INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM:

PHILIPPINES PROGRESS REPORT 2011–2013

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First Progress Report

Open
Government
Partnership
INDEPENDENT
REPORTING MECHANISM

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INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM:

PHILIPPINES

PROGRESS REPORT 2011–13

INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM (IRM):
PHILIPPINES
PROGRESS REPORT 2011-2013

The Philippines national action plan focused on the challenges of more effectively managing public resources and increasing public integrity, and it emphasized all four open government values. While all commitments saw progress, only three were completed, and only four were on schedule.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a biannual review of each OGP participating country's activities.

One of the eight founding countries of the OGP, the Philippines began formal participation in September 2011.

In the Philippines, the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster of the President's Cabinet, under Budget Secretary Florencio Abad, oversaw implementation. The Departments of Budget and Management, Interior and Local Government, and Social Welfare and Development were also responsible.

OGP PROCESS
Countries participating in OGP are required to follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their OGP action plan. There was little documentation of this process in the Philippines. Both the Government and civil society agreed that the consultations had been rushed and could be improved in the future.

Consultation during implementation did not occur, but both Government and civil society shared responsibility for this. While the Government did not organize consultations, civil society did not cooperate to articulate common goals for OGP or expectations of the Government.

Both sides reported plans to correct these mistakes in future OGP processes, from the Government's holding more regular multi-stakeholder consultations, to civil society's agreement on common priorities and pushing for more meaningful initiatives.

AT A GLANCE

MEMBER SINCE: **2011**
NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS: **19**

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

COMPLETED:	3 out of 19
IN PROGRESS:	16 out of 19
NOT STARTED:	0 out of 19
UNCLEAR:	0 out of 19

TIMING

ON SCHEDULE:	4 out of 19

COMMITMENT EMPHASIS

ACCESS TO INFORMATION:	10 out of 19
CIVIC PARTICIPATION:	8 out of 19
ACCOUNTABILITY:	10 out of 19
TECH & INNOVATION FOR TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY:	8 out of 19

GRAND CHALLENGES

SAFE COMMUNITIES:	0 out of 19
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY:	0 out of 19
PUBLIC SERVICES:	8 out of 19
PUBLIC RESOURCES:	13 out of 19
PUBLIC INTEGRITY:	14 out of 19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. Table 1 summarizes the level of completion of each commitment, whether it falls within the Philippines's planned schedule, and the key next steps for the commitment regarding future OGP action plans. The Philippines's plan maintained an even focus on transparency, participation, accountability, and employing technology for all three, as evidenced in Table 1.

Table 1 | Assessment of Progress by Commitment

THEMATIC CLUSTER	COMMITMENT SHORT NAME AND SYNOPSIS	LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
		NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE	Ahead of schedule, behind schedule, or on schedule?	
Improving Compliance with Transparency	**1. Disclose Executive Budgets:** Disclose 100% of executive funds and annual procurement plans.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation
	2. Access to Information Initiative: Review, improve, and rectify current policies on citizen access to information, including Freedom of Information Act.	■	■	■		Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation
	3. Broader Civil Society Organization (CSO) Engagement: Include regional and local organizations, business, and academia in a Philippine Partnership for Open Governance.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation
Deepening Citizen Participation	**4. Participatory Budget Roadmap:** In consultation with CSOs, expand coverage of participatory budget preparation.	■	■			Behind schedule	Significant revision of the commitment
	5. Local Poverty Reduction: Collaborate with local governments and community organizations to develop at least 300 local poverty reduction action plans.	■	■	■	■	On schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
	6. Empowerment Fund: Support capacity development of projects to empower citizens to demand better services and governance.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation
	7. Social Audit: Craft a roadmap to institutionalize social audits for public works and agricultural infrastructure projects.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation

Category	Commitment					Status	Assessment
Escalating Accountability	**8. Results-Based Performance:** Increase compliance with Seal of Good Housekeeping to 70% by 2016, and link to grants.	■	■	■	■	On schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
	9. Harmonized Performance-Based Management Systems: Harmonize current monitoring and reporting systems into a single results-based performance management system (RBPMS).	■	■	■	■	On schedule	Maintenance and monitoring
	10. Citizen's Charters: In consultation with CSOs, ensure that 100% of government agencies publish a Citizen Charter.	■	■			Behind schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
	11. Internal Audit: Issue a Philippine Government Internal Manual (PGIAM) in 90 days, and, within 360 days, roll out the PGIAM and National Guidelines on Internal Control System (NGICS) in nine critical departments.	■	■			Behind schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
Technology and Innovation	**12. Single Portal for Information:** With CSOs, craft a roadmap for a single government information portal.	■	■			Behind schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
	13. Integrated Financial Management System: Develop a pilot within 360 days to be used by government oversight agencies. Complete system due by 2016.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation
	14. Electronic Bidding: In 360 days, enable online bid submission, a CSO monitoring module, an e-payment fee feature, an expanded supplier registry, and a module for agency procurement plans.	■	■	■		Behind schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
	15. Procurement Cards: In 180 days pilot procurement cards to replace cash advances.	■	■			Behind schedule	Significant revision of the commitment
	16. Manpower Information System: Complete and develop a central payroll system in 360 days.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation
	17. Expand the National Household Targeting System: Expand coverage to other poor sectors, such as rural or informal sectors, and indigenous peoples.	■	■	■		Behind schedule	Significant revision of the commitment
	18. e-TAILS: Expand the Electronic Transparency and Accountability Initiative for Lump-Sum Funds to include other funds and enable citizen reportage.	■	■	■		On schedule	Extension building on existing implementation
	19. *Budget ng Bayan*: Launch the People's Budget website as an interactive platform.	■	■			Behind schedule	Further work on basic implementation

Tabel 2 | Summary of Progress by Commitment

COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
1. New power to secure release of valuable datasets	The departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Education, and Justice, as well as the Presidential Communications Operations Office, did not comply with this commitment. The challenges to full implementation derive from its nature as a voluntary task of government agencies. Despite its current shortcomings, stakeholders confirmed that transparency initiatives like this one should be scaled up, though they also cited the importance of a Freedom of Information law so that initiatives like this could be institutionalized.
2. Access to Information Initiative	The failed passage of the Freedom of Information Law compromised this commitment, although other pre-existing initiatives were reviewed or revamped. The Government plans to continue pushing for this law's passage.
3. Broader CSO Engagement	Citing lack of personnel and time, the Government reported holding two meetings of the Philippines-OGP Steering Committee in 2012–but without any proof of documentation–even as the stakeholders said no such meetings occurred in 2012. The Steering Committee did meet in 2013. To the best of the IRM researcher's knowledge, the Steering Committee was convened only on 14 March 2013. Both the Government and the stakeholders have committed to scale up efforts to make the Philippines-OGP Steering Committee move to real action and results in 2013.
4. Participatory Budget Roadmap	The Government self-assessment report said this commitment has been "fulfilled." Stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops said it was only "partially fulfilled." The stakeholders at the IRM workshops raised concerns about the "selectivity" in the choice of CSOs invited to the consultation and the "mixed quality of the Government-CSO partnership." Given these issues with implementation, especially the failure to design a participatory road map, the IRM researcher coded this commitment's completion as "limited." The IRM researcher recommends more work on basic implementation.
5. Local Poverty Reduction	According to the Government, in 2012, at least 595 cities and municipalities underwent participatory budgeting and planning processes. Stakeholders split between those who praised this project, and those who doubted the relevance of this project, which has assumed the name of "bottom-up budgeting" (BUB) in Government documents. The common view was that the project needs expansion and improvement.
6. Empowerment Fund	The Government said it is still finalizing guidelines for implementation in 2013. A few CSOs had availed themselves of the fund in 2011 but the stakeholders said that the project was "very slow moving" and disbursements were "clouded with controversy."
7. Social Audit	While encouraging and responding to civil society participation, the Government piloted this initiative in one project (CAMANAVA Flood Control Project) of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) during the last quarter of 2012. A preliminary audit report should be available in the third quarter of 2013.
8. Results-Based Performance	Since August 2010, local governments have been required to post online information on fund utilization and project implementation in local forums. Though through this commitment more local governments received the "Seal of Good Housekeeping" in acknowledgment of their compliance, full compliance remained low. Stakeholders reported a need for independent monitoring and citizen participation.
9. Performance-Based Budgeting	During 2012, a task force was convened and the review was begun, fulfilling this commitment. The achievements cited by Government include only the development of "a framework for a results-based performance management system." Stakeholders pointed to flaws in implementation like the lack of citizen or CSO participation in rating and validating the reports, and the failure to include government corporations in the commitment.

10. Citizen's Charters	Out of 2,693 target agencies, 1,881 have published Citizen's Charters. The IRM researcher found few indications of significant impact. A number of stakeholders voiced concern that government agencies are crafting Citizen's Charters, which orient and focus the agency toward the needs of citizen 'customers,' without involvement from the citizens themselves.
11. Internal Audit	The Philippine Government's Internal Audit Manual was rolled out in seven agencies (Departments of Education; Health, Public Works and Highways; Finance; Social Welfare and Development; Labor; and Department of Justice) partially completing the first part of the commitment. The trainer's training manual was delayed by required consultations and pilot testing.
12. Single Portal for Information	This commitment moved government practice forward by the sheer volume of information and data that was uploaded to the portal in 2012. However, stakeholders said the portal needs more content management to meet the "open data standards," and Government must craft a "roadmap" for the portal with the participation of stakeholders.
13. Integrated Financial Management System	Despite some positive first steps, the goal of this commitment was not met. Nevertheless, stakeholders from government agencies voiced confidence that the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System should be able to match actual use of budgets against budget allocations and that it is "a good application that would aid the Government in fund allocations."
14. Electronic Bidding	More agencies are now posting bids on PhilGEPS (The Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System), a marked improvement since the law requiring online posting of bids was passed in 2003. Some stakeholders said they find it relevant, while others said they are not satisfied because the site is slow and the content incomplete.
15. Procurement Cards	Implementation has been delayed. While electronic purchase tracking through procurement cards could potentially limit waste and corruption, without a clearly spelled out corresponding public transparency and accountability mechanism, it is unclear how they pertain to OGP values.
16. Manpower Information System	Government said the initiative has been "partially fulfilled" because new national payroll system software was developed and pilot-tested in six target agencies. However, the test showed that the software could not meet the needs of the entire system, thus a commercial software system is being sought.
17. Expand the National Household Targeting System (NHTS)	While expansion of the NHTS, a database to identify and locate beneficiaries of targeted poverty-reduction programs, continued in earnest, without clear language to improve access to information, public participation, and accountability, it is unclear how this commitment relates to OGP. At the time of writing, the database had not been made available online. Two stakeholders said that they had seen the database, but had concerns about its currency, integrity, and lack of validation with the beneficiaries.
18. e-TAILS	A majority of stakeholders approved and praised this project, as there was a significant increase in the volume of information now available on e-TAILS (Electronic Transparency and Accountability Initiative for Lump-Sum Funds). But technology and innovation projects like e-TAILS may be improved further if they can move from being mere transparency tools to becoming accountability tools.
19. *Budget ng Bayan*	This commitment to launch the website for *Budget ng Bayan*, "the People's Budget," made a significant impact. Stakeholders, particularly those involved in budget transparency work, found the website useful as a research tool. Citizens who posted queries on the website received feedback from the site administrator — some in a more timely way than others. Thus stakeholders recommended making the website more interactive, in line with their interpretation of the original commitment.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The IRM researcher recommends a number of steps to make OGP stronger and more useful in the Philippines, and also recommends improving the function of the action plan as an accountability mechanism. Additionally, based on stakeholder feedback, a number of areas not covered by this action plan could be covered in future action plans.

Strengthen the OGP Institutionally

1. Improve citizen participation and public consultation by:
    a. Holding regular and more open consultation and public awareness activities about the OGP.
    b. Convening regular meetings of the Philippines OGP steering committee and involving CSOs.
2. Encourage those involved in government agencies to form technical working groups (TWG) to monitor and ensure the progress of implementation in their departments.
3. Involve more government agencies, notably rank-and-file and career service personnel and the members of the Philippine Congress in crafting the 2013 OGP Action Plan.

Strategically Draft the Commitments in the Next Action Plan

1. Clarify how the commitments coherently promote OGP values of transparency, accountability, participation, and use of technology and innovation to the OGP.
2. Clarify how the action plan commitments relate to the "eligibility criteria" for membership in the OGP, notably initiatives at promoting asset records disclosure and freedom of information.
3. Identify and remove overlapping commitments to assure greater transparency and lessen double counting.

Clarify Construction of the Next Action Plan

1. Identify project milestones with clear indicators and metrics to allow tracking.
2. Make future commitments more manageable by providing actual projects limited to selected agencies or departments, rather than applying to the whole Government.
3. Conduct public consultation meetings with CSOs and stakeholders on the development of the plan and document the discussions at these meetings.

Focus Content in the Next Action Plan

1. Focus on freedom of information.
2. Consider using mobile technology given its widespread coverage and the limited connection to broadband.
3. Ensure analysis, usefulness, and usability of data through open formats and improved data validation processes.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 2011:

To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions of open government. Third-party indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, visit: www.opengovpartnership.org/eligibility

BUDGET TRANSPARENCY:
4 OUT OF 4

ACCESS TO INFORMATION:
CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE

ASSET DISCLOSURE:
4 OUT OF 4

CIVIC PARTICIPATION:
8.53 OUT OF 10
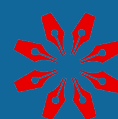
PCIJ is an independent, nonprofit media agency that specializes in investigative reporting. The PCIJ believes that the media play a crucial role in scrutinizing and strengthening democratic institutions and freedom.

Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.

I | BACKGROUND

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 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.

The Philippines, one of the founding eight countries of OGP, began its formal participation in September 2011, when President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III launched the initiative along with other high-level ministers and heads of state in New York.

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, strengthening citizen engagement, and fighting corruption. Indicators produced by organizations other than OGP to determine the extent of country progress on each of the dimensions, with points awarded as described below. The Philippines entered into the partnership exceeding the minimal requirements for eligibility, with a high score in each of the criteria. At the time of joining, the country had the highest possible ranking for Open Budgets (2 out of a possible 2),[1] the principle of access to information embodied in its constitution,[2] the highest possible rankings in Asset Disclosure for Senior Officials,[3] and a score of 9.12 out of a possible 10 on the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index Civil Liberties subscore.[4]

All OGP participating governments must develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Governments should begin their action plans by sharing existing efforts related to a set of five "grand challenges," including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. [See Section 4 for a list of grand challenge areas.] Action plans should

then set out each government's 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 ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

Along with the other founding members of OGP, the Philippines developed its national action plan from June through September 2011. The effective start date for the action plan submitted in September was officially 1 January through 31 December. It published its self-assessment during March of 2013. At the time of writing, officials and civil society members were working on the second national action plan.

Pursuant to OGP requirements, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) of OGP partnered with an experienced, independent local researcher to carry out an evaluation of the development and implementation of the country's first action plan. In the Philippines, the IRM partnered with Malou Mangahas of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, who authored this progress report. It is the aim of the IRM to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP participating country.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The lead institutions responsible for the action plan are:

- Department of Budget and Management
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- Department of Social Welfare and Development

- Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster of the President's Cabinet
- Secretariat of the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster, which is also the secretariat of the Philippine OGP Steering Committee under Budget Secretary Florencio Abad

The Government said the Philippine OGP Action Plan evolved largely as a plan of the executive branch, and in particular, the departments that constitute the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster (GGACC) of the President's Cabinet. The action plan's implementation thus evolved as an ad hoc (not permanent) interagency project with oversight and supervision from Budget Secretary Florencio Abad, who in turn supervises the GGACC secretariat (that also serves as the Philippine OGP secretariat).

According to the Government Focal Point, "a GGACC technical working group (TWG), composed of Undersecretaries of the member agencies of the Cluster, was created under the auspices of the Governance Cluster to oversee the drafting of the GGACC/OGP Action Plan. This group met several times to review the projects proposed by various agencies. The draft plan was then vetted with the concerned Cabinet Secretaries, before it was finally presented to the President for approval."

Civil society members and Government officials interviewed concurred that engagement with Congress was very limited.

and the self-assessment published by the Government in April of 2013.[6] Numerous references will be made to these documents throughout this report.

Pursuant to OGP requirements, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) has partnered with a national research organization, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, to carry out an evaluation of the process and implementation of the first Philippines OGP 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.

As part of its role in gathering the voices of multiple stakeholders, the IRM researcher for the Philippines carried out interviews with officials and hosted two stakeholder forums. These forums are referred to throughout this report as "stakeholder forums" or, interchangeably, "IRM workshops." For the Philippine Government, Mr. Patrick Lim served as the Government Focal Point, coordinating with the IRM researcher.

All original documentation from the IRM research process is available at the OGP Philippines Document Library at https://sites.google.com/a/opengovpartnership.org/philippines-ogp-library/home

Methods and sources are dealt with more completely in a methodological annex in this report.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The IRM report builds on existing work by Government and civil society in assessing and carrying out OGP activities, attempting to get as wide a range of relevant voices as possible. The reader is encouraged to review key documents prepared by the Government to put this report in context: the Philippines first action plan[5]

[1] Open Budget Partnership, Open Budgets Change Lives (Washington, DC: Open Budget Partnership, 2012). http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/OBS2012-infographic.png

[2] 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Article III, §7, The LawPhil Project. http://www.lawphil.net/consti/cons1987.html

[3] 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://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1334126##; 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/1clokyf

[4] Economist Intelligence Unit, "Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat" (London: Economist, 2010). Available at: http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy_Index_2010_web.pdf

[5] Republic of the Philippines, "Philippine Government Action Plan for 2012" (Government of the Philippines, Manila, 2011).

[6] Republic of the Philippines, "Country Assessment Report" (Government of the Philippines, Manila, 2013).

II | PROCESS: DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

Countries participating in OGP follow a set process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan.

OGP GUIDELINES

Countries must:

- Make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation.

- Consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector; seek out a diverse range of views and; make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online.

- Undertake OGP awareness raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation.

- 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.

  A fifth, requirement, during consultation, is set out in the OGP articles of governance, section III "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.

PRIOR NOTICE OF CONSULTATION

The process and timeline for public consultation was not available online prior to beginning the consultation. Despite requests, the IRM researcher was unable to obtain invitation letters, meeting agendas, attendance reports, or documentation of "public consultation" meetings. Government promised in its reply of 12 June 2013 to send the relevant documents. No web or online reports could be found pertaining to these events.

In terms of awareness-raising activities, the Government Focal Point stated that:

> While there was initially a plan to regularly convene the PH-OGP Steering Committee, this was not conducted since the Secretariat was newly formed and was insufficiently staffed. It prioritized setting up the monitoring system for the OGP initiatives, along with its other responsibilities as the concurrent secretariat of the Governance Cluster of the Cabinet. In the few meetings that have been called in 2012, the Governance Cluster Secretariat, through its head, Secretary Florencio Abad, called for the meetings and set the agenda.[1]

Moving forward, there is a commitment to call a quarterly meeting of the PH-OGP Steering Committee and a plan to hold an annual multistakeholder conference."

DEPTH AND BREADTH OF CONSULTATION

The Government wrote in its self-assessment report that it had conducted seven forums as part of its "Public Consultation for the development and implementation of the Plan." The IRM researcher was unable to verify this statement through online reviews or document requests. Government was not able to provide any documentation to the IRM researcher.

Nonetheless, the IRM researcher was able to confirm that over a dozen representatives from a smaller number of civil society organizations (CSOs) had been invited to informal meetings that Budget Secretary Abad had called for various related initiatives, like budget transparency, but not necessarily focused on the OGP.

In its written response to an early draft of the IRM report, the government acknowledged that its OGP "Secretariat was indeed not able to provide documents as promised," but added that "we wish that the

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documents we are now submitting together with this response be considered in the IRM report.

"The documents are not as organized as we would like them to be. The staff in charge of these documents had left the unit and these were the only documents we have been able to retrieve from the files that was left," the government said.

The documents submitted included the lists of attendees and/or highlights of six public meetings, including five conducted in 2011 and only one in 2012, the year covered by the IRM review.

These meetings were: "CSO consultations" on 26 August 2011 and on 25 November 2011; with "business" on 8 August 2011; with "development partners" on 22 November 2011; and another on 6 July 2012

Quality of consultation

What constitutes "quality" public consultation is not clear as yet to either Government or civil society stakeholders. But there was general agreement that quality could be improved.

According to stakeholders who attended the two forums conducted for this IRM research, the key question about the quality of consultation is not about the "diversity" of voices, but rather about a complete lack of feedback and consultation. In short, stakeholder feedback was not sufficiently considered prior to or in the development of the Philippines OGP Action Plan for 2012.

Consultations for the development of the Philippines OGP Action Plan for 2012, by the admission of the Government Focal Point and feedback from the stakeholders, was largely perfunctory in terms of depth, method, and quality. No vigorous discussions were held between the Government and stakeholders on the nature, scope, meaning, and desired results of the 19 commitments. The Government Focal Point explained, "While it must be noted that the plan was consulted with various stakeholders before it was presented to the Cabinet and the President, there was relatively a very short time to draft the plan, go through the consultations and submit the plan in time for the OGP deadline (of September 2011)."

An updated self-assessment report published on 5 April 2013 at www.gov.ph, confirmed Lim's earlier comments about difficulties and delays with consultation, but reiterated a "high level of commitment."

Nevertheless, the question remains of whether that "high-level commitment" is sufficient to translate the commitments into consistent, "quality" results matched by similar commitments from implementing agencies.

Private sector participation

Government submitted no documentation of having encouraged private sector participation.

The Makati Business Club (MBC), an association of individual business executives, and the Integrity Initiative Project of the National Competitiveness Council, a Government-private-sector project, were allowed to designate one representative each to the Philippines OGP Steering Committee. This arrangement occurred well ahead of the selection of permanent CSO representatives to the committee in 2012.

But Peter Perfecto, MBC executive director, who attended the first IRM workshop, said that business leaders are periodically invited (typically, once a month) to meetings at the Office of the President at Malacañang Palace with the economic ministers, including Budget Secretary Florencio Abad. It was at these meetings, Perfecto said, where Mr. Abad has had occasion to update business leaders about the OGP and transparency projects. In a complementary effort, the MBC has launched the "Integrity Initiative" to promote transparency and eschew corruption in government.

Accessibility of information on consultation

The Government has a mixed record in providing accessible information on the OGP process on its website or on OGP websites.

- Government did not publish documentation about its "public consultations" for the development of the Philippines OGP Action Plan for 2011.

- Several reports (a press release and a speech of President Aquino at the launch of the OGP in September 2011 in the United States) had been posted on the old version of the government

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[1] Patrick Lim, "Response to Ms. Malou Mangahas, IRM Researcher for the Philippines," official personal communication, 10 June, 2013. https://sites.google.com/a/opengovpartnership.org/philippines-ogp-library/

website, www.gov.ph. (The IRM researcher used webarchives.org to get these reports that are no longer public).

- The Philippines OGP Action Plan for 2011 was first uploaded on the OGP website in September of 2011 ahead of its distribution to the news media covering the Office of the President and the Budget department.

- The Government's self-assessment report was published on the government portal (www.gov.ph), on 5 April 2013 according to schedule.

- No summary of public consultation was available online.

Because of this lack of documentation on public consultations, there is little evidence to judge the quality of public consultation or whether it reached beyond the national capital region of metro Manila.

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III | PROCESS: CONSULTATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

According to both the Government and civil society stakeholders, no regular multistakeholder consultation was conducted in 2012. While laudable in its intent, the most notable aspect has been the failure to fully and regularly convene the full membership of the Philippines OGP Steering Committee. However, there are promising starts to improving the consultative process.

PHILIPPINES OGP STEERING COMMITTEE

In either late 2011 or early 2012 (accounts vary), three interim civil society representatives to the Philippines OGP Steering Committee were selected. However, the full nine-member Philippines OGP Steering Committee did not convene throughout 2012. Nor did the interim civil society representatives convene separate stakeholder meetings to elect/select permanent representatives.

The Government Focal Point acknowledged that representatives were to "organize a more inclusive selection process" but presumably, because of resource limitations, they waited to do so until the consultation on the Philippines self-assessment in which many CSO stakeholders would be participating. This consultation was held on 14 March 2013.

Despite the lack of regular convening, two [partially attended] Steering Committee meetings were held on 10 September 2011 and 16 March 2013, and a "terms of reference" for the committee was agreed upon.[1]

Government and civil society stakeholders interviewed did not agree as to when the terms of reference were circulated. According to Government, the draft was circulated on 14 March 2013. By then, however, the CSO representatives who attended the meeting did not even include the "interim" CSO representatives. Vince Lazatin of the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN), one of the three interim CSO representatives to the OGP Steering Committee, told members of the Right to Know, Right Now Coalition in February 2013 that the Philippines OGP Steering Committee had not yet convened a meeting of all the members. While the meeting may have occurred, it is clear that there is disagreement about attendance.

In its response to the early draft of the IRM report, the government said one meeting of the steering committee was conducted on 16 March 2012, which was attended by Guillermo Luz of the National Competitiveness Council, Jose Cortez of the Integrity Initiative, Reylynne Dela Paz of TAN, and Flora Arellano of the Alternative Budget Initiative.

"We had counted as a Steering Committee meeting the meeting held on September 10, 2011 during which the CSOs present chose the Interim CSO representatives," the government said.

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Importantly, the poor quality of ongoing consultation is not only caused by Government's actions. According to Atty. Nepomuceno Malaluan of the Right to Know, Right Now! Coalition, the IRM workshops were "a good start for the CSOs to come up with their strategic position moving forward on how to engage the OGP, or even the GGACC." Prior to this, CSOs had not worked closely to articulate common goals and platforms for OGP.

The Government Focal Point raised similar observations: CSOs must clarify their expectations of Government, agree on common priorities, push for more meaningful initiatives, and clarify the CSO participation structure for the steering committee.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Both the Government and the stakeholders agreed that there should be more regular multistakeholder consultations on the 2013 OGP Action Plan. Further, both sides should be clear about their respective

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expectations and desired outcomes and should engage in more meaningful and vigorous engagement. As of the time of writing (mid-July 2013), however, no activities or public consultation forums have been scheduled to roll out these initiatives.

The Government Focal Point stated that "we are aware of the deficiencies of the process undertaken, and we are committed to improving the process as we proceed with our Open Government Partnership journey." He assured that there will be more public consultations, more public-awareness activities, and regular multistakeholder and Steering Committee meetings to assist the implementation of the Philippine OGP Action Plan.

[1] "Phl-OGP Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee," draft, 13 Feburary 2012. https://sites.google.com/a/opengovpartnership.org/philippines-ogp-library/

IV | IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS

All OGP participating governments develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Governments begin their OGP country action plans by sharing existing efforts related to their chosen grand challenge(s), including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. Action Plans then set out governments' OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant policy area. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete on-going reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

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 including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications, and any other relevant service areas by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation.

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 meet basic open data standards (e.g. raw data, machine readability).

- **Citizen Participation** — governments seek to mobilise 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.
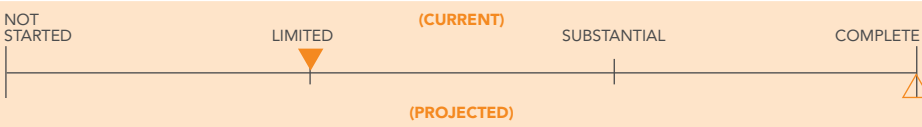
Countries may focus their commitments at the national, local and/or subnational level—wherever they believe their open government efforts are to have the greatest impact.

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multiyear process, governments should attach timeframes and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, wherever possible.

This section details each of the commitments the Philippines included in its initial action plan.

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1 | Improving Compliance with Transparency: Disclose Executive Budgets

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Participation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED **(CURRENT)** ▼ — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE ⚠

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

By June 2012, improve the compliance rate of departments in the executive branch to disclose their approved budgets, use of funds, and annual procurement plans to 100%.[1] Agency compliance will be measured in an index, co-managed with CSOs, to be developed by March.

What Happened?

This commitment, dubbed "escalating fiscal transparency," was rated in the Government report as "partially fulfilled." Consulted stakeholders and the IRM researcher concurred.

The Government said it faced low compliance by agencies in disclosure of their budget information, before resolving the issue through requirements in the Performance Based Incentive System that offered performance bonuses to agencies that secured a "transparency seal" for disclosing budget documents.

Stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops acknowledged "extensive budget (information) disclosure" on the government website.

A number of problems were found with the data sets, some technical, some administrative, and some policy-related, including:

- delayed upload of some data;
- days when the site is down;
- need for more "effectiveness and relevance of data," especially actual expenditures along with projected budgets;
- data that is "constrained" by the largely PDF or html formats and nonuser-friendly formatting (including hard copies);
- Internet access that is "blocked" in many government agencies, thus preventing civil servants from accessing the website, according to the Government employees union;
- wrong types and quality of data;
- problems with full compliance, standardization of data presentation, format, or quality of data;
- lack of an index of information with civil society stakeholders;
- no clear civil society or third-party validation mechanism to grant a seal of transparency.

Others stressed that budget records disclosed online do not reach the poor who have no access to the Internet. According to Government estimates

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for 2013, only 30% of the 98 million Filipinos have access to the Internet because of prohibitive costs. Internet cafes sell access at cheap rates but beyond personal applications (email, office work) and social media networking, few citizens turn to the Internet for research and information on government and public policy issues.

The challenges to full implementation of this commitment derive from its nature as a self-rating, voluntary — and thus discretionary — task for government agencies. In the stakeholders' view, the absence of a freedom of information law that requires all government agencies to disclose budget and other financial documents will retard full cooperation.

The noncompliant agencies were the departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Education, and Justice, and the Presidential Communications Operations Office (an agency under the Office of the President). These departments are significant because of the large amount of taxpayers' money they manage, as well as their roles in upholding transparency, accountability, and services delivery.

A new incentive system was introduced in 2012 that apparently improved compliance. This system was also implemented for local government agencies that must comply with another commitment related to the "Seal of Good Housekeeping."

Did it matter?
The Government itself has doubts about the value of the disclosures made under this commitment. Its report said that in future, Government "will have to assess the quality and usability of the information being disclosed."

Some stakeholders suggested that people should be told whether or not public expenditures complied with agencies' budget ceilings and reflect honest spending.

Despite the shortcomings, stakeholders confirmed that transparency initiatives like this one should be scaled up to serve as initiatives for accountability and improved public services.
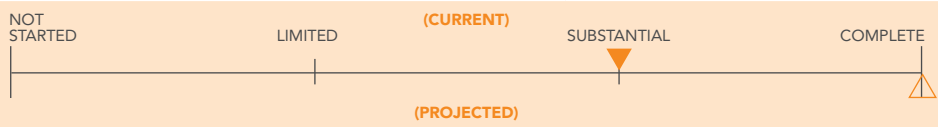
Moving forward
The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation:

- The Government needs to focus on the quality and usability of the disclosures by government agencies.

- The stakeholders interviewed cited the importance of a freedom of information law so that initiatives like this could be institutionalized across political administrations, and not remain discretionary acts of transparency by public officials.

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[1] Of 22 executive branch departments, six have posted their approved budgets on their websites, three have posted their fund utilization reports, and ten have posted their annual procurement plans.

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2 | Improving Compliance with Transparency: Access to Information Initiative

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office (PCDSPO)
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Participation, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	Medium
ACTION OR PLAN	Both

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED	LIMITED	(CURRENT)	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE
			▼	⚠

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

The Aquino Administration will move toward giving citizens greater and freer access to official information in a timely, relevant, and meaningful manner, subject to certain limitations such as national security, foreign diplomacy, and privacy concerns. This initiative will entail the review, improvement, and rectification of current policies on citizen access to information; setting-up public access mechanisms and infrastructure, including information technology systems; and collaboration with stakeholders in broadening the scope of access to information and improving the compliance of agencies to existing standards.

The proposed Freedom of Information Act, which has already been submitted to Congress upon instruction of the President, is a critical component of this Initiative. A roadmap for the improvement of public access to information will be developed within 2012 in consultation with stakeholders.

What happened?

The Government report rated this commitment as "partially fulfilled."

Most stakeholders who attended the two IRM workshops said the commitment was "still in progress"

because the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act failed to pass in the Congress. A few others said it could be rated as "partially fulfilled" in terms of the Government's technology innovation for transparency. The IRM researcher coded this commitment's completion as "substantial," since the Government made significant progress on the non-FOI aspects of the commitment.

Most stakeholders at the IRM workshops said the Government's failure to ensure the passage of the FOI Act was "not aligned" with this commitment's avowed goal to promote access to information and public participation. Interestingly, one stakeholder said, "All transparency initiatives are just infrastructure for a service of public access to info policy."

The Government acknowledged the failure to pass the FOI Act, but emphasized the review of government policies on access to information and the development of a roadmap for improved access to information. Many stakeholders felt that these activities were double-counted.

Did it matter?

Arguably, the non-FOI aspects of the commitment did

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not stretch government practice beyond the baseline. Many initiatives were started seven years ago under two previous budget secretaries who had served former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Nonetheless, some stakeholders said they found the commitment useful, particularly in regard to disclosure of budget documents by the Budget and Local Government departments.

However, these stakeholders and others cited the need for all government agencies to be transparent, and for the executive branch to recognize that real transparency entails not just placing documents online, but also responding to citizen requests for other documents. Additionally stakeholders made clear that without formal mechanisms for requests, access to information seemed hinged on the will of current agencies officials.
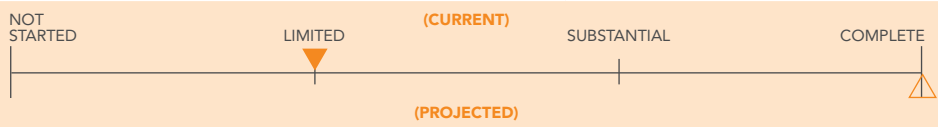
Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation. It concurs with the government self-assessment report that has acknowledged the recommendation of the stakeholders that it must fulfill its promise to pass a freedom of information law.

This effort should be included in a stand-alone, measurable commitment in the next action plan.

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3 | Improving Compliance with Transparency: Broader CSO Engagement

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	National civil society organization networks
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Participation, Accountability
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	Medium
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED — LIMITED (CURRENT) — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE (PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

The Government, in partnership with the national CSO networks it engaged for its first OGP action plan, will engage a broader spectrum of CSOs—including regional and local organizations—as well as business groups and academia, in convening a Philippine Partnership for Open Governance. This partnership will be tapped in plotting the Government's direction toward deepening open government and pursuing other governance reforms in the medium term. The partnership will be organized by June 2012 and expanded in 2012.

What happened?

The Government report said this commitment is "still in progress." A majority of the stakeholders agreed that the goal has not yet been met.

The Government cited lack of personnel and time for the acknowledged failure to convene and conduct regular meetings of the Philippines–OGP Steering Committee. It said two meetings of the Steering Committee were held in 2012–but without proof of documentation–even as the stakeholders said no such meetings occurred in the year assessed for this report.

The Steering Committee did meet in 2013, outside of the year assessed for this report. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the Philippines–OGP Steering Committee was convened only on 14 March 2013, with the election of the three permanent CSO representatives, during a consultation that Government called to discuss its self-assessment report, testimony to the overly delayed implementation of this commitment.

The report also cited the absence (as of May 2013) on the government portal of a website or page "dedicated" to OGP. Consequently, OGP Philippines activities may be under the radar for most potential stakeholders.

Therefore, the IRM researcher considered this commitment's implementation to be "limited."

Did it matter?

The failure to convene a full Steering Committee, the absence of regular meetings, and the nondisclosure of all its discussions did not enhance awareness or participation by significant numbers of stakeholders in the OGP process in 2012.

Because of the lack of a functioning Steering Committee, the recommendations of CSOs consulted

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were "not really taken." A stakeholder said, "The establishment of OGP Steering Committee (interim) stopped at its creation — to make it functional did not happen."

In addition to being "more proactive," the stakeholders said the Steering Committee should be more transparent and disclose the minutes of all its meetings.
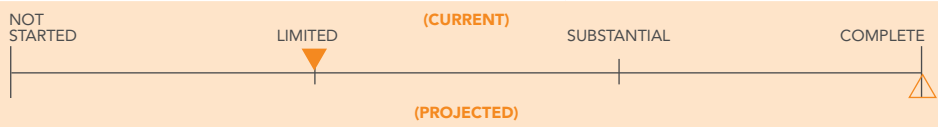
Moving forward

Both the Government and the stakeholders have committed to scale up efforts to make the Philippines-OGP Steering Committee move beyond planning to taking real action and producing results in 2013.

Stakeholders said the Steering Committee needs to "meet on a regular basis to discuss, assess, and review the implementation of the plan," so it may update all stakeholders on a regular basis. The findings of the IRM researcher support this consensus.

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4 | Deepening Citizen Participation: Participatory Budget Roadmap

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of the Interior and Local Government
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Civil society organizations, through consultation
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Participation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Both

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED · · · · · LIMITED ▼ (CURRENT) · · · · · SUBSTANTIAL · · · · · COMPLETE ⚠ (PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

By June 2012, alongside the preparations for the 2013 national budget, the Government will expand the coverage of participatory budget preparation and enhance the process to address issues experienced during the pilot consultations. By December 2012, the Government will craft a roadmap to expand participatory budgeting to the other phases of the budget cycle, in consultation with CSOs.

What happened?

The Government self-assessment report said this commitment has been "fulfilled." Stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops said it was only "partially fulfilled."

According to the self-assessment, the Government "initiated a process wherein citizen groups can engage national government agencies and provide inputs during the annual budget formulation process, as a means of promoting transparent and participatory governance."

Government said it achieved its target to cover 12 national government agencies and six government

corporations under the participatory budgeting program. It said that guidelines for CSO participation "in all phases of the budget have been developed" as outlined in National Budget Circular Nos. 536 and 539. The "People's Budget" was published for 2011 and 2012.

The stakeholders at the IRM workshops raised concerns about:

- the "selectivity" in the choice of CSOs invited to the consultation, contrary to the accepted goals of "participatory budgeting"; and the

- "mixed quality of the Government-CSO partnership"— not all covered agencies have forged partnerships with CSOs.

The IRM researcher requested copies of any Government documentation on the public consultation activities under this commitment, but none had been offered as of publication.

The Government Focal Point acknowledged "the varying capacities of both government and CSOs, resulting (in) mixed quality of partnerships." He said an assessment of the implementation of Budget Partnership Agreements (BPA) [scope: 2012 and 2013

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Budget Preparation and 2012 Budget Execution] is being conducted and results from this study will inform the enhanced guidelines for participatory budgeting.

"Government recognizes the need for a more substantial Government-CSO partnership and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) will continue to push to institutionalize budget reforms it has already started," he added. Stakeholders cited problems with the "mixed quality of partnerships" and varying degrees of transparency of public agencies as challenges.

Specific issues arose with regard to formalizing partnerships, which is required before CSOs can provide input to "executive sessions" conducted by the partner agencies.

Two circulars[1] spell out the duties and accreditation requirements for partner CSOs and their local affiliate CSOs that could sign a Budget Partnership Agreement with government agencies. Certain principles define the partnerships, including transparency and accountability. However, other principles described, including constructive engagement, conflict of interest, and respect for internal processes, might be misconstrued as constraints on the partnership.

The Department of Public Works and Highways drew praise for presenting its annual budget to CSOs.

Given these issues with implementation, especially the failure to design a participatory road map, the IRM researcher coded this commitment's completion as "limited."

Did it matter?
Concerned stakeholders said the initiative allowed them to engage with the budget processes of some government agencies, but also reported "mixed results" and varying degrees of transparency and openness. How many of the CSO recommendations were affirmed in the final agency budgets is not yet clear.

The Budget Partnership Agreement was launched three years ago as a mechanism for CSO participation and grew out of similar initiatives launched by previous Philippine budget secretaries. In recent years it has

been more robustly implemented and may thus comprise a "stretch" for the Government.
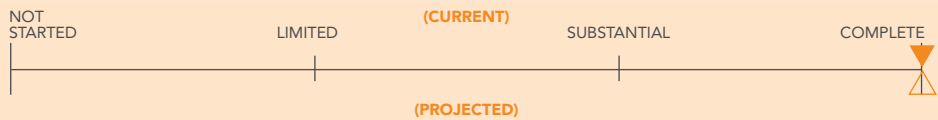
Moving forward
The IRM researcher recommends more work on basic implementation. The Government has acknowledged "the need for a more substantial Government–CSO partnership and the DBM will continue to push to institutionalize budget reforms it has already started." Expansion of the program to include more, if not all, national and local government agencies is the common suggestion of stakeholders. Additionally, the rules of partnership could be improved to assure more effective participation.

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[1] National Budget Circular (NBC) No. 536 issued 31 January 2012 by the budget department, and its amended version, NBC No. 539 of 31 March 2012.

5 | Deepening Citizen Participation: Local Poverty Reduction

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	National Anti-Poverty Commission, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Participation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Develop a plan

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED — **(CURRENT)** — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE ▼

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

The government will push for a stronger collaboration among national agencies, local government units, and community organizations as a means of converging and localizing poverty reduction programs. By June 2012, alongside the preparation of the 2013 national budget, at least 300 city or municipal local poverty reduction action plans will be developed and priority poverty reduction programs identified. These projects will be given serious consideration by national government agencies in crafting the 2013 national budget.

What happened?

The Government report rated this commitment as "fulfilled." The stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops disagreed, saying it had been only "partially fulfilled," because they saw ways to expand and further the commitment. The IRM researcher coded this commitment as "fulfilled," since the explicit goals of the commitment were met.

According to the Government, in 2012, at least "595 cities and municipalities have undergone participatory budgeting and planning processes and submitted their lists of priority projects to national government. A total

of P8.4 billion worth of locally identified projects has been incorporated into the FY 2013 National Budget."

Stakeholders were split between those who praised this project, and those who doubted the relevance of the project, which has assumed the name "bottom-up budgeting" (BUB) in government documents. But their common view was that the project needs expansion and improvement.

A key concern expressed by two Government stakeholders was how to insulate the BUB projects from partisan politics. There is need, one said, to "develop a standard that may be less political (to) ensure objective implementation." Another said that the budgeted amounts for the BUB projects have to be verified, because "it seems to be a discretionary fund, like pork barrel, and a bit confusing."

An assessment report on the project was done by the Development Academy of the Philippines and nine regional assessment workshops conducted by the National Anti-Poverty Commission, Government said.

The Government Focal Point, in response to the IRM researcher's queries, wrote that the BUB projects were

selected as a result of "negotiations between various local stakeholders, including communities/citizens, CSOs, and officials," but "national government is still adjusting to meeting the varied demands from this process… Many projects are being rejected by agencies because these are not within their mandates (many are in fact [local] mandates). But we are still adjusting the process to be really more bottom-up… We do agree that there is much that can be improved in the process of identifying projects at the local level as well, as these tend to be not yet linked to available poverty statistics and data."

Did it matter?

The commitment seems to have reached the level of daily administrative practice. Indeed, some stakeholders have been involved. Others, however, have no involvement or information, and suggest that Government should conduct public information efforts about the project.

Overall, the "mixed results" of the BUB experience show the need to verify the supposed amounts allotted to BUB-identified projects, more fully explain the commitment, and safeguard against turning the project funds into a political or discretionary purse by the ruling political party.
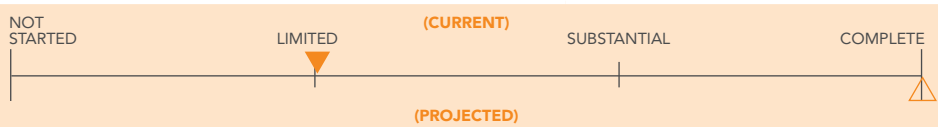
Moving forward

Implementation, expansion, and review of the basic commitment are recommended.

Government would do well to heed the suggestions of stakeholders to disclose the results of the first round of BUB activities, and clarify exactly how the projects could result in improved delivery of public services and reduction of poverty.

6 | Deepening Citizen Participation: Empowerment Fund

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Multisectoral steering committee composed of government departments and nongovernment stakeholders
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Participation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED ▼ (CURRENT) — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE ⚠

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

The Empowerment Fund seeks to provide citizens groups with support in undertaking capacity development and community organizing projects that will empower citizens to demand better services and governance. This fund will be overseen by a multisectoral steering committee composed of government departments and nongovernment stakeholders. It will be operationalized within 2012.

What happened?

The Government report rated this commitment is "still in progress." Stakeholders agreed, and the IRM researcher considered progress "limited."

Specifically, Government said it is still finalizing the guidelines for the Empowerment Fund for implementation in 2013. A few CSOs availed themselves of the fund in 2011, but stakeholders said that the project is "very slow moving" and the fund disbursements "clouded with controversy" because of the transfer of fund management from one government agency to another. They noted a lack of transparency in the selection of beneficiary CSOs.

The Government Focal Point said that as of June 2013, "the guidelines have still not been finalized. Government audit rules have made it difficult to actually put in place a fund to support community organizing. DLIG [the Department of the Interior and Local Government] hopes to issue such guidelines within a few months."

While the stakeholders said public consultation on the guidelines started only in January 2013, some stakeholders were more positive about the "inclusive" nature of this process. However, they said the draft guidelines needed criteria for CSO seeking funds and methods to hold the CSOs accountable for their use of the funds.

The lead role in implementing this project shifted from the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) in 2011 to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in 2012, a shift some CSOs found confusing. The Government Focal Point said that funding was never directly provided to NAPC, but rather the budget was lodged with DILG and then transferred to NAPC. Some delay was caused by preparing the documents to allow DILG to transfer the

funds to NAPC. In 2013, DILG will manage this fund, he said.

The Government confirmed an issue raised by many CSOs: community organizations "have no capacity to meet the liquidation requirements of national government," and because public funds "will have to be properly accounted for and liquidated based on COA [Commission on Audit] guidelines and standards," they can access the fund only through "networks or consortia that have the proven capacity to liquidate and account funds provided to them… It will be these networks and consortia who will have the accountability over these funds (along with DILG) and will thus have to make sure their local partners are able to liquidate the funds. Clarification: no one has accessed the funds yet in 2013."
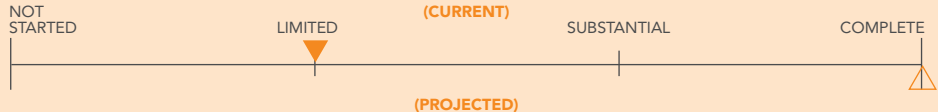
Did it matter?
The fund was created, according to the Government, in response to the concern raised by CSOs that many traditional donors no longer support community organizing activities. Government said it recognizes that community organizing is critical to enabling citizens to hold Government accountable. The fund can help improve public participation and capacity, but currently it is hampered because the guidelines have not been finalized and Government has not yet disclosed reports from a pilot run.

Moving forward
The Government has to finalize the guidelines, disclose the full details of disbursements of the fund, and make sure that CSOs that serve as fund conduits conform to the best-practice standards of transparency and accountability.

7 | Deepening Citizen Participation: Social Audit

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Commission on Audit
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Department Public Works and Highways (pilot agency), Department of Agriculture, and Department of Budget and Management
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Participation, Accountability
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Develop a plan

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED ———— LIMITED ▼ **(CURRENT)** ———— SUBSTANTIAL ———— COMPLETE ⚠ **(PROJECTED)**

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

The Commission on Audit (COA), in partnership with executive departments and CSOs, will craft a roadmap to institutionalize social audits[1] for general public works and agriculture infrastructure projects for implementation throughout 2012.

What happened?

The Government report said this commitment was "partially fulfilled" in 2012. Stakeholders agreed and the IRM researcher considered the commitment's implementation to be "limited."

Under this commitment, according to the Government self-assessment report, the Commission on Audit, and the Departments of Public Works, Agriculture, and Budget "will seek to institutionalize participatory audits for general public works and agriculture infrastructure projects" and engage citizens' groups in the conduct of COA audits for selected projects to help "increase the integrity of these audits." It added that, "the overall goal of the program is to contribute to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of public resources. Program outcomes include enhanced

external scrutiny, improved public trust, and reduced potential for misuse of funds." The initiative was launched in November 2012, with pilot implementation still under way at the Public Works Department.

The initiative was piloted in one project (CAMANAVA Flood Control Project) of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) during the last quarter of 2012, and a preliminary audit report will be available in the third quarter of 2013. The operational guidelines for the 2013 implementation are being refined. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was invited to take part in the second run of the audit.

Stakeholders interviewed raised a number of concerns about implementation of the commitment:

- selection of the projects to be audited;
- selection of partner CSOs that will be allowed to participate in the audit;
- limited scale (pilot-only) nature of the project;
- delayed disclosure of the first or pilot audit report;
- lack of clarity on the process and on roles for a citizen participatory audit;

- relation of the audit to other processes such as financial review;

- lack of capacity building and training for such audits. Some stakeholders, however, said they had participated in training events conducted by Government.

In response, the Government provided additional information on the main partner, Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP), and links to the website www.i-kwenta.com, launched in 2012. Many of the activities implemented in 2012 were preparatory, such as establishment of a project management unit within COA, development of audit design, drafting of terms of reference for CSO partners, and capacity- building workshops for CSOs and COA staff.

Did it Matter?

According to the limited number of stakeholders engaged in the project, the results of this commitment were useful. Other stakeholders said they had little information about it.

Engaged stakeholders proposed a clearer premise for the commitment. CSOs should have been given a chance to identify priority targets for audit and given answers to questions like, "What is a citizen participatory audit?" "What are the specific roles of CSOs in the audit?" "Can the same CSOs engaged in project identification also be involved in the audit?" and "Will the audit be a technical or financial review of the projects?"
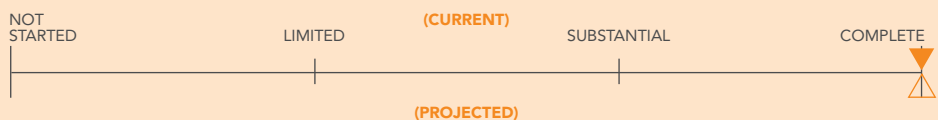
Moving forward

The Government would do well to launch a public awareness drive on this initiative, publish the report on the pilot audit project, conduct training programs for stakeholders to gain expertise in audit work, and clarify the premises of the initiative. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the agencies in charge of the social audit should clarify what actions will take place as part of the audit.

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[1] For a description of the 'social audit' concept in the Philippine context, see Segundo Romero, *Social Audit Toolbox for Philippines Civil Society Organizations*, Civil Service Commission, 2011. http://fdpp.blgs.gov.ph/uploads/templates/SAT-1.pdf

8 | Escalating Accountability: Results-Based Performance

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Commission on Audit
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Department Public Works and Highways (pilot agency), Department of Agriculture, and Department of Budget and Management
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Participation, Accountability
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Develop a plan

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED — LIMITED — (CURRENT) — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE (PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Extension building on existing implementation

Full text of the commitment

In line with the goal of making all lower-income municipalities and cities[1] meet the "Seal of Good Housekeeping" standards by 2016, increase the compliance rate from 50% to 70% in the span of 360 days. Furthermore, develop new standards that link performance in social development areas to the awarding of the Seal of Good Housekeeping and to grants under the Performance Challenge Fund.

What happened?

The Government report rated this commitment as "fulfilled." Stakeholders said it was "partially fulfilled." The IRM researcher found that, according to the language of the commitment, the commitment has been fulfilled.

Through the Seal of Good Housekeeping (SGH) for local government units (LGUs) the Government committed "to aggressively scale up interventions to elevate the practice of local governance by institutionalizing the value of transparency, accountability, participation, and performance." The seal ranks LGUs on Good Planning; (2) Sound Fiscal Management; (3) Transparency and Accountability; and (4) Valuing of Performance Information.

LGUs that obtain a Seal of Good Housekeeping receive a P1 million cash incentive from the LGU Performance Challenge Fund.

In 2012, the Government said 55 provinces, 101 cities, and 1,166 municipalities were conferred with the SGH, for a total of 77% of all LGUs (1,322 out of 1,714)."

Disaggregated by levels of administrative units, the numbers show lower performance rates: of 80 Philippine provinces, 55 or 68% obtained the seal; of 143 cities, 101 or 70.6% obtained it; and of 1,491 towns, 1,166 or 78% go the seal.

Since August 2010, the DILG has required all LGUs to post information on fund utilization and project implementation online, on local bulletin boards, and in newspapers and/or websites through its full disclosure policy (FDP).

The Government report said that as of the third quarter of 2012, the compliance rate of LGUs, excluding those from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao,

were as follows: 21% fully compliant, 74% partially compliant, and 5% noncompliant. "This is on track for the attainment of 100% compliance by 2016," the report said.

Did it matter?

The stakeholders said citizens should be allowed to validate and contest the granting of the Seal of Good Housekeeping at the town level, even as limited participation is allowed on the national, regional, and provincial levels. The Government said, "it may be difficult to contest results in areas where there are peace and security issues. The DILG is still improving its system of validation to more meaningfully engage CSOs in the SGH program."

The stakeholders also noted that the SGH is "incentivized" by a grant of P1 million even as the requirements are "very low," that is, financial disclosure online of a few public funds documents, and getting Commission on Audit reports with no adverse findings.

"We agree that the standards may seem low," the Government said, adding that the DILG has developed guidelines[2] for an expanded or scaled-up SGH that will assess LGUs on three levels: SGH Bronze (accountable governance and transparent governance); SGH Silver (accountable governance, transparent governance, and frontline service performance); and SGH Gold (accountable governance, transparent governance, frontline service performance, and participatory governance).

Moving forward

Stakeholders said there is a need for independent monitoring and citizen participation to verify the data submitted under SGH to avoid turning it into "a dime a dozen" award for LGUs.

They said Government must "raise the bar" and review the "contested awarding" of SGHs. The commitment does not cover transparency and accountability requirements such as "local legislation, development planning, resource generation, resource allocation and utilization, customer service, etc."
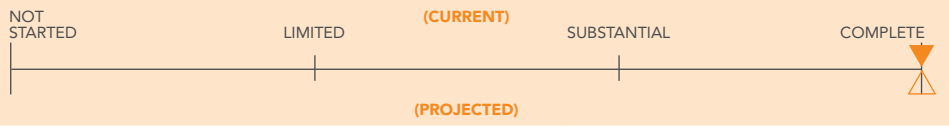
Two stakeholders said a third party should implement the SGH rather than the DILG, which supervises LGUs.

[1] Lower-income municipalities are those belonging to the 4th to 6th classifications. There are a total of 619 municipalities under these classifications. Lower-income cities are those belonging to the 4th to 5th classifications. There are a total of 28 cities in these.
[2] See Memorandum Circular No. 2012-078.

9 | Escalating Accountability: Harmonized Government Performance Management Systems

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Accountability
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED — (CURRENT) — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Maintenance and monitoring

Full text of the commitment

A single Results-Based Performance Management System (RBPMS) shall be developed, harmonizing the currently disparate performance monitoring and reporting systems among national government departments and agencies. The President has created a task force to formulate the RBPMS by June 2012. In line with this, the Organizational Performance Indicator Framework (OPIF) — a core framework used in developing the RBPMS—will be reviewed and strengthened by jumpstarting in 2012 a review of agency outputs and performance indicators.

What happened?

The Government reported that this commitment has been "fulfilled." Stakeholders in both workshops disagreed and said it has been only "partially fulfilled." During 2012, the task force was convened and the review was begun, so the IRM researcher considered this commitment fulfilled.

The Government report said "the President of the Philippines has created a task force to formulate the RBPMS by June 2012. In line with this, the OPIF—which

will be a core framework used in developing the RBPMS–will be reviewed." The achievements cited by Government under this commitment for 2012 include only the development of "a framework for the RBPMS." Pilot implementation in state colleges and universities and government corporations, and the development of "criteria for Good Governance Certification" have both occurred. Still, state colleges and universities, and government corporations account for just a small portion of the national budget.

Stakeholders interviewed had higher expectations of the activities arising from this commitment. A stakeholder from a budget-transparency group observed, "In 2012, the PBB (performance-based bonus) was piloted but in reality, the secretariat was not that strict with its implementation. Agencies should follow the deadlines indicated. There should also be a check and balance with the public and CSOs. A more specific guideline should be issued." Another added, "The guidelines have yet to be released; also how to ensure credible self-rating." Stakeholders noted that Government-owned and -controlled corporations have not yet all complied and CSO and citizen participation

guidelines to serve as "checks and balance" for the self-rating PBB have not been achieved.

Bilateral donor documentation is more laudatory. Under the Philippine Financial Management Program (PFMP), according to AusAID, the supporting bilateral agency, the Philippines has committed to "a sound Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS)…The 'core group' is currently finalising a new Philippines PFM [public financial management] Reform Roadmap that will map out strategies for implementing much needed changes to the PFM system…It is proposed that AusAID go 'back to basics' with this new Public Financial Management Program (PFMP), both in terms of 'the what' - or the outcomes the program aims to achieve; and 'the how' - or the way assistance is provided."[1]

Did it matter?

The Government said that 44 out of 185 participating agencies (24%) have not submitted accomplishment reports for Good Governance Certification,[2] and that the validation process has been delayed for lack of personnel. Stakeholders pointed to more basics flaws in implementation: the lack of citizen and CSO participation in rating and validating the reports, and the incomplete results of the commitment in regard to government corporations. Further, a majority of stakeholders said the citizens — as clients and service-users — were not engaged in rating and validating the performance of government agencies, hence, they doubt the value of this commitment in promoting accountability and improving public services.

As well, the guidelines that form the basis of the ratings, which serves as the reference for the grant of a performance-based bonus, are unclear.

Moving forward

Further work on basic implementation is needed.

The Government, according to stakeholders, should focus on the following next steps:

- Allow for citizen participation in grading the performance of government agencies.
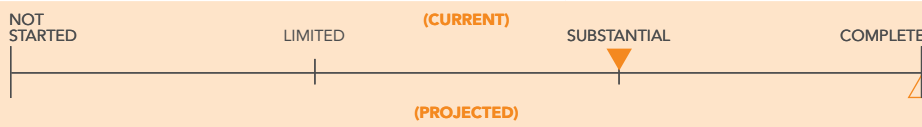
- Disclose details of performance reports submitted, and reasons for low submission rate by other agencies.

- Infuse the project with incentives other than additional budget or cash bonuses for agencies that, by a self-rating mechanism, report good performance.

- Clarify "gray areas in the guidelines" and ensure strict-but-fair evaluation by Secretariat of the performance reports of agencies.

- Assure consistent, timely, and sufficient public disclosure of the results of this commitment across agencies of Government.

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[1] Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) Committee, "Philippine Public Financial Management Reform Roadmap: Towards Improved Accountability and Transparency 2011 to 2015." http://bit.ly/14TR2TY

[2] Inter-Agency Task Force on the Harmonization of National Government Performance Monitoring, Information and Reporting Systems, "Guidelines to Clarify the Good Governance Conditions for Fiscal Year 2012 in Line with the Grant of the Performance-Based Bonus under Executive Order (EO) No. 80," Memorandum Circular No. 2012-02. http://bit.ly/1bmNrar

10 | Escalating Accountability: Citizen's Charters

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Civil Service Commission (CSC)
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Civil society organizations
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	Medium
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED — **(CURRENT)** — SUBSTANTIAL ▼ — COMPLETE ⚠
(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Extension building on existing implementation

Full text of the commitment

Within 360 days, ensure that 100% of national government agencies have published a Citizen's Charter. Furthermore, agencies shall strive to improve their Citizen's Charters, as well as to review their processes for frontline and other services, in consultation with civil society organizations.

What happened?

The Government's self-assessment report says this commitment has been "partially fulfilled." The stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops and the IRM researcher agreed that "substantial" progress was made.

Citizen's charters are tools to proactively match a public agency's services to the needs of its citizen 'customers.' They set and measure compliance with the basic service standards of government, provide that information to citizens, and offer mechanisms to rectify situations with those standards are not met.[1] Members of the Philippine citizenry actively participate in, and share ownership of, the Citizen's Charter.[2]

The Government listed the following achievements:

- The Report Card survey, a feedback mechanism to report on how closely agencies are following their

Citizen's Charter,[3] was conducted in 595 government offices. The target was 560 in 2012.

- The CSC Chairman, Commissioners, and/or Directors performed spot checks at 516 agencies with Citizen's Charters. The target was 440.

- The number of agencies that posted a Citizen's Charter was 1,881, 70% of the target of 2,693.

The Government acknowledged that stakeholders have recommended that government employee unions review the Citizen's Charters and that the Government develop "a more comprehensive plan for reducing red tape within the bureaucracy."

A small portion of the stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops said they do not know enough about the program. Many others said they were aware it exists but also stressed that:

- Citizens and CSOs must be given a chance to validate these achievements and conduct "consistent, independent monitoring" of the agencies but there is no mechanism for this as yet.

- Government's baseline data and coverage targets are not clear about which agencies are covered

in the commitment's "100% coverage." While the Government said it had surpassed its targets for the year, a number of agencies, including local government agencies, had not been surveyed.

- The results of the Report Card survey have not been published or uploaded online.

- The commitment focuses only on "physical" efforts, such as posters and inspections, and without considering also their impacts, there is no assurance "those agencies' measures aren't just for show."

The stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops are generally concerned about:

- The lack of citizen engagement in defining the criteria for performance of frontline agencies, as well as in the verification of performance reports by the Civil Service Commission and the agencies.

- The low level of public awareness about the implementation of this commitment.

- The fact that the commitment largely entailed the public posting of Citizen Charters—a few stakeholders wondered if this was transparency in form rather than in practice.

Did it matter?

There were few indications of significant impact of this commitment at the time of writing. A number of stakeholders said they have limited knowledge about its implementation. They voiced concern that the Citizen's Charters are being crafted by government agencies without citizens being involved or informed about what these charters should focus on, in terms of the quality, speed, and efficiency of the delivery of frontline services.

Moving forward

Stakeholders urged more public information and awareness efforts by Government, more citizen engagement in crafting Citizen's Charters, and more CSO validation or verification of reports by the agencies.

The IRM researcher recommends extension building on existing implementation. In the future, the Government would do well to:

1. Involve CSOs in the entire process of implementation, from crafting Citizen's Charters to conducting site inspections of government agencies.

2. Mount more vigorous public information and awareness campaigns on this and related initiatives.

3. Disclose reports of inspections by the Civil Service Commission, that is, identify agencies that pass or fail the benchmarks of good performance.

4. Clarify the link between this "transparency" initiative with other grand challenges of enhancing public accountability and improving the delivery of public services.

[1] Magdelena Mendoza, "Using Citizens' Charter to Exact Local Accountability for Human and Social Development," Paper presented to NAPSIPAG Annual Conference, University of Sydney, Australia, 4-5 December 2006. http://www.napsipag.org/pdf/social_development.pdf
[2] Victoria Esber, "The ARTA-Report Card Survey as a Tool in Participatory, Accountable, and Transparent Governance," Presentation at ASEAN Conference on Promoting Social Accountability in Public Service, Makati City, Philippines, 14 November 2012. http://bit.ly/1fDu1jj
[3] Esber, "The ARTA-Report Card."

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11 | Escalating Accountability: Internal Audits

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Accountability
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Both

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED — **(CURRENT)** — SUBSTANTIAL ▼ — COMPLETE ⚠
(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Extension building on existing implementation

Full text of the commitment

Within 90 days, the Government will issue a Philippine Government Internal Audit Manual (PGIAM); and within 360 days, the PGIAM and the National Guidelines on Internal Control Systems (NGICS) will be rolled out in nine critical departments, in particular, the Public Works and Highways, Education, Finance, Justice, Health, Social Welfare, Budget, Labor, and Environment departments. This roll-out is in line with the target of all agencies to adopt the PGIAM and NGICS by 2016.

What happened?

The Government report said this commitment was "partially fulfilled" in 2012. Stakeholders judged it to be "still in progress" or "partially fulfilled." Despite delays, the IRM researcher found "substantial" progress in implementing this commitment.

Though its self-assessment referred to a different set of "critical departments" than the list of nine originally included in the action plan, which are those used for analysis here, the Government declared these achievements in 2012:

- A PGIAM training manual was published and 33 agencies underwent capacity-building trainings.

- Internal Audit Units were established in one target agency and three others: Finance, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, and Transportation and Communications.

PGIAM and NGICS were rolled out in seven of the nine target agencies: Education, Health, Public Works, Finance, Social Welfare, Labor, and Justice.

The Government said that the March 2012 target date for publication of the "Trainer's Training Manuals on the PGIAM" was not met because consultations and pilot testing of the draft manuals caused delays.

Did it matter?

Notably, 23 of the 31 stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops said they did not have enough information about this commitment to give it a fair rating. Several were confused about what an "internal audit" entailed.

A stakeholder from the Public Works Department said a rationalization program of government personnel now under way is reducing the effectiveness of the internal audit project because personnel engaged in an internal audit will trimmed significantly under the rationalization program. A second government agency stakeholder noted that the internal audit manual is

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only useful if adequately enforced and sufficiently supported by funds and personnel.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends extension of this commitment building on existing implementation:

- Fully inform stakeholders about this and related initiatives.

- Rank the order of priorities.

- Clearly assign government agencies in charge of implementation. A number of financial management reform initiatives are quite complex, leaving stakeholders and citizens hard put to understand their values, mechanisms, and purposes.

The Government, in its self-assessment report, said its future plans include "the finalization and issuance of the Generic Manuals on Controls in the Human Resource and Management System and Quality Management System. The scope of the capacity-building activities will be expanded to other agencies not covered in 2012. Further, the institutionalization process for the adoption of the NGICS and the PGIAM will be intensified."

12 | Technology and Innovation: Single Portal for Information

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office (PCDSPO)
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Both

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED		LIMITED	**(CURRENT)**	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Extension building on existing implementation

Full text of the commitment

Within 360 days, the Government, with CSOs, will craft a roadmap for the development of a single portal for government information, which complies with basic open data standards.

What happened?

The Government said it has "fulfilled" this commitment. Stakeholders said it was only "partially fulfilled."

Government said, "The Official Gazette website www.gov.ph will be converted into the main portal of the Philippine government–a unified interface in the form of a one-stop source for information and service delivery. It will provide easily accessible information regarding government services, and it will feature an archive of government documents published over the span of more than a century in the Official Gazette as a print publication. Eventually, it will also feature an online feedback mechanism for the public and a unified email and collaboration intranet for government employees with which constituents may launch petitions and make queries online."

Government said the portal for commonly sought government information is now operational

(http://www.gov.ph/official-gazette/) and plans for the adoption of open data standards are being discussed.

Stakeholders said the commitment has not been fulfilled because the Government has yet to work on the roadmap of information with CSOs. The outstanding questions include:

- What kind of information or data will be included?

- How useful will the formats be?

- How can there be single portal when the data at local offices (e.g., Department of Agrarian Reform) are not even centralized?

While stakeholders had much to say about the existing portals (gov.ph and the online gazette), there was a sense that Government has neglected the main pivot of the commitment—to collaboratively craft a roadmap for the development of a single portal for government information. For this reason, the IRM researcher considered progress on this commitment to be "limited."

Did it matter?

This commitment moved government practice forward if simply by the sheer volume of information and

data that was uploaded to the portal in 2012. The stakeholders said, however, that the portal needs better content management to meet open data standards, and that Government must craft a roadmap for the portal with the participation of stakeholders.
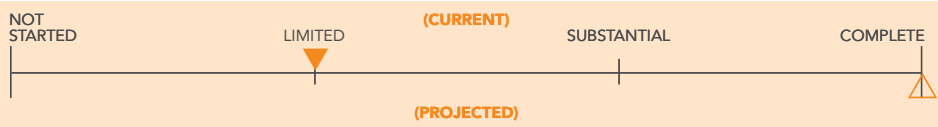
Some stakeholders expressed approval of the value of the portal "as a research tool." Others cited a need to improve the portal's accessibility and content to make it a "transparency tool," enhanced feedback mechanisms, and quicker and more constant response to citizen queries posted online. A few others urged the online disclosure of documents covering other lump-sum funds, including those under the oversight and control of the Office of the President and other executive departments.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends extension building on existing implementation (improvements on the content and user operability values of existing portals), as well as further work on basic implementation including the roadmap.

13 | Technology and Innovation: Integrated Financial Management System

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED ——— LIMITED ▼ (CURRENT) ——— SUBSTANTIAL ——— COMPLETE ⚠ (PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

The Government plans to develop a complete Government Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) by 2016. In the interim, within 360 days, the Government will develop a pilot GIFMIS to be initially used by its oversight agencies, particularly, the Finance and Budget Departments and the Commission on Audit.

What happened?

The Government report said this commitment has been "partially fulfilled." Stakeholders said it was "still in progress." The IRM researcher found "limited" implementation.

The Government said GIFMIS is "a browser-based application composed of components and modules that automates and reports the many different processes involved with the agency budget and expenditure cycles of the National Government." It is envisioned to assist the Government in maintaining fiscal discipline. In 2012, the Government said it developed and used unified account code structures (UACS) for the preparation of the FY2014 national budget, and finalized the GIFMIS design and implementation plan.

Implementation was challenged by a delay in the establishment of the GIFMIS Project Management Office (PMO). The Government said approval for the PMO was obtained in late 2012 and it is currently in the process of hiring personnel and installing office equipment. Journalists covering the Office of the President said the GIFMIS Project Management Office "has not yet been set up" as of May 2013.

Half of the stakeholders who joined the first IRM workshop either did not comment or said they had insufficient information about GIFMIS. A CSO stakeholder who was tracking the development and use of this system said "we know of the challenges it is facing, [and] want to push more on the inter-agency work to see this to completion."

Did it matter?

Stakeholders from government agencies voiced confidence that, "If effectively implemented, GIFMIS should be able to link the matching of actual use of budgets against budget allocations" and that it is "a good application that would aid the government in fund allocations."

Another said: "If this will be fulfilled, it will be one of

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the best initiatives of the government in improving efficiency and transparency in public service. They should also assume security because government finances are involved."
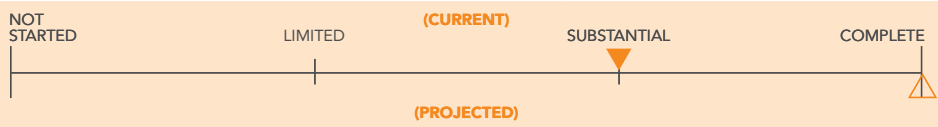
The downside, according to the same stakeholder, is that there is a "lack of information for public awareness" about the commitment.

Moving forward
The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation. Specifically, Government has to organize the PMO and inform citizens and stakeholders about this initiative.

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14 | Technology and Innovation: Electronic Bidding

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Department of Public Works and Highways
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Accountability, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED — LIMITED — **(CURRENT)** — SUBSTANTIAL ▼ — COMPLETE ⚠ **(PROJECTED)**

NEXT STEPS	Extension building on existing implementation

Full text of the commitment

In line with the medium-term goal of digitizing the bidding process, develop additional features of PhilGEPS (The Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System) within 360 days, particularly: a facility to enable the online submission of bid documents; a module for CSOs to monitor tenders online; an electronic fee payment system; an expanded supplier registry; and a module for agency posting of their annual procurement plans.

What happened?

The Government listed this commitment as "partially fulfilled." The stakeholders agreed. The IRM researcher found "substantial" progress toward implementing it.

Government said that PhilGEPS was improved and expanded to include the following features and modules:

- E-bid submission module to be piloted in one agency (Department of Public Works);
- Inventory management system, inspection module, and planning module;
- E-payment system being implemented in two agencies (Procurement Service and the National Tax Research Center);

- Official merchants' registry;
- Integrated notices publication (INP).

The Government reported that from 2011 to 2012, the number of registered government agencies increased by 68%. In addition, the number of bid notices posted increased by 29%, and the number of contracts awarded increased by 31%.

Stakeholders cited a problem with Government's failure to spell out baseline data or benchmarks for its claimed "achievements" and said that while the commitment speaks of electronic bidding, PhilGEPS mainly is about posting notices of bids.

Stakeholders said Government's balance of work includes the module for CSOs to monitor tenders online, providing a mechanism for CSO and citizen participation, as well as the e-bid module and e-payments (which are being piloted).

They said PhilGEPS is not interactive, access is difficult because of server capacity, data posted are "not relevant," and public awareness remains low.

A stakeholder from Government said the Public Works Department has actually proposed, "to keep bidding secret to minimize collusion."

Three stakeholders from public agencies said Government must develop a mechanism to ensure 100% use of PhilGEPS by all government departments and agencies to generate data that will indicate unit costs of goods and services procured. A fourth stakeholder from Government noted that projects funded in lump sums are not posted on PhilGEPS.

Did it matter?

Many more agencies are now posting bids on PhilGEPS, a marked improvement since the law requiring online posting of bids passed in 2003.

As to usefulness, a mixed picture emerges: some stakeholders said they find PhilGEPS useful and relevant, while others said they are not happy with PhilGEPS because the site is slow and the content incomplete. Still others were not aware of PhilGEPS or have not used it.

Most of the stakeholders acknowledge the value of a project like PhilGEPS, but have concerns about:

- The lack of public awareness about what it is, how to use it, and how to validate the bid notices enrolled on PhilGEPS.

- The lack of clarity about the baseline data that Government used to assess its implementation of this commitment.

- The lack of a module or mechanism for CSOs and citizens to validate and engage in the PhilGEPS system.

- The fact that the website is slow, not interactive, and documents posted are difficult to access.

- The fact that not all government agencies are posting bid notices on PhilGEPS and there are apparently no measures to compel them to do so. There is need to ensure 100% compliance by all agencies.

- Whether PhilGEPS can be used to make sure that the bid notices posted conform to the annual procurement plans of the various agencies.
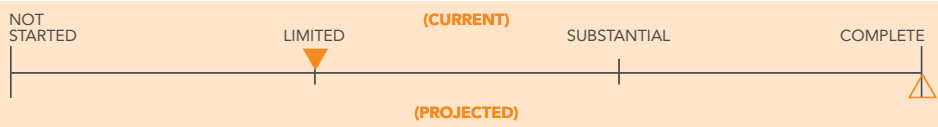
Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends extension building on existing implementation: Government might do a performance audit of PhilGEPS for insight on how to improve it. Key matters to assess include:

1. Which agencies are not posting bids on PhilGEPS and why? Should there be penalties or administrative action against these agencies?

2. The fact that only 64% of government agencies (national agencies, government corporations, local government units) are posting bids 10 years after PhilGEPS was launched, should raise concern.

3. Public information and awareness efforts, as well as prompt action on the planned module for CSOs to monitor tenders online might be necessary to encourage more citizens to use PhilGEPS content.

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15 | Technology and Innovation: Procurement Cards

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Monetary Board
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Accountability, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED **(CURRENT)** ▼ — SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE ⚠

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Significant revision of commitment

Full text of the commitment

The Government will pilot a system of procurement cards, in lieu of the often-abused system of cash advances [used for procurement purchases], within 180 days.

What happened?

The Government report rated the "Cashless Purchase Card System" to use digitally traceable cards for government supply purchases, as "still in progress." The stakeholders agreed. The IRM researcher found only "limited" progress on this initiative.

The Government said that bids were received from card vendors and the contract was awarded to Citibank to provide the service. It said the Department of National Defense has agreed to pilot test use of the card. But as of writing in September 2013, pilot implementation had not started since regulatory clearances were still being sought from the Department of Finance and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. That is, other government reports said implementation was stalled because of a delay in obtaining regulatory approval from the Monetary Board for the use of the credit cards by government. The Commission on Audit also reportedly disapproved implementation because Citibank would add a 1% transaction fee.

A majority of the stakeholders said they had no information about this commitment and saw "no relevance" to this initiative. They said they were not aware of the exact objectives, mechanisms, and coverage of this commitment. A number raised concerns about the transparency of the bidding process.
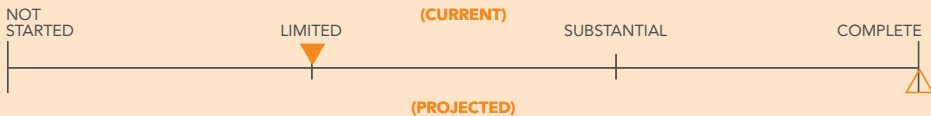
Did it matter?

Project implementation has been delayed. While it can potentially limit waste and corruption through making government expenditures more traceable, without a clearly spelled out corresponding public transparency and accountability mechanism, it is unclear how this commitment pertains to OGP values.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends that the Government amend this commitment to more clearly spell out the relevance to the OGP values of transparency, participation, accountability, and technology and innovation for transparency and accountability. Similar to other commitments, more awareness-raising activities can be carried out.

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16 | Technology and Innovation: Manpower Information System

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Accountability, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED LIMITED **(CURRENT)** SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETE **(PROJECTED)**

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

To better manage government manpower requirements and improve accountability in the disbursement of funds for personal services, the Government will complete its Government Manpower Information System (GMIS) and develop a central payroll system within 360 days, in accordance with Executive Order No. 31 series of 2011.

What happened?

The Government report said this commitment was "partially fulfilled." Many stakeholders said it was "limited," while others agreed with the Government's rating. The IRM researcher considered this commitment's implementation to have been limited.

In its self-assessment report, the Government described the commitment as allowing for direct payments to employee bank accounts, eliminating "ghost" employees in the system, and addressing "the perennial problem of nonremittance of GSIS (Government Service Insurance Systems) contributions" with government-accredited banks providing oversight.

The Government reported that it pilot-tested new software for a national payroll system in six agencies

and concluded that the system could not meet the payroll requirements of the entire government. Thus it will procure commercial payroll and human resource software to manage the national government payroll. The Government said it would install and configure the new software, conduct user training for six pilot agencies, and begin live payroll processing.

Stakeholders said they knew that an effort to rid the Government of ghost employees had been discussed in the Armed Forces and Philippine National Police, "but we have not seen the system or the effort yet." They raised questions about the likelihood that the private software will be able to handle the national payroll system, how the project could affect the autonomy of local government units, and how accurate it is to say that the target was met when the pilot testing failed.

The commitment called for the national payroll system to be developed "within a year." Many stakeholders lauded the goals of the national payroll system, that is, getting rid of ghost employees and getting agencies to fill vacancies. But they said the commitment consisted of two deliverables: the Government Manpower

Information System to keep track of government employees, and the national payroll system. The Government Manpower Information System is also part of the other commitments in the 2012 action plan. The matter of overlapping, similar, or even identical commitments is a basic problem of the action plan.

Did it matter?

As yet, there are few clear consequences. Stakeholders said they have not been fully informed or engaged in activities related to the roll-out of this commitment. The software for the GMIS has yet to be purchased. The stakeholders from government implementing agencies (Department of Public Works and Highways, Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, and the Civil Service Commission) separately expressed concern about how this commitment will affect the ongoing implementation of a personnel rationalization program in the bureaucracy. They said that the number of civil servants in some agencies is being streamlined (trimmed or reduced) under this rationalization program.

This and several other commitments in the Philippines' OGP Action Plan for 2012 are listed as project deliverables under the Philippine Financial Management Program (PFMP) funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The PFMP was launched in 2010, and will continue to 2016. It is the second five-year bilateral program on financial system reforms. Thus, it is hard to say that the commitment "stretched" government practice.
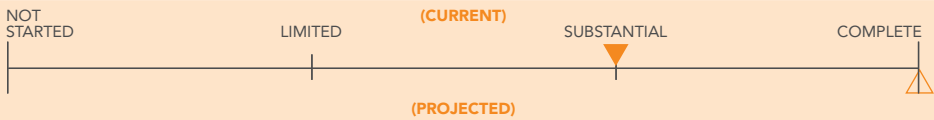
Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation.

Once the Government acquires payroll and human resources software from private sources, perhaps the national payroll system could move in earnest. More information on the Government Manpower Information System is desirable. Full and timely public disclosure of information about these initiatives to citizens and CSOs, but most especially to civil servants is necessary for the commitment to gain public goodwill and support.

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17 | Technology and Innovation: Expand National Household Targeting System

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, National Anti-Poverty Commission, and National Statistics Office
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Unclear
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED — LIMITED — (CURRENT) SUBSTANTIAL — COMPLETE (PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Significant revision of the commitment

Full text of the commitment

The Government uses the National Household Targeting System (NHTS) to identify and locate beneficiaries of targeted poverty-reduction programs. Within 360 days, the Government will enhance the NHTS by expanding its coverage from indigent households to other poor sectors, such as the rural sector (a registry of farmers may be developed as part of NHTS or independent of it), the informal sector, and indigenous peoples. CSOs will be tapped to ensure the integrity of the NHTS.

What happened?

The Government report rated this commitment as "fulfilled" in 2012. Stakeholders said it has been only "partially fulfilled."

To fulfill this commitment, in 2012 the Government said it had developed the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA), a nationwide database of baseline information and geographical coordinates of farmers, farm laborers and fisher folk households from identified provinces. This database complements the NHTS database mentioned in the commitment.

Farmers and fisher folk from 75 provinces have been registered and the data for 20 provinces have been processed. However, "the second batch of data processing for 55 provinces was delayed because of a conflict of activities with the survey agency, the National Statistics Office (NSO). The regular Census of Agriculture and Fisheries is slated to commence in March 2013."

Most of the stakeholders attending IRM workshops were aware of this commitment and acknowledged that the registry of farmers and fisher folk had been completed and that the RBSA was a valuable poverty reduction tool. They had the following issues:

- Data were not consolidated or analyzed.
- Coverage was limited to 20 of 75 provinces at present.
- Expansion of coverage to indigenous peoples and the informal sector was not yet done.
- Integrity of the data should be prioritized, and it should be updated regularly.

There were numerous questions about the integrity or currency of the data, the purpose of the database,

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the lack of public disclosure or even the online upload of the database, the vagueness of which "poverty-reduction programs" the database could inform, the absence of notice to the targeted sectors (farmers, fisher folk, indigenous peoples) about what data about them have been secured for the database, and the incomplete coverage of the database (only 20 of 75 provinces).

Due to the lack of CSO involvement, the IRM researcher found this commitment to have been "substantially," but not totally, completed.

Did it matter?

Without clear language to improve access to information, public participation, and accountability, it is unclear how this commitment relates to OGP.

At the time of writing, stakeholders had not had the opportunity to access the RSBSA database because it had not been made available online. Two stakeholders who had seen the database had concerns about its currency, integrity, and lack of validation with the beneficiaries.

On the original NHTS database, in its response to an early draft of the IRM report, the government said that it has helped inform the work of seven national agencies and the school of economics at the state university. It noted that to protect the identities and the addresses of the registered farmers, farm laborers, and fisherfolk, only relevant national Government agencies are allowed to obtain a full copy of the database; other agencies are given only aggregate information

Work on the NHTS progressed in earnest, and the number of households under CCT coverage grew under the watch of President Aquino in 2010–12 with significant multiyear loans for the CCT program from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The data obtained through the NHTS powered up the development of the database promised under this commitment.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends that Government would do well to improve this commitment by making it more OGP relevant:

- Validate the content of the RSBSA database with the subject beneficiaries (farmers, fisher folk, indigenous peoples) out of courtesy to them, and to precisely fulfill what it says was "razor-sharp targeting" of
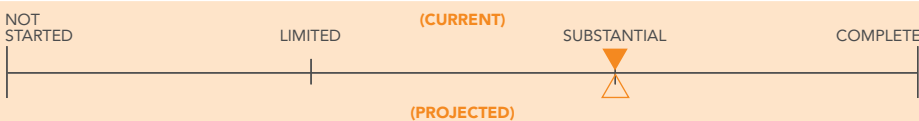
their sectors for poverty-reduction programs.

- Make the RSBSA data available to the public, CSOs, academics, and journalists so its content could be vetted, appreciated, and inform public policy research and advocacy, and affirm the people's right to know–one of the grand challenges of the OGP. Obviously, this should be done with care for the privacy of the individuals who are registered in the system.

Further, for the 2013 Philippines OGP action plan, the IRM researcher recommends that the commitment be rewritten to makes clearer the link to the OGP core values of access to information, public participation, and accountability.

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18 | Technology and Innovation: e-TAILS

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Accountability, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

NOT STARTED — LIMITED — **(CURRENT)** — SUBSTANTIAL ▼ — COMPLETE

(PROJECTED)

NEXT STEPS	Extension building on existing implementation

Full text of the commitment

Within 360 days, the Government will expand the e-TAILS (Electronic Transparency and Accountability Initiative for Lump-Sum Funds) so that (1) other often-politicized lump-sum funds are processed through it; and (2) citizen reportage on the implementation of projects funded by Congressional allocations is enabled. Modules for the School Building Fund and the Internal Revenue Allotment of Local Governments are slated for development.

What happened?

The Government report said this commitment was "partially fulfilled" in 2012. A large majority of the stakeholders at IRM workshops supported this rating. Despite some challenges in implementation, the IRM researcher found "substantial" progress.

The initiatives related to e-TAILS allow for better accuracy and citizen oversight of large, lump-sum disbursements of government funds.

Pursuant to the demand for greater transparency and accountability in the allotment and utilization of lump-sum funds, e-TAILS was developed as a facility to particularize items under Special Allotment Release Orders (SARO) pertaining to the Priority Development

Assistance Fund (PDAF), Department of Public Works and Highways-Congressional Allocation for Infrastructure (DPWH-CA), Financial Subsidy to Local Government Units (FS-LGU), and Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).

The Government said IRAs of local government units are now posted on e-TAILS. Information on the release of the following allotments can be found in the following URLs:

- Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) – http://pdaf.dbm.gov.ph/index.php

- Internal Revenue Allotments of local governments – http://reports.dbm.gov.ph/ira.php

- Statement of Allotments, Obligations and Balances – http://www.dbm.gov.ph/?page_id=1824

A feedback facility was developed for the "*Budget ng Bayan*" website of the Department of Budget and Management. A design for improving the feedback facility was drawn up and was to be developed in the first half of 2013.

A majority of stakeholders praised this project. They also proposed improvements in the format and coverage of e-TAILS. In particular, they said that:

- Data on the disbursement of other lump-sum funds, including those under the control of the Office of the President, Contingency Fund, Schoolbuilding Program Fund, and Motor Vehicle Users' Fund should also be posted online.

- Other than just a list of projects funded with IRA allotment shares of local government units, e-TAILS should offer reports on what projects have been completed or are ongoing, and how much was spent on each project.

- Interactivity and user-experience would be enhanced if the data were not just in PDF format and if the site offered feedback buttons.

One government employee stressed that while e-TAILs is designed to promote transparency, making it work to achieve accountability and citizen participation, and provide checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches, has not yet happened.

Stakeholders cited some challenges:

- How should this transparency tool be transformed into an accountability or check-and-balance tool?

- There is no mechanism for validation of the data enrolled in e-TAILS.

- Public information and awareness of e-TAILs is low.

- Access to the Internet is still the privilege of only 30% of the 98 million Filipinos.

Did it matter?

The commitment does represent a stretch on the part of Government as there is a significant increase in the volume of information now available on e-TAILS. A number of stakeholders said they have used e-TAILS for research and advocacy, particularly those aligned with budget transparency work.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends extension building on existing implementation. Technology and innovation projects like e-TAILS may be improved from being mere transparency tools to becoming accountability tools. The Government should move in this direction by enhancing the content and by improving functionalities for citizen interaction.

Stakeholders said that e-TAILS should be more interactive, offer "open data" standards for its content, and include data on the disbursement of other lump sum funds.

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19 | Technology and Innovation: *Budget ng Bayan*

COMMITMENT SUMMARY	
LEAD INSTITUTION	Department of Budget and Management
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS	None
POINT OF CONTACT SPECIFIED?	No
OGP VALUES	Access to information, Accountability, Technology and innovation
OGP GRAND CHALLENGES	Improving public services, Increasing public integrity, More effectively managing public resources
SPECIFICITY OF GOAL	High
ACTION OR PLAN	Carry out action

LEVEL OF COMPLETION	NOT STARTED · · · · · LIMITED · · · · · **(CURRENT)** SUBSTANTIAL ▼ · · · · · COMPLETE ⚠ **(PROJECTED)**

NEXT STEPS	Further work on basic implementation

Full text of the commitment

Within 180 days, the Government will develop and launch a "Budget ng Bayan" (translated as "The People's Budget") website, which will serve as an interactive platform for citizens to learn about and find information on the national budget.

What happened?

The Government report rated this commitment as "fulfilled." Stakeholders at the IRM workshops deemed it "partially fulfilled." Because the commitment's definition of "interactive" is unclear, and Government and civil society appeared to have interpreted it differently, the IRM researcher refrained from confirming fulfillment of the commitment and gave it a rating of "substantial."

The Government report described the commitment as a Citizen's Portal. It said users can log in through their Facebook accounts and post their comments on forums on the website. The website has been completed and can be accessed at http://budgetngbayan.com. Its main features include an Interactive People's Budget, an Interactive Budget Cycle, and a Citizen's Portal.

Many stakeholders said the *Budget ng Bayan* website is a useful research and transparency project. They noted that the Government promise to implement an "interactive" website that would allow citizens to understand the language and process of budgeting, ask questions, and get timely and meaningful responses and more complete information on both big-ticket and small-ticket expenditure items in the national budget was only partially fulfilled.

One stakeholder noted that the site has links to content from the Department of Budget and Management, but few links to other departments. Stakeholders cited additional issues:

* Citizens' intervention in the process and government response is not ensured.
* The site administrator does not regularly respond to online comments and queries. There were 16 responses as of the time of writing in September 2013.

The website has good graphic design, but the stakeholders said the Government could have put more effort into enhancing its user-friendly and interactive values. They noted that the Government

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rolled out the *Budget ng Bayan*'s Facebook page, but took longer to put its site on the Government portal into operation.

Did it matter?

This commitment made a significant impact. A number of stakeholders, particularly those involved in budget transparency work, have found the website useful as a research tool. Citizens who posted queries on the website have received feedback from the site administrator—some in a more timely way than the others.

Moving forward

The IRM researcher recommends further work on basic implementation. This commitment is a good transparency initiative. The next steps are to transform it into a platform for accountability, improved services, and citizen participation. There is a need for public information and CSO consultation on what improvements could be made with the website.

The stakeholders and citizens who had posted queries on the *Budget ng Bayan* website have suggested that it could be improved with:

- More interactive content.

- Simpler presentation of complex concepts in budgeting, public finance processes in Government.

- More consistent and prompt replies from site administrator to questions posted by citizens.

- Integration or user interface of *Budget ng Bayan* website with the Government portal, and the website of the Department of Budget and Management.

- More complete data entries on big and small expenditure items.

V | PROCESS: SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The self-assessment process in the Philippines went according to schedule, although a few improvements could be made.

The government self-assessment was published on 15 March 2013 on the OGP website, ahead of the extended schedule. A consultation meeting with stakeholders was held in Manila on 14 March, where the portions of the draft report were circulated and discussed. The draft was put up for public comment according to OGP guidelines on 2 April, and the final self-assessment report, with some updated paragraphs, was published online on the Philippine Government portal on 5 April 2013.

The report contains an update on each of the commitments, although some commitments are included which fall outside of the prescribed assessment period.

Question	Answer
Was annual progress report published?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Was it done according to schedule?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Is the report available in the local language(s)? According to stakeholders, was this adequate?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Is the report available in English?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Did the government provide a two-week public comment period on draft self-assessment reports?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Were any public comments received?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Is the report deposited in the OGP portal?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Did the self-assessment report include review of consultation efforts?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Did the report cover all of the commitments?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Did it assess completion according to schedule?	Unclear
Does the report reaffirm responsibility for openness?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does the report describe the relationship of the Action Plan with Grand Challenge Areas?	☒ Yes ☐ No

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VI | MOVING FORWARD

This section puts the OGP action plan into a broader context and highlights potential next steps, as reflected in the preceding sections, as well as stakeholder-identified priorities.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Aside from the 19 commitments in its OGP action plan for 2012, the Government listed 14 other transparency and accountability reforms under the Cabinet-level Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster.[1]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In its OGP action plan for 2012, the Government pledged to pursue a "Public Access to Information Initiative."

The plan stated: "The Aquino Administration will move towards giving citizens greater and freer access to official information in a timely, relevant and meaningful manner, subject to certain limitations such as national security, foreign diplomacy and privacy concerns. This initiative will entail the review, improvement and rectification of current policies on citizen access to information; setting-up public access mechanisms and infrastructure, including information technology systems; and collaboration with stakeholders in broadening the scope of access to information and improving the compliance of agencies to existing standards.

"The proposed Freedom of Information Act, the Administration of which has already been submitted to Congress upon instruction of the President, is a critical component of this Initiative. A Roadmap for the improvement of Public Access to Information will be developed within 2012 in consultation with stakeholders."[2]

A number of stakeholders who attended the IRM workshops raised concern that the Government's self-assessment report made no mention of the Government's pledge to pursue an FOI Act.

They lamented that President Aquino had not, in his first three years in office, endorsed or certified to Congress the FOI bill that his study committee led by Budget Secretary Florencio Abad had discussed at length with FOI advocates. They expressed disappointment that the FOI bill had not passed since

Mr. Aquino himself, as a candidate for president in May 2010, had promised to push for its passage.

These stakeholders included two of the three civil society representatives to the Philippine OGP Steering Committee: Attorney Nepomuceno Malaluan, co-convener of Right to Know, Right Now, a coalition of 160 civil society organizations and leaders; and Peter Perfecto and Patrick Chua, executive director and staff, respectively, of the Makati Business Club.

INTERNET COVERAGE

Around 70% of the Philippine population of about 98 million do not have access to the Internet and/or do not possess personal computers. Of the 30% who have access— mainly through slow dial-up connections or Internet cafes – only 70% are active or have a presence in social media networks. While there has been fantastic growth in the number of cell phones, the majority of low- and middle-income subscribers use them largely for texting, rather than for surfing websites. Providing greater access to the Internet is a big challenge for Government's technology and innovation initiatives.[3]

CONCLUSION: OVERALL VIEWS ON THE ACTION PLAN

Of the 19 commitments that Government pledged to implement in 2012 under its OGP Action Plan, the Government's Self-Assessment Report states that in relation to the OGP grand challenges, 10 commitments are designed to achieve "improved public services;" five to "increase public integrity;" and four to "more effectively manage public resources."

After taking into account the views of the Government and of stakeholders, the IRM researcher found that of the 19 commitments, three have been fulfilled and 16 have been partially fulfilled, with either "limited" or "substantial" progress made.

The Government Report says that of the 19 commitments, seven have been "fulfilled," nine have been "partially fulfilled," and three are "still in progress."

However, the two IRM stakeholder workshops on 9 and 16 May 2013 offered a different perspective. The workshops were attended by 31 stakeholders. The first workshop (14 persons) was attended by those with at least some awareness or engagement in the Philippines OGP process. The second workshop (17 persons) consisted of stakeholders with little or no awareness, as well as middle-level and senior officials in agencies assigned to roll out the commitments.

Except for four individual scores of "fulfilled" for two commitments, the consensus of the two workshop groups was that the Government has not yet fulfilled any of the 19 commitments. The stakeholders said that from 1 January 2012 to 1 January 2013, the Government had only "partially fulfilled" five commitments.

Stakeholders gave low to median scores ("not met," or "in progress") for six commitments. In addition, nearly half the 31 stakeholders said they are not aware of, or have insufficient information to assess the status of six other commitments.

Stakeholders generally agreed that three most significant commitments were: the single portal for government information (Commitment No. 5), which Government said it had "fulfilled" in 2012; expanded participatory budgeting (No.13); and bottom-up planning and budgeting (No.14), which Government reported had been "partially fulfilled" in 2012.

Individual stakeholders questioned whether these three commitments (largely designed to improve transparency) had actually assured "accountability" and meaningful citizen participation, allowed for "verification" of the data reported by Government, and resulted in good governance or efficient delivery of public services.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The IRM researcher proposes a number of steps to make OGP stronger and more useful in the Philippines and also recommends improving the function of the action plan as an accountability mechanism. Additionally, based on stakeholder feedback, a number of areas not covered by this action plan could be covered in future action plans.

Strengthen the OGP Institutionally
1. Improve citizen participation and public consultation by:
   a. Holding regular and more open consultation and public awareness activities about the OGP.
   b. Convening regular meetings of the Philippines OGP steering committee, and involving CSOs.
2. Encourage those involved in government agencies to form technical working groups (TWG) to monitor and ensure the progress of implementation in their departments.
3. Involve more government agencies, notably rank-and-file and career service personnel and the members of the Philippine Congress in crafting the 2013 OGP action plan.

Strategically Draft the Commitments in the Next Action Plan
1. Clarify how the commitments coherently promote OGP values of transparency, accountability, participation, and use of technology and innovation for all three.
2. Clarify how the action plan commitments relate to the "eligibility criteria" for membership in the OGP, notably initiatives at promoting asset records disclosure and freedom of information.
3. Identify and remove overlapping commitments to assure greater transparency and lessen double counting.

Clarify Construction of the Next Action Plan
1. Identify project milestones with clear indicators and metrics to allow tracking.
2. Make future commitments more manageable by providing actual projects limited to selected agencies or departments, rather than applying to the whole Government.
3. Conduct public consultation meetings with CSOs and stakeholders on the development of the plan and document the discussions at these meetings.

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Focus Content in the Next Action Plan

1. Focus on freedom of information.

2. Consider using mobile technology given its widespread coverage and the limited connection to broadband.

3. Ensure analysis, usefulness, and usability of data through open formats and improved data validation processes.

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[1] Patrick Lim, "Good Governance and Anti-Corruption and Open Government Partnership Action Plan Accomplishment Report," Powerpoint presentation during consultation meeting with civil society and government representatives to discuss the Government's Self-Assessment Report, 14 March 2013, Office of the Department of Budget and Management, Manila. https://sites.google.com/a/opengovpartnership.org/philippines-ogp-library/home/document-repository

[2] Philippine Government Action Plan for 2012, 3.

[3] Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), "Asian Media Barometer: The Philippines 2011" (FES, Berlin). http://bit.ly/1aoXZV8

ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

As a complement to the government self-assessment, an independent assessment report is written by well-respected governance researchers, preferably from each OGP participating country.

These experts use a common OGP independent report questionnaire and guidelines,[1] based on a combination of interviews with local OGP stakeholders as well as desk-based analysis. This report is shared with a small International Expert Panel (appointed by the OGP Steering Committee) for peer review to ensure that 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 local 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.

For the Philippine Government, Mr. Patrick Lim served as the Government Focal Point, coordinating with the IRM Researcher. The online sources of some documents include the official websites of the OGP and the government portal, www.gov.ph. As cited earlier, all original documentation received by the IRM researcher for this report is available for download and comment at an online library: https://sites.google.com/a/opengovpartnership.org/philippines-ogp-library/home

The IRM researcher chose stakeholders from various sectors and civil society groups with a variety of policy advocacy activities. Two stakeholder meetings were held in Quezon City, the Philippines. Each meeting was one day long. Formats used included focus group, workshops, and side interviews with individual stakeholders.

The first stakeholder meeting was held on 9 May 2013 for stakeholders deemed to be fully or somewhat aware and engaged in the process (the "usual suspects" meeting). The second was held on 16 May 2013 for stakeholders deemed to have little or no awareness or engagement in the process, as well as mid-level personnel of government agencies that had been designated as implementers of specific OGP action plan commitments.

The three permanent civil society representatives (and/or their alternates) to the PH-OGP Steering Committee attended both meetings. The three representatives were Ms. Maxine Tanya Hamada of the International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov), Ms. Jing Lopez of the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), and Ms. Annie Geron of the Philippine Government Sector Employees Confederation (PSLink) and the Right to Know, Right Now Coalition.

To secure Government's response, the IRM emailed a 14-page "NOTES re PHL Government Self-Assessment Report 2012," to Mr. Patrick Lim, the Government Focal Point for the IRM research. The IRM researcher's questions were emailed to Mr. Lim on 30 May 2013 with a request for him to respond in writing in 10 days, or by 10 June 2013. Mr. Lim requested a two-day extension and asked for more time to gather the documents and documentation on reported public-consultation meetings that Government had conducted with CSOs to discuss the OGP action plan's implementation. Government had emailed only two documents as of 15 June 2013.

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9 May 2013, Workshop 1 conducted by IRM Researcher Annabel's Restaurant, Quezon City, 9 am to 5 pm Attendees

1. Annie S. Geron, President, Philippine Government Sector Employees Confederation (PSLink) and civil society representative, Philippines-OGP civil society Steering Committee Member (Access to Information Cluster)

2. Jing Lopez, Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) and Philippines-OGP civil society Steering Committee Member (Task Force Participatory Local Governance Cluster)

3. Tanya Maxine Hamada, Executive Director, International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov), and Philippines-OGP civil society Steering Committee Member (Budget Advocacy Group Cluster)

4. Atty. Nepomuceno Malaluan, Lead Convenor, Right to Know, Right Now! Coalition

5. Cathy Tiongson, Cooperation and Advocacy Specialist, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)

6. Dondon Parafina, Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP)

7. Omar Q. Jiao, Executive Director, Association of Foundations

8. Peter Perfecto, Executive Director, Makati Business Club

9. Patrick Chua, Program Staff, Makati Business Club

10. Joyce Panares, Reporter and former President, Malacañang Press Corps

11. Noemi Gonzales, Reporter, Malacañang Press Corps

12. Clarissa Militante, Director, Focus on the Global South

13. Jet Palacpac, Staff, Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE NGO)

14. Isagani Serrano, Board Member, SocialWatch Philippines

16 May 2013, Workshop 2 conducted by IRM Researcher Annabel's Restaurant, Quezon City, 9 am to 5 pm Attendees

1. Leah Nimfa S. Valdez, Business Affairs Division, Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)

2. Frances T. Salvador, Business Affairs Division, Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)

3. Ulysses H. dela Cruz, Systems Development and Maintenance Division, Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)

4. Ma. Ditas M. Mendoza, Training and Customer Service Division, Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)

5. Dr. Romulo Emmanuel Miral Jr., Head, Congressional Planning and Budget Research (CPBRD)

6. Medardo G. Dupale, Office for Strategic Management, Civil Service Commission

7. Gerry Alonzo, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)

8. Dr. Francisco Magno, De La Salle University - Jesse M. Robredo Institute of Governance

9. August F. Manalo, Philippine Constructors Association (PCA)

10. Benedict Balderama, Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies, Inc. (PhilSSA)

11. Yuen Abana, Partido ng Manggagawa (PM or Workers' Party)

12. Alnem V. Pretencio, Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA)

13. Joseph Alwyn Alburo, Board Member, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP)

14. Rupert Mangilit, Staff, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP)

15. Kathryn Roja Raymundo, Staff, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR)

16. Ernesto G. Sonido Jr., Blogger and IT specialist, Baratillo Pamphlet

17. Elizabeth P. Pilorin, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)

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Discussion Guide for Workshops held 9 and 16 May 2013, conducted by IRM Researcher

All the participants were given a reading kit that included:

- The Philippine Government's Self-Assessment Report, March 2013

- The Philippine Government's OGP Commitment for 2012, submitted in September 2011 to the OGP Steering Committee

- Frequently Asked Questions about the IRM (from OGP website)

- The OGP Public Consultations Guidelines (from OGP website)

- The OGP Guidelines for Preparation of the Country Self-Assessment Report (from OGP website)

- The Plan of the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Cluster of the Cabinet of the Philippine Government

- PowerPoint handout on the Status of Implementation of its OGP commitments, distributed by the Philippine Government at its 14 March 2013 Consultation with Civil Society representatives

The IRM Researcher introduced the OGP Process and the IRM Research, and explained selection of participants.

Next, there was discussion of 10 to 15 minutes per commitment. All participants could ask questions (context, background), seek clarification on commitment (what exactly was promised?), and express themselves: (the meaning/value of commitment to stakeholders?)

Then, the stakeholders rated progress in implementation: "Please write comments on separate note cards. Reference the OGP Self-Assessment Report Guidelines below as a rating guide.

Commitment was:

1 = Not Met

2 = Withdrawn

3 = In Progress

4 = Partially Fulfilled

5 = Fulfilled

6 = No basis to rate (Note: this rating was added on request of the participants who said they had little or no basis to rate the status of implementation of some commitments)

ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM

The IRM is a key means by which government, civil society, and the private sector can track government development and implementation of OGP action plans on a bi-annual basis. The design of research and quality control of such reports is carried out by the International Experts' Panel, comprised of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

The current membership of the International Experts' Panel is:

- Yamini Ayar

- Debbie Budlender

- Jonathan Fox

- Rosemary McGee

- Gerardo Munck

A small staff based in Washington, DC shepherds reports through the IRM process in close coordination with the researcher. Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the staff at irm@opengovpartnership.org

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[1] Full research guidance can be found at http://bit.ly/120SROu

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