

DESIGNING
AND MANAGING
AN OGP MULTISTAKEHOLDER
FORUM

A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK WITH GUIDANCE AND IDEAS

Open
Government
Partnership



The work in this publication is based on research commissioned by the OGP Support Unit. The purpose of the commissioned research was to:

- Capture the rich experiences in OGP countries with different models of permanent dialogue and collaboration.
- Create a practical, action oriented handbook with ideas and guidance for the OGP community – both within government and civil society.

Ernesto Velasco-Sánchez developed a methodology and conducted the research independently of OGP. All findings in this report emanate from his efforts and should be understood as third party recommendations to the OGP community.

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Collaboration is the cornerstone

The participation of both civil society and government is essential to the success of the Open Government Partnership. Their collaboration is vital at the international level and within each participating country. That is why OGP participants commit to developing their National Action Plans through a multistakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society.

OGP's consultation requirements (see next box) ask countries to *"identify an existing or new forum to enable regular multistakeholder consultation on OGP implementation."* The majority of OGP countries by now fulfill this requirement. This document shows the advantages of having a Multistakeholder Forum (or simply Forum) – a structured environment designed to maximize participation and cooperation between government and civil society by bringing relevant partners into the discussion and ensuring that all voices are heard.

A Forum is a cornerstone of each country's successful participation in OGP and is crucial to delivering collaborative open government reform. However, no two Forums are identical – the character of each nation's government and civil society participants will influence the model they design and the practices they adopt for their open government work.

Addendum C of the Open Government Partnership's **Articles of Governance** states that OGP participants commit to developing their country action plans through a multistakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society. Taking account of relevant national laws and policies, OGP participants agree to develop their country commitments according to the following principles:

CONSULTATION DURING DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

- **Availability of timeline:** Countries are to make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at a minimum) prior to the consultation.
- **Adequate notice:** Countries are to consult the population with sufficient forewarning.
- **Awareness-raising:** Countries are to undertake OGP awareness-raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation.
- **Multiple channels:** Countries are to consult through a variety of mechanisms – including online and through in-person meetings – to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage.

- **Breadth of consultation:** Countries are to consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector, and to seek out a diverse range of views.
- **Documentation and feedback:** Countries are to make available online a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions.

CONSULTATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

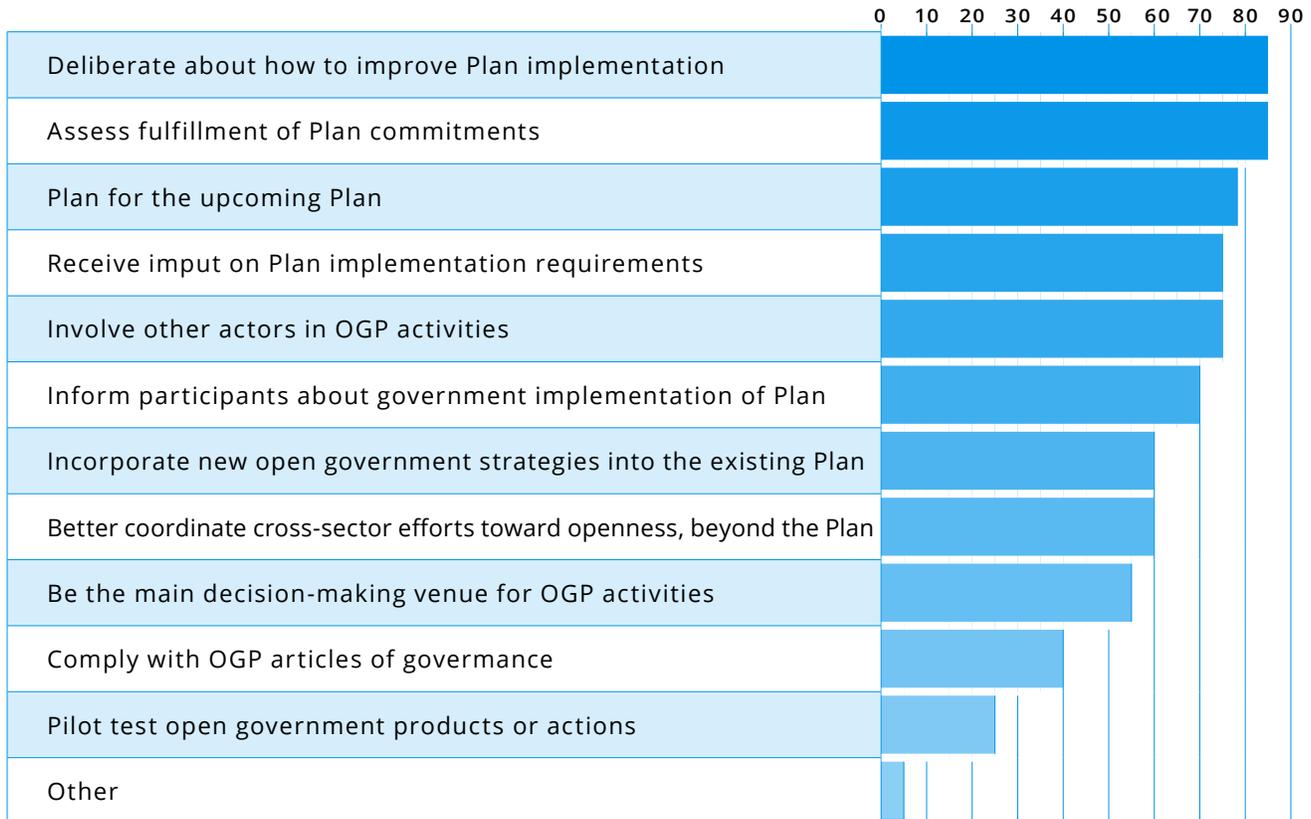
- **Consultation during implementation:** Countries are to identify an existing or new forum to enable regular multistakeholder consultation on OGP implementation.

Furthermore, the **OGP Guidance Note** gives suggestions for best practices and outlines what is required in a consultation Forum for participation in OGP. Source: Open Government Partnership, OGP Consultation During Implementation Guidance Note, available at [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP_Con_dur_imp%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP_Con_dur_imp%20(1).pdf)



A survey of points of contact, members of civil society organizations (CSOs) and Independent Reporting Mechanism’s (IRM) researchers conducted by the OGP Support Unit found that most Forums focus on monitoring and improving National Action Plan commitments. As shown in the table below, almost half of respondents saw the Forum as a way to integrate others into OGP activities and promote open government policy beyond the Plan.

OGP Survey: Main Functions of the Multistakeholder Forum



Source: OGP Support Unit Survey on Multistakeholder Forums, conducted in August 2015, n=33, more than one option could be selected.

This handbook is intended to help government and civil society actors participating in national OGP processes to meet the Partnership’s guidelines. Moreover, it aims to support them in moving beyond the minimal requirements and develop fuller and more ambitious approaches to permanent government–civil society dialogue. It draws on the experiences of OGP participants to assist actors in refining existing mechanisms and to aid new actors to create and manage their own Forums. Each country’s stakeholders should consider their own situation and which aspects of different models would work best for them, as well as whether they would need to make use of other means in order to develop a successful permanent dialogue mechanism.

There are three phases in the Forum life cycle:

- Creation of the Forum and participant recruitment
- Managing the ongoing operations of the Forum
- Participation in the development of the National Action Plan (or Plan)

Phase One: Creation of the Forum

Preparation and planning are essential to avoid early disappointments in the creation of the Forum. Clearly-stated activities, information and political support should be arranged from the start. Early agreement on a Forum's goals, its resources, its general characteristics, and the process for its creation will help balance the expectations of different actors with what can actually be achieved.

To help in the creation and operation of a Forum:

- Ensure sufficient political support.
- Mobilize and involve leadership inside and outside government.
- Review the existing legal framework.
- Agree on the basic features or characteristics of the Forum.
- Establish a calendar for the creation for the Forum.

Careful consideration of who will be at the table representing government, civil society organizations and other interested parties will help in determining who should be part of the endeavor from the start. Strong leaders will move the process forward toward setting up the Forum while considering feedback from all sides. Design of the Forum must be an effort of co-creation between government and civil society. Forum participants can look at case studies and discuss the approaches taken by others to select the practices that will work for them and their country.

The Forum can be established by:

- Administrative decision, such as an executive decree.
- Creation of new laws or building on existing legislation.
- Formal or informal agreements.

There is no required framework for setting up the Forum, but general guidelines suggest rules for naming representatives, some means of public accountability, and collaboration and shared responsibilities by government and civil society.

Once participants are identified, it is generally a good idea to provide an overview of the Open Government Partnership's goals and operations to ensure there is a common understanding of what open government means and how to achieve it within the OGP framework.

Partners should be encouraged to operate as co-creators of the Forum and work together for the open government agenda. This can be challenging where relations have been less cordial. There also needs to be room for the addition of new partners and the rotation of existing partners into new roles.





Phase Two: Managing the Forum

Once the Forum is established, participants must ensure its work continues in a steady and sustained fashion. This requires commitment and communication from all parties.

Effective communications should consider the needs of the recipient, both in relation to content and the means to receive it. Communication surveys can be utilized at the outset to determine the best way to connect with participants, and the surveys can be used to regularly assess information systems in order to make adjustments when necessary.

Forum meetings must be frequent enough that their effectiveness does not wane between sessions, but not so frequent that there is insufficient time to see measurable gains. Of course in periods of intense activities – such as during the drafting of the National Action Plan – meetings will by necessity be more frequent.

Meetings must also be accountable to the public by providing accessible minutes, agendas and advance notice of dates and venues.

The Forum can function primarily as a space for decision-making or for consultation, or a combination of the two, although most countries opt for one or the other. The rules for making decisions – consensus rule, majority rule or qualified majority rule – must be established in advance, as well as determining what constitutes a quorum in order to make decisions binding.

Throughout the process, communication among participants is crucial, as is communication with external stakeholders and those with an interest (though not necessarily a role) in open government policy development. Much like intra-Forum communication, effective information strategies consider both the audience's needs

and how it receives news. In addition, meetings, working groups and other opportunities outside traditional communications tools can be effective ways to include other interested parties in the Forum process.

The Forum must be firmly established, but also flexible enough to adapt to changes in government and civil society. To be prepared for change, Forum members can:

- Document the Forum meetings and other activities.
- Appoint a co-chair and member's substitutes in case of absence.
- Establish a rotation policy that develops skills among all participants.
- Adopt a succession plan for the chair, co-chair and technical secretariat.
- Prepare induction materials for newcomers.
- Establish multiple links with high- and mid-level officials that allow an easier flow of information in relation to Plan implementation.
- Make agreements for continuing dialogue in case of external political crisis.

Alongside the hard work of establishing the Forum, it is important to make sure that there is a continuous commitment to learning and improvement. This can be achieved by assessing Forum activities as regularly as every six months. Additionally, to be in accordance with OGP principles, the Forum has to be accountable to the public for its activities, the resources allocated to it and the results obtained.





Phase Three:

Participation in development of a National Action Plan

Once the Forum is up and running, members' work turns to their role in the two-year cycle of the National Action Plan. As the Plan comes together, Forum members continue to promote government-civil society dialogue for greater public engagement.

As the Forum designs its consultation methodology for the Plan, its members should ensure the public is made aware with advance notice of the process and that a wide range of perspectives is

sought. This can include diversity in both regions and viewpoints.

The Forum also plays an important role in monitoring Plan implementation. This can include ensuring there is sufficient documentation, that relevant capabilities are recognized, and that there are sufficient resources, monitoring and timely feedback. Forum members also can serve as facilitators, connecting OGP researchers with key participants during the reporting process.

Going beyond the Plan:

Promoting Open Government policies and principles

The challenges to openness in each country can be numerous, complex and long-standing. They may require multiple interventions over a long time. OGP National Action Plans cannot be expected to resolve all the challenges and their underlying causes. Action Plans operate on a short time frame, with limited resources, and the information and technologies at its disposal are sometimes imperfect or unreliable.

Because of this, building open government policy cannot be confined to the OGP Plans. More actors are pushing openness initiatives, more public sector institutions are showing interest

(e.g. the legislative and judicial branches) and new technological solutions are being developed every day. The Forum's representatives have to be aware of this and act proactively to go beyond the OGP process. They should promote openness in innovative ways in order to support initiatives that work in parallel to the Plan and take advantage of peer learning opportunities within the country and internationally.

Openness requires contributions from diverse sources and the sustained mobilization of all kinds of social resources – all aimed at making a difference in people's lives.





How to develop a Multistakeholder Forum

In this chapter you will learn:

- How to strategize during the planning stages of Forum establishment
- How to identify and engage different stakeholders
- How to establish a Forum via several mechanisms, such as administrative decisions or other agreements
- How to map and define roles and responsibilities of Forum participants
- How to enroll new members from civil society and government and manage rotation of Forum members

PLANNING STAGE

Creating a Multistakeholder Forum is a demanding task for government and civil society actors that requires careful planning to avoid early obstructions and disappointments. Start by planning how the Forum is to be established. Be clear about the different activities, and have the necessary information, resources and political backup required. Be prepared.

The challenge is to balance and manage the open government expectations of different actors with the capabilities (resources, skills, political leadership, etc.) that can realistically be mobilized.

The following steps will help plan the creation and operation of the Forum:

- Make sure you have sufficient political support.
- Mobilize and involve leadership inside and outside government.
- Review the existing legal framework.
- Agree on the basic features or characteristics of the Forum.
- Establish a calendar of creation for the Forum.

Government officials frequently worry about establishing a Multistakeholder Forum. This is particularly true where there have not been sustained efforts to involve external stakeholders in policy making, where the culture has not included collaboration between government and civil society, and where there have been conflicts between public officials and social movement leaders.

It is essential that key stakeholders (government officials, civil society and influential organizations) agree on a Forum's goals, its general characteristics,



its creation process, and the resources that will be required to carry it out. Early agreement can help prevent future problems.

It is useful to compile a list of the main government decision-makers and other external actors who will have to be on board to increase the chance of success. To help identify them, ask:

- Who is directly responsible for making the decisions crucial to assuring the effective creation and functioning of the Forum?
- Who are key or influential people in both government and civil society who are committed to OGP values?
- Do the legal or administrative frameworks define statutory consultees?
- Which individuals and organizations will be affected by decisions relating to the creation of the Forum?
- Who runs the organizations that have interests relevant to open government initiatives?
- Who can obstruct the establishment and functioning of the Forum if not involved?
- Who has been involved in previous open government dialogues between government and civil society?
- Who has not been part of earlier open government dialogues but should now be involved?

Because this list can be very long, a table such as the one below can be useful in identifying and organizing relevant actors. The data used below, however, is for illustration only and based on no specific country. Each country's Forum stakeholders will vary.

Identifying key stakeholders to involve

STAKEHOLDER	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES (HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW)	AUTHORIZES?	HOLDS ACCOUNTABLE?	POSITION ON FORUM (FOR, AGAINST, NEUTRAL)
G O V E R N M E N T					
Secretary of the Cabinet	Coordinates Cabinet, has conducted policy development	High	Yes	Yes	For
Minister for Civil Society Relations	Responsible for government-CSO relations	Medium	Yes	No	Neutral
Local Communities Agency	Responsible for local government and relations with grassroots movements	Low	No	No	Against
C I V I L S O C I E T Y					
Social Forum for Civil Rights	Biggest CSO in the country specializing in human rights	Medium	No	Yes	For
National Business Chamber	Represents the most important businesses in the country	High	No	Yes	Against
O T H E R S T A K E H O L D E R S					
President of Parliament	In charge of legislative agenda and procedures	Medium	No	Yes	Neutral
Opposition Leader	Holds government accountable	Medium	No	Yes	For

These lists will help you identify the individuals and organizations that need to be part of the Multistakeholder Forum process from the start. They will need information during the planning and creation, and their expectations and feedback must be part of the process.

In some instances, Forum promoters could consider recruiting the international CSOs or multilateral institutions committed to OGP, to help promote awareness and a positive view of the Forum.



Case Study: URUGUAY

Technical assistance from UNESCO

During the drafting of its second National Action Plan, the government of Uruguay invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be an observer and facilitator within the OGP Working

Group. This provided an outside council about good open government strategies and practices around the world. UNESCO took the role of convener, providing a neutral facilitator for meetings with key stakeholders.

Source: Guillán Montero, Aránzazu (2015), OGP and transparency reforms in Uruguay: Strong dialogue to address complex institutional challenges, Bergen, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre:

[<http://www.u4.no/publications/open-government-in-uruguay-strengthening-dialogue-to-make-up-for-institutional-challenges/>].

Once key stakeholders are identified, strong leaders inside and outside of government need to push the process forward. Leaders with CSO experience have been successful in facilitating communications and acting as a mediator between government and civil society. Strong, effective leadership is crucial in setting up a Forum, particularly if there are challenges to open government, such as a tradition of opaqueness, distrust between actors, or weak organizational capabilities.

Skills of an effective Forum leader include:

- **Communication:** The Forum leader must effectively communicate the importance and implications of transparency to government and CSO participants, particularly those unfamiliar with the OGP concept and values.
- **Trust:** Effective leaders must inspire trust from both government and civil society actors.
- **Transparency:** Forum leaders must be clear about the agenda, motives and objectives throughout the Plan process. In addition to being good practice, this can help alleviate accusations that the leader's actions are self-serving or political.
- **Mediation:** Leaders must be fair to all parties when setting up the Forum. They must broker discussions between key stakeholders, even if their relationships have been challenging in the past, and find common ground for decisions.





Case Study: EL SALVADOR

Strong leadership leads to reform

In 2009 a new government, led by the left-leaning FMLN took office in El Salvador. Gerson Martínez, a party leader and one of the most important figures in promoting transparency as a member of the Legislative Assembly, became Minister for Public Works, which was known for its poor quality work and high levels of corruption.

Martínez introduced several measures for improvement, including creation of an external monitoring mechanism in charge of CSO. Martínez partnered with Transparency International; with its national chapter, the National foundation for Development (FUNDE); with the construction industry chamber (CASALCO); and with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to introduce Integrity Pacts.

These pacts aimed to improve the contracting processes by creating joint, public commitments by government and companies to refrain from corrupt practices in the bidding and execution. A third party CSO monitors compliance of both parties by compelling the disclosure of project information.

The pacts were so successful the government included them in its first National Action Plan, and provided the basis for El Salvador to enroll in the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST). Strong leadership behind this transparency initiative increased its chances for success and led to development of more ambitious goals for opening government.

Source: Gainer, Mata (2015), "A Blueprint for Transparency: Integrity Pacts for Public Works, El Salvador, 2009-2014", Princeton, Princeton University-Innovations for Successful Societies and Schneider

Once there is sufficient political backing and leaders are recruited, it is time to develop a detailed plan for setting up the Forum. The first step is to identify the activities to be conducted (for example, drafting and publishing a call for proposals for selecting civil society representatives, reviewing the proposals, communicating results, formally inaugurating the Forum, etc.). These activities must be tailored to the national context, considering the particularities of both civil society (e.g., level of articulation and capabilities) and government (e.g., the expected time needed to get approvals and resources allocated).



An example of steps toward launch of the Forum and their duration is below.

Programming activities for setting up a Forum

ACTIVITIES (DELIVERABLE)	INSTITUTION IN CHARGE	WEEK							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Conduct stakeholders mapping (Stakeholder contact directory)	OGP Secretariat	█							
Draft Forum Call for Proposals (Call for Proposals)	OGP point of contact and CSO working group	█	█						
Publish and disseminate Call for Proposals (brochures; newspaper, TV, radio ads; Web page; listserv)	OGP STC Secretariat			█	█				
Conduct awareness events about OGP and open government concepts, values and strategies (Seminars, roundtables, TV/ radio, booklets, Web page)	OGP point of contact and CSO working group		█	█					
Process proposals and communicate results (Representatives selected are informed)	OGP Secretariat, OGP point of contact and CSO working group					█			
Schedule and convene inaugural meeting (Participants informed of venue, date and hour of meeting)	OGP Secretariat						█		
Prepare agenda and materials for inaugural meeting (Agenda and materials)	OGP Secretariat							█	
Determine meeting logistics (Coffee break, computer, a/v, podium, seating)	OGP Secretariat							█	
Prepare press release (Press release)	OGP Secretariat								█

Design of the Forum must be a co-creation of government and civil society. By discussing the approaches taken by others, Forum participants can select the best practices that will work in their country.

There are three ways to create the Forum:

- **Administrative decision, such as an executive decree:** Government formalizes the Forum by means of issuing administrative norms, such as presidential decrees or ministerial decisions.
 - *Advantages:* This strategy can provide a clear mandate for transparency and operation. It provides a formal framework for the Forum to exist, providing transparency and certainty to actors involved.

- *Disadvantages:* It can be difficult to draft and approve the decisions necessary for the Forum or to reform government's own operations. Administrative regulations may require some time to be drafted, approved and published. Administrative decisions could lead to changes in the way the Forum is constituted, its participants and decision-making rules.
- **Create new or build on existing laws:** Passing a new law – or, more frequently, taking advantage of existing laws – gives participants a place to house the creation of the Forum and OGP decision-making. This process can help prevent overlap and improve overall efficiency. The Forum is included in the legal framework.
 - *Advantages:* Creates a strong and stable formal framework for the Forum, providing it with stability across time. If taking advantage of a Forum previously enacted by law, it can reduce the risk of overlapping mandates and/or the multiplication of consultation mechanisms.
 - *Disadvantages:* Drafting and passing legislation could be a burden, given that it requires the collaboration of the legislature. If the Forum is previously existing and prescribed by law, there may be some deficiencies in relation to its adaptability to OGP needs.
- **Formal and informal agreements:** The most common way to create a forum is through agreements between parties, giving the Forum flexibility to adapt to new circumstances and demands. Agreements can be informal or written down more formally as a procedures manual or guidelines.
 - *Advantages:* Provides actors with flexibility to set the rules of engagement and to adapt them if needed.
 - *Disadvantages:* There is no guarantee of Forum permanence, so continued operation relies heavily on participants' commitment.

Another common trend is to begin by setting up a government inter-ministerial and/or interagency group. This group coordinates the open government activities across government and, after some time, enlarges its membership to include standing members from academia, business or CSO or by creating a sub-forum with non-governmental stakeholders.

A variation of this model works as follows: First, create an inter-ministerial working group for OGP comprising the main departments, ministries or agencies related to OGP strategies and values. Then, incorporate an informal working group with representatives of civil society focused on developing the next National Action Plan. Once the Plan is approved, establish a formal civil society group that works with the Inter-ministerial group.



**Case Study: SIERRA LEONE**

Dedicated OGP Forum builds partnerships

Relations between government and civil society in Sierra Leone were characterized by distrust and a culture of “we against you.” This needed to change if open government initiatives were to succeed. A key decision was to establish, by executive order, a national OGP Steering Committee.

At first, the government invited only 10 CSO, but civil society leaders pushed to reach other stakeholders.

Today, the Steering Committee has 17 representatives of government and 17 representatives from Civil society. An important aspect to the process was the willingness of government to forego its tendency to micromanage the consultation process without eroding its leadership. The initial task of the Steering Committee was to draft the first National Action Plan.

Source: Samba-Sesay, Marcella (2015) “Open-Government Partnership Process in Sierra Leone: Engaging in mutually respectful manner and Finding a common ground to actualise the reforms we need”: [<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5959>].

There is no one-size-fits-all model, but the general recommendation is that the Forum incorporates some formal framework providing general guidelines for its main functions, participants, rules for naming representatives and decision-making. It also must report and have accountability to the public. To increase legitimacy and efficacy, government and civil society must create the framework together. To foster collaboration and co-creation of the OGP policies, government and civil society must have an equal standing in the Forum by means of an equal number of representatives, and they must share responsibility for directing and coordinating the Forum.

**Case Study: PERU**

A Multi-sectorial Commission

The Permanent Multi-sectorial Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the OGP National Action Plan (Comisión Multisectorial de Naturaleza Permanente para el Seguimiento de la Implementación del Plan de Gobierno Abierto) was created by Executive Order in 2013, taking advantage of previously existing legislation. The Secretariat for the Presidency leads the commission, which includes several governmental ministries, the National Office for E-Government, the judiciary as well as several CSO and private sector organizations.

The Commission was created during the drafting of the Supreme Decree, where honorary participation of the representative was established and the basic rules of the Forum were laid out. After the limited consultation process for the first Plan, civil society representatives took advantage of the Working Group and reviewed the commitments, offered suggestions and participated in the consultation for the next Plan. In Peru, a monitoring and evaluation system based on defining performance

indicators was established in support of the Commission's activities.

Participants in Peru's Permanent Multisectorial Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the OGP National Action Plan include:

- Government: General Secretariat to the Presidency; one representative from the Presidency of the Cabinet; one representative proposed by the E-Government Office; one representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; one representative from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights; and one representative of the Judiciary.
- Business: One representative from the business chambers.
- CSO: Three representatives from CSO related to the Plan commitments.
- Observers: People's Defense Office; High Level Commission on Anti-Corruption; and General Comptroller of the Republic.

Source: Gobierno Abierto Perú, *Proceso de Elaboración del Plan de Acción de Gobierno Abierto del Perú*, Lima, Executive Committee and OECD (2014), *Gobierno Abierto en América Latina*, Paris p. 239



**Case Study: BRAZIL**

Ministries coordinate open government

The Multistakeholder Forum in Brazil is hosted within the Open Government Interministerial Committee (CIGA), chaired by the President's Civil Office (Casa Civil da Presidência).

The Committee includes 18 ministries and has two sub-committees or working groups. One is the Executive Group of the Committee led by the General Comptroller of Brazil and includes seven ministries, functioning as a

Source: Support Unit Survey conducted in August 2015

coordination mechanism for the implementation of the National Action Plan. The other is an Ad Hoc Working Group with 10 CSO that was created for the second OGP Plan and lasted until 2013. In 2014, a new and formal Civil Society Working Group was established with the mandate to monitor the implementation of the Plan and to work with the Executive Group of the Committee to improve the OGP process in the country.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORUM PARTICIPANTS

As leadership determines who should be involved in the Forum, it is important to achieve balance among the following criteria:

- Sufficient political backing from the upper levels of government
- Adequate coordination and technical capabilities
- Representation from diverse civil society voices
- Trust among participants to foster collaboration and minimize conflicts
- Good public standing among representatives involved in the creation of a fair and transparent process

The Multistakeholder Forum participants are responsible for the functioning of the Forum as the space for making decisions, assessing achievements and disseminating information about OGP and openness policies in general. Involving the right actors and giving them the proper tools are crucial to success. This entails:

- **Offering an introduction to OGP.** Many actors within and outside of government have no clear idea of what open government means and how OGP works. When recruiting Forum members it may be advisable to make sure there is common understanding of open government goals generally and OGP functioning specifically.
- **Ensuring Forum partners are co-creators.** Government and civil society should collaborate on selecting the organizational features of the Forum.
- **Coordinating between government and civil society.** Forum members must work together to promote the adoption and implementation of the open government agenda.

To maintain a collaborative atmosphere, government and civil society participants must operate in a horizontal manner. Where specific leadership roles are assigned, those positions should be seen as a means to further the dialogue, not as a mark of superiority in relation to other stakeholders.

Below are some examples of how others have assigned the most common Forum roles. These positions can be shared or overlap, and in some cases may be distributed differently.



Frequent Roles and Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Chair or Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Convenes the stakeholders to co-design the Forum rules and procedures. ■ Proposes an agenda for the meetings. ■ Coordinates Forum operation and acts as the Forum's public face in front of other institutions, organizations and the media. ■ Main or higher level point of contact with the OGP. ■ In meetings, the chair can be delegated in a representative. ■ There can be more than one chair, each one representing different sectors represented in the Forum.
Co-Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supports the chair and substitutes in his/her absence. ■ Offers a leading role to representatives from a sector other than that represented by the chair (e.g., a chair from civil society and a co-chair from government). ■ Serves as a succession strategy, by having the co-chair take the lead after the termination of the chair's agreed term.
Technical Secretary or Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides support services as an operation and logistics leader to allow proper and efficient operation of the Forum. ■ Drafts and consults the agenda of the meetings for approval. ■ Convenes participants. ■ Selects and prepares meeting venues. ■ Prepares information, materials and plans the meeting dynamics. ■ Prepares the meeting minutes. ■ Coordinates the monitoring and evaluation of National Action Plan implementation. ■ Consolidates the monitoring information sent by the responsible government institutions in relation to the implementation of Plan commitments. ■ Conducts or commissions research in support of the operation of the Forum.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three options available: ■ No staff: The Forum will not have a permanent staff, but depends on the personnel from each of the institutions and organization participating. This reduces the cost of operation of the Forum. The disadvantage is that there are no specialized people supporting Forum activities. ■ Shared staff: Staff at one of the hosting institutions (frequently a government agency) is assigned to support the Forum. This provides a permanent staff to support the Forum, but only part time. There can be difficulties arising from the amount of attention given to the different participants, and a perception of favoritism. ■ Dedicated staff: The Forum has its own staff and resources (office space, equipment, etc.) to support its activities full-time. Forum participants can recruit staff based on merits, political neutrality, and probity. This approach can deliver a more specialized and comprehensive support service to the Forum. It does require sufficient resources to be viable, however.
Representative or Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in the discussions. ■ Put forward proposals for improving the OGP process or for new openness policies. ■ Provide technical feedback and resources to support implementation of the Plan or the development of new openness policies. ■ Scrutinize the monitoring and evaluation information presented by the main commitment implementation leaders. ■ Discuss and approve Forum rules, procedures and internal policies. ■ Approve the Forum's reports. ■ Disseminate information about the Forum's activities and results.



In some countries, there is no formal allocation of roles within the Forum, although these are the exception. In other countries, a number of discussion groups work around specific policy sectors or issues, operating parallel to or even without a central Forum. These specific groups allow a greater degree of specialization, which is particularly important when dealing with complex technical issues. It is a good practice for a central Forum to coordinate the specific groups and to document results obtained across government, which results in a better reporting process within OGP.

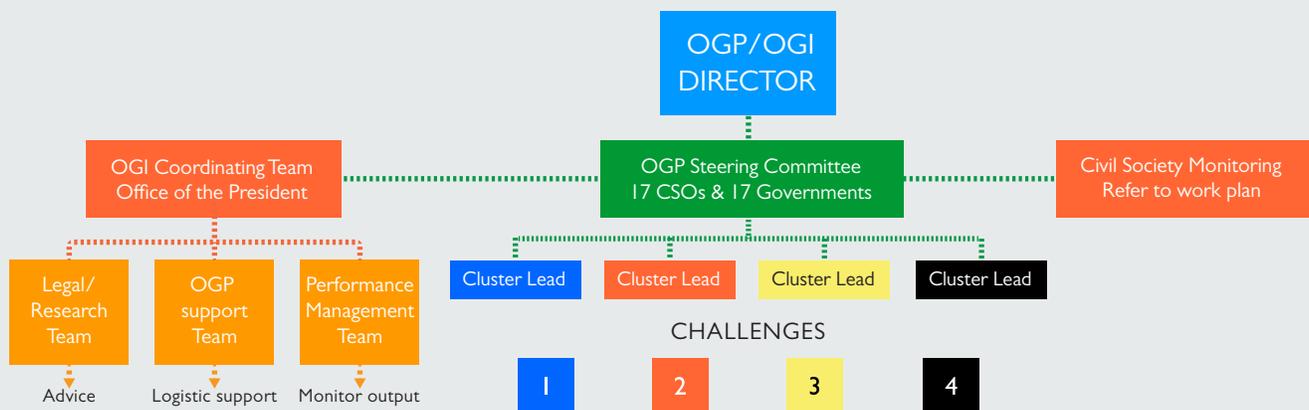


Case Study: SIERRA LEONE

Multistakeholder Forum structure

In Sierra Leone, the Forum closely follows the National Action Plan, establishing leads for specific commitment clusters, as a means to make monitoring of their implementation more effective. In this case, the chair is a member of civil society. There is a support group, under the Open Government Initiative Coordinating Team

within the Office of the President, which provides legal and logistical service and performance information. In addition, the civil society representatives have established an independent monitoring mechanism that assesses the results achieved in implementation of the Plan.



Source: Samba-Sesay, Marcella (2015), "Sierra Leone Open Government Partnership Model", presentation at the OGP Global Summit, Mexico City, 27th October, 2015.

ENROLLMENT AND ROTATION OF FORUM MEMBERS

While establishing a model for Forum representation, it is important to consider the enrollment of new members, as well as the rotation of existing members into new roles. The initial group of stakeholders may be a small one because of resources and time constraints. To avoid the exclusion of other actors or sectors of society, consider policies that allow new incorporations and,

if viable, the definition of fixed terms for the existing representatives. In some countries, representatives remain in their posts during the implementation of the Plan, and when a new one is published new representatives are selected.

In some countries, the CSOs within the Forum can be a large group. To facilitate dialogue with the government, the CSO group selects a lead organization to act as an intermediary. In Mexico, for example, the lead organization is elected for one year and then replaced by one of eight others in the Civil Society Cluster. In Panama, the civil society group consists of 18 organizations that select three representatives to attend Forum meetings, who rotate on a monthly basis.¹

Governments tend to bear the operating costs of Forums. However, in some countries public resources available for these sorts of events are very limited. CSOs can share the burden, but only if they are well-funded, established organizations, which is not always the case. Some international donors also support OGP activities and could represent a source of funding. They include the Ford Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, USAID, the German Cooperation (GIZ), the Inter-American Development Bank, and others.

SELECTING GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

When selecting government representatives for the Multistakeholder Forum, it is important to ensure:

- **Representation by the main institutions responsible for open government policy:** It is important to have Forum representatives from the ministries, departments and/or agencies responsible for implementing open government policies – such as access to information agencies and e-government or telecommunications departments. Further, to ensure political support, government representation should include both ministerial and mid-level officials.²
- **Representation by figures with cross-government coordination capacity:** Such authorities must be involved to make sure the relevant ministries, departments and/or agencies can effectively implement Forum decisions. According to IRM reports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is often the lead for OGP activities. This can create difficulties in coordinating within government, as line ministries are not subject to that ministry's coordination authority. It can be more effective to give that role to the Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry for Public Administration or directly to the Office of the President or Prime Minister. Some countries have created specialized OGP lead positions, but its capacity to coordinate depends on its mandate and political support from the highest authorities in government.

1 Martínez Mórtoła, Aída I. (2015), "Fomentando una Alianza de partes interesadas para avanzar en la participación, innovación y rendición de cuentas en AGA. República de Panamá", presentation at the OGP Global Summit, Mexico City, October 2015.

2 Brockyer, Brandon and Jonathan Fox (2015), *Assessing the Evidence. The effectiveness and impact of public governance-oriented multi-stakeholder initiatives*, London, Transparency & Accountability Initiative, p. 52.



MODELS FOR SELECTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

Deciding which stakeholders get involved in the Forum can be challenging. One way to handle this could be by starting with a small, core group to establish the basic features and procedures of the Forum. This group could include actors that have collaborated in the past. The advantage of starting with a group of known actors is that there may be a good understanding about their strengths and a degree of trust may have developed over time.³ However, effort must be go beyond this initial group to reach new actors that bring other perspectives, capabilities or skills to the table.

Although there is sometimes overlap, CSOs are typically either national or local organizations and this determines how they operate.

- National-level CSOs deal mainly with broad policy areas (human rights, environment, strengthening democracy, probity and anti-corruption, etc.), focusing their work on advocating for changes in national policies and institutions. Most of these organizations are located in the capital or in relevant urban areas. They are usually in a better position to receive resources from in-country donors and from foreign foundations or multilateral institutions. They frequently develop highly technical knowledge about the issues they promote. National advocacy organizations can provide a nation-wide focus, expertise and resources that can complement that of the government.
- Local, or grassroots, organizations are mainly concerned with problems facing specific communities, territories or sectors of the population. They tend to be based in different parts of a country, and their work relates more to the community – to raising awareness about local problems and promoting actions in defense of the rights of specific communities or individuals. These organizations usually have intimate knowledge of the circumstances present in specific locales or that face particular segments of society, but they may have limited funding. Local groups can bring the voice of communities or segments of the population that could otherwise be neglected or marginalized in decision-making.

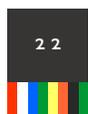
Ideally, a Forum would include a balanced representation of both types of organizations. However, in every country these CSOs may be significantly different in number, organizational capacity, ability to communicate, access to resources, etc., and governments may be used to dealing more with one group than with the other. In such cases, the early rounds of recruitment might target certain members of these CSO categories first, with a strategy to reach others later.

There are three general models for deciding who will represent civil society in the Forum: open election, invitation, and self-selection.

Open election

Civil society directly elects its representatives. The election can be organized by territory or district, by activity or interest (human rights, environment, etc.), or by sections of society that have seats allocated in the Forum (indigenous peoples, the young, etc.). A mix of these sectors is also possible.

³ Agranoff, Robert (2012), *Collaborative Management*, Georgetown, Georgetown University Press, kindle edition, position 3534.



- **Advantages:** Gives civil society greater input and the opportunity to freely select its representatives.
- **Disadvantages:** Coordination across groups requires strong communication about the election to relevant individuals and organizations, as well as across regions. It requires a high level of organizational capability.

One of the challenges of an open selection processes is to define the franchise rules, that is, who gets a vote or say in the election process. The problem is that if you use pre-existing registries you may exclude organizations that have no legal or official recognition. Therefore, the process may be biased in favor of CSOs that have existing relationships with the government. On the other hand, if you do not establish prior and clear franchise rules, the process can get out of control due to the duplication of votes or the creation of ad hoc organizations aiming to control the process.

By invitation

This is the most common method, particularly at the start of the Forum process. The government invites certain CSOs or outstanding individuals to participate in the Forum.⁴ Different criteria for invitation can be used, but the most common are: selection from a CSO registry predating the involvement of the country in OGP; assessment of the technical capabilities or prestige of the existing organizations; and past collaboration.

- **Advantages:** Participants can be chosen by their specific capabilities and past collaborations with government. It also can expedite the selection of representatives and guarantee that certain key stakeholders are included in the Forum. This selection process also is less demanding.
- **Disadvantages:** This approach can skew the selection process by excluding important opinion sectors, particularly those that are more critical of the government or that represent subordinated or marginalized groups. To be effective, it must be accompanied by a strategy to widen the reach of OGP and include new stakeholders through transparent procedures.

Self-selection

Another frequently used mechanism to select civil society representatives for the Forum is to publish an open call for proposals, by conducting meetings open to all interested individuals, or by establishing an open application procedure.

- **Advantages:** This offers greater opportunities for attracting a more diverse group of people, with less risk of skewing representation. It does not allow government to have a comprehensive list of stakeholders.
- **Disadvantages:** There must be an effort to disseminate information widely about the selection of representatives, the call for proposals and for the dates, venues and agenda of future meetings. It also requires a high level of interest from potential participants.

⁴ Even in other global governance initiatives, such as EITI, governments usually are involved in selecting the CSOs' representatives. See Brandon Brockyer and Jonathan Fox (2015), *Assessing the Evidence. The effectiveness and impact of public governance-oriented multi-stakeholder initiatives*, London, Transparency & Accountability Initiative, p. 52.





Case Study: Estonia

Inviting civil society representation

Civil society in Estonia was the main driver for joining OGP. An independent civil society coordination mechanism, the Civil Society Roundtable (CSR), was formed to start the process of joining OGP and to support drafting the National Action Plan. The members of the roundtable are volunteers from CSO, experts and other stakeholders. CSR objectives include monitoring implementation of the Plan, developing new proposals to advance government openness, and the dissemination of information about

OGP and the results achieved in delivering the Plan commitments.

Over time, the CRS grew and by October 2013 there were 18-member organizations and one individual member. It has published a normative document that includes the creation of an OGP Network that “is open to all non-governmental organizations and individuals who recognize the goals and operation of the network and is ready AVP objectives for its active support for the activities.”

Sources: Hinsberg, Hille, *Independent Reporting Mechanism Estonia: Progress Report 2012–13*, IRM, Washington, D.C., *Eesti Avatud Valitsemise Partnerluse (AVP)*: [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Estonia_Final_2012.pdf]

Other models to incorporate civil society representatives in the Forum vary between those that place the final selection in government hands and those that empower civil society to decide. In all cases, the representation can be by individual, by organization, or a mix of the two. Whatever principle of representation is adopted, it should be made clear so that issues such as turnover can be dealt in an appropriate way.

While there are different ways to define the government and civil society representatives to the Forum, it is important to consider ways to bring in other stakeholders and experts to provide independent views about the development of open government in the country. Universities and think tanks can be a good source of such expertise. Organizing roundtables for specific issues or commissioning policy papers also can move some discussions forward.



Case Study: BRAZIL

Self-selecting civil society representatives

In Brazil, the process to select the CSOs representatives to the Advisory Work Group of the Interministerial Committee for Open Government is open and direct. It is detailed in an edict from the Secretary of Transparency and Prevention of Corruption. The process includes several steps:

- CSO interested in participating in the selection process register online.
- An Organizing Commission reviews the information to verify the CSO has met eligibility requirements, such as availability of a registry in the National Legal Persons

Registry and evidence of work in at least two of the OGP principles and challenges.

- The names of CSO considered for participation in the process as electors and candidates are published online.
- The CSO are clustered in electoral colleges, based on three categories: civil society, private sector and labor unions.
- CSO vote online for the candidate organizations. Those with the most votes are elected, and the list is published online.

Source: Secretary of Transparency and Prevention of Corruption Edict 1/2015, August 31st, 2015.





Managing the Multistakeholder Forum

Here you will learn:

- How to develop an effective communications strategy both within and outside the Forum
- How to determine the frequency of Forum meetings
- About different decision-making models for Forums
- How to set rules for decision-making in the Forum
- How to manage challenging situations such as government turnover
- About evaluation and accountability mechanisms
- How to sustain engagement and enthusiasm during the life cycle of the Plan

Once the Forum is established, the challenge is to make sure that it works in a steady and sustained way. The long-term viability of the Forum depends on the level of commitment of the participants, which will be a result of demonstrable achievements and the stakeholders' continuing conviction that the Forum still has something valuable to offer them. Management of the Forum, therefore, is not limited to the administration of resources and the organization of meetings, but extends to the need to keep momentum and motivation among the participants.

CREATING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The key to successfully managing the Forum is timely and clear communication. This is important to productive interactions, to maintaining momentum and enthusiasm among participants, and to demonstrating transparency and accountability to external stakeholders.

To support the Forum's communications, an effective information system that includes tangible elements, such as equipment, and intangible elements, such as data, is crucial. An established set of communications practices and infrastructure will enable outreach to a variety of stakeholders and lessen the effect of barriers across organizational boundaries.

Barriers to effective communication:



- Different frameworks or points of reference can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding, as well as selective attention and retention.
- Physical distance can reduce the opportunity for face-to-face interaction and can increase the cost of collecting information from decentralized locations. It also reduces the possibilities for those far away to be up to date about what is happening in other locations.
- Status or hierarchy divides can interfere with direct interchanges as well as with equal and honest communication. They can also result in an unequal distribution of information and on good news being emphasized while bad news is downplayed.
- Too much data, or information overload, from the continuous provision of memoranda, briefings, telephone calls, informative sessions, etc. can reduce time and attention spent on a particular message, giving important and routine communications the same status.
- Distractions and the daily interruptions from a busy work environment can reduce attention to decision-making and other considerations. As people working in organizations face tasks that are increasingly brief, varied and fragmented, the pressures of the day-to-day operation can delay careful consideration of information.
- Administrative or technical jargon can interfere with effective communications by blocking the transmission of messages among the participants.
- Prejudice can inhibit or impede assessment or consideration of ideas. Examples of such prejudices are the views that people from one profession may hold about those from another.
- Inadequate communications skills can negatively affect design of a good message and selection of the medium for delivery.

Source: based on James L. Garnett (1997) Barreras a la comunicación gubernamental efectiva: una visión nueva de un problema antiguo, in Rafael Bañón and Ernesto Carrillo (comps.), La Nueva Administración Pública, Madrid, Alianza.

A variety of tools can be used to communicate within the Forum, including: electronic mailing lists (listserv); newsletters; memoranda; video conference services; social network applications (e.g., Facebook or Google+ groups); platforms for collaborative document drafting (e.g., Google docs); direct messaging services (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook messenger); courier services; intranets; meetings.

In creating an effective information system, begin with a survey of Forum members to identify their information needs, the platforms they are aware of and comfortable with, and what sort of information they wish to provide to the rest of the participants. This will assist in identifying the most effective means to communicate with participants.

Forum participants should regularly assess their information systems and make improvements as needed, conducting the survey periodically to identify new information needs.

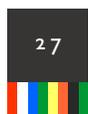
The following worksheet, shown here completed only for illustration and not representative of any particular country, can help get the survey started.



Communications survey matrix

ROLE IN THE FORUM	PERSON/ INSTITUTION	INFORMATION NEEDS	INFORMATION PROVIDED
Chair	Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Issues of concern to participants. ■ Plan implementation challenges and results. ■ Civil society positions on relevant issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Government's position on relevant issues. ■ Government rules and procedures.
Co-chair	Civil society national network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Issues of concern to participants. ■ Government's position on issues. ■ Plan implementation challenges and results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Civil society position on issues. ■ Dynamics of civil society ■ Funding opportunities for OGP-related activities.
Secretary	Deputy director of open government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participants' communications needs. ■ Participants' position on relevant issues. ■ Participants' availability for meetings. ■ Plan implementation reports from government departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Summary of participants' information needs ■ Summary of participants' positions on relevant issues ■ Overview of Plan implementation challenges and results.
Participant	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Principles and procedures of OGP participation. ■ In-country OGP participation updates for diplomacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ News about international open government meetings and other events. ■ Details about the country's treaties and other international commitments. ■ Protocol.

Frequently, the Technical Secretariat of the Forum will be in charge of internal communication. This includes the preparation and timely distribution of meeting agendas and the drafting of minutes, as well as management of a dedicated website and mailing lists. In other cases, the preparation of agendas and minutes rotates among Forum participants.



FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The frequency of Forum meetings varies depending on participants' needs and activity. For example, during intense work periods, such the drafting of the Plan, meetings likely will be more frequent and on an ad hoc basis. While meetings may be held anywhere from every two weeks to twice a year, it is generally good practice not to let too much time lapse between them, or to hold them too closely together. The former can lead to ineffective Plan monitoring, while the latter may not give enough time for the progress needed to have meaningful discussions.¹

The majority of OGP countries hold regular meetings monthly or quarterly, with additional meetings as needed.

Frequency of meetings in some OGP countries

Once every two weeks	Argentina, Uruguay
Monthly	Costa Rica, Guatemala, Malta, Panama, Sierra Leone, Tunisia
At least monthly	Montenegro, Peru
Every three months (quarterly)	Colombia, Estonia, Ghana, Moldova, Philippines, Tanzania
Twice a year	The Netherlands
At least twice a year	Brazil
As needed	Armenia, Chile, Croatia, Italy, Liberia, Mexico, Romania (with monthly OGP meetings to discuss issues informally)

Source: OGP Support Unit Survey of Multistakeholder Forums, August 2015, n=33

Taking minutes at each meeting is a useful way to document discussions and decisions. This can help Forum participants monitor its proceedings, and it provides public accountability, particularly if the minutes are posted online. Below is a simple minutes template.

1 Colombia, for instance, has decided to go from monthly to quarterly meetings.





Template for meeting's minutes

MEETING MINUTES		
Date:		
Hour:		
Venue:		
Attendees:		
Materials sent beforehand:		
Documents or information requested (responsible) to be delivered at the meeting:		
AGENDA		
Debate (main points made by participants):		
Conclusion:		
Actions to be taken:	Person(s) in charge	Deadline
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION		
Notes:		



**Case Study: GEORGIA**

Creating the Open Government Forum

The Multistakeholder Forum in Georgia is the Open Government Forum. The Ministry of Justice created it, and it has representatives from civil society, government and international organizations. It can call external experts to participate in the discussions.

The OGF is chaired by two speakers, one from government and one from civil society. They are elected by a majority of votes and remain in that position during implementation

of the National Action Plan. The Forum Secretariat is in charge of convening meetings, defining the agenda, preparing the meeting's minutes and preparing reports of the activities twice a year. Regular meetings are held quarterly. Forum rules state that the meeting calendars must be drafted and published online, that members have to be notified about the meeting's agenda via email, and that the minutes should be posted at the Forum's Web page.

Source: Guidelines of the Open Government Partnership Forum, Adopted on the First Meeting of Forum, January 15th, 2014

MULTISTAKEHOLDER FORUM DECISION-MAKING MODELS

While many participatory models focus on providing stakeholders with information or collecting different views on an issue, they frequently do not provide rules for decision-making. It is vital that the Forum provides participants with clear guidance about what Forum members can decide and what authority government retains. Clarity about the scope and limits of Forum decision-making is important to manage expectations.

Empowerment of the Forum requires a careful review of the laws and administrative norms to make sure there is consistency with the institutional framework. Participants' interest and motivation will be related to the impact their discussion has on actual policy, so Forum stakeholders will likely be more committed if they have more decision-making authority.

Forum decision-making authority generally concerns aspects of the OGP process, such as designing the National Action Plan. Where government retains decision-making authority, for such things as drafting legislation, the Forum provides input for consideration. Although a combination of decision-making and consultative roles is ideal, in practice most OGP countries opt for one or the other, as illustrated below.



Multistakeholder Forum and OGP decision-making models

MODEL	IMPLICATIONS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Forum as a decision-making body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Forum has a mandate to make decisions regarding certain aspects of open government policy and processes. ■ Government honors those decisions by instructing relevant institutions to fulfill them. ■ Government is accountable to the Forum and, therefore, Forum participants are more empowered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increases civil society participation. ■ Clearer link between deliberation and policies. ■ Empowerment is an incentive for continuous commitment by Forum participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Risk of overlapping or contradicting established procedures for coordination and decision-making. ■ Requires implementation of coordination capabilities within the Forum.
Forum as a consultation body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Forum plays an advisory role for input and feedback that can improve government’s open government policies and projects. ■ The Forum is accountable to government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allows government to follow pre-existing decision-making and coordination processes, reducing the risk of internal resistance or confusion. ■ As long as government argues its decisions, this model can result in more viable decisions that will consider public sector’s context and capabilities. ■ Allows for greater inclusion of stakeholders’ views than traditional top-down bureaucratic decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Forum participants may have the impression that their participation merely legitimizes government policies that are designed in a top-down style. ■ It can lead to more ceremonial dynamics among the participants, with limited discussion and an impact on actual decision-making. ■ If government does not offer arguments to adopt or reject the Forum’s recommendations, it can alienate stakeholders, reducing their will to contribute.

Case Studies: ARGENTINA, PERU AND MEXICO

Forum decision-making models

The Multistakeholder Forum as an advisory body: Argentina

The Forum makes decisions by consensus and then refers them for consideration to the Sub Secretary of Management Technologies, who is in charge of open government policy.

Mixed model: Peru

The Permanent Multisectorial Commission is in charge of monitoring implementation of the National Action Plan, and can invite participation from government representatives in charge of OGP commitments. However,

the methods and instruments to monitor the Plan have to get approval from the Council of Ministers.

Forum as a decision-making body: Mexico

The Tripartite Technical Secretariat (STT) consists of representatives from the main government offices in charge of open government – the Office for Digital Strategy of the Presidency and the National Institute for Access to Information – and one representative from the civil society group, which includes eight leading national CSO. The STT makes decisions by consensus over the consultations and monitoring processes of the Plan.



SETTING THE RULES FOR DECISION-MAKING

The next issues to decide and, preferably, adopt are the decision-making rules. Most of the Forums have agreed upon such rules, and in many cases they are written down in the form of internal operation manuals or guidelines.² In general, these rules should strike a balance between consideration of all points of view within the Forum and the need to avoid blockages that may render the Forum ineffective.

The basic rules, which are interconnected, cover quorum, agenda and decision-making.

Quorum: Determines how many members of the Forum must be in attendance for a binding decision. Attendance rules are common in most Forums, many of which require participation of 50 percent-plus-one for a meeting to be valid. This not only helps ensure attendance, but also maintains parity between government and civil society. Examples of quorum-related rules include:

- Meetings require a minimum attendance of 50 percent-plus-one of the Forum's members to be valid.
- In cases of insufficient attendance, an invitation is circulated setting a new date.
- Meetings that are postponed because insufficient attendance require upon the second invitation a 25 percent-plus-one attendance threshold to be valid.
- Representatives can have substitutes attend in their place, but they must be identified in advance.
- Those members who do not attend three meetings in a row or fail to show up to more than half of the meetings in a year are designated as inactive and substitutes are called or replacements elected.

Agenda: Determines how far in advance the meeting agenda and materials must be distributed to participants. This allows participants to be informed about pending issues and to prepare for meeting discussions. It is important to distribute the agenda far enough in advance for participant feedback. Examples of agenda-related rules include:

- The Technical Secretariat of the Forum presents to the Chair (and to the Co-chair, if the position exists) a draft of the agenda for approval.
- The draft approved by the Chair (and the Co-chair) is circulated for comments from members of the Forum (one week prior to the meeting).
- Documents or information to be discussed at the meeting must be sent at least one week in advance.
- The approved and final draft agenda is circulated at least three days prior to the meeting.
- Regular meetings allocate time for general issues to be proposed by the attendees.

Decision-making: Determines how decisions are made – for example, whether by consensus or majority rule. While most Forums rely on majority rule, many try to reach decisions by consensus to build trust among participants

2 OGP Support Unit Survey, conducted in August 2015, n=30.



by considering all points of view. In some cases, it is useful to set a deadline for reaching a decision and calling a vote. Examples of decision-making rules include:

- **Consensus:** Decisions are based on reaching unanimous agreement, with no party opposing the decision.
 - *Advantages:* Promotes dialogue and inclusion of all points of view in the decision-making process. Decisions are acceptable to all parties involved.
 - *Disadvantages:* Can lead to blockage because every participant has “veto” power over decisions. The process of reaching agreement can be time consuming.
- **Majority rule:** Decisions can be made with the vote of 50 percent-plus-one of the members attending the meeting.
 - *Advantages:* Expedites the decision-making process. Reduces the risk of blockage. Allows the OGP process to move forward, even in the absence of some Forum members.
 - *Disadvantages:* Risk of recurring minorities questioning the legitimacy of the decision-making process. Actors that oppose the decision can block its implementation.
- **Qualified majority rule:** Decisions require two-thirds or three-fifths of member votes at the meeting (or the total of active members).
 - *Advantages:* Middle-of-the-road alternative to consensus and majority rules.
 - *Disadvantages:* There is a risk of blockage and of creating recurring minorities, although in a lesser extent than other options.
- **Mixed rule:** Members push for consensus as much as possible, with decisions submitted to vote only as exceptions.
 - *Advantages:* This is the most legitimate alternative in the view of all stakeholders. It provides the incentives to motivate a real dialogue among participants, with opportunities to surmount blockages. Provides incentives to reach an agreement under the threat of holding a vote.
 - *Disadvantages:* The decision to hold a vote can be seen as arbitrary without a clear benchmark to determine when the dialogue has been exhausted.

No OGP country has adopted the qualified majority rule. Consensus is the preferred method of decision-making, which is compatible with the principles of equal standing, participation and deliberation behind open government initiatives. The second preferred option is simple majority, followed by the consensus with a simple majority option in case of an impasse.



Decision rules in different OGP countries

COUNTRY	ARE THERE COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING RULES? FOR EXAMPLE, IS THE GENERAL RULE A CONSENSUS OR A MAJORITY VOTE?	ARE THEY FORMALIZED?
R U L E S I N P L A C E		A N S W E R
Argentina	Consensus	No
Brazil	Simple majority	Yes
Chile	Consensus	No
Colombia	Consensus	No
Costa Rica	Simple majority	Yes
Croatia	Consensus with simple majority option	Yes
Estonia	Consensus	Yes
Ghana	Consensus	No
Guatemala	Consensus	No
Malta	Simple majority	Yes
Mexico	Consensus with simple majority option	Yes
Moldova	Simple majority	Yes
Montenegro	Consensus with simple majority option	Yes
Panama	Consensus	Yes
Peru	Simple majority	Yes
Philippines	Consensus with simple majority option	Yes
Uruguay	Consensus	No

COMMUNICATIONS WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Many Forums have not developed strategies for effectively communicating with external stakeholders and the public. The most common tools for this are social media, press releases, conferences and seminars. Other less frequently used are mass media campaigns, e-mail distribution lists (listservs), and newsletters.

A good communications strategy differentiates target audiences, and classifies them according to their interest in OGP activities, information needs and expected feedback. Based on this information, a mix of communication outlets can be chosen, and the messages can be better tailored to reach their objectives.



Characteristics of an effective media strategy:

- The Forum segments its audiences and implements strategies towards each of them.
- Consistent information is provided through different outlets.
- The Forum establishes long-term productive relationships with the media.

A sample media audit template for defining the adequate external communication strategy is below. The tables are filled in with fictitious examples for illustration only and do not represent any particular country.

Multistakeholder Forum's media audit template

WHERE? CHANNEL/ OUTLET	WHAT? CONTENT/ MESSAGE	WHEN? DATE/ FREQUENCY	WHY? PURPOSE / TARGET AUDIENCES	PERFORMANCE? 1= CHALLENGE 5= STRENGTH
Press releases	Announce events and release of reports and other news	Once or twice a year	Disseminate OGP information to a wide audience	2: Few news outlets consider press releases for content. Small group of online blogs that follow OGP
Press conferences	Disseminate information about the development and implementation of the Plan.		Provide society with information about the activities of OGP in the country	3: Considerable attendance by main media outlets. Some content is picked up by mainstream media. No follow up is given by the media
Twitter account	Share links to documents, photographs of events and disseminate basic knowledge about OGP.	Two tweets a day, on average	Reach young audiences and provide a two-way communication for the public	3: Few followers and only sporadic retweets and direct messages
Informative sessions	Disseminate OGP principles, challenges, and the contents of the Plan	Three-to-four a semester	Provide specific stakeholders or interested audiences in-depth information about Forum activities and the Plan process	4: Good level of attendance, lots of information requests and identification of potential allies
Electronic mail distribution lists (listserv)	Provide regular updates on OGP	Once a month	Provide updates to interested audiences	1: Low number of subscriptions, many recipients classify such e-mails sent as spam, and in the last 12 months more people have unsubscribed than subscribed
OGP Bulletin	Present information about the Forum activities and op-eds on OGP.	Quarterly	Disseminate more specialized information to interested audiences, such as government officials, members of CSOs and academia	5: More than 1,000 subscriptions and good feedback about content and layout

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

Even in inclusive Multistakeholder Forums with representatives from a wide array of government, it is difficult to involve public officials from all institutions responsible for implementing open government projects. Frequently, OGP commitments require the collaboration of local governments or from other branches of government, such as the legislative and the judiciary. In general, it is possible to identify different models to coordinate with different institutions. Examples of this include:

- **Invite non-members to attend specific meetings or provide information.**
 - *Advantages:* It allows access to actors not represented in the Forum without the need to increase the number of participants.
 - *Disadvantages:* This model depends on the capacity of the Forum to bring in external stakeholders, such as public officials, as well as their willingness to respond positively to the Forum's invitation.
- **Include representatives from the Forum.**
 - *Advantages:* Including representatives from local government, the legislative or the judiciary, for example, can allow for a closer coordination in the implementation of OGP commitments and allows those sectors to have a say in the Forum decision-making process.
 - *Disadvantages:* Increases the number of Forum participants, and may require establishing multiple selection processes for choosing representatives – for example, from local governments or the legislative.
- **Establish working groups around certain issues or Plan commitments.**
 - *Advantages:* Allows a specialized group to track progress of the implementation of the Plan, which reports to the Forum's representatives, and may lead to better interaction between the working group members and the authorities responsible to implement Plan commitments.
 - *Disadvantages:* Requires establishing clear mechanisms of accountability between the central Forum and the working groups. A transparent process is necessary for selecting the members of the working groups and establishing decision-making rules.



- **Create parallel Forums for specific issues or to deal with open government in local government, the legislature or the judiciary.**
 - *Advantages:* Allows a clear separation of the activities between the Plan commitments focused on the national government and initiatives aimed at improving openness in other parts of the public sector. Permits a more manageable number of participants in the national Forum.
 - *Disadvantages:* Risk of dispersion, overlap and even contradictions between the strategies and activities of the different dialogue mechanisms.

As open government strategies deal with issues that go beyond the capabilities and legal mandates of national governments, the introduction of mechanisms to coordinate openness strategies with other stakeholders are required. In many countries, the preferred option has been to widen the Forum to include representatives from local government, parliament and the judiciary. In relation to the implementation of Plan commitments within the national government, there are many examples of creating subcommittees or working groups to track them in close contact with those public officials in charge of their fulfillment.

Case Studies

Coordination with external stakeholders

An OGP Support Unit survey in August 2015 identified the following strategies for coordinating with external stakeholders in the following OGP participating countries.

CHILE: The OGP working group, led by the Citizen's Defense and Transparency Commission, includes a representative from the Bicameral Transparency Group of the National Congress.

MEXICO: The civil society OGP cluster selected a responsible and a co-responsible CSO for each Plan commitment to support and scrutinize progress. In collaboration with public officials, a Work Plan was developed and compliance monitored.

PHILIPPINES: The national OGP Steering Committee includes a governor representing the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.

PERU: The Permanent Multistakeholder Commission includes representatives from the Judicial Branch and the Ombudsman's Office.

ROMANIA: The Coalition of Open Data and Government – which includes CSO, universities and business, and government – holds “OGP Club” monthly meetings to discuss different issues.

SIERRA LEONE: Civil society and government established leads for each of the Plan commitments, who are responsible to provide information about progress in the implementation of the Plan.

Source: OGP Support Unit Survey, conducted in August 2015, n=33



MANAGING TURNOVER, CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT AND OTHER CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Many situations are outside the control of members of a Forum but can pose a threat to its sustained operation. It is important to identify such risks, especially those more likely to occur and that could have a larger impact on performance. An annual risk analysis can help develop preventive and remedial strategies.

Describing likelihood and magnitude of risks

LIKELIHOOD SCORE		DESCRIPTION
Almost certain	5	Almost 100 percent chance of occurrence; experienced once a year or more often
Very likely	4	More than 75 percent chance of occurrence; has occurred in recent years; circumstances frequently encountered, i.e. daily/weekly/monthly
Likely	3	40-74 percent chance of occurrence; expected to occur in next 1-2 years; circumstances occasionally encounters, i.e. once/twice a year
Unlikely	2	10-39 percent chance of occurrence; has not occurred in the most recent past but may occurred once every 5+ years
Rare	1	Less than 10 percent chance of occurrence; may never happen or may occur only under exceptional circumstances
MAGNITUDE SCORE		DESCRIPTION
Catastrophic	5	The consequences will prove fatal for the continuation of the Forum's activities; it will stop functioning or be terminated
Major	4	The consequences would threaten the ability of the Forum to perform its activities
Moderate	4	The consequences may not threaten the ability of the Forum to perform its activities, but may result in the need for changes in structures, processes or personnel
Minor	2	The consequences only affect negatively the efficiency and effectiveness of the Forum activities, not its survival, and could be dealt by staffers
Insignificant	2	The consequences have a negligible impact in the Forum activities and they can be handled by existing routine procedures



Designing strategies for dealing with risks

RISK	COMBINED SCORE (LIKELIHOOD + MAGNITUDE)	PROPOSED STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES (WHO IS IN CHARGE?)
Change of government	(4+5) 9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preventive <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Document Forum procedures (Forum Secretariat). ■ Promote an OGP network among mid-level public officials (Forum Chair)
Changes in government or civil society representatives	(5+5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Preventive <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish rotation practices to develop knowledge and skills among participants ■ Prepare induction materials for newcomers (Forum members) ■ Document Forum procedures (Forum Secretariat)
Changes in government or civil society representatives	...	<input type="checkbox"/> Preventive <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor	...

**This template has been filled out with a fictitious example just for demonstration purposes. No particular country has inspired this section.*

Three common risks have significant impact on a Forum's functioning:

- **Changes in government or civil society representation:** Government can have frequent turnover, and this can result in delays in coordination or approvals as well as in the loss of institutional memory and time having to be taken based on the learning curves of new representatives.
- **Changes in administration and political upheaval:** Electoral cycles or votes of non-confidence can result in changes in government. The effects of this are the potential decline of interest in OGP from new political appointees. Changes in structures and in high- and mid-level public officials can result in delays and the need to introduce new Forum members.
- **Tension in government-civil society relations:** Unexpected events or crisis can generate tensions between public officials and CSOs that can lead to breakdowns in dialogue or demands to include broader issues in the Forum's discussions – issues which may go well beyond the contents of the Plan.

While national context will influence the effectiveness of different solutions, certain activities can generally prove useful in addressing these challenges:

- Document Forum meetings and other activities.
- Appoint a co-chair and member's substitutes in case of absence.
- Establish a rotation policy that develops skills among all participants.



- Adopt a succession plan for the chair, co-chair and technical secretariat.
- Prepare induction materials for newcomers.
- Establish multiple links with high- and mid-level officials that allow an easier flow of information in relation to Plan implementation.
- Make agreements for continuing dialogue in case of external political crisis.



Case Study: CHILE

Managing changes in national government

In Chile, a change of government occurred during the drafting of the Second Plan in 2014.

The Citizen's Defense and Transparency Commission (CDC), the leading institution for OGP in the country, had conducted consultation workshops with citizen and community organizations in four regions of the country, with support from the General Comptroller Office Council for Transparency and regional governments. These workshops produced 200 proposals that were reduced to 86 in consultation with the OGP working group.

With the change of government in mind, the drafted Plan was read and contained some initiatives that were

under way. The new government significantly reduced the number of commitments, requiring a new round of consultations with the working group, which was expanded and transformed into a permanent technical committee. The decision over the definitive list of commitments was made by consensus. The application of additional criteria brought the number of commitments to 12.

The transparency and deliberative approach of the method to better align the contents of the Plan to a new government's agenda resulted in high levels of satisfaction for all parties involved.

Source: Guillán Montero, Aránzazu (2015) OGP and transparency in Chile: Balancing leadership, implementation capacity and ambition, Bergen, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. And Schneider, Jordan (2015)

EVALUATING FORUM ACTIVITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Alongside the hard work of establishing the Forum, it is important to make sure that there is a continuous commitment to learning and improvement by assessing its activities as regularly as every six months. Additionally, to be in accordance with OGP principles, the Forum has to be accountable to the public for its activities, the resources allocated to it and the results obtained.

It is important to adopt a deliberative approach to assessment, considering stakeholders' different points of view. One way to do this is by distributing a survey among members and other actors interested in the Forum's activities. The results can be discussed in a special meeting that includes people who are not regular participants. Afterward, a discussion about how to sustain positive aspects and address negative ones can take place. Roles, responsibilities, deliverables and deadlines in relation to the actions identified have to be agreed upon.



Multistakeholder Forum assessment tool

1. In your opinion, has the Forum been able to operate adequately?
 - a. Yes, with high levels of commitment and participation
 - b. Yes, but with irregular meetings and uneven degrees of commitment and participation
 - c. Yes, but mostly as a formality
 - d. No, the Forum gradually lost participants and the meetings ceased
 - e. No, after a conflict the Forum collapsed
 - f. Other (explain):

2. In general, what is the level of trust and commitment among the Forum participants?
 - a. Very high
 - b. High
 - c. Uneven
 - d. Low
 - e. Very low

3. In general, what is the level of your satisfaction with the Forum regarding the following items? (Please rate your answers on a scale where 5 means that you are "totally satisfied" and 1 means that you are "not at all satisfied." Feel free to provide further comments in the appropriate space below.)

3.1. STRUCTURE AND RULES

	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of roles and responsibilities:					
Rules for rotation, incorporation and permanence of members:					
Rules regarding decision-making:					
Decision-making empowerment:					
Support infrastructure and equipment:					
Support staff:					
Regularity of meetings:					
Accountability provisions and mechanisms:					
Comments:					

3.2. INTERACTIONS

	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership development:					
Building trust among participants:					
Internal communication among participants:					
Effectiveness of meetings:					
Quality of reporting information:					
Conflict management:					
Comments:					

3.3. PERFORMANCE

	1	2	3	4	5
Contribution to implementation of OGP commitment:					
Joint fact finding and learning:					
Clarity of Forum mission:					
External communications:					
Timely decision-making:					
Dealing with external challenges:					
Comments:					



Public accountability requires the timely provision of information about Forum activities, for example, by making the Forum's meetings minutes available online. The public should be invited to comment and assess the information provided, and to ask questions and make information requests. Asking for contact information – and responding in a timely manner – can facilitate public communication. When the Forum receives feedback, it should act upon it with a plan for improvement that responds to the reasonable expectations from the public.



Case Study: **BRAZIL**

Transparency and accountability online

In Brazil, after the self-assessment report on the implementation of the first Plan, the civil society working group opened a virtual discussion forum for public's feedback. This was part of a broader effort called "Virtual Dialogue: Government and Society" that promoted

public participation in the assessment of the first Plan and developed proposals for the second Plan. Additional materials including a Virtual Dialogue Participation Manual were developed through collaboration.

Source: Fabro Steibel (2015), Brasil: relatório do progresso 2013-2014, Independent Reporting Mechanism, Washington, D.C.



Case Study: **ARMENIA**

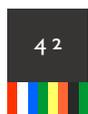
Training to use monitoring tools

In July 2009, the seminar "Tools for civil society for the monitoring and evaluation of Open Governance Partnership – Armenia processes" was held in Yerevan, with the collaboration of different national and international organizations. The aim was to provide

CSOs with tools and methodologies for monitoring and evaluating the OGP process.

As a result of the discussions, a group of CSO decided to work together to prepare an assessment report based on a methodology developed collaboratively.

Source: "Monitoring and evaluation tools for civil society": [<http://ogp.am/en/news/item/2015/06/30/monitoringtools>]



SUSTAINING ENGAGEMENT AND ENTHUSIASM

Maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of members is the most powerful means to make sure that the Forum operates effectively over time. Sustaining the commitment to participate, perform the tasks assigned and attend the meetings is a central challenge of managing the Forum.

When stakeholders feel their points of view are not considered, that discussions do not have any significant impact on actual policies, or when the financial and time costs of participating are not compensated by comparable results, enthusiasm for the Forum will diminish.

There is no absolute solution to maintain motivation, and national context will affect the results of different methods. Some general ideas in this regard include:

- **Allocate time for participants to get to know each other better.** As trust increases, encourage personal connections to develop among the participants.³ Planning for informal interactions in relaxed environments can prove helpful.
- **Plan to achieve short-term results.** Actors will assess the value of participating in the Forum, in part, based on results achieved through collaboration. People find it difficult to invest time and resources in the long-term without evidence of progress. Even if they are willing to wait, their superiors, donors, constituencies, board members, etc., will probably demand evidence. Therefore, active planning for achieving short-term results is crucial to gaining credibility.⁴
- **Focus on developing capabilities.** In many cases, government institutions and CSOs may lower their level of involvement as a result of their lack of capacities to effectively participate. Many organizations do not have personnel with the necessary technical skills to monitor the implementation of complex projects. Therefore, create capacity-building opportunities, such as seminars with experts, training courses and study visits. It is important to match these interventions with the needs of the Forum members.
- **Provide support when lack of resources to finance participation is a hindrance.** Lack of sufficient personnel to attend the organization's main activities and participate in the Forum can be problematic. The lack of resources can result in not being able to pay for transportation, accommodation, etc. Basic solutions can be of help, such as offering food or coffee breaks to attendees or providing them with transportation.

3 Agranoff, Robert (2012), *Collaborative Management*, Georgetown, Georgetown University Press, kindle edition, position 3534

4 See Kotter, John P. (2007), "Leading Change. Why Transformation Efforts Fail" in *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007, p. 7.



**Case Study: GHANA**

Forum bonding

The OGP National Steering Committee includes 20 members. At the start, in addition to meeting six or seven times to prepare the draft National Action Plan, the entire committee went on a two-day retreat outside Accra.

"This really helped us to establish ourselves as a team before we hit the road," said Vitus Azeem of Ghana Integrity Initiative.

Source: "Dolar Vasani, *Improving the OGP experience*", *The OGP Civil Society Hub*:
[<http://www.ogphub.org/media/ImprovingtheOGPExperience.pdf>].

**Case Study: CROATIA**

Issue roundtables

Dialogue between government and different stakeholders represented in the Forum does not always mean reaching agreements. This can easily become a vicious circle where the same issues are raised constantly and no satisfactory decision or conclusion is reached, demotivating participants.

One valuable lesson learned in Croatia was the importance of keeping the dialogue going without consensus. If a situation arose where the parties could not agree, the issue was put aside for discussion at a different meeting. Policy papers on the issue were commissioned from both government and civil society for clarity on the positions.

These documents were the basis for future discussion, making it easier to assure a careful consideration of all data provided and of all arguments presented.

This method helped make the OGP Council a successful mechanism that has developed a stronger collaborative relationship between government and civil society. The result of all this, in the words of a civil society participant, is that "the very enthusiastic and proactive civil servants involved on the one side and the expert and knowledgeable CSO representatives on the other, both pushing in the same direction."

Sources: Puhovski, Tamara (2015), "Permanent Dialogue Mechanisms in Romania", presentation at the Point of Contact Day, OGP Global Summit, 27th March 2015 and Francoli, Mary, Alina Ostling and Fabro Steibel (2015) "From Informing to Empowering: Improving Government-Civil Society Interactions within OGP", Hivos-IDRC, Ottawa:
[<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/case-study/informing-empowering-improving-government-civil-society-interactions-within-ogp-0>].





The role of the Multistakeholder Forum in National Action Plan development

Here you will learn:

- How the Forum can be involved in the co-creation of the Plan
- How to prepare for Plan consultation
- About different approaches and methodologies for consultation
- About different consultation techniques
- How to report and assess Plan results
- How to Promote Open Government processes beyond the Plan

Once the Forum is established and operational, its members will become an important platform during the two-year cycle of a country's Plan. Forum participants must be familiar with the Plan calendar in their country. In each Plan activity, the Forum's main task is to promote government-civil society dialogue for greater public engagement. The OGP Calendar Guidance Note outlines the life cycle of a Plan in this way:



Life Cycle of a National Action Plan

ACTIVITY	LEAD ACTOR	DURATION	DESCRIPTION
Draft National Action Plan	Government (co-created with civil society)	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-creation of the Plan with civil society ■ New Plans are developed during the last six months of implementation of an ongoing Plan.
Implement Plan	Government	24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementation of the plan over a two-year period. ■ Throughout the implementation period, governments are expected to conduct periodic consultations with civil society to share progress and updates.
Develop and Publish Midterm Self-Assessment	Government	3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of the midterm self-assessment report that focuses on the consultation process, which focuses on relevance and ambitiousness of the commitments, and progress to date.
Develop and Publish IRM Progress Report	Independent Reporting Mechanism	5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The IRM Prepares its main evaluation of the Plan, which focuses on the consultation process, relevance and ambition of the commitments, and advances to date. ■ This report will be available in time for the development of the next plan.
Develop and Publish Plan Final Self-Assessment	Government	3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Government presents the final self-assessment of its completed action plan, which focuses on results and lessons learned. ■ This Document is done after a two-week public consultation period and in parallel with the start of implementation of a new Plan.
Develop and Publish IRM Plan End of Term Report	Independent Reporting Mechanism	2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The IRM prepares an "end of term report" which will focus on the commitments that have since the publication of the main progress report.

Source: [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGPCalendar_notes%20FINAL_0.pdf]



Each phase of the Plan cycle offers Forum participants the opportunity to foster participation and take action to facilitate meaningful involvement from civil society. This can include induction activities to ensure Forum members understand the overall OGP process and the implications of each activity.

Additionally, making sure the Forum's members are aware of different strategies, methodologies and tools to improve participation is important. A useful approach is to employ the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Engagement, which offers a clear conceptual framework to assess the present situation and establish goals for strengthening public engagement on a particular phase of the plan cycle.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Engagement

Increasing Impact on the Decision 

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To provide the public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solutions.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISES TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Source: [<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/spectrum.pdf>]



PREPARING THE NEW NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

One of the main responsibilities of the Forum is to discuss how to go about developing the next Plan. The goal is to meet the basic requirements of the consultation process and hopefully go beyond them. The methodology has to maximize the depth and breadth of such consultation and carefully consider as many relevant voices as possible in the definition of the Plan's contents.



Case Study: MEXICO

Developing the Plan co-creation methodology

The OGP Tripartite Technical Secretariat (STT) collaborated to develop methodology for the second Plan that carefully considered the positive aspects as well as the more difficult lessons learned from the first Plan process. The aim was to broaden the number and diversity of the actors consulted, achieve a more orderly discussion of challenges in different policy areas and to have a smaller number of clear and measurable commitments.

The STT established nine themes, or policy areas, that would be discussed in an equal number of roundtables: Public Procurement, Digital Agenda, Competition and

Economic Promotion, Social Policy, Environment and Climate Change, Infrastructure, Budget and Fiscal Transparency, Public Security and Justice, and Energy and Extractive Industries.

The STT invited experts to present diagnostic documents to kick start roundtable discussions and hired an external facilitator to conduct the debate. Additionally, the government asked the different institutions of the federal government to present proposals of commitments that, after review by the STT, could be included in the Plan.

Source: Stephen Birtwistle (coord.) (2015), AGA: co-creación y más. The OGP Civil Society Hub, México, Núcleo de Sociedad Civil



FORUM AND ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION

The Forum can play an important role in the consultation process by designing a methodology that takes into consideration the needs and expectations of different sectors of society and by opening the process to new stakeholders, especially those that are frequently neglected. In this regard, it is useful to take into account both thematic and sectorial criteria. The following OGP guidelines should be considered in the design of the consultation process:

■ Advance notice and raising awareness

- *Availability of process and timeline:* Countries are to make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (at least online) prior to the consultation.
- *Public awareness-raising activities:* Countries are to undertake OGP awareness-raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation.
- *Advance notice of public consultation and variety of mechanisms:* Countries are to advise the population with sufficient forewarning and through a variety of means—including online and in-person meetings—to ensure accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage.

■ Depth and breadth of consultation

- Countries are to consult widely with the national community, including civil society and private sector, seek out a wide range of views, and make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online.¹



Case Study: URUGUAY Consultation

During the development of its second Plan, Uruguay conducted an innovative online consultation to receive feedback on the commitment proposals which were put forward by government agencies and the Plan's draft. Online consultation was organized thematically around

34 pre-selected projects. Additionally, two roundtables received proposals from civil society. An external facilitator was in charge of conducting the sessions to promote an open and candid dialogue. The final commitments were selected by consensus of the participants.

Sources:

Francoli, Mary, Alina Ostling and Fabro Steibel (2015) From Informing to Empowering: Improving Government-Civil Society Interactions within OGP, Hivos-IDRC, Ottawa: [<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/mary-francoli-alina-ostling-and-fabro-steibel/2015/09/01/improving-government-civil-society>], and Guillán Montero, Aránzazu (2015), OGP and transparency reforms in Uruguay: Strong dialogue to address complex institutional challenges, Bergen, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre: [<http://www.u4.no/publications/open-government-in-uruguay-strengthening-dialogue-to-make-up-for-institutional-challenges/>].

1 Independent Reporting Mechanism (2015), *Procedures Manual, version 2.0*, available at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm/about-irm>



It is important to remember that the Independent Reporting Mechanism will assess the degree of public engagement in drafting the Plan. The questions that guide IRM researcher’s assessment are presented below:

IRM Consultation Assessment Questions

QUESTION	GOOD EXAMPLES
<p>1. Were consultations held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Online? b. In person? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Peru: Published a brochure online with a detailed Gantt chart of dates of meetings and opportunities for stakeholder input into the second Plan. See <i>in Spanish</i>: [http://bit.ly/1ky3TYc]
<p>2. Was a summary of public consultation, including all individual submissions, available online? If yes, please provide links.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Estonia: Used the government consultation website and cooperation with the Estonian Civil Society Roundtable to inform stakeholders about opportunities to contribute to the first Plan. See <i>in Estonian</i>: [http://bit.ly/1rLYTV8] for the first action plan consultation and <i>here</i>: [http://bit.ly/1kMkByy] for the second Plan consultation.
<p>3. Please describe the quality and breadth of consultation during action plan development including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Whom did the government invite to participate? b. Who actually participated (from civil society, the private sector, and other branches of government)? c. Was a diversity of views represented? d. Was power shared with stakeholders on decision making on commitment inclusion or action areas? e. Did stakeholders consider the consultation to be meaningful? f. Describe the nature and accessibility (geographic, socioeconomic, physical ability, or other groupings) of these mechanisms. g. When relevant, provide links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tanzania: Carried out a variety of awareness-raising activities around dates and opportunities for input into the first Plan, including a letter from <i>the President’s Office</i>: [http://bit.ly/Te9eJV], commercials: [http://bit.ly/1kMkJ10], and blog posts: [http://bit.ly/1kCVG5g].
<p>4. Was the consultation “invitation-only” or open to all interested parties?</p>	
<p>5. Based on your narrative (above) please refer to the <i>IAP2 spectrum of political participation</i>: [http://cymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf] and describe the impact of public input on the outcomes. Choose one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inform b. Consult c. Involve d. Collaborate e. Empower 	

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES FOR CONSULTATION PROCESSES

Many countries incorporate the views from stakeholders in different areas of the national territory. In order to do this, they have conducted regional meetings as well as online consultations. Participants need to be aware of the concepts, values and principles of OGP in order to promote a better-informed methodology to collect and filter the input. To make sure that actors feel that their participation is meaningful, it is important to avoid situations in which, on the one hand, there are not enough proposals or, on the other, proposals are too numerous, dispersed, contradictory or unfeasible.

Induction sessions, informative materials and awareness campaigns in different media can foster greater participation and improve the relevance of the proposals put forward by both government and civil society. Seeking expert advice and external facilitators can be useful for a process that allows transparent and value-added activities throughout the consultation process.

Examples of consultation processes in selected OGP countries include:

- **Chile:** During the development of the second Plan, four regional consultations were conducted, with strong presence of citizen and community CSOs (e.g., the meeting in Punta Arenas was attended by 90 participants).²
- **Georgia:** The OGP Forum organized public meetings in different regions that included a presentation about OGP. Attendees were asked to put forward commitments to be considered for inclusion in the Plan.³
- **Honduras:** A structured consultation process for the second Plan that included efforts to raise awareness by CSOs, included training and information sessions for interested stakeholders.⁴
- **Peru:** During the development of the second Plan, efforts to incorporate views from more civil society actors included three regional consultations with budget allocated to hire an expert facilitator to support the process.⁵
- **Sierra Leone:** At the start of the process for drafting the Plan, awareness raising regarding the OGP was carried out in 12 districts, Western Area (rural and urban) and in the Diaspora (Belgium, U.S. and U.K.). The process started with sensitization before consultation, an approach that became an innovation in the OGP process. Afterward, a nationwide consultation was held in all 14 districts.⁶

2 Guillán Montero, Aránzazu (2015) *OGP and transparency in Chile: Balancing leadership, implementation capacity and ambition*, Bergen, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre.

3 Lasha Gogidze (2015), *Georgia Progress Report, Independent Reporting Mechanism*.

4 Francoli, Mary, Alina Ostling and Fabro Steibel (2015) *From Informing to Empowering: Improving Government-Civil Society Interactions within OGP*, Hivos-IDRC, Ottawa, p.18, available at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/case-study/informing-empowering-improving-government-civil-society-interactions-within-ogp-0>.

5 <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/case-study/informing-empowering-improving-government-civil-society-interactions-within-ogp-0>.

6 Samba-Sesay, Marcella (2015) "Open-Government Partnership Process in Sierra Leone: Engaging in mutually respectful manner and Finding a common ground to actualise the reforms we need", available at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/marcella-samba-sesay/2015/06/24/ogp-process-sierra-leone-engaging-mutually-respectful-manner>.



The methodologies to conduct the consultation meetings have to be carefully selected in order to enable a truly deliberative process in which a wide array of positions are expressed and considered, in order to reach agreements based on the exchange of arguments and justifications.

Deliberation should be based on basic principles:⁷

- **Reciprocity in the context of decision-making:** participants owe one another introductory arguments that justify their preferred option. This way of exchanging justifications allows reaching a reasonable agreement.
- **Mutually-binding decisions:** deliberations have to produce agreements that make decisions mutually binding to help ensure that participants recognize the final decisions as legitimate and abide by them.
- **Mutual respect:** participants show respect to one another by making an effort to move the dialogue forward and find common ground. While not ignoring present grievances, their focus is on seeing how current situation can be improved.
- **Publicity:** deliberations are public and transparent.
- **Accountability:** public officials have to provide justification for accepting or rejecting input from the deliberative process, and, in the case of proposals they will take on board, they also accept scrutiny of their performance in implementing them.

The following should be considered in the construction of the consultation methodology:⁸

- Avoid paralysis and reduce distrust by achieving mutual respect and acknowledging conflict. This method should allow the candid expression of different positions and, at the same time, enable agreements.
- Clear objectives about the goals and scope of the consultation process in order to manage expectations. Additionally, rules should be laid out from the start and, hopefully, co-created with the participants. These rules should make the process transparent and prevent arbitrary decisions.
- Achieve a common understanding of OGP's aims, principles, challenges and procedures in order to allow relevant proposals to have a greater impact.

CONSULTATION TECHNIQUES

Many techniques are available to conduct consultation events. They must be selected based on the specific context in which the consultation will be carried out. In deciding which methodologies to use during the consultation, available resources and capabilities should carefully considered.

7 Based on Amy Gutman and Dennis Thompson (2009), *Princeton, Princeton University Press* p. 133.

8 Based on Generalitat de Catalunya (2007), *Del aquí no al así sí*, Barcelona, Departament d'Interior. *Relacions Institucionals i Participació*.



Selected Consultation Techniques

TECHNIQUES	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES AND RECOMMENDED USE
Nominal Group Technique	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator presents the group (5-18 participants) with a question that is open ended (not a “yes” or “no” question). 2. Participants answer the question by themselves, silently, in writing during 5-10 minutes. 3. After the end of the allocated time each participant reads his/her answer aloud. 4. Facilitator records the ideas in a flip chart or board, consolidating those that are similar. 5. Participants can ask questions to clarify the meaning of others' ideas, but no debate is allowed. 6. When all participants have voiced their answers, the facilitator summarizes the ideas, identifying convergences. 7. An exercise to prioritize ideas can follow by, for instance, voting on the most relevant ideas. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Duration: 1 hour, aprox., per question</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allows a larger number of more diverse ideas to be generated in comparison with open discussion. ■ Particularly useful to identify causes or effects of a problem and for generating solution alternatives. ■ Recommended for conducting diagnostics or for generating a preliminary list of action proposals. ■ Requires the group members to be in the same room, no virtual participation (e.g., via video conference) allowed.
Delphi Technique	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A problem is defined and participants are expected to provide ideas for refining the definition or to put forward solutions. 2. A carefully constructed questionnaire, with open-ended questions (no multiple option) is sent to the participants (by mail or email). 3. Members are given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. 4. The returned answers are centrally tabulated and similar ideas consolidated. 5. Copies of the answers are distributed among participants (mail or email). 6. Participants are required to review the results and select a proposed solution or put forward new proposals. 7. Steps 4 through 6 are repeated until a manageable number of viable solutions is agreed by the group (usually 3 round is enough). <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Duration: 2 weeks, aprox., for each round</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allows a larger number of more diverse ideas to be generated in comparison with open discussion. ■ Can be used in very large groups (from few people to hundreds). ■ Does not require the physical presence of the participants in the same location. ■ Particularly useful in the case of expert panels.
Fish-bowling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An issue or problem to be debated is selected. 2. Time for the debate is allocated (usually 45 minutes to 1 hour). 3. Seats are arranged in a circle, leaving enough space in the center to have 4-5 chairs for the speakers. 4. The rest of the group sits around as observers. They are not allowed to speak unless a speaker asks one of the observers to intervene. 5. The moderator is in charge of moving the debate forward, giving the floor to the speakers in an orderly way and keeping control of the time. 6. The moderator or a rapporteur records the ideas on a board. 7. Once the allocated time runs out, the moderator presents a summary of the ideas obtained. 8. The whole group (speakers and observers) can now proceed to vote for their preferred idea(s). <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Duration: 1.5-2 hours per session</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Useful to have a more open debate, with people representing different positions around an issue. ■ Allows an orderly debate in large groups while, at the same time, keeping control of the time. ■ Useful to address issues that have resulted in impasse or blockage in previous sessions or meetings. ■ Particularly useful to define objectives and debating alternative solutions.



FOLLOWING UP ON NATIONAL ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS

Monitoring the implementation of Plans has been a challenge in many countries. The Forum plays a crucial role in ensuring that the energy and interest generated during the construction of the Plan does not fade.

The Forum should take into consideration issues that could make monitoring difficult or ineffective:

- **Lack of sufficient and adequate documentation.** If the Forum is to be an effective space to monitor the implementation of the Plan, it is important to define documentation standards for public officials responsible for implementing OGP commitments. Assigning a civil society partner to support public officials in the implementation process, and making sure they properly report their activities, challenges and results, can prove useful. This entails not only recording quantifiable dimensions of performance, but also qualitative information. Getting the documentation right from the start not only makes the Forum's work more meaningful, it is also useful for the OGP reporting process.
- **Lack of relevant capabilities.** One aspect that can reduce the effectiveness of the Forum in monitoring progress is the lack of participants with specific technical skills. Some OGP issues and challenges can demand expert or professional expertise in order to move forward. For example, in Croatia there was a need for improving public sector skills related to conducting consultation and dialogue with civil society and groups engaged in information technology work.⁹ In other cases, such as in Peru, while active CSOs in the areas of transparency and anti-corruption were present, it was challenging to find civil society partners to follow up on commitments related to other OGP issues such as fiscal transparency and public procurement.¹⁰ In other cases, those involved do not have enough time or resources to participate continuously in the OGP process without jeopardizing their other responsibilities.
- **Lack of resources for implementing Plan commitments.** An issue that frequently affects the implementation of a Plan is the lack of specific budget allocations to execute commitments. For instance, IT projects can demand substantial resources. The Forum can play an advocacy role, promoting dialogue with the government's financial authorities in order to increase their awareness of the OGP process and to promote the investment of public resources in advancing openness. This demands a proactive approach from Forum members, who can engage closely with public officials that believe in the importance of the OGP process and wish to see it move beyond its scrutiny and accountability functions.

9 Francoli, Mary, Alina Ostling and Fabro Steibel (2015) *From Informing to Empowering: Improving Government-Civil Society Interactions within OGP*, Hivos-IDRC, Ottawa, p.19 (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/case-study/informing-empowering-improving-government-civil-society-interactions-within-ogp-0>), and "Selected country experiences with the OGP process at the national level" (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/blog-editor/2012/12/18/selected-country-experiences-ogp-process-national-level-croatia>).

10 Francoli, Ostling and Steibel, p. 67.



- **Lack of implementation and monitoring partnerships.** One key role of the Forum during the Plan's implementation phase is to promote partnerships that support government with research, expertise or training. This increases the likelihood of a country meeting its commitments by the end of a Plan cycle and also incorporates other actors into the monitoring work.
- **Lack of timely feedback.** The Forum has to promote learning by generating information and assessments that improve the operation of government overall and the implementation of the Plan in particular. This requires continuously identifying lessons learned and areas that require adjustment. It also requires engagement in sincere and positive dialogue with those in charge of implementing OGP strategies.



Case Study: SIERRA LEONE

Monitoring and accountability

Sierra Leone has established a dual model for monitoring the implementation of the Plan:

- **General Forum:** A national Steering Committee as a permanent forum having monthly meetings and ad hoc sessions as needed.
 - **Smaller Forum:** Cluster hubs to monitor, accelerate and discuss progress on bigger challenges and commitments. These are broken down in line with the four grand challenges (clusters) and commitments.
- A monitoring framework – the Performance Management and Service Delivery Unit (PMSD) in the Office of the President – presents a quarterly evaluation report on the implementation of the Plan that is discussed and improved in a seven-day national consultation process.
- **Day 1:** At the end of each quarter, PMSD drafts an evaluation report on implementation progress.
 - **Day 2:** Implementation report is submitted to the Steering Committee, Open Government Initiative and CSO Monitoring group for review.
 - **Day 3:** Report is accepted by relevant stakeholders and prepared for national consultations.
 - **Day 4-6:** Steering Committee members consult across the country for three days.
 - **Day 7:** Nationwide a press conference and a symposium are held in Freetown to communicate Plan implementation progress.

The national Steering Committee then takes the final report to all 14 districts in the country. At the same time, the civil society group conducts its own monitoring exercise that uses a tool for collecting and verifying data presented by those in charge of implementing the Plan's commitments. This approach aims at establishing checks and balances within the OGP process.

Source: Samba-Sesay, Marcella (2015), "Sierra Leone Open Government Partnership Model", presentation at the OGP Global Summit, Mexico City, 27th October, 2015 and Samba-Sesay, Marcella (2015) "Open-Government Partnership Process in Sierra Leone: Engaging in mutually respectful manner and Finding a common ground to actualize the reforms we need": [<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/marcella-samba-sesay/2015/06/24/ogp-process-sierra-leone-engaging-mutually-respectful-manner>]

REPORTING AND ASSESSING PLAN RESULTS

The Plan cycle ends with the reporting activities specified in the OGP Articles of Governance. Government has to produce mid-term and end-of-term self-assessments. The first focuses on the development of the Plan, the consultation process, its relevance and ambition of the commitments, and progress to date. The end of term focuses on the results of the reforms introduced, the consultation during implementation, and lessons learned.



Additionally, the IRM produces mid-term and end-of-term progress reports that consider the information contained in the self-assessments and other information from interviews and group discussions with stakeholders and from other documents available.

OGP Articles of Governance, VI OGP Reporting Processes

All OGP participating governments are to publish a midterm self-assessment report at most three months after the end of the first year of action plan implementation. This report should follow OGP guidelines in assessing the government's performance in meeting its OGP commitments, according to the substance and timelines set out in its national action plan. This report should be made publicly available in the local language(s) and in English. It should be published on the OGP website. An end of term self-assessment report will be required after two years of action plan implementation.

IRM: As a complement to the participating government's self-assessment report, an independent progress report is to be written by well-respected governance researchers, preferably from each OGP participating country. These researchers are to use a common OGP

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

In general, information required for drafting reports relates to the following issues: ¹¹

- **The characteristics of the consultation during the Plan development:** evidence of the availability of timeline, adequate notice, conduct of awareness raising activities, the use of multiple consultation channels, the number and diversity of the participants and the documentation of the consultation results as well as government feedback to the collected proposals.
- **Consultation during the implementation:** evidence of the existence of a Forum in the country, the frequency and regularity of its meetings and the information on the Forum's participants.
- **The use of the IRM reports:** evidence of knowledge and use of the findings in the IRM reports to improve the OGP process in the country.
- **Implementation of the Plan commitments:** evidence of the relevance, ambition and completion of Plan commitments.

11 OGP Self-Assessment Report Guidance Note: [<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/6850>]



- **Progress on eligibility criteria:** evidence of the country's efforts to improve its performance on the OGP eligibility criteria, if included in the Plan.
- **Peer exchange and learning:** evidence of involvement in peer exchange and learning activities, if any.
- **Lessons learned, complementary initiatives, next steps and conclusions.**

The Forum can play an important role in these reporting activities. It can make sure that the required information is presented thoroughly and in a timely fashion. It can clarify information presented. And it can document its own assessment of the implementation process as well as the functioning of the Forum to complement information from the government.

The Forum can provide the IRM report researcher with access to key participants who can present their members' opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the OGP process in their country. In this respect, the Forum should provide as much information as possible early in the IRM reporting process to ensure that all relevant data is available and that the Forum members' points of view receive adequate consideration by the researcher.

Finally, and more importantly, the Forum has to use the information contained in the reports in order to improve the implementation of the Plan and to better strategize for the development of the next Plan.

GOING BEYOND THE PLAN: PROMOTING OPEN GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The challenges to openness in each country can be numerous, complex and long-standing. They may require multiple interventions over a long time. OGP National Action Plans cannot be expected to resolve all the challenges and their underlying causes. Action Plans operate on a short time frame, with limited resources, and the information and technologies at its disposal are sometimes imperfect or unreliable.

Because of this, building open government policy cannot be confined to the OGP Plans. More actors are pushing openness initiatives, more public sector institutions are showing interest (e.g. the legislative and judicial branches) and new technological solutions are being developed every day. The Forum's representatives have to be aware of this and act proactively to go beyond the OGP process. They should promote openness in innovative ways in order to support initiatives that work in parallel to the Plan and take advantage of peer learning opportunities within the country and internationally.

Openness requires contributions from diverse sources and the sustained mobilization of all kinds of social resources – all aimed at making a difference in people's lives.





Forum design, management activities and promising practices

This handbook has presented concepts, activities and country cases that aim at guiding stakeholders in the process of establishing and managing a Multistakeholder Forum. The basic issues have been covered and promising practices highlighted. This guide does not promote the direct transfer of experiences from one country to another. It intends to provide information to key decision-makers to help them reflect on the challenges of setting up a Forum. However, context-specific knowledge and political and managerial skills will be required of local stakeholders in order to adapt the ideas presented here to the particular circumstances of each country. In the following pages, we present a summary of the different issues addressed in this document.

Phase one: Creation of the Forum

KEY QUESTIONS	ACTIVITIES	PROMISING PRACTICES	COUNTRY CASE STUDIES
How to start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Get political support. ■ Mobilize leadership inside and outside government. ■ Define steps to follow. ■ Understand Forum models. ■ Know the strengths and weaknesses of different models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Map key stakeholders. ■ Involve effective leaders. ■ Define steps for establishing the Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uruguay: Technical assistance from UNESCO. ■ El Salvador: Strong leadership leads to reform. ■ Sierra Leone: Dedicated OGP Forum builds partnerships. ■ Peru: A multi-sectorial commission. ■ Brazil: Ministries coordinate open government.
Who should participate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recruit government representatives. ■ Recruit Civil Society representatives. ■ Involve other actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High and mid-level representatives with capacity to coordinate across government and with experience in working in or with Civil Society organizations. ■ Fair and transparent selection mechanism, with high degrees of empowerment to CSO to select their representatives. ■ Consider national context to adapt the different alternatives available (degree of consolidation of national CSO and territorial representation). ■ Involve experts and facilitators to improve decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sierra Leone: Forum structure. ■ Mexico: Electing Forum representatives. ■ Estonia: Inviting civil society representation in the Forum. ■ Brazil: Self-selecting civil society representatives.



Phase Two: Managing the Forum

KEY QUESTIONS	ACTIVITIES	PROMISING PRACTICES	COUNTRY CASE STUDIES
How should the Forum work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share information. ■ Establish frequency and format of meetings. ■ Make decisions. ■ Coordinate with agencies, local governments and other branches of government. ■ Manage difficult situations. ■ Evaluation and accountability sustain involvement and energy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify information needs of Forum participants. ■ Establish the Forum's communication system. ■ Meet frequently, with monthly, bimonthly or quarterly regular meetings, plus additional ones when necessary. ■ Establish rules for attendance and decision making (emphasizing consensus with voting as last resort). ■ Create coordination mechanism with external actors by incorporating them into the Forum or creating specialized subgroups. ■ Manage risks. ■ Evaluate by means of deliberative assessment of activities. ■ Establish Public Accountability Mechanisms (take advantage of technology). ■ Plan for short-term results. ■ Develop capabilities. ■ Search for simple solutions to resources' constraints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Georgia: Creating the Open Government Forum. ■ Argentina, Peru and Mexico: Forum decision-making models. ■ Case studies: Coordination with external stakeholders. ■ Chile: Managing changes in local government. ■ Brazil: Transparency and accountability online. ■ Armenia: Training to use monitoring tools. ■ Ghana: Forum bonding. ■ Croatia: Issue roundtables.



Phase Three: Forum and Plan implementation

KEY QUESTIONS	ACTIVITIES	PROMISING PRACTICES	COUNTRY CASE STUDIES
How should the Forum intervene in the OGP Action Plan Cycle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Draft Plan. ■ Implement Plan. ■ Develop and Publish Midterm Self-Assessment. ■ Develop and Publish IRM Progress Report. ■ Develop and Publish Plan Final Self-Assessment. ■ Develop and Publish IRM Plan End of Term Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a participatory methodology to develop Plan, considering OGP Consultation Guidance. ■ Conduct awareness raising activities. ■ Promote a deliberation conducive methodology in the process of consultation. ■ Promote adequate documentation of OGP activities. ■ Develop monitoring capabilities. ■ Promote the allocation of resources for implementing Plan commitments. ■ Create implementation partnerships. ■ Provide timely feedback to those responsible for Plan implementation. ■ Familiarize with OGP reporting standards and requirements. ■ Make sure quality information is timely. ■ Discuss performance. ■ Document the Forum's own performance. ■ Engage with and facilitate the work of IRM researcher. ■ Use the reports information to improve. ■ Promote openness policies beyond OGP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mexico: Developing the Plan co-creation methodology. ■ Uruguay: Consultation. ■ Monitoring the Plan in Croatia and Mexico. ■ Sierra Leone: Monitoring and accountability.



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