

**MAKING OGP
WORK FOR
ADVOCATES
AROUND THE
WORLD:**
A SNAPSHOT
OF CIVIL
SOCIETY
SUPPORT





"Over the past year, more and more African governments have embraced the OGP platform. More importantly the quality of dialogue and commitments for transparency has become even stronger. As CSOs we feel more connected and learn from each other irrespective of the countries we work in. What is needed now is to support civil society to effectively engage and monitor implementation of commitments. There is also great value in sharing knowledge and experiences. AFIC and the CSC played an important role in this by organizing video conferences and by organizing support missions to new member countries to get them up-to-speed and keep them running."

Marcos Mendiburu, World Bank Institute

"The CSC team is a critical filter to understand what is going on with OGP and to keep us very busy folks up-to-date. It is a two-way information bridge, clarifying what is working and what is not working at country level in terms of adequate civil society participation as well as at the regional and global level of the initiative. The team has always been open to a real and honest dialogue on OGP. Your independence brings credibility with the community, as you focus on making it work from the ground up by offering hands-on support. We've needed the civil society coordination team, you've been important to us in understanding what is going on, to communicate critical key messages, to identify key opportunities and challenges. That role should be even more independent, not less independent.

You need country and regional level support to know what is going on on the ground and to help civil society ensure participation that works. If you ask me, it would therefore be really worthwhile to have more 'Emilene's' (regional coordinators) in the other regions."

Zoe Reiter, Transparency International

CSC HELPS DRIVE OPEN GOVERNMENT RESULTS AROUND THE WORLD

Since 2012, the in-depth, in-country work of the Civil Society Coordination (CSC) team of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) has helped realize government transparency objectives around the world. Through interventions large and small, CSC has helped national civil society achieve stunning results utilizing its three main work areas: making OGP work at the country level; providing easy access to OGP experiences and basics; and engaging the community in co-ownership that drives OGP principles.

CSC's Three Work Areas

Making OGP work at the country level.

CSC uses the design, implementation and monitoring resources of OGP to ensure that national civil society actors in selected countries are well-positioned to achieve their open government objectives. The CSC coordinator's team proactively provides tailored support, access to OGP knowledge and networks, and advice for developing tactics and strategy.

Providing easy access to OGP experiences and basics.

CSC provides timely, easily shared and readily available information to the civil society community so that it can effectively partner with government and achieve its open government objectives.

Engaging the community in co-ownership that drives OGP principles.

CSC works with the broader civil society community to ensure that its key interests are reflected in international OGP governance, positions and events. We facilitate civil society participation in key OGP events and activities, and cultivate its vibrant interaction with members of the Steering Committee.

ZOOMING IN ON CSC ACTIVITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

ACTIVITIES	COUNTRIES ASSISTED
<p>Broker initial contact and meetings between civil society and government at the national level, possibly via Mexico City or Brussels.</p>	<p>Costa Rica</p>
<p>Encourage international actors to engage government or civil society when a program needs additional support to advance.</p>	<p>Ghana</p>
<p>Provide occasional seed funding to get civil society organized or to develop an outreach or strategy meeting.</p>	<p>UK Uruguay</p>
<p>Inspire and spur action by sharing experiences from other countries via consultation, ongoing dialogue platform and, when needed, bring relevant civil society actors to countries where their expertise can help.</p>	<p>Indonesia Argentina</p>
<p>Work with local CS actors to develop advocacy strategies, such as defining asks and priorities, and assist them with internal organization, roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Paraguay Argentina Uruguay</p>
<p>Utilize international experience to advocate for local priorities – such as self-selection of civil society organization (CSO) leaders and creation of permanent dialogue mechanisms – in meetings with local government.</p>	<p>Ghana Argentina Paraguay Uruguay Dominican Republic</p>
<p>Connect civil society to funders and to international technical assistance providers, such as OGP multilateral partners.</p>	<p>Sierra Leone</p>
<p>Provide neutral facilitation to the national civil society process, for instance by participating as a facilitator/expert in the consultation.</p>	<p>Dominican Republic</p>
<p>Participate in opportunities to raise OGP’s profile, explain OGP basics, share international experiences and advance additional requests from civil society for AP launches, outreach meetings, media events and the like.</p>	<p>Ghana Kosovo Romania</p>
<p>Deliver an international platform for stories from the national level, sharing experiences and supporting advocacy via the OGP Hub, OGP blog, newsletter and mailing lists.</p>	<p>Hungary Ireland</p>
<p>Work closely with civil society in chair countries to share experiences and develop strategies to make the most of the chairmanship term and help them take a leading role in the civil society community.</p>	<p>Indonesia UK Mexico</p>
<p>Share OGP information from a civil society perspective via the OGP Hub: Country Case Studies and the additional guidance for the national OGP process</p>	<p>Worldwide</p>

SUCCESS WITH COUNTRY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

Credit for the open government success stories that follow belongs primarily to those in each country's national civil society, who worked tirelessly toward more official transparency. In each country, however, CSC members brought their expertise and OGP resources to help civil society navigate the process with the tools that best addressed their needs.

ARGENTINA

BRIDGING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT



CHALLENGE

Dialogue between transparency and accountability civil society organizations (CSOs) and the administration was non-existent. CSOs were not adequately represented during creation of the first national action plan (NAP), and their relationship with government points of contact (POCs) was strained. Government officials did not have clear guidance on the OGP co-creation process, nor did they have examples of best practices that demonstrate the benefits of true partnership with civil society. For its part, civil society was sceptical about OGP's eligibility criteria, which damaged its credibility.



CSC INTERVENTION

Civil Society Steering Committee member Alejandro González and the CSC's Regional Coordinator for Latin America went to Argentina in September 2013 to participate in a daylong civil society strategy meeting with leading CSOs and the government POC (Jefatura de Gabinete). Close follow-up to the local process included facilitating an exchange with the ministerial POC and CSO representatives in London, where both parties agreed on common ground to move forward. CSC has since maintained frequent communications with both civil society and the government.



RESULTS

CSC answered questions about eligibility criteria and explained its rationale and limitations. It also helped civil society strategize on meeting key demands for participation in OGP, including creation of a dedicated space for OGP dialogue within the Jefatura de Gabinete, which was granted after the London Summit. CSC also mediated a dialogue between government and civil society representatives in Buenos Aires that led to an open discussion about each other's positions and expectations regarding the OGP national process.

A change in the ministry, however, has necessitated new talks with officials, which began in March. Nevertheless, the process has helped CSOs realize that OGP offers a space to begin a dialogue with the current administration.



FEEDBACK

"During 2013, the CSC supported us actively on OGP. I met Emilene [Martinez] in a public event and since that moment we've been in touch exchanging ideas on the advances and difficulties of the Argentinean OGP process. We organized a strategy meeting with the national CSO coalition working on OGP, in which Emilene and Alejandro González participated, discussing and formulating a common strategy on open government. We took the opportunity to also organize a meeting with the government agency in charge of OGP directly after, in which we managed to restate our stake and re-emphasize the importance of CSO participation in the OGP process."
Maria Rosario Pavese, Poder Ciudadano

COSTA RICA

BECOMING A REGIONAL LEADER



CHALLENGE

Starting in November 2012, it was clear that although they were enthusiastic, government officials lacked guidance on the basics of civil society involvement in OGP's co-creation process. At the same time, civil society did not have the key information it needed, such as government plans or POC information.



CSC INTERVENTION

CSC made three in-country visits, including one in February 2013 where it partnered with the Networking Mechanism to sponsor Mexican and Peruvian civil society and government representatives who participated in strategy sessions with their Costa Rican peers. Throughout the process, CSC has provided close follow-up and assistance.



RESULTS

The OGP process in Costa Rica completely turned around after CSC involvement. Its permanent dialogue mechanism – based on the Peruvian and Mexican experiences – is a model for the region. Government created an amendment to the NAP that includes civil society participation, and Costa Rica will host the Americas Regional meeting in November 2014.



FEEDBACK

"Support from OGP's Civil Society Coordination has been paramount in the process of articulating this sector in Costa Rica by facilitating meeting spaces with government and other stakeholders... and providing mediation between different actors. Also through contact with Emilene Martinez, we managed to solve doubts and clarify required issues to advance the local process...."

Susana Soto, Red-C

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

MAKING A COMMITMENT TO OPEN GOVERNMENT



CHALLENGE

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) report did not regard consultation for the first NAP as a proper OGP process, because it was part of another local consultation process led by the Dirección General de Ética e Integridad Gubernamental (DIGEIG). Few civil society actors, including the media, were aware of the country's commitment to open government, or of their own rights and responsibilities in the process.



CSC INTERVENTION

The regional CSC attended a public event that ended with the first consultation meeting between government and civil society and the installation of thematic working groups. CSC supported an outreach strategy to local media outlets to promote the IRM report and OGP awareness. Strategy meetings were held with the lead CSO, Participación Ciudadana, and with wider civil society and government officials.



RESULTS

DIGEIG made public commitments to create a permanent dialogue mechanism, in which civil society elects its own representatives, and to involve other ministries in this body. Moreover, DIGEIG also committed to engage in a co-creation process with civil society following a thematic approach inspired by the Mexican experience. It also committed to document and to lead the process. CSC helped civil society strategize on key asks, needs and challenges, including actively lobbying on behalf of civil society to ensure OGP best practices/guidance were being taken into account by the government POC. In addition, the OGP and IRM reports were placed in the news agenda surrounding the public consultation event.



FEEDBACK

"The support and coordination of the CSC in [the] person of Emilene Martinez has been of great value to us, witnessing the permanent exchange of information about best open government practices and the role of civil society herein. We've been assisted in the elaboration process of the second National Action Plan, specifically in ensuring the quality hereof, and in checking upon the adoption of commitments according to OGP principles. Moreover, Emilene's support has provided us the opportunity to exchange ideas with other CSOs in the region, and with government actors."

Carlos Pimentel, Participación Ciudadana

INDONESIA

COORDINATING BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS



CHALLENGE

One of the main challenges in Indonesia was a limited coordination and connection among national CSOs. Furthermore, development of the first NAP involved a limited range of stakeholders, with consultation only during some stages of the process. The second NAP would benefit from a more inclusive consultation process with a broader range of stakeholders throughout its development.



CSC INTERVENTION

CSC facilitated connections between the CSOs themselves, and between CSOs and the government. CSC also shared skills for how to better engage with government during the OGP process.

In June 2013, CSC organized a peer learning event in London with key civil society players from current and former OGP co-chairs. The meeting gave civil society the opportunity to learn from their peers' experiences and to share ideas. A similar event for Indonesian civil society was held in Jakarta in early 2014, to give it the opportunity to learn from the U.K. CSOs' OGP co-chair experience.

During the first quarter of 2014, CSC has been collaborating intensively with an Indonesian CSO coalition on preparing the Asia Pacific Regional Conference.



RESULTS

A more aligned, coordinated and equipped network of Indonesian CSOs is now better able to successfully engage with government, and to formulate an ambitious civil society agenda for both the second Indonesian NAP and the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting.



FEEDBACK

"OGP is still quite new for civil society in Indonesia. Paul Maassen has been very helpful as a partner for discussion and consultation in almost every aspect of OGP. Although some of the CSOs have been in the core team since 2012, the persons within those CSOs constantly change. The Civil Society Coordination Team has been helping the Indonesian CSOs in providing input and directions on maintaining the partnership in the spirit of true open government. Also, they have been helpful in providing knowledge on strategy and good practices for Indonesian CSOs to advance a civil society agenda in the Indonesian OGP process."

Ilham Saenong, TI Indonesia

"Indonesia has a strong existing civil society movement on the ground. One of the challenges of implementing the OGP is to link OGP values to existing good governance principles promoted from within Indonesian civil society. At the same time, the OGP movement must be linked to the national interest in order to reach out to the right actors who could and should benefit from OGP. The Civil Society Coordinator has been helpful to us in many ways, particularly in the formation of strategies for Action Plan development, through sharing knowledge on strategies undertaken by other OGP Country members. The CSC has also assisted in preparations for the OGP Asia Pacific regional meeting; connecting us to the right people nationally and globally; and sharing with us the skills (tricks and tips) required to better engage with the government and fellow CSOs in the country."

Nanda Sihombing, Pattiro

IRELAND

CAMPAIGNING FOR MEMBERSHIP SUCCESS



CHALLENGE

After Ireland officially joined OGP in May 2013 after some solid civil society campaigning, the next hurdle was to get OGP basics in place. This included developing a proper consultation process, building the structure for civil society to work together, and establishing a permanent dialogue with government. A diverse group of civil society had to be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to make membership a success.



CSC INTERVENTION

Once the campaign for Ireland to join was successful, CSC switched its focus to getting the basics in place. This included providing continuous coaching on OGP membership and getting started on the first NAP. To do this, CSC provided basic information, shared experiences, advice on how to strategically engage with the government, and generally made the case for OGP membership to civil society and government.



RESULTS

The establishment of structures and co-creation of an NAP have recently been completed. Civil society organized itself through an online platform (ogpireland.ie) and Dgroups mailing list. A dialogue mechanism between civil society and government is now in place, although challenges remain among the different interests and approaches of civil society and in working with the government – especially regarding the FOI law and fees, although some success has been seen there.

Ireland hosted the 2014 Europe Regional Meeting, which was organized by Irish government and civil society.



FEEDBACK

“Personally, I have no doubt that the CSC’s continuous support has been crucial to the Irish progress towards more open government. More specifically, the civil society coordination team helped us to learn from other countries. For example, they helped us to establish communication channels with governments (i.e. U.K. Cabinet Office, U.S. State Department, the Croatian government); and to accommodate peer learning with CSOs and active citizens from other countries (i.e. Moldova, Hungary, Germany). Next to that, we have been very grateful for plenty of social media support and thoughtful advice and guidance in our modest civic endeavours.”

Denis Parfenov, OKF Ireland



"Paul was very helpful in providing me and other CSOs in Serbia with contacts and information about OGP. He was the link between the OGP Secretary [of the government] and us. Thanks to him we found out what the Serbian government actually sent to OGP.

Thanks to Paul we learned about positive and negative experiences of the OGP process in other countries, for example the positive experiences with open data in the U.S. and U.K., and the negative experiences of some other countries on open data related commitments. Based on these cases, we talked about the Serbian Action Plan, and he provided us with good comments on which steps to take in defining [open data related] commitments."

Ivan Grujic, Serbia



"In our work of advocating for open data and the implementation of OGP commitments, the OGP secretariat and the Civil Society Coordinator in particular were of great help to us.

The CSC facilitated the sharing of best practices among us, and put us in contact with other NGOs and peers working on the same issues. Next to that, the regular updates from the CSC on the latest activities and developments around OGP informed our position and allowed us to adjust strategies. The provision of tools to monitor the development and implementation of the national action plan by the CSC has been really valuable, as they encourage and support our work, and assure we are not 'fighting windmills'. Moreover, the facilitation and organization of regional OGP meetings showed us the connection to and support of the international community, which boosted our work. Lastly, the participation of the CSC in national events also encouraged the serious uptake of OGP by public officials at various levels."

Andra Bucur, Soros Romania



"Getting OGP going in Azerbaijan is extremely challenging. Civic space is being challenged, and getting independent engagement of self-selected civil society is very difficult. Ever since I met Paul in Brazil [April 2012], we have been supported by his professional view and recommendations. At various open government related meetings, we exchanged ideas on the challenges and OGP related activities that we undertake in Azerbaijan, and we sketched a strategy on the way forward together. When visiting Azerbaijan late 2012, he shared his insights and recommendations with our local group of OGP activists and colleagues. The CSC team is a great bridge between local demands and realities and the OGP's activities."

*Galib Abbaszade,
National Budget Group/Economic Research Centre Azerbaijan*



"Over the past year, more and more African governments have embraced the OGP platform. More importantly the quality of dialogue and commitments for transparency has become even stronger. As CSOs we feel more connected and learn from each other irrespective of the countries we work in. What is needed now is to support civil society to effectively engage and monitor implementation of commitments. There is also great value in sharing knowledge and experiences. AFIC and the CSC played an important role in this by organizing video conferences and by organizing support missions to new member countries to get them up-to-speed and keep them running."

*Gilbert Sendugwa,
African Freedom of Information Centre*

MEXICO

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY



CHALLENGE

CSOs participating in the national process needed a shared vision and strategy to take advantage of their country's position as co-chair/chair to position concrete advocacy items.



CSC INTERVENTION

CSC organized a July 2013 peer-exchange meeting in London with participants from past, current and future chair countries, including Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico the U.K. and the U.S.



RESULTS

Civil society from Mexico and Indonesia learned from civil society experiences in other countries and set priorities for their year as OGP co-chairs. Mexican civil society also successfully established priorities for its international OGP role, including promoting three key topics: true partnership between government and civil society; open parliament; and the inclusion of sub-national level. Priorities were presented to the government and so far have been accepted as their own.



FEEDBACK

"Most organizations have limited human and financial resources, so it is difficult for us to monitor the processes in other countries and be aware of relevant dates regarding OGP. In this regard, the independent Civil Society Coordination was essential to have a global and regional perspective on OGP processes, and to identify possible areas of collaboration between organizations and countries. The webinars and newsletters are useful tools that promote the exchange of experiences and lessons learned, but beyond these tools, the closeness and availability of Emilene has been fundamental to answer questions, conduct virtual meetings, reflect together on the challenges of OGP and to develop innovative proposals."

Haydeé Pérez, Fundar

PARAGUAY

CREATING A PERMANENT DIALOGUE



CHALLENGE

The ministry in charge of OGP, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación (STP), had been working on unrelated priorities. When it recently re-engaged in OGP, it was not aware of best practices for co-creation and civil society involvement. Civil society had no clear government POC and there were doubts about the consultation process for the second NAP. Consultation for the first NAP was rushed and CSOs felt that their participation was minimal, with no clear opportunity for input. CSOs were interested in the topic but lacked a common strategy. CSC had an open channel of communication with actors in the government, civil society and the international community (USAID and the U.S. Embassy).



CSC INTERVENTION

The regional CSC coordinator visited Paraguay to participate in public events, including IRM launch and meeting with a representative from the Organization of American States, and in private strategy meetings with government officials, CSOs and the international community. She also facilitated a videoconference with Mexican civil society representatives during a public event.



RESULTS

STP committed to create a permanent dialogue mechanism where civil society elects its own representatives and to involve other government areas, including the well-respected ICT ministry. STP also committed to engage in a co-creation process with civil society following a thematic approach inspired by the Mexican experience.

The regional CSC coordinator also helped civil society strategize on key asks, needs and challenges including lobbying for civil society to ensure that OGP best practices/guidance are being taken into account by the government POC.



FEEDBACK

"The support of the regional coordinator has been fundamental to rally civil society organizations around the design of the second action plan and ensure that we as citizens deliver our demands to the government in a constructive and efficient way. This time, those of us who want to be part and contribute to the creation of new commitments towards a more open government are better informed and prepared thanks to the guidance of Emilene [Martinez]."

Jazmín Acuña, TEDIC

UNITED KINGDOM

ENCOURAGING AMBITION AND CO-CREATION



CHALLENGE

In 2013, U.K. civil society was faced with the challenge of ensuring that the second NAP and the U.K.'s chairmanship were both ambitious and co-created with civil society. The London Summit, in particular, needed engagement from U.K. and international civil society to ensure that it inspired action. U.K. civil society was also keen to use the profile of the Summit to leverage strong and ambitious commitments for the U.K.'s NAP.



CSC INTERVENTION

CSC liaised with and financially supported the coordinator of Involve, the U.K. CSO network, to coordinate civil society for the NAP, and to co-organize the London Summit.

CSC helped Involve disseminate [lessons from the U.K. NAP process](#) to other OGP countries. CSC and Involve jointly designed and ran the program for Civil Society Day, which relied heavily upon the CSC's international networks and knowledge.



RESULTS

The U.K. developed a strong second NAP, covering a breadth of open government issues. The plan included a number of ambitious commitments campaigned for by civil society, including an open register of beneficial ownership. A successful and vibrant CSO Day was held prior to the London Summit, which saw significant involvement from international civil society and strong civil society representation in plenary sessions and on panels. Lessons from the London Summit have been shared with other countries.



FEEDBACK

"Various strategic meetings were held with key partners and government representatives to co-create the OGP Summit and ensure a civil society agenda would be well integrated. Access to political intelligence through the CSC about the international OGP process and the progress of other OGP countries helped us to advocate on behalf of international civil society and support the development of the U.K.'s NAP."

Tim Hughes, Involve

URUGUAY

BECOMING A REGIONAL LEADER



CHALLENGE

The government appointed CSOs to participate in the OGP process, despite their lack of knowledge about OGP basics and the engagement of only three non-government organizations. Government was not aware of the need for its participation in the OGP process.



CSC INTERVENTION

In September 2013, CSC Regional Coordinator and CS Steering Committee Member Alejandro González visited the country to participate in a civil society outreach event and in a strategy meeting with leading CSOs and the government POC, AGESIC. During close follow-up to the local process, CSC has helped craft a strategy for the country's second NAP. Some seed funding was provided in early 2014 to support and professionalize the Uruguayan civil society network and for engagement in the national OGP process.



RESULTS

The country visit sparked the creation of a wider civil society coalition that clearly identified key needs, including asking the government to create a permanent dialogue mechanism in which civil society could elect its own representatives. The meeting with AGESIC resulted in a commitment to open up participation, allowing civil society to elect its own representatives who would co-own the OGP process alongside the government.

The strategy building session with civil society resulted in the adoption of a thematic action plan inspired by the Mexican experience. Seed funding supports the professional engagement of civil society in the national OGP process.



FEEDBACK

"One of the problems that led to the restriction of civil society's participation in the process was the prior existence of an 'Open Government Working Group' created by an agency of the Executive, which had specifically invited two organizations to participate in it. After the meetings held by Emilene and Alejandro, their advocacy efforts led to the opening of those two spaces for civil society representatives to elect themselves.

The strategy workshop allowed us to know more about how the OGP works and allowed actors from government and civil society to know OGP tools and general information.

The financial support could impact professionalization in the process at the civil society level that works on open government. This support will help generate equal conditions between government and civil society representatives working on OGP.

The input regarding knowledge and experiences in the region, facilitated by the CSC generated fundamental inputs to plan the advocacy efforts of the Open Government Network. It was fundamental to present an alternate work methodology to the Open Government Working Group for the organization of thematic workshops and helped identify core topics for negotiation with the government to demand basic conditions for a participative process."

Mariana Mas, DATA Uruguay

FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA

Civil society networks and organizations throughout Latin America often questioned national and international OGP processes. They were concerned that:

- The OGP structure (CSC, SC, Support Unit) did not address their concerns and questions (e.g. civil society participation in OGP meetings)
- Key information was not available in Spanish
- No clear guidelines were available regarding civil society participation in local processes
- Eligibility criteria and SC representation were questionable
- There was a lack of regional strategies based on shared challenges. Latin America is the first region to have a dedicated OGP civil society coordinator.

To address these issues, the CSC Regional Coordinator for Latin America provided key OGP information in Spanish (via the OGP Hub, mailings, webinars) and opened a channel of communication to address the challenges presented by the Latin American community.

CSC became more transparent about processes, such as the rotation of SC members and participation in the London Summit, which built trust within the community.

Frequent travel to the region allowed CSC to work with civil society on its concerns and help it strategize on how to use OGP as an advocacy tool. The convening of a multi-actor event dedicated to Latin America before the OGP London Summit (in active partnership with the London School of Economics and the World Bank Institute) helped to delineate common goals and strategies for the region.

As a result of CSC intervention in Latin America:

- Successful co-creation processes were established in Costa Rica and Colombia – and discussions are underway in Uruguay, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic.
- Peer-exchanges throughout the region were facilitated.
- Strategic partnerships with multilaterals and donor communities were started to strengthen civil society participation in OGP, including travel support for meetings and events (OSF, Hewlett, Omidyar).
- Civil society input is considered in the design of OGP events and webinars.
- OAS is a partner in the Dominican Republic and Paraguay.
- Specific projects with regional networks were started, including TI Americas and Juntos.



**THE OGP CIVIL
SOCIETY HUB**

WWW.OGPHUB.ORG