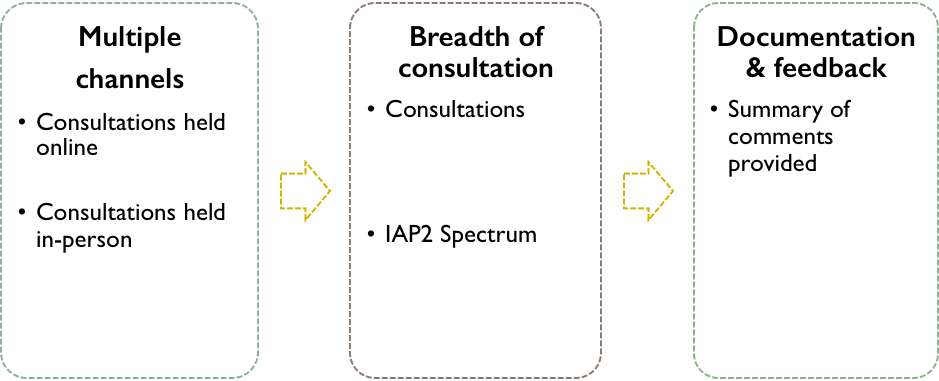
✔

✔

✔

**7**

✔



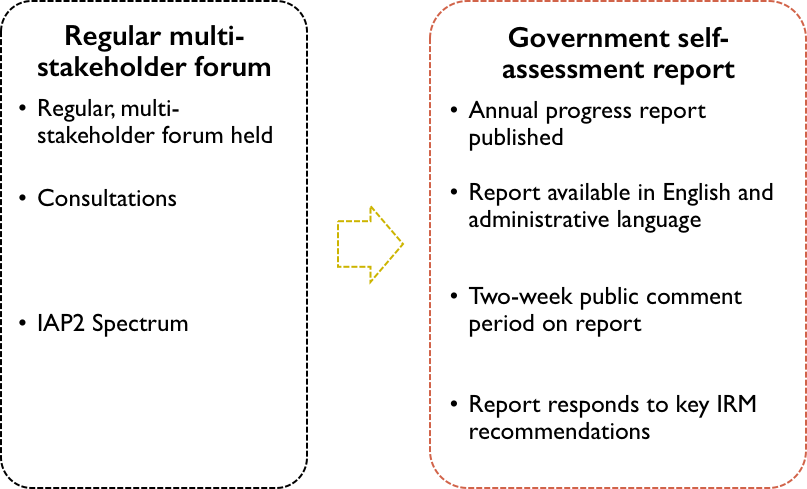
✔

✔

✔

**Open**

**Consult**



✔

✔

✔

✔

✔

**Consult**

**Consult**

## 2.1. Action Plan Development (Narrative)

1. Describe in a short narrative the activities prior to consultation. This section looks at overall stakeholder participation. Make sure it is consistent and not repetitive of narrative in previous section 1.3 were you highlight institutional participation. This section should provide more detail on non-governmental stakeholder participation.
   1. Who was invited, how were they invited,
   2. Were the “rules of the game” laid out (e.g. timelines, how to make proposals, what is the method for consultation, how (if at all) participants become formal members of panels, etc).
2. Describe the quality and breadth of consultation during action plan development including:
   1. Who actually participated (i.e., civil society, the private sector, other branches of government)?
   2. Was a diversity of views represented? How was this diversity of views assured through out the process?
   3. To what degree could stakeholders observe, inform, and influence decision-making on action plan themes or commitments?
   4. Describe the nature and accessibility (geographic, socioeconomic, physical ability, or other groupings) of these mechanisms. How did it affect the scope of the action plan? (Depending on the context, it could be negative or positive.)

## 2.2. Ongoing multi-stakeholder forum (Narrative)

As part of their participation in OGP, governments commit to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

In a single cohesive narrative, consider the following questions:

1. **Structure**

* Did the forum meet in person? Online? How many times?
* Was a pre-existing forum adapted to OGP? Or was a new forum created? Was it dedicated to OGP or was it broader in its mandate?
* Does the forum have formal procedures for participation?
* Was it “invitation-only” or open and pluralistic? Who can participate? Who (civil society or government) can observe, who can inform, and who can influence or make decisions?
* Representation: Please include additional narrative on how the structure and the participants influenced the implementation of the action plane. Consider the following:
  + Whether the forum was always in the capital city or regionally diverse,
  + Whether it only contained professional NGOs (And which policy areas), and
  + Whether it had gender balance.

1. **Accountability**

* Were notes or minutes of meetings posted or forums made open to the public?
* Did the forum track progress on action plan commitments? Did the forum publicize the progress on commitment implementation it tracked? Can stakeholders comment on or ask questions about this progress?

1. If relevant, disclose whether the IRM researcher was a part of this process
2. Reports may cover whether there were perceptions of partisanship or conflict within civil society, within government or between the two. You may want to (carefully) comment on this in the report. Also remember that OGP depends on politics for its success, so “politicization” is not a bad word, but the IRM should be able to describe this in a non-partisan fashion, especially where this is relevant to OGP

*Note: If there is no mechanism, please comment on the lack of this mechanism. You may consider offering possible options for the design of such a forum above.*

## 2.3 Self-Assessment (Narrative)

The OGP Articles of Governance require that participating countries publish a self-assessment report three months after the end of the first year of implementation. The self-assessment report must be made available for public comments for a two-week period. This section assesses compliance with these requirements and the quality of the report.

In a single, cohesive narrative, consider the following questions

1. **Quality of public comment period**
   1. How long was it open?
   2. Was the comment period well advertised?
   3. What tools were used to receive or make comments?
   4. Who participated in the public comment period?
   5. How was feedback from civil society/stakeholders included in the self-assessment report?
2. **Quality of the self-assessment report**
   1. Did the self-assessment report include review of consultation efforts during action plan development?
   2. Did the self-assessment report include review of consultation efforts during action plan implementation?
   3. Did it provide evidence to support completion levels of *all* commitments? The self-assessment saying that government did something is not ***evidence***.
      * Example of evidence is:
        1. Documents.
        2. Participants lists
        3. Pictures, videos
        4. Agendas, meeting minutes etc.
   4. Did it cover all of the commitments in the action plan?
   5. Did it provide information on challenges or delays in implementation?
   6. Did it include next steps for the next phase of implementation?

**Example:**

*The government self-assessment was published on 23 April. While as of July 2013, the Taprobani Transparency Agency (TTA) had not released information on implementation; upon the author’s request the TTA made available a draft report of the self-assessment. At the time of writing (September 2013), the information was not publicly available because it has not yet been officially approved. CSOs at the Tarachi Stakeholder Forum stated that one commitment is missing from the government’s self-assessment report and that government did not explain or discuss the process that led to reducing the number of commitments from eight to seven. Finally, stakeholders at the Galibi forum stated that the entire OGP process in Taprobane has been carried out in English, which may exclude views from many citizens who are not conversant in English.*

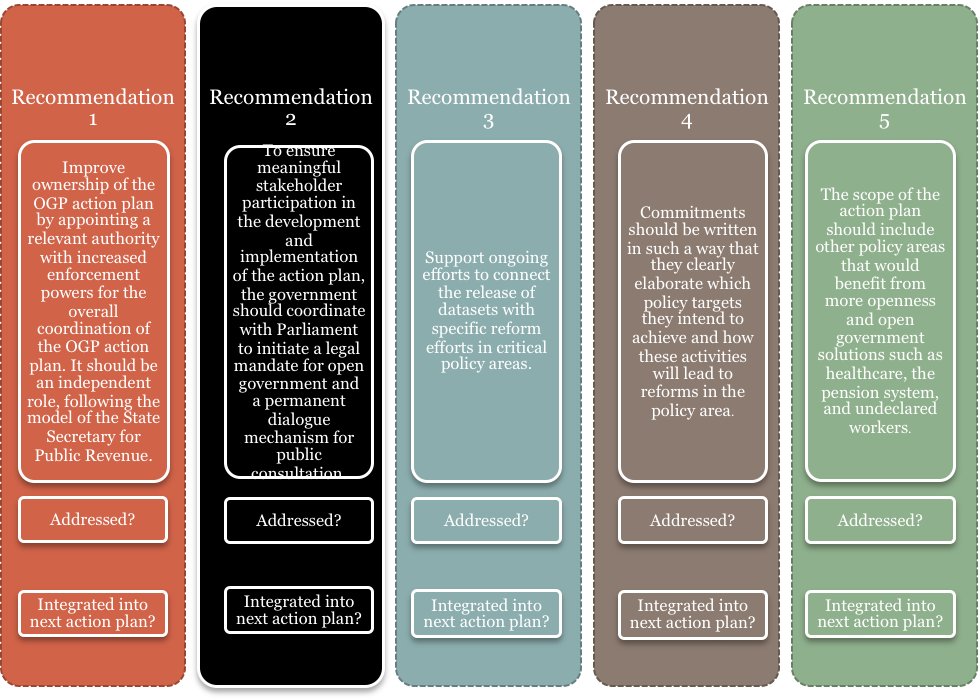
## 2.4 Follow-up on Previous IRM Recommendations

Starting in the second year of assessments, reports shall also include a section for follow-up on recommendations issued in previous reports. This follow-up process will also be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in this document.

A) Complete “Table 2.2. Previous IRM report key recommendations” using the recommendations table from previous IRM progress report. For longer recommendations (or those that included many indicators) please use the recommendations box from the Executive Summary of the previous report.

**Example:**

Table 2.2: Previous IRM report key recommendations



✔

✔

✔



✔

✔

✔

✔





B) Based on the information in table 2.2 provide a brief description of:

1. How the government incorporated the previous IRM recommendations. OR if they were not incorporated, provide a brief explanation of why
2. Then, describe how the recommendations were incorporated in the new action plan. The narrative should draw from both the text of the action plan and stakeholder opinions.

**Example:**

*Of the five recommendations, government addressed four in their self-assessment and integrated three in the next action plan. The IRM researcher did not receive a response from the PoC explaining why the fifth recommendation, to expand the scope of the action plan to other sectors, was not addressed in the self-assessment. Stakeholders, however, who participated in the multi-stakeholder forum stated that the government decided to focus commitments on open budgeting and open contracting because they were part of the government’s larger four year strategy. Finally, the government noted in their self-assessment that they have proposed draft legislation to institutionalize an OGP permanent dialogue mechanism. However, Parliament and civil society stakeholders were of the opinion that the way the draft legislation was formulated it would restrict future civil society participation and therefore this initiative was not pursued further.*

## 

# 3. Analysis of action plan contents

After the IRM research plan is approved, IRM staff will generate an IRM report template for IRM researchers to complete. The information described under Commitment description is provided in the IRM report template. IRM researchers can complete the coding and narrative sections described under Coding for IRM variables: desk research before gathering stakeholder inputs. After gathering stakeholder views and the end of the first year of implementation, IRM researchers can complete the coding and narrative sections described under Coding for IRM variables: After implementation.

The IRM report template includes a table and a narrative section for each commitment in the action plan. Each commitment narrative is divided into four subsections “Context & Objectives”, “Completion”, “Early Results”, and “Next Steps”. Additional information on the scope and content of the subsections is provided below.

The IRM depends on the IRM researchers to ensure accurate and consistent translation of all official terms, including grand challenges, open government values, names of sections, and the like. While official translations exist in Spanish, all researchers are asked to provide a final check that all terms were correctly translated throughout the entirety of the report. For example, the coded term ‘limited’ appears many times throughout the report. The same administrative language translation should be used in every instance.

## Opening text

The following sample text will appear in all reports. Guidance for coding specific variables will be provided in the Commitment Description and Commitment Analysis sections.

**Example:**

*All OGP-participating governments develop OGP action plans that include concrete commitments over a two-year period. Governments begin their OGP action plans by sharing existing efforts related to open government, including specific strategies and ongoing programs.*

*Commitments should be appropriate to each country’s unique circumstances and challenges. OGP commitments should also be relevant to OGP values laid out in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Declaration signed by all OGP-participating countries.*

***What makes a good commitment?***

*Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multiyear process, governments should attach time frames and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, whenever possible. This report details each of the commitments the country included in its action plan, and analyzes them for their first year of implementation.*

*While most indicators used to assess each commitment are self-explanatory, a number deserve further explanation.*

* ***Specificity:*** *The IRM researcher first assesses the level of specificity and measurability with which each commitment or action was framed. The options are:*
  + *High (Commitment language provides clear, verifiable activities and measurable deliverables for achievement of the commitment’s objective)*
  + *Medium (Commitment language describes activity that is objectively verifiable, but does not contain clearly measurable deliverables for achievement of the commitment’s objective)*
  + *Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as verifiable but requires some interpretation on the part of the reader to identify measurable deliverables)*
  + *None (Commitment language contains no measurable activity, deliverables or milestones)*
* ***Relevance:*** *The IRM researcher evaluated each commitment for its relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text as stated in the action plan, the guiding questions to determine the relevance of the commitment to OGP values are:* 
  + *Access to Information: Will government disclose more information or improve quality of the information disclosed to the public?*
  + *Civic Participation: Will government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions?*
  + *Public Accountability: Will government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable to their actions?*
  + *Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability: Will technological innovation be used in conjunction with one of the other three OGP values to advance either transparency or accountability?[[14]](#endnote-14)*
* ***Potential impact:*** *The IRM is tasked with assessing the potential impact of the commitment, if completed. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:*
  + *Problem: What is the social, economic, political, or environmental problem addressed by this commitment?*
  + *Objective: What are the objectives stated in the commitment? How does the commitment’s objective contribute to solving or improving the problem?*
  + *Solution: What activities does the commitment propose to achieve the objective? How would the activities contribute to the objective of the commitment?*
  + *Assessment: If fully implemented as written, what potential effect would this approach have on the problem?*

***Starred commitments*** *are considered exemplary OGP commitments. In order to receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:*

* *It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have “medium” or “high” specificity.*
* *The commitment’s language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.*
* *The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.[[15]](#endnote-15)*
* *Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.*

*Based on these criteria, [Country]’s action plan contained [number] starred commitments, namely:*

* *[ ]*

*Finally, the graphs in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its progress reporting process. For the full dataset for [Country] and all OGP-participating countries, see the OGP Explorer[[16]](#endnote-16).*

## General overview of the commitments

Please provide an overall view of the action plan and describe how it was organized or what it emphasized. This section should describe any unique characteristics of the process or plan that are necessary to understanding this report, for example whether the plan passed through multiple versions and how this was done. This is a brief overview and does not need to be more than one page. It should be very readable for the general public.

***Example:***

*The action plan focused on three key areas – Improvement of the integrity of public administration agencies, improvement of the quality of public services, and improvement of the efficiency of using community resources.*

## Themes

If the IRM reorganized the commitments in a way that differs from the action plan, explain here why and how this was done.

*Note: The IRM will work with national researchers to group commitments or milestones where necessary, before approving the final research plan.*

## Commitment description

Based on the approved breakdown of action plan commitments in the IRM research plan, the IRM staff generates an IRM report template with worksheets for each commitment. This section is based on information provided in the country action plan and is automatically generated as part of the IRM report template provided by IRM staff. IRM researchers are asked to verify the accuracy of the information provided in this section. Note that IRM staff will extract text form the complete commitment template used in the action plan. In the assessment, IRM researchers must review the complete narrative in the action plan per commitment to code for the key variables.

### A. Basic information

1. **Number of the commitment:** If the government has assigned the commitment a number, it is noted here. Where commitments were not assigned numbers in the action plan, the researchers do so for ease of organization.
2. **Short title for the commitment:** Provides an accurate and precise description that differentiates the commitment from other, similar commitments.
3. **Full text of the commitment:** This is copied directly from the action plan. If the fact sheet treats multiple actions or commitments, bullets, or hyphens, separate them here.
   1. Is this associated with a thematic grouping or heading by government in the action plan? If yes, please name the grouping.
   2. Is the commitment made of individual milestones and deliverables?
4. **Number of the milestone:** If the government has assigned the milestone a number, it is noted here. Where milestones were not assigned numbers in the action plan, the researchers do so for ease of organization.
5. **Short title of each milestone:** Provides an accurate and precise description that differentiates the milestone from other, similar milestone.

### B. Accountability and answerability

1. Which, if any, **primary institution** was designated as responsible for the commitment?
2. Which, if any, **supporting institutions** were designated as responsible for the commitment?

*Note: In some circumstances, these may not be limited to national government agencies. They may be subnational governments, private companies, or civil society organizations.*

1. Did the government designate a **start date and end date** for implementing this commitment?

**Optional:** Did the commitment specify an **answerable person or office** responsible for the commitment?

*Note: Most countries would not designate a point of contact in charge of an individual commitment, but in some cases governments will put a single office or team in charge with a clear email or web platform through which the public may interact with them. This should be indicated in the action plan. Use the IRM ‘SMART Guidance’ (*[*http://bit.ly/1kCZh3h*](http://bit.ly/1kCZh3h)*) to determine if there is an answerable person/office. If not, do not include this in the commitment worksheet.*

**Example:**

#### Commitment 1. Implement the Directive on Open Government

***Commitment text:***

*The Government of Canada will issue mandatory policy requiring federal government departments and agencies to maximize the release of data and information of business value subject to applicable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, and security. Eligible data and information will be released in standardized, open formats, free of charge, and without restrictions on reuse.*

*The proactive release of data and information is the starting point for all other open government activity. It is the foundation on which all other aspects of Canada’s Action Plan are based. Accordingly, the Government of Canada will firmly establish an “open by default" position in its mandatory policy framework by issuing a new Directive on Open Government.*

*The Directive on Open Government will provide clear and mandatory requirements to government departments aimed squarely at ensuring the availability of eligible government information and data of business value while respecting any restrictions related to privacy, security, and confidentiality. Business value takes on a broad definition in this context, including data and information that document the business of government, decision making in support of programs, services and ongoing operations, as well as departmental reporting. Furthermore, the directive will support broader accountability and transparency, and ensure that open government requirements are considered in the development and implementation of all federal programs and services. Departments and agencies will also be required to develop inventories of their data and information, plan for the release of eligible holdings, and lay out a schedule for their release.*

*Maximizing the release of data and information will enable Canadians to better engage with their government and hold it accountable, creating an environment that supports meaningful civic engagement and drives social and economic benefits through the innovative reuse of data and information.*

*Deliverables to be completed in 2014-16:*

* *Issue a new* ***Directive on Open Government*** *to require federal departments and agencies to maximize the release of eligible government data and information of business value subject to applicable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, and security.*
* *Require federal departments and agencies to* ***publish open government implementation plans*** *that describe planned activities to meet the requirements of the directive, including the following:*
  + *Establishing and maintaining inventories of data and information holdings;*
  + *Prioritizing the publication of data and information based on public demand;*
  + *Publishing data and information in accessible and open formats on federal open government websites under an open and unrestrictive licence; and*
  + *Reporting annually on progress made.*
* *Establish* ***tools and guidance*** *for the publication of* ***departmental data inventories****, subject to privacy, security, and confidentiality requirements.*

*Responsible institution: Treasury Board Secretariat*

*Supporting institution(s): Treasury Board Secretariat*

*Start date: November 2014 End date: 30 June 2016*

## 3.3.1. Coding for IRM Variables: Desk Research

This section provides additional guidance for coding variables that the IRM researcher can determine through desk research and application of the IRM methodology, and do not require stakeholder inputs. This can be done before the end of the first year of implementation. Based on a close reading of the commitment text, researchers use their best judgment to identify the following information based on their expertise, the action plan, and necessary materials referenced in the action plan.

### A. Specificity

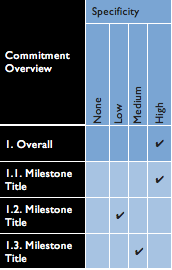
In the narrative table, under the column marked Specificity please code for the overall commitment and each milestone based on the given definitions. Please select one value per row.

1. This variable assesses the level of specificity and measurability with which each commitment or action was framed. Using the IRM ‘SMART Guidance’ (<http://bit.ly/1kCZh3h>) and based on a close reading of the text of the commitment, IRM staff and IRM researchers code the specificity as one of the following:
   1. High: Commitment language provides clear, verifiable activities and measurable deliverables for achievement of the commitment’s objective
   2. Medium: Commitment language describes activity that is objectively verifiable and includes deliverables that are not clearly measurable or relevant to the achievement of the commitment’s objective.
   3. Low: Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as verifiable but requires some interpretation on the part of the reader to identify what the activity sets out to do and determine what would the deliverables be.
   4. None: Commitment language contains no measurable activity, deliverables or milestones

*Note: The IRM generally follows a ‘high water mark’ philosophy for coding the overall commitment level, which means that if the highest specificity level for a milestone is ‘medium’, the overall commitment level should be at least ‘medium’. However, if the IRM researcher determines that the sum effect of the milestones warrants a higher or lower overall coding, this will be reflected in the overall coding and further explained in the narrative section.*

**Example:**

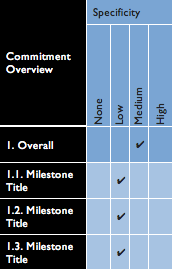
*A. Typical scenario: High water mark*

 or 

In the first graphic, all of the milestones are high specificity, therefore the overall commitment is high specificity.

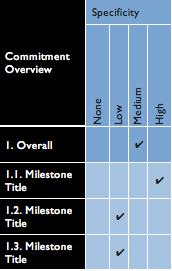
In the second graphic, milestone 1.1 is assessed as high specificity while milestones 1.2 and 1.3 are lower specificity. However, milestone 1.1 is the most significant activity for overall commitment implementation, therefore the overall commitment is coded as high specificity.

*B. Sum effect warrants higher overall coding*



In this scenario, the individual milestones were of low specificity, however their sum total contributes to a higher level of specificity for the overall commitment. Therefore the overall commitment is coded as medium rather than low specificity.

*C. Sum effect of milestones does not warrant high water mark overall coding*



In this scenario, milestone 1.1 has high specificity while milestones 1.2 and 1.3 have low specificity. However, the IRM researcher found that while milestone 1.1 is highly specific, milestones 1.2 and 1.3 include the more significant activities. Therefore the overall commitment should be of medium, rather than high specificity.

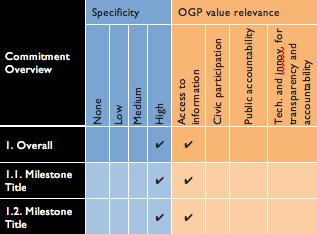
### B. OGP Value Relevance

In the narrative table, under the column marked OGP Value Relevance please code for the overall commitment and each milestone based on the given definitions. Please select all OGP values that apply for each row.

1. This variable assesses whether the goal directly addresses one or more of the four principles of OGP (below). Based on a close reading of the commitment text and the IRM ‘SMART Guidance’ (<http://bit.ly/1kCZh3h>), IRM researchers code all the values that apply for individual milestones and the commitment overall:
   1. Access to information
   2. Civic participation
   3. Public accountability
   4. Technology and innovation for openness and accountability

*Note: The IRM follows a ‘high water mark’ for this variable, which means that the coding for the overall commitment should reflect all the OGP values selected at the milestone level.*

**Example:**



### OGP Values: Explained

The following explanations for each OGP value are taken directly from the Guidance Note: Assessing OGP Values for Relevance (see Annex). The Guidance Note also explains the purpose of the four OGP values and how different stakeholders use the OGP values in their work. When coding commitments and milestones for OGP value relevance, researchers will assess the commitment text against the following criterion:

#### Access to information

Commitments around access to information:

* Pertain to government-held information, as opposed to only information on government activities. As an example, releasing government-held information on pollution would be clearly relevant, although the information is not about “government activity” per se;
* Are not restricted to data but pertain to all information. For example, releasing individual construction contracts and releasing data on a large set of construction contracts;
* May include information disclosures in open data and the systems that underpin the public disclosure of data;
* May cover both proactive and/or reactive releases of information;
* May cover both making data more available and/or improving the technological readability of information;
* May pertain to mechanisms to strengthen the right to information (such as ombudsman’s offices or information tribunals);
* Must provide open access to information (it should not be privileged or internal only to government);
* Should promote transparency of government decision making and carrying out of basic functions;
* May seek to lower cost of obtaining information;
* Should strive to meet the 5 Star for Open Data design (<http://5stardata.info/>).

#### Civic participation

Commitments around civic participation may pertain to formal public participation or to broader civic participation. They should generally seek to “consult,” “involve,” “collaborate,” or “empower,” as explained by the International Association for Public Participation’s Public Participation Spectrum (<http://bit.ly/1kMmlYC>).

Commitments addressing public participation:

* Must open up decision making to all interested members of the public; such forums are usually “top-down” in that they are created by government (or actors empowered by government) to inform decision making throughout the policy cycle;
* Can include elements of access to information to ensure meaningful input of interested members of the public into decisions;
* Often include the right to have your voice heard, but do not necessarily include the right to be a formal part of a decision making process.
* Alternately, commitments may address the broader operating environment that enables participation in civic space. Examples include but are not limited to:
* Reforms increasing freedoms of assembly, expression, petition, press, or association;
* Reforms on association including trade union laws or NGO laws;
* Reforms improving the transparency and process of formal democratic processes such as citizen proposals, elections, or petitions.

The following commitments are examples of commitments that would **not** be marked as clearly relevant to the broader term, civic participation:

* Commitments that assume participation will increase due to publication of information without specifying the mechanism for such participation (although this commitment would be marked as “access to information”);
* Commitments on decentralization that do not specify the mechanisms for enhanced public participation;
* Commitments that define participation as inter-agency cooperation without a mechanism for public participation.
* Commitments that may be marked of “unclear relevance” also include those mechanisms where participation is limited to government-selected organizations.

#### Public accountability

Commitments improving accountability can include:

Rules, regulations, and mechanisms that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.

Consistent with the core goal of “Open Government,” to be counted as “clearly relevant,” such commitments must include a public-facing element, meaning that they are not purely internal systems of accountability. While such commitments may be laudable and may meet an OGP grand challenge, they do not, as articulated, meet the test of “clear relevance” due to their lack of openness. Where such internal-facing mechanisms are a key part of government strategy, it is recommended that governments include a public facing element such as:

* Disclosure of non-sensitive metadata on institutional activities (following maximum disclosure principles);
* Citizen audits of performance;
* Citizen-initiated appeals processes in cases of non-performance or abuse.

Strong commitments around accountability ascribe rights, duties, or consequences for actions of officials or institutions. Formal accountability commitments include means of formally expressing grievances or reporting wrongdoing and achieving redress. Examples of strong commitments include:

* Improving or establishing appeals processes for denial of access to information;
* Improving access to justice by making justice mechanisms cheaper, faster, or easier to use;
* Improving public scrutiny of justice mechanisms;
* Creating public tracking systems for public complaints processes (such as case tracking software for police or anti-corruption hotlines).

A commitment that claims to improve accountability, but assumes that merely providing information or data without explaining what mechanism or intervention will translate that information into consequences or change, would **not** qualify as an accountability commitment. See <http://bit.ly/1oWPXdl> for further information.

#### Technology and innovation for openness and accountability

OGP aims to enhance the use of technology and innovation to enable public involvement in government. Specifically, commitments that use technology and innovation should enhance openness and accountability by:

* Promoting new technologies that offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration.
* Making more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions.
* Working to reduce costs of using these technologies.

Additionally, commitments that will be marked as technology and innovation:

* May commit to a process of engaging civil society and the business community to identify effective practices and innovative approaches for leveraging new technologies to empower people and promote transparency in government;
* May commit to supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use technology for openness and accountability;
* May support the use of technology by government employees and citizens alike.

***Important Note:*** *not all eGovernment reforms improve openness of government. When an eGovernment commitment is made, it needs to articulate how it enhances at least one of the following: access to information, public participation, or public accountability.*

#### Note on OGP grand challenges:

This variable indicates whether the commitment directly addresses one or more of the grand challenges set out by OGP (below):

* 1. Improving Public Services
  2. Increasing Public Integrity
  3. More Effectively Managing Public Resources
  4. Creating Safer Communities
  5. Increasing Corporate Accountability

The action plan will specify whether a commitment addresses one or more grand challenges. If it is not included in the text of the action plan, the IRM researcher will not include it in this narrative section.

### C. Potential impact

This variable assesses, “Would the commitment, if implemented, stretch government practice beyond business-as-usual in the relevant policy area—regardless of whether it is new or pre-existing?” IRM researchers answer this question according to the potential effect of the commitment as written, not what actually happens. This is necessarily specific to the status quo in each country—the exact same commitment could have a completely different potential impact depending on which government made it.

#### Note on new vs. pre-existing

OGP does not require commitments to be new, so it is not necessarily a sign of lack of ambition if an action pre-dated the action plan. If it is pre-existing, the researcher must explain in his or her narrative if there are elements of added value that the action plan brings to the pre-existing action, or not. For example, producing the Executive Budget. While producing the Executive’s Budget is a pre-existing activity, if including it as part of the action plan will contribute to overcoming previous delays or challenges in producing the budget.

The IRM team has found that the following format works well in a narrative, thus allowing an informed, evidence based assessment of potential impact.

Using the complete commitment content as stated in the action plan identify:

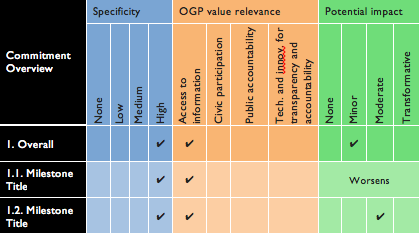
* Problem: What is the social, economic, political, or environmental problem addressed by this commitment?
* Objective: What are the objectives stated in the commitment? How does the commitment’s objective contribute to solving or improving the problem?
* Solution: What activities does the commitment propose to achieve the objective? How would the activities contribute to the objective of the commitment?
* Assessment: If fully implemented as written, what potential effect would this approach have on the problem?

By answering these questions, you should be able to give a more accurate, reliable, and informed assessment of potential impact.

After determining the baseline according to the suggested format above, IRM researchers code the commitment and each milestone as one of the five following options. Please select one value per row:

1. Worsens: Worsens the status quo of problem identified.
2. None: Maintains the status quo of problem identified.
3. Minor: An incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area to improve problem identified.
4. Moderate: A major step forward in the relevant policy area, to improve problem identified, but remains limited in scale or scope.
5. Transformative: A reform that could potentially transform ‘business as usual’ in the relevant policy area and contribute to improvements in the problem identified.

**Example:**



### D. Context and objectives

This is the first narrative section in IRM progress reports. This narrative section provides concise, fact-based analysis to justify the coding for specificity, OGP value relevance, and potential impact provided in the table. In the report template, IRM researchers are provided with guidance on the scope and content of each narrative section (replicated below).

Guiding question:What problem does the commitment try to solve and how?

* **Problem:** What is the social, economic, political, or environmental problem addressed by this commitment?
  + Here the IRM researcher can assess action plan statements with third-party evaluations.
  + Here the IRM researcher can establish the baseline, which will be used as the measure against which potential impact is assessed.
* **Objective:** What are the objectives stated in the commitment? How does the commitment’s objective contribute to solving or improving the problem?
  + Here is where the IRM researcher will also describe the relevance of this commitment to OGP values and justify the IRM researcher’s coding for relevance. If the commitment language refers to OGP Grand Challenges, here is also where the IRM researcher will describe how the Grand Challenges are addressed by the commitment.
* **Solution:** What activities does the commitment propose to achieve the objective? How would the activities contribute to the objective of the commitment?
  + In this section refer to coding of specificity, for example: If you cannot tell what the objective is due to vague or confusing commitment text, please mark “Low” or “None” in the table for specificity and describe the ambiguity here.
* **Assessment:** If fully implemented as written, what potential effect would this approach have on the problem?
  + Here the IRM researcher should state the potential impact in clear terms. This should be consistent with the table above.

*Note: In cases where a commitment has multiple milestones and the effects of milestones are cumulative, the IRM will assume the highest level of potential impact among the individual milestones. Where milestones are “stand-alone,” the IRM will leave milestones disaggregated.*

## 3.3.2. Coding for IRM Variables: After First Year Implementation

This section provides additional guidance for coding variables that require stakeholder input. Based on a close reading of the commitment text, researchers use their best judgment to identify the following information based on their expertise, the action plan, and necessary materials referenced in the action plan. Responses should elaborate on coded choices to the questions above, and narratives should be cohesive and flow logically from one section to another.

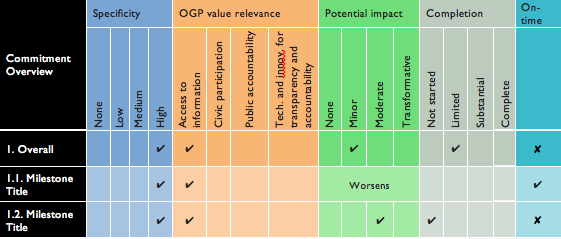
### A. Completion (coding)

In the narrative table, under the column marked On-Time please mark (check) if the commitment is on track as scheduled (as it is indicated in the text of the commitment) or (x) if it is delayed.

Under the column for Completion please code for the overall commitment and each milestone based on the given definitions. Please select one value per row.

1. **Completion:** Based on a close reading of the commitment text, how complete is the given activity at the end of the assessment period (first year of implementation)?
   1. Complete
   2. Substantial
   3. Limited
   4. Officially withdrawn
   5. Not started
   6. Unable to tell from government and civil society responses

Example:



### B. Completion (narrative)

This is the second narrative section in IRM progress reports. This narrative section provides concise, fact-based analysis to justify the coding for completion provided in the table. In the report template, IRM researchers are provided with guidance on the scope and content of each narrative section (replicated below).

Guiding question:What is the status of completion for this commitment?

* Answers in simple language, “What progress has been made in the first year of implementation?"
  + Is the commitment on schedule?
    - Although the IRM does not code for Timing, the IRM Researcher MUST clearly state if the commitment is on time or delayed. The IRM researcher must specify if the timing assessment is determined by stakeholder’s inputs or the commitment’s start and end dates.
  + Here the researcher provides evidence of progress
    - * Lays out the government viewpoint.
      * Lays out the non-government viewpoint, and differentiates this from the government’s viewpoint. Analysis should be a dispassionate analysis of the objective facts of completion.
  + If completed, please provide evidence.
  + If delayed or withdrawn, please assess the reasons for delay. Include government and selected non-government stakeholder “diagnoses”.

*Note: When writing this section, please be sure to distinguish the views of different stakeholders.*

### C. Early Results if any

This is the third narrative section in IRM progress reports. This narrative section draws on stakeholder and end-user feedback and impressions to provide a concise, fact-based analysis of preliminary changes in government practice or use of products created through OGP commitments. In the report template, IRM researchers are provided with guidance on the scope and content of each narrative section (replicated below).

Guiding question:Is there any evidence of changes in government practice and if there has been uptake in citizens or civil society?

1. Provide evidence for where the commitment’s outputs were:
   1. Useful?
   2. Usable?
   3. Used?
   4. If yes, consider in the next section how success can be replicated or scaled up.
   5. If not, why not? Include views, as relevant from the relevant users and implementers.
2. Is there any evidence that the commitment’s outputs are starting to solve the problem that they set out to resolve?

### D. Next Steps

This is the fourth narrative section in IRM progress reports. This narrative section draws on stakeholder feedback, third party sources, and the IRM researcher’s expertise to provide targeted recommendations for either continued implementation of the commitment during the second half of the implementation cycle or areas for continuation in the next action plan. In this section, the IRM researcher should limit the scope of recommendations to the specific activities and subject areas described in the commitment text –Section 5: Recommendations is where the IRM researcher can provide thematic, cross-cutting recommendations for the action plan as a whole. In the report template, IRM researchers are provided with guidance on the scope and content of each narrative section (replicated below).

#### Guiding questions:

1. Should the commitment be:
   1. Taken forward into the next action plan?
   2. Modified?
   3. Implemented in the remaining period of the action plan?
   4. Not carried forward?
2. If there is an area for improvement, please provide an example or additional details, considering:
   1. Coherence:Good recommendations should follow logically and directly from the above analysis.
   2. Clarity and ambition: Good recommendations should model good commitments. They should be specific, high-impact, and feasible (within the remaining action plan or the next two-year action plan).
      1. Bullets are recommended for ease of reading.
   3. Viewpoint: Establishes the IRM researcher’s views as an informed expert and attributed to the “IRM researcher.”
      1. May include relevant recommendations from stakeholders (including government officials), but needs to make clear that these are from stakeholders, not from the IRM researcher

### E. Note on ‘Starred’ Commitments

The IRM recognizes model commitments, and awards them ‘stars’. In order to receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

1. It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity.
2. The commitment language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
3. The commitment must have a "transformative" potential impact, should it be fully implemented.
4. Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period (receiving a ranking "significant" or "complete" progress).

# 4. Country context

This section places the action plan commitments in the broader national context. The emphasis of the IRM report is on the development and implementation of the OGP action plan. However, to ensure the credibility of the report and of OGP more broadly and to inform future versions of the action plan, researchers are asked to briefly take into account significant actions not covered by the action plan that are relevant to OGP values and the country’s participation in the Partnership.

**A) Describe any significant relevant actions (negative or positive):**

* Not captured in country commitments
* Relevant to its participation in OGP and;
* The four OGP values (access to information, participation, accountability, technology for openness and accountability)

Significant events might include whistleblowing cases, corruption scandals, new laws, or widespread new citizen-led movements.

**B) Based on the chart in Section VII on changes in eligibility criteria, include a description of any other actions the government has taken or could take affecting its OGP eligibility criteria:**

* Fiscal transparency
* Access to information
* Disclosures by senior public officials
* Citizen engagement
* Civic space

## Stakeholder priorities

Based on the finding of prior sections, please address the following two main themes.

A) First, what were the **stakeholder priorities from the current action plan?** This question asks which of the commitments or included themes were considered to be the most important.

* These can be high priority commitments that were successfully implemented or that should be carried forward.

B) Second, what are the **stakeholder priorities for the next action plan?** This question asks which themes or areas stakeholders would like to see in future action plans that were not addressed in the first action plan and how they relate to the country context above.

## Scope of action plan in relation to national context

While it is not the job of the IRM as a whole to tell governments and civil society organizations what can or cannot be in action plans, the IRM Guiding Principles do require the IRM to identify, “The extent to which the action plan and its commitments reflect, in a country-specific way, the OGP values of transparency, accountability, and civic participation, as articulated in the OGP Declaration of Principles and the Articles of Governance.”

The author should make constructive comments about areas or policies that might be considered in light of the national context. These might be “headline” issues that have not been part of the action plan thus far. These should be framed in terms of practical areas that can be acted on in a two-year time frame, but recommendations on specific commitments or activities should be presented in the next section. These should be:

* High priority themes that are affecting the country
* Should be framed in terms of practical areas that can be acted on in a two-year time frame.
* Tie back to the issues raised or areas highlighted in the country context section (above)
* Do not include recommendations on specific commitments or activities here, they should be presented in the next section.

# 5. General recommendations

This section recommends crosscutting, general next steps for OGP in the country, rather than for specific commitments. The researcher should make crosscutting, prioritized recommendations in a descriptive narrative or bulleted lists.

**How to write this section:**

* Focus on high-level messages for principal actors
* Should not repeat the individual recommendations for commitments in Section III
* Identify the actors clearly, be organized under sub-headings, and address incremental, SMART steps the government can take in the next two years
* Address additional sources of opinion that should be included in the next iteration of the action plan, multi-stakeholder consultation, self-assessment, and post-implementation processes) or specific actions in the different areas of open government
* Provide cross-cutting, strategic recommendations that address both process and the quality/content of the action plan

From these crosscutting recommendations, the researcher should distill their top five recommendations to include in table 5.1. These top recommendations should be a mix of both process and content-specific recommendations, include up to two process related recommendations and three on content and quality of commitments.

### SMART recommendations

# 6. Methodology and sources

The IRM mid-term report is written by well-respected governance researchers based in each OGP-participating country. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control to ensure the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

Analysis of progress on OGP action plans is a combination of interviews, desk research, and feedback from nongovernmental stakeholder meetings. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government’s own self-assessment report and any other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations.

Each IRM researcher carries out stakeholder meetings to ensure an accurate portrayal of events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, the IRM cannot consult all interested or affected parties. Consequently, the IRM strives for methodological transparency, and therefore where possible, makes public the process of stakeholder engagement in research (detailed later in this section.) In those national contexts where anonymity of informants—governmental or nongovernmental—is required, the IRM reserves the ability to protect the anonymity of informants. Additionally, because of the necessary limitations of the method, the IRM strongly encourages commentary on public drafts of each national document.

Each report undergoes a 4-step review and quality control process:

1. Staff review: IRM staff reviews the report for grammar, readability, content, and adherence to IRM methodology
2. International Experts Panel (IEP) review: IEP reviews the content of the report for rigorous evidence to support findings, evaluates the extent to which the action plan applies OGP values, and provides technical recommendations for improving the implementation of commitments and realization of OGP values through the action plan as a whole
3. Pre-publication review: Government and select civil society organizations are invited to provide comments on content of the draft IRM report
4. Public comment period: The public is invited to provide comments on the content of the draft IRM report

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section 2.3.

### Interviews and focus groups

Each IRM researcher is required to hold at least one public information-gathering event. Care should be taken in inviting stakeholders outside of the “usual suspects” list of invitees already participating in existing processes. Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g. online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews). Additionally, researchers perform specific interviews with responsible agencies when the commitments require more information than provided in the self-assessment or accessible online.

In a select number of countries, after consultation with the IRM staff, the IRM researchers opt for an alternative to a second stakeholder meeting. In these cases, there are substitute activities. If this is the case, for this question describe the alternative and the arrangements undertaken to carry out the research and include wide stakeholder views.

If IRM researchers wish to substitute a stakeholder meeting with another format, they should communicate this to IRM staff.

**How to write this section** (1 paragraph per event or bulleted list)**:**

Describe the considerations taken into account when selecting national level stakeholders. For each focus group or stakeholder national-level meetings please provide the following:

1. Source. If anonymous, explain why.
2. Date of interaction
3. Attendees
4. Format of interaction (e.g. interview, focus group, workshop)
5. Synopsis of meeting

### Document library (optional)

The IRM will use a publically accessible Google (or equivalent) library. The IRM team will create a page for each country and send the national researcher detailed instructions for how to upload important documents used in their research. Then, the researcher will be able to use those website permalinks to cite in the text of their report.

### Survey-based data (optional)

Carrying out a survey can be helpful in gauging the interest of national-level stakeholders in OGP commitments. However, it is not expected that a national researcher would carry out this survey. If an online survey was carried out, this section provides links and provides the results of the survey, including number of respondents and findings. If no survey was carried out, the IRM researcher will delete this subsection.

# 7. Eligibility Requirements Annex

In September 2012, OGP decided to begin strongly encouraging participating governments to adopt ambitious commitments in relation to their performance in the OGP eligibility criteria.

The OGP Support Unit collates eligibility criteria on an annual basis. These scores are presented below.[[17]](#endnote-17) When appropriate, the IRM reports will discuss the context surrounding progress or regress on specific criteria in the Country Context section.

Table 7.1: Eligibility Annex for [Country]

*Example:*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Criteria* | *2011* | *Current* | *Change* | *Explanation* |
| *Budget transparency[[18]](#endnote-18)* | *4* | *4* | *No change* | *4 = Executive’s Budget Proposal and Audit Report published*  *2 = One of two published*  *0 = Neither published* |
| *Access to information[[19]](#endnote-19)* | *4* | *4* | *No change* | *4 = Access to information (ATI) Law*  *3 = Constitutional ATI provision*  *1 = Draft ATI law*  *0 = No ATI law* |
| *Asset Declaration[[20]](#endnote-20)* | *4* | *4* | *No change* | *4 = Asset disclosure law, data public*  *2 = Asset disclosure law, no public data*  *0 = No law* |
| *Citizen Engagement*  *(Raw score)* | *4*  *(10.00) [[21]](#endnote-21)* | *4*  *(10.00) [[22]](#endnote-22)* | *No change* | *EIU Citizen Engagement Index raw score:*  *1 > 0*  *2 > 2.5*  *3 > 5*  *4 > 7.5* |
| *Total / Possible*  *(Percent)* | *16/16*  *(100%)* | *16/16*  *(100%)* | *No change* | *75% of possible points to be eligible* |

## IRM End of Term Reports

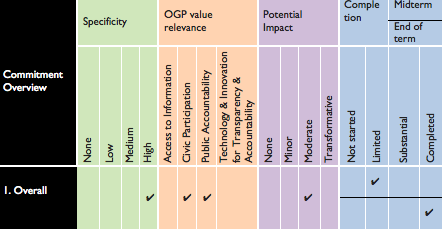
***Note:*** *The IRM End of Term Reports draw heavily from the IRM Progress Reports. Commitment descriptions and coding for Specificity, OGP value relevance, Potential impact, and Completion (at midterm) are all taken directly from the final publication version of the Progress report. For more guidance and information on these variables, please refer to their respective subsections within Section 3.3: IRM action plan analysis.*

### A. Completion: End of Term (coding)

In the narrative table, under the column marked Completion: End of Term please code for the overall commitment and each milestone based on the given definitions. Please select one value per row.

1. **Completion:** Based on a close reading of the commitment text, how complete is the given activity at the end of the two-year implementation cycle?
   1. Complete
   2. Substantial
   3. Limited
   4. Officially withdrawn
   5. Not started
   6. Unable to tell from government and civil society responses

***Example:***



### B. Did it Open Government? (coding)

Often, OGP commitments are vaguely worded or not clearly related to opening government, but they actually achieve significant political reforms. Other times, commitments with significant progress may appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government. In an attempt to capture these subtleties and, more importantly, actual changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable ‘did it open government?’ in End-of-Term Reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation. This can be contrasted to the IRM’s “Starred commitments” which describe *potential* impact.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM End-of-Term Reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focus on outcomes that can be observed on government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report.

1. To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes *as implemented* for changes in government openness.
2. IRM Researchers assess the “Did it open government?” with regard to each of the OGP values that this commitment is relevant to. For each OGP value, the IRM researcher considers the following questions when assessing commitment outcomes as implemented for changes in government practice:

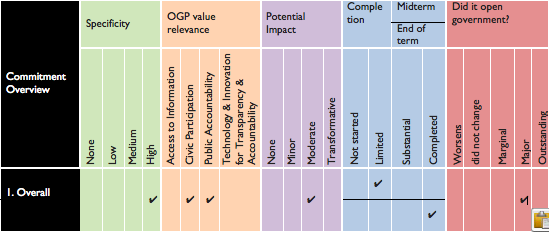
* Access to Information: Did government disclose more information or improve quality of the information disclosed to the public?
* Civic Participation: Did government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions?
* Public Accountability: Did government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable to their actions?

1. Based on the above questions, the IRM researcher uses this scale for coding the overall commitment and individual milestones as follows:

* Worsened: worsens government openness as a result of the measures taken by commitment.
* Did not change: did not change status quo of government practice.
* Marginal: some change, but minor in terms of its impact over level of openness.
* Major: a step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale
* Outstanding: a reform that has transformed ‘business as usual’ in the relevant policy area by opening government.

*Note: The IRM follows a ‘high water mark’ philosophy for coding this variable, which means that if a commitment or milestone has multiple relevant OGP values, please code for the highest level. For example, if a milestone is relevant to both ‘Access to Information’ and ‘Civic Participation’ but is assessed as being a major step forward for government openness in ‘Access to Information’ and marginal in terms of openness for ‘Civic Participation’ please code the overall milestone as Major. In the narrative section on ‘Did it Open Government?’ the IRM researcher should explain this discrepancy. Additionally, if the IRM researcher determines that the sum effect of the milestones warrants a higher coding for the commitment overall, this will be reflected in the overall coding and further explained in the narrative section.*

***Example:***



### C. Commitment Aim:

This section is taken directly from the Context and objectives section (see Section 3.3.1.d) in the IRM progress report. The purpose of this section is to provide readers with a short summary of the commitment and what policy aim it sought to achieve. When identifying the policy aim, IRM researchers pull from the commitment language and what the government has identified as 1. The policy area of the commitment 2. The policy problem and starting point at the time commitment was adopted and 3. How the policy solution meant to address the issue.

*Note: While the End of term report is intended to be a stand-alone document, it is also narrower in scope and more concise than the progress report. IRM researchers can therefore refer readers to specific sections in the progress report for more detailed analysis and explanations.*

***Example:***

*This commitment aimed at improving the disclosure practices of state-owned enterprises (SOE) and local governments as well as contributing to the transparency of public procurement procedures. At the time this commitment was adopted 30% of local governments did not disclose their procurement contracts. More specifically, the commitment set out to*

* *Expand the scope of the compliance checks of the State Audit Office (SAO) to the disclosure obligations of SOEs*
* *Review the Public Procurement Act with the aim of improving the online accessibility of procurement information*
* *Make open meetings a regular practice of local governments to discuss the utilization of local government property and procurements (milestone 3.3),*
* *Make the disclosure of public motions a regular practice before holding local government meetings (milestone 3.4).*

### D. Status

This section provides a brief narrative justifying the coding for completion levels at the end of the implementation period. A brief summary of the completion level at the end of the first year of implementation serves as a point of comparison.

#### Progress report

This section is taken directly from the Completion section (Section 3.3.2.b) of the progress report and briefly describes, “What progress was made during the first year of implementation?” Findings can be copied directly from the Completion section of the progress report. IRM researchers should also include a description on what remained to be completed. The IRM progress report can be cited here to direct readers to the progress report for more detail.

***Example:***

*According to official government sources, internal rules of procedures determining the independent control agencies’ (SAO) practice were not yet amended. Government sources informed the IRM researcher that although no new regulation was put into force, the SAO has already begun to incorporate this activity into its operations. It would be useful to monitor and evaluate the SAO’s practice on a regular basis. For more information, please see the 2013-2014 mid-term IRM report.*

*The implementation of the commitment was halted at a very early stage due to the opposition of lobby groups, such as the representation of cities (Association of Cities with County Rights). For more information, please see the 2013-2014 mid-term IRM report.*

#### End of term

Here the IRM researcher summarizes any actions (or lack thereof) towards implementing the commitment, which took place after the first year of implementation. This evidence-based description serves to justify the coding for completion at the end of term. In a similar format to the Completion section (Section 3.3.2.b) of the progress report, this section uses evidence and focuses on facts and findings from desk research and stakeholder interviews to answer, “What is the status of completion for this commitment?”

* Answers in simple language, “What progress has been made since the first year of implementation?"
  + Here the researcher provides evidence of progress
    - * Lays out the government viewpoint.
      * Lays out the non-government viewpoint, and differentiates this from the government’s viewpoint. Analysis should be a dispassionate analysis of the objective facts of completion.
  + If completed, please provide evidence.
  + If not delayed or withdrawn, please evaluate the reasons for delay. Include government and selected non-government stakeholder “diagnoses”.

*Note: When writing this section, please be sure to distinguish the views of different stakeholders.*

***Example:***

*Based on government self-assessment report and media monitoring conducted by the IRM researcher, there was no further progress on the implementation of the unfinished milestones (3.1, 3.3, and 3.4). Milestones 3.3 and 3.4 lost importance and ownership in the course of implementation after some CSO members of the government working group, who could have pressed for the implementation of these milestones, resigned in protest. Since the mid-term IRM report, no further consultations with the Association of Cities, the government stakeholder group that opposed the activities in these milestones since the action plan development stage, have taken place. The IRM researcher could not find evidence of any further attempts by the government to make progress on these two milestones.*

### E. Did it open government?

IRM researchers will first establish the baseline of government practice in the given policy area by establishing the context and starting point of the issues in the policy area. Then, the IRM researcher will describe what was the potential impact expected from the commitment. This information can be drawn from the Context and objectives section (Section 3.3.1.d) of the progress report. In particular, the IRM researcher should describe ‘what changes did the commitment aim at?’

Building on the findings described in the ‘Early results’ section (section 3.3.2.c) the IRM researcher will provide respond to the following guiding questions, depending on the relevance of the commitment to OGP values:

* Access to Information: Did government disclose more information or improve quality of the information disclosed to the public?
* Civic Participation: Did government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions?
* Public Accountability: Did government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable to their actions?

Then the IRM researcher will provide an analysis and assessment to justify coding for how the commitment changed government openness in government practice. The possible options are:

* Worsened
* Did not change
* Marginal
* Major
* Outstanding

Here the IRM researcher can describe in greater detail how government practice changed with regards to specific OGP value areas.

*Note: Questions are to be considered in the time frame of the two-year period of the action plan.*

### Carried forward?

This section indicates if the commitment was carried over to the next action plan. Commitments can be carried over from action plans to action plans by including the exact same incomplete commitment in the next new action plan. Completed commitments can also be carried over to the new action plan, though they should include a different scope. Additionally, stakeholders can include new and different commitments.

The responses for this section are:

* Yes
  + Researchers will reference the action plan text to describe how it was included, briefly noting if there are any changes or updates to the commitment as described.
* No.
  + If the answer is no because an action plan has not been released at the time of writing of the report, IRM researchers will draw on stakeholder inputs and their own expertise to briefly discuss whether the commitment should be included in the next action plan. IRM researchers can reference the recommendations from the first progress report if they are still relevant.
* If the commitment did not receive “complete” at the end of term, the IRM researcher will draw on stakeholder input or their own expertise to briefly discuss next steps or areas for improvement in the next action plan so that the commitment can earn “complete”.

# Annex A: IRM Charter

**IRM Charter (Proposed)**

*Draft version for discussion September 2014.*

***“[…]/[…]”*** *signify**possible alternatives.*

***Bold text*** *indicates IEP-recommended proposal.*

## I. Overview

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) is a key means by which all stakeholders can track progress among OGP governments, as well as promote strong accountability between member governments and citizens. The IRM serves a key role in cooperation and collaboration between governments and civil society and in ensuring the credibility of OGP, and in promoting accountability for carrying out commitments outlined in national action plans. The IRM issues annual reports that assess each OGP participating government’ progress in development and implementation of its respective national action plan. The IRM is in charge of overseeing this process on behalf of OGP to ensure reports are credible and independent.

The IRM assesses each OGP participating government on development and implementation of action plans and progress in fulfilling open government principles. The IRM also develops technical recommendations. In each country, well-respected national researchers, drawn from the country whenever possible, apply a common questionnaire to evaluate these areas. The actual IRM country reports are drafted by the national researchers, based on a combination of interviews with national OGP stakeholders, analysis of relevant data, and reports by governments and civil society.

An International Expert Panel (IEP) oversees the IRM. The IEP is comprised of **[10]** individuals who are technical and policy experts. In accordance to the OGP Articles of Governance, the OGP Steering Committee appoints the individuals following an open, public nominations process. In line with OGP’s commitment to peer support, the IEP’s efforts to ensure due diligence, quality assessment, and the application of the highest standards of research help to ensure the credibility of the Partnership. At the same time, the IEP also identifies opportunities to strengthen OGP processes and national implementation of commitments.

The IEP is comprised of experts representing a diversity of regions and thematic expertise. The organogram of the IRM is found in the figure below:

**Figure:** Organogram of Independent Reporting Mechanism

International Experts Panel

(Content and process)

IRM Program Director and Staff

National Researchers

National Researchers

National Researchers

OGP Executive Director

(Fiduciary and administrative)

The content of individual reports and the methodology of the IRM are protected from outside influences. Final say on the content of a report rests with the IEP, the IRM program staff, and the individual author. Neither the Executive Director of the Support Unit nor any member of the Steering Committee has veto authority on the reports.

Once drafted, IRM reports go through a process of initial review by the IEP. They are also provided to governments to offer their comments and feedback. No government has the power to veto any content within IRM reports, but their initial review offers the opportunity to correct any factual errors or offer new evidence that can inform the final report.

Following IEP and government review, the IEP conducts a final review of each country report for quality control purposes, to resolve any outstanding questions or concerns, and to finalize reports for publication on the OGP website in both English and the relevant national administrative language(s). There, public comments may be received and may warrant final revision.

## II. IRM governance

### International expert panel (IEP)

As part of the critical function of quality control, the IEP establish and updates guidelines for the IRM to incentivize governments and civil society to “race to the top.”

1. **Membership:** The IEP will be broadly representative of OGP participating countries, with experts that represent a diversity of regions and thematic expertise related to open government. IEP members are not required to come from OGP participating countries to sit on the panel.

* **Size:** The IEP has [5 technical advisors]/[10 technical advisors]/**[5 members with a steering role and 5 with a supporting, quality control role]**.
* **Qualifications:** Due to the complexity of the role and the large number of countries that must be assessed, Technical Advisors should have substantial experience in the transparency, accountability, and civic engagement field in a number of regions, as well as experience managing multinational research projects.
* **Responsibilities:** They will have the following responsibilities:
  1. Develop the overall assessment guidelines and the assessment template for national researchers to use.
  2. Work with the IRM Program Manager to identify respected, nationally based researchers in each OGP participating governments to draft the independent reports.
  3. Review draft country reports and work with national researchers to incorporate inputs from IEP and government review.
  4. Provide final approval for report publication.
  5. Aid the IRM staff in developing a robust and transparent system for addressing complaints from OGP countries and other stakeholders.
  6. [Attending regularized meetings of the IEP to be held at least twice per year.]
* **Powers:** **[Any IEP can withhold any report that it does not see fit for publication.] [The IEP may also withhold the IRM brand from products written by IRM staff that the panel has not reviewed.]**
* **Limits on powers: [The IEP does not have powers to recommend administrative changes to the IRM.]**/[The IEP, as the steering entity of the IRM, does not have the power to dismiss the IRM Program Director nor have a say in hiring the new one, should such a situation arise.]
* **Nomination and appointment:** The IRM will be overseen by an International Expert Panel, which is comprised of individuals nominated through an open, public process and selected by the OGP Steering Committee. **[Currently, the OGP Steering Committee appoints the IEP at the recommendation of the OGP Criteria and Standards Committee following an open nomination and vetting process.]** **[The IEP has** **standing to make nominations and recommendations to [nominate new candidates,] [set requirements for publication of nominees,] [set criteria for weighing individual candidates or the whole panel]].**
* **Terms:** [Initial terms for International Expert Panel members will be two years, with the possibility of a one-year extension.]/[There are no term limits for IEP members]/**[IEP members serve a two-year term and serve one year as “emeritus reviewers.” During the emeritus period, they review reports and pass on knowledge to new IEP members.]**
* **Renewal of terms and termination of contract: [IEP members will develop a clear, public set of transparent criteria for their own performance evaluation. The review would be applied annually by** [the Executive Director]/**[the IRM Program Director] in consultation with the Executive Director.] [In cases of renewal, the IRM Program Director would make recommendations to the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee for renewal of terms. In cases of termination or expiration of the annual contract,** [the Executive Director]/**the IRM Director would make a recommendation to [**the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee] **/[the Executive Director] for termination or expiration of the contract. The OGP Executive Director is legally responsible for termination of the respective IEP member’s contract.]**
* **Resignation, dismissal, and replacement: [Resignations ahead of the end of term are to be sent to the IRM Program Director and communicated to the OGP Criteria and Standards Subcommittee.] [In cases of inactivity of more than two months, and after appropriate due diligence by IRM staff, the IRM Program Director may recommend to the IEP that the member be considered to have effectively resigned.]**
* **Compensation:** Technical Advisors will be compensated for their time and direct expenses.

### Staff support for the IRM

The full-time IRM Program Manager leads the IRM, supported with adequate staff. All such positions are housed within the Support Unit for administrative and fiduciary reasons, but report to the IEP in terms of content to ensure independence of thought and appearance. The Program Manager will not have a reporting relationship to the director of the Support Unit and the Subcommittee on Criteria and Standards in terms of intellectual products, although they will maintain a strong working relationship with both in order to keep the Support Unit and the Steering Committee informed of the progress.

The Criteria and Standards Subcommittee oversees and has input into the Program Director’s hiring.

The IRM Program Director’s responsibilities include:

1. Working to convene the IEP in person/by phone and staff for ongoing business;
2. Maintaining and updating the process for identifying national researchers;
3. Hiring national researchers in each of the OGP countries;
4. Developing, updating, and applying the IRM template;
5. Developing detailed guidance for national researchers and providing training, coaching and feedback as necessary to IRM researchers;
6. Identifying and rolling out tools to help national researchers collect IRM inputs within OGP countries;
7. Publishing all reports in a timely, consistent fashion;
8. Briefing the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee and Steering Committee as appropriate;
9. Reviewing and finalizing reports in tandem with the IEP;
10. Developing relevant products derived from OGP data, as appropriate.

**[While the Program Director is legally an at-will employee, subject to resignation or termination without notice,]** [the IEP will be confidentially informed of reasons for termination of employment]/[IRM Program Director should only be dismissed as a result of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ standards.]

### Criteria and Standards Subcommittee of the OGP Steering Committee

**[The Criteria and Standards Subcommittee of the OGP Steering Committee will oversee the selection and vetting process for the IEP. This includes identifying the selection criteria and having them approved by the Steering Committee, short-listing and interviewing nominees after an open nominations process, and providing a final set of recommendations on IEP panel members to the full Steering Committee for approval.]**

[The Criteria and Standards Subcommittee will also oversee the hiring of the IRM Program Director.] / **[The Executive Director oversees the hiring of the IRM Program Director with the input of the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee and the IEP.]**

**[The Criteria and Standards Subcommittee develops definitions and guidelines on OGP eligibility criteria, reporting requirements, and the implications of IRM findings (for example, defining the consequences of a negative IRM report).]**

[Finally, the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee will maintain a watching brief over the IRM to ensure that the IEP, project management team, and national researchers are able to publish their reports, achieve objectives, and that the reports maintain a high standard of quality and accuracy.]

No more than once [annually]/**[every two years]**, the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee will revisit and, where necessary, revise the IRM Guiding Principles Document as well as provide official guidance to the IEP and IRM staff, subject to approval of the Steering Committee.

### National researchers

IRM national researchers are hired through an open recruitment process, based on transparent public criteria. This open recruitment will supplement the existing pool of researchers that OGP partner organizations have already identified. Candidates will be short-listed after an open call based on this broad set of qualifications by the IRM project manager, overseen by the IEP.

The IRM Program Director oversees the process of conducting interviews, checking references and working with IEP technical experts to make a final selection of national researchers for each country. Further details on the national expert selection process are to be made public.

Whenever possible, national researchers should be from—and currently working in—the country of study. Candidates should have the following:

* A background in academia or public policy, with demonstrated experience conducting research for publication nationally, regionally, or internationally;
* Specific experience working on public policy issues related to governance, transparency, accountability, or public participation more broadly, as well as experience working with and engaging civil society, the government, and the private sector; and
* A demonstrated capacity and willingness to engage a broad range of stakeholders in a non-partisan and objective fashion.

While governments will not have veto power over any particular expert’s nomination, they will be invited to provide feedback on the shortlist of national researcher candidates for the sole purpose of identifying any information that might present a conflict of interest or draw into question the expertise of particular candidates.

As appropriate, the IRM may engage civil society members to provide feedback on the national researcher candidate shortlist.

### Governments, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the IRM

During the research process, national researchers will use a variety of methods to gather data. Among the most important will be participatory research, such as focus groups and interviews, to solicit the broadest possible feedback of relevant stakeholders, especially civil society and the private sector. At a minimum, it will include stakeholders involved in the drafting of the OGP plan and those directly affected by commitments. Through these processes, CSOs and other stakeholders will be able to evaluate the focus, development, and progress of the action plan.

Governments will also be invited to review IRM reports in draft form before they are finalized. While governments will not have veto power over any section of these reports, they will have the opportunity to offer additional information, clarifications, and other evidence that IRM experts will then take into account before finalizing the draft reports for publication. Once published, there will be a space on the OGP website for broader public comment on reports.

All countries will respond to IRM reports by leveraging IRM recommendations to improve performance and implementation of current action plans. Countries also will report on their reform and action plan progress within the next annual self-assessment reporting cycle. In line with OGP’s commitment to peer support, these countries will also benefit from OGP’s community of extensive technical assistance providers and peer support as they work to implement their OGP commitments and analyze and implement IRM recommendations.

### Disclosure policy

OGP operates on a presumption of openness in all of its activities. It must favor openness over any approach which advocates secrecy. The OGP disclosure policy was developed with input from the OGP community and applies to all information held by the OGP Support Unit, Steering Committee and subcommittees.

The IRM upholds this as stated in the general OGP Disclosure Policy. Exceptions provided for in the General Policy are as follows and may have particular resonance in the administration of the IRM:

1. Information received by OGP which has an explicit expectation of confidentiality;
2. Information which, if disclosed, would do identifiable harm to the safety or security of an individual, or violate his or her rights or privacy;
3. Information that in OGP’s view, if disclosed, would demonstrably inhibit candid policy dialogue with governments, donors, communities or partners;
4. Internal pre-decisional policy documents that are not available for public consultation. Pre-decisional policy documents not subject to public consultation will be archived and available on request after three years.

# Annex B: Selected Articles of Governance

## Background and Objectives

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder international initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In pursuit of these goals, OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and sharing ideas and experience among governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, all of which contribute to a common pursuit of open government. OGP stakeholders include participating governments as well as civil society and private sector entities that support the principles and mission of OGP.

## Participation in OGP

### Expectations of OGP participating governments

All OGP participating governments commit to meeting five common expectations. These are that they:

1. Endorse the high-level Open Government Declaration;
2. Make concrete commitments, as part of a country action plan, that are ambitious and go beyond a country’s current practice;
3. Develop country action plans through a multi-stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society;
4. Commit to a self-assessment and independent reporting on the country’s progress; and,
5. Contribute to the advancement of open government in other countries through sharing of best practices, expertise, technical assistance, technologies and resources, as appropriate.

OGP participating governments are expected to uphold the values and principles articulated in the Open Government Declaration, and to consistently and continually advance open governance for the well being of their citizens. Should the IRM process find that a participating government repeatedly (in two consecutive IRM reports) acts contrary to OGP process and to its action plan commitments (Addenda B and C), fails to adequately address issues raised by the IRM, or is taking actions that undermine the values and principles of OGP, the Steering Committee may upon recommendation of the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee review the participation of that government in OGP. Both the Subcommittee and Steering Committee processes will include direct conversations with governments under such review. Specifically, in order to safeguard the integrity and legitimacy of OGP, the Steering Committee may review the participation of governments in OGP if they fail to resolve these issues:

1. Should a participating government fall below the minimum eligibility criteria (Addenda A, updated each year by the OGP Support Unit) that government should take immediate and explicit steps to address issues so that it passes the threshold within one year.
2. Should the IRM process find that a participating government repeatedly (for two consecutive reports) acts contrary to OGP process or its action plan commitments (Addenda B and C), and fails to adequately address issues raised by the IRM, the Steering Committee may upon recommendation of the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee review the participation of said government in OGP.

Steering Committee engagement with participating governments should emphasize the vertical accountability between a government and its citizens that is the founding principle of OGP.

The Steering Committee will issue a public report about its final decision on the participation of any government.

## III. OGP action plans and reporting

Action plans should be for the duration of two years, although individual commitments contained in these action plans may be for more or less than two years, depending on the nature of the commitment. However, each action plan should include one-year and two-year benchmarks, so that governments, civil society organizations, and the IRM (see below), have a common set of time-bound metrics to assess progress. As living documents, action plans may be updated as needed based on ongoing consultations with civil society. Any updates must be duly noted in the official version of the action plan on the OGP website.

All OGP participating governments are to publish an interim self-assessment report approximately three months after the end of the first year of action plan implementation. This report should follow OGP guidelines in assessing the government’s performance in meeting its OGP commitments, according to the substance and timelines set out in its national action plan. This report should be made publicly available in the local language(s) and in English and should be published on the OGP website. A comprehensive self-assessment report will be required after two years of action plan implementation. For countries that have joined OGP through 2012, interim and comprehensive self-assessment reports will be required after the government’s second OGP action plan. For countries that have joined OGP in 2013 and onwards, self-assessment reports will be required in the implementation of their first action plan.

As a complement to the participating government self-assessment report, an independent progress report is to be written by well-respected governance researchers, preferably from each OGP participating country. Researchers are to use a common OGP independent progress report instrument and guidelines, based on a combination of interviews with local OGP stakeholders as well as desk-based analysis. This report is to be shared with a small International Experts Panel (IEP) (appointed by the OGP Steering Committee) for peer review to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied. The draft report is then shared with the relevant OGP government for comment. After receiving comments on the draft report from each government, the researcher and the IEP finalize the independent progress report for publication on the OGP portal. OGP-participating governments may also issue a formal public response to the independent report on the OGP portal once it is published. The executive summary of the independent progress report is to be made publicly available in the local language(s) and in English.

### Disclosure policy

OGP operates on a presumption of openness in all of its activities. The disclosure policy outlined in Addendum E applies to all information held by or on behalf of the OGP Support Unit, Steering Committee and subcommittees, and must favor openness over any approach which advocates secrecy.

# Annex C: Guidance: assessing OGP values for relevance

## I. Purpose

This document presents the definitions of Open Government Partnership (OGP) *values* that are applied by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) to evaluate the relevance of commitments made as part of OGP national action plans. As part of its mandate, the IRM evaluates each commitment within the national context for its relevance to the OGP values (as contained in the OGP Articles of Governance) and the OGP Declaration which all countries sign. The definitions offered here are syntheses of these sources.

These definitions, taken as a whole, will be used to evaluate whether each OGP commitment meets the test of “clear relevance” for each commitment. In order to be marked of “clear relevance” in an OGP IRM report, a commitment must clearly articulate their relationship to “Access to Information,” “Civic Participation,” and “Public Accountability.”

While action plans may contain commitments that do not meet the test for relevance, those that do not will be ineligible for “starred” or exemplary commitment status. (This is used to highlight the major achievements of a country around open government in its IRM report.) Proponents of commitments will want to draft commitments in such a way that they clearly articulate which of the values they intend to improve. Relevant commitments may either employ these values instrumentally (in the service of some other policy aim) or they may be aims in-and-of-themselves.

Because the fourth value “Technology and Innovation for Transparency and Accountability” is instrumental in achieving the other three values, governments that wish to have this value checked are advised to clearly articulate how technology and innovation will improve access to information, civic participation, and public accountability. Commitments that have technology but do not clearly articulate their intended impact on these other values may be considered of “unclear relevance.”

OGP values may be applied to any branch of government to be considered relevant.

## II. How to use these values

**Government points of contact:** Share these values with civil society, private sector and government stakeholders to ensure a shared understanding of open government values. These can be used to help draft, evaluate relevance of, and where necessary revise commitments under, the OGP action plan. Additionally, you can use these definitions to help predict the evaluation by the IRM in your country.

**Members of government:** Use these values to help draft your commitments and make proposals to civil society and to government for inclusion in the action plan. These should help to identify those goals that meet your goals of good government and open government.

**Civil society:** Use these values to draft proposed commitments and to evaluate the relevance of commitments in your national action plan. These definitions should also help to educate your colleagues on what is and what is not relevant to open government.

**IRM national researchers:** Carefully apply these definitions to each commitment or group of commitments to identify whether the actions described in the commitment, as written, would either enhance these values or would employ these values to meet other policy goals. Assess the intent of the commitment, as written, rather than the ultimate potential impact or the intentional impact.

## III. OGP values defined

### Access to information

Commitments around access to information:

* Pertain to government-held information, as opposed to only information on government activities. As an example, releasing government-held information on pollution would be clearly relevant, although the information is not about “government activity” per se;
* Are not restricted to data but pertain to all information. For example, releasing individual construction contracts and releasing data on a large set of construction contracts;
* May include information disclosures in open data and the systems that underpin the public disclosure of data;
* May cover both proactive and/or reactive releases of information;
* May cover both making data more available and/or improving the technological readability of information;
* May pertain to mechanisms to strengthen the right to information (such as ombudsman’s offices or information tribunals);
* Must provide open access to information (it should not be privileged or internal only to government);
* Should promote transparency of government decision making and carrying out of basic functions;
* May seek to lower cost of obtaining information;
* Should strive to meet the 5 Star for Open Data design (<http://5stardata.info/>).

### Civic participation

Commitments around civic participation may pertain to formal public participation or to broader civic participation. They should generally seek to “consult,” “involve,” “collaborate,” or “empower,” as explained by the International Association for Public Participation’s Public Participation Spectrum (<http://bit.ly/1kMmlYC>).

Commitments addressing public participation:

* Must open up decision making to all interested members of the public; such forums are usually “top-down” in that they are created by government (or actors empowered by government) to inform decision making throughout the policy cycle;
* Can include elements of access to information to ensure meaningful input of interested members of the public into decisions;
* Often include the right to have your voice heard, but do not necessarily include the right to be a formal part of a decision making process.
* Alternately, commitments may address the broader operating environment that enables participation in civic space. Examples include but are not limited to:
* Reforms increasing freedoms of assembly, expression, petition, press, or association;
* Reforms on association including trade union laws or NGO laws;
* Reforms improving the transparency and process of formal democratic processes such as citizen proposals, elections, or petitions.

The following commitments are examples of commitments that would **not** be marked as clearly relevant to the broader term, civic participation:

* Commitments that assume participation will increase due to publication of information without specifying the mechanism for such participation (although this commitment would be marked as “access to information”);
* Commitments on decentralization that do not specify the mechanisms for enhanced public participation;
* Commitments that define participation as inter-agency cooperation without a mechanism for public participation.
* Commitments that may be marked of “unclear relevance” also include those mechanisms where participation is limited to government-selected organizations.

### Public accountability

Commitments improving accountability can include:

Rules, regulations, and mechanisms that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.

Consistent with the core goal of “Open Government,” to be counted as “clearly relevant,” such commitments must include a public-facing element, meaning that they are not purely internal systems of accountability. While such commitments may be laudable and may meet an OGP grand challenge, they do not, as articulated, meet the test of “clear relevance” due to their lack of openness. Where such internal-facing mechanisms are a key part of government strategy, it is recommended that governments include a public facing element such as:

* Disclosure of non-sensitive metadata on institutional activities (following maximum disclosure principles);
* Citizen audits of performance;
* Citizen-initiated appeals processes in cases of non-performance or abuse.

Strong commitments around accountability ascribe rights, duties, or consequences for actions of officials or institutions. Formal accountability commitments include means of formally expressing grievances or reporting wrongdoing and achieving redress. Examples of strong commitments include:

* Improving or establishing appeals processes for denial of access to information;
* Improving access to justice by making justice mechanisms cheaper, faster, or easier to use;
* Improving public scrutiny of justice mechanisms;
* Creating public tracking systems for public complaints processes (such as case tracking software for police or anti-corruption hotlines).

A commitment that claims to improve accountability, but assumes that merely providing information or data without explaining what mechanism or intervention will translate that information into consequences or change, would **not** qualify as an accountability commitment. See <http://bit.ly/1oWPXdl> for further information.

### Technology and innovation for openness and accountability

OGP aims to enhance the use of technology and innovation to enable public involvement in government. Specifically, commitments that use technology and innovation should enhance openness and accountability by:

* Promoting new technologies that offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration.
* Making more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions.
* Working to reduce costs of using these technologies.

Additionally, commitments that will be marked as technology and innovation:

* May commit to a process of engaging civil society and the business community to identify effective practices and innovative approaches for leveraging new technologies to empower people and promote transparency in government;
* May commit to supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use technology for openness and accountability;
* May support the use of technology by government employees and citizens alike.

***Important Note:*** *not all eGovernment reforms improve openness of government. When an eGovernment commitment is made, it needs to articulate how it enhances at least one of the following: access to information, public participation, or public accountability.*

# Addenda

Addenda A:

**Timeline**:

·    Orientation

o    Attendance at an in-person (preferred) or virtual orientation to discuss strategy for answering the research questions contained in the OGP IRM Research Guide. (date to be determined with IRM staff)

·    Research plan

o    The IRM researcher serves both the role of fact-finding and listening to the viewpoint of various stakeholders. In order to carry out these roles, the IRM researcher will develop a research plan with at least one public information-gathering event. The IRM researcher, in developing the research plan should be conscious of the following elements.

§  Care should be taken in inviting stakeholders outside of the "usual suspects" list of invitees already participating in existing processes.

§  Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g. online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews).

§  The IRM researcher should be conscious of the amount of time they spend educating the public about OGP, with care not to displace the primary responsibility for awareness-raising from civil society and government.

o    After receiving the research plan template from IRM staff, the researcher shall A submit a research plan (not to exceed two pages) will be submitted by March 30, 2017 to the IRM  within two weeks or less of receiving action plan structure from IRM staff.

***Progress report***:

·    Initial Data gathering

o    **Background desk research:** Inputting information on sections I (“Institutional contextOverview/ Background”), 2.1 (“Consultation during Development of Action Plan”) of the progress report in English or Spanish in the report templateresearch tool (by March 30, 2017 within one month or less of approved research plan)

o    **Stakeholder meetings:** Facilitation, organization, and documentation of at least one public-information gathering event in the course of research. (Due Junely 30, 2017).

* Draft Country Context Section (Section VI) and Consultation during implementation of the action plan (Section 2.2) (by June 30, 2017).

o    **Summit draftsample commitment** to IRM staff (due July September 310, 2017).

o    **Completion of report:** Inputting remaining sections into template provided in English or Spanish (Due October 1, 2017)

·    Review and revision

o    **Internal review:**

§  Revised draft following review by IRM staff. (due within one week or less of receiving report back from IRM staff)

§  Revised draft following review by International Experts’ Panel. Note: IEP comments are not advisory, they must be responded to (due within one week or less of receiving report back from IEP members)

o    **Pre-publication review:**

§  Revised draft following review by country government and three select civil society organizations (due within one week or less of receiving comments back from government and civil society)

o    **Publication:**

§  Translation and copy-edit of report in administrative language(s) (to be completed during government 21 days comment period – due to IRM at end of government comment review)

§  Final revisions following public external review + approval of final print version of report to be sent to graphic designer (due one week or less after end of public comment period)

§  Review first proof from graphic designer (within two business days of receipt of proof by email)

·    Results dissemination

o    **Launch:** Presentation of findings to government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders (due by March 15, 2018)

***End-of-term report:***

o    Submit first draft of end-of-term report using template provided by IRM staff (Due September 15, 2018)

o    Revised draft following review by IRM staff (due within 4 days or less of receiving report back from IRM staff)

o    Revised draft following review by IEP (due within 4 days of receiving or less report back from IEP)

o    Revised draft following review by country government (due within one week or less of receiving comments back from government)

o    Delivery of translated and copy-edited version of report in administrative language(s) (to be completed during government 21 days comment period – due to IRM at end of government comment period)

o    Final revisions and approval of final print version of end-of-term report following public comment period (due within 4 days or less of end of public comment period)

o    Review first proof from graphic designer (within two business days of receipt of proof by email)

·    Results dissemination

o    Presentation of findings to government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders (Due December 16, 2018)

**Sources and interviews:**

The local researcher will be responsible for answering the questions available in an online toolkit for sections I and II of the report. The researcher will input the rest of the section in Word template provided by IRM staff. The final report will, *at a minimum*, be based on the following documentation:

·    Review of documentation including the government self-assessment, official websites, and, where they exist, any independent civil society reports on progress of OGP implementation;

·    At least one public information-gathering event. Care should be taken in inviting stakeholders outside of the “usual suspects” list of invitees already participating in existing processes.  Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g. online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews).

·    Interviews with key informants inside and outside government.

### Addendum B: OGP country commitments

All OGP participating governments are to develop OGP national action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over a two-year period.

Governments should begin their OGP national action plans by sharing existing efforts related to their chosen grand challenge(s), including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. Action plans should then set out governments’ OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant grand challenge. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete on-going reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area. Commitments in country action plans should be ambitious in nature. An ambitious commitment is defined as one that, once completed, will show a demonstrable advancement from action plan to action plan in the grand challenge areas proposed by OGP through openness, transparency, civic participation, and accountability. In the context of pre-existing commitments, ambition is defined as expediting the time frame for completion of the stated goals of a commitment.

OGP commitments are to be structured around a set of five “grand challenges” that governments face. OGP recognizes that all countries are starting from different baselines. Countries are charged with selecting the grand challenges and related concrete commitments that most relate to their unique country contexts. No action plan, standard or specific commitments are to be forced on any country.

The five OGP grand challenges are:

1. Improving Public Services—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation, including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications, and any other relevant service areas
2. Increasing Public Integrity—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom
3. More Effectively Managing Public Resources—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources, and foreign assistance
4. Creating Safer Communities—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats
5. Increasing Corporate Accountability—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement

While the nature of concrete commitments under any grand challenge area should be flexible and allow for each country’s unique circumstances, all OGP commitments should reflect four core open government principles:

* Transparency: information on government activities and decisions is open, comprehensive, timely, freely available to the public, and meets basic open data standards (e.g. raw data, machine readability).
* Citizen Participation: governments seek to mobilize citizens to engage in public debate, provide input, and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative, and effective governance.
* Accountability: there are rules, regulations and mechanisms in place that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.
* Technology and Innovation: governments embrace the importance of providing citizens with open access to technology, the role of new technologies in driving innovation, and the importance of increasing the capacity of citizens to use technology.

Countries may focus their commitments at the national, local and/or sub-national level—wherever they believe their open government efforts are to have the greatest impact.

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multi-year process, governments should attach time frames and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, whenever possible.

To encourage the sharing of best practice and innovation and maintain high standards, all OGP countries are to participate in working-level sessions with other participating governments and the OGP Steering Committee during the action plan development phase.

Through presentations and discussions, governments with initially less ambitious proposals are to be able to identify gaps and address them early. Peer consultation sessions also are to enable participants to identify the need for additional feedback from relevant technical experts on specific commitment areas, which the OGP networking mechanism can help facilitate.

### Addendum C: guidelines for public consultation on country commitments

OGP participants commit to developing their country action plans through a multi-stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society. Taking account of relevant national laws and policies, OGP participants agree to develop their country commitments according to the following principles:

##### i. Consultation during development of action plan

* Availability of timeline: Countries are to make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation
* Adequate notice: Countries are to consult the population with sufficient forewarning
* Awareness-raising: Countries are to undertake OGP awareness-raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation
* Multiple channels: Countries are to consult through a variety of mechanisms—including online and through in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage
* Breadth of consultation: Countries are to consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector, and to seek out a diverse range of views
* Documentation and feedback: Countries are to make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online

##### ii. Consultation during implementation

* Consultation during implementation: Countries are to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one.

Countries must report on their consultation efforts as part of their self-assessment reports, and the IRM is to examine the application of these principles in practice.

### Addendum D: Open Government Declaration

As members of OGP, committed to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention against Corruption, and other applicable international instruments related to human rights and good governance:

**We acknowledge** that people all around the world are demanding more openness in government. They are calling for greater civic participation in public affairs, and seeking ways to make their governments more transparent, responsive, accountable, and effective.

**We recognize** that countries are at different stages in their efforts to promote openness in government, and that each of us pursues an approach consistent with our national priorities and circumstances and the aspirations of our citizens.

**We accept responsibility** for seizing this moment to strengthen our commitments to promote transparency, fight corruption, empower citizens, and harness the power of new technologies to make government more effective and accountable.

**We uphold the value** of openness in our engagement with citizens to improve services, manage public resources, promote innovation, and create safer communities. We embrace principles of transparency and open government with a view toward achieving greater prosperity, well-being, and human dignity in our own countries and in an increasingly interconnected world.

Together, we declare our commitment to:

**Increase the availability of information about governmental activities.** Governments collect and hold information on behalf of people, and citizens have a right to seek information about governmental activities. We commit to promoting increased access to information and disclosure about governmental activities at every level of government. We commit to increasing our efforts to systematically collect and publish data on government spending and performance for essential public services and activities. We commit to pro-actively provide high-value information, including raw data, in a timely manner, in formats that the public can easily locate, understand and use, and in formats that facilitate reuse.

We commit to providing access to effective remedies when information or the corresponding records are improperly withheld, including through effective oversight of the recourse process. We recognize the importance of open standards to promote civil society access to public data, as well as to facilitate the interoperability of government information systems. We commit to seeking feedback from the public to identify the information of greatest value to them, and pledge to take such feedback into account to the maximum extent possible.

**Support civic participation**. We value public participation of all people, equally and without discrimination, in decision making and policy formulation. Public engagement, including the full participation of women, increases the effectiveness of governments, which benefit from people’s knowledge, ideas and ability to provide oversight. We commit to making policy formulation and decision making more transparent, creating and using channels to solicit public feedback, and deepening public participation in developing, monitoring and evaluating government activities. We commit to protecting the ability of not-for-profit and civil society organizations to operate in ways consistent with our commitment to freedom of expression, association, and opinion. We commit to creating mechanisms to enable greater collaboration between governments and civil society organizations and businesses.

**Implement the highest standards of professional integrity throughout our administrations.** Accountable government requires high ethical standards and codes of conduct for public officials. We commit to having robust anti-corruption policies, mechanisms and practices, ensuring transparency in the management of public finances and government purchasing, and strengthening the rule of law. We commit to maintaining or establishing a legal framework to make public information on the income and assets of national, high ranking public officials. We commit to enacting and implementing rules that protect whistleblowers. We commit to making information regarding the activities and effectiveness of our anticorruption prevention and enforcement bodies, as well as the procedures for recourse to such bodies, available to the public, respecting the confidentiality of specific law enforcement information. We commit to increasing deterrents against bribery and other forms of corruption in the public and private sectors, as well as to sharing information and expertise.

**Increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability**. New technologies offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration. We intend to harness these technologies to make more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions. We commit to developing accessible and secure online spaces as platforms for delivering services, engaging the public, and sharing information and ideas. We recognize that equitable and affordable access to technology is a challenge, and commit to seeking increased online and mobile connectivity, while also identifying and promoting the use of alternative mechanisms for civic engagement. We commit to engaging civil society and the business community to identify effective practices and innovative approaches for leveraging new technologies to empower people and promote transparency in government. We also recognize that increasing access to technology entails supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use it. We commit to supporting and developing the use of technological innovations by government employees and citizens alike. We also understand that technology is a complement, not a substitute, for clear, useable, and useful information.

We acknowledge that open government is a process that requires ongoing and sustained commitment. We commit to reporting publicly on actions undertaken to realize these principles, to consulting with the public on their implementation, and to updating our commitments in light of new challenges and opportunities.

We pledge to lead by example and contribute to advancing open government in other countries by sharing best practices and expertise and by undertaking the commitments expressed in this declaration on a non-binding, voluntary basis. Our goal is to foster innovation and spur progress, and not to define standards to be used as a precondition for cooperation or assistance or to rank countries. We stress the importance to the promotion of openness of a comprehensive approach and the availability of technical assistance to support capacity- and institution-building.

We commit to espouse these principles in our international engagement, and work to foster a global culture of open government that empowers and delivers for citizens, and advances the ideals of open and participatory 21st century government.

1. Link to letter [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Link to action plan. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Link to self-assessment. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. These institutions were invited to or observed the development of the action plan, but may or may not be responsible for commitments in the action plan. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. These institutions proposed commitments for inclusion in the action plan. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. These institutions are responsible for implementing commitments in action plan whether or not they proposed those commitments. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum\_vertical.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum\_vertical.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Link to Procedures Manual & Articles of Governance explaining OGP value relevance [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information visit: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919> [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. bit.ly/1KE2WIl [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. For more information, see http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/eligibility-criteria. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. For more information, see Table 1 in http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/open-budget-survey/. For up-to-date assessments, see http://www.obstracker.org/. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. The two databases used are Constitutional Provisions at http://www.right2info.org/constitutional-protections and Laws and draft laws at http://www.right2info.org/access-to-information-laws. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, “Disclosure by Politicians,” (Tuck School of Business Working Paper 2009-60, 2009), http://bit.ly/19nDEfK; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “Types of Information Decision Makers Are Required to Formally Disclose, and Level Of Transparency,” in Government at a Glance 2009, (OECD, 2009), http://bit.ly/13vGtqS; Ricard Messick, “Income and Asset Disclosure by World Bank Client Countries” (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009), http://bit.ly/1cIokyf. For more recent information, see http://publicofficialsfinancialdisclosure.worldbank.org. In 2014, the OGP Steering Committee approved a change in the asset disclosure measurement. The existence of a law and de facto public access to the disclosed information replaced the old measures of disclosure by politicians and disclosure of high-level officials. For additional information, see the guidance note on 2014 OGP Eligibility Requirements at http://bit.ly/1EjLJ4Y. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. “Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat,” The Economist Intelligence Unit (London: Economist, 2010), http://bit.ly/eLC1rE. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. “Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and its Discontents,” The Economist Intelligence Unit (London: Economist, 2014), <http://bit.ly/18kEzCt>. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)