

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) BY THE NUMBERS: WHAT THE IRM DATA TELLS US ABOUT OGP RESULTS

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

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) is a key means by which all stakeholders can track OGP progress in participating countries. The IRM produces independent progress reports for each country participating in OGP. In addition to assessing governments on the development and implementation of OGP action plans and on their progress in fulfilling open government principles, the progress reports make technical recommendations for improvements. These reports are intended to stimulate dialogue and promote accountability between member governments and citizens. Further information on the IRM, indicators, and the IRM process can be found at: www.opengovpartnership.org/independent-reporting-mechanism.

In the 18 months since the formation of the IRM, IRM researchers (national experts) in 43 countries have produced 43 IRM reports. Taken as a whole, the IRM reports provide insight on how OGP is working as a platform to advance ambitious policy reforms.

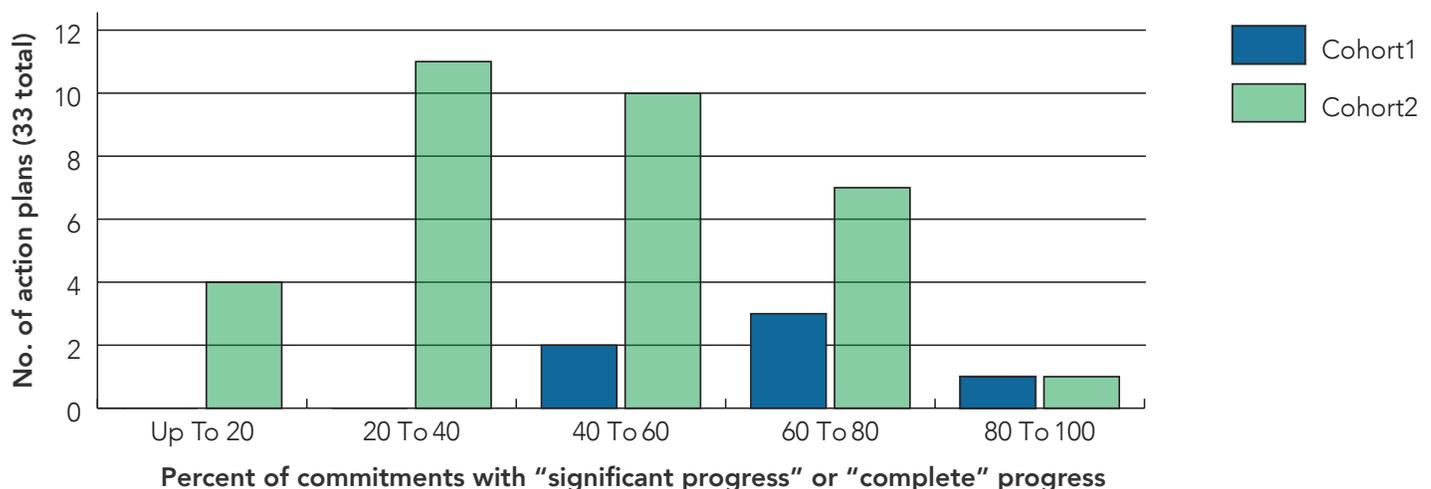
WHAT DO THE IRM REPORTS TELL US ABOUT OGP ACTION PLAN COMMITMENTS?

All OGP participating countries are required to develop a biannual OGP action plan including ambitious, concrete reform commitments.

What was the rate of completion of OGP action plan commitments?

Implementation of OGP action plans was uneven. A group of countries completed or made significant progress on many commitments, but a larger group completed less than half of all commitments. See Figure A. Completion varied widely between the first and second cohort. It is almost certain that the rates of completion following IRM assessment are likely to rise, as the IRM research period did not include the final months of implementation.

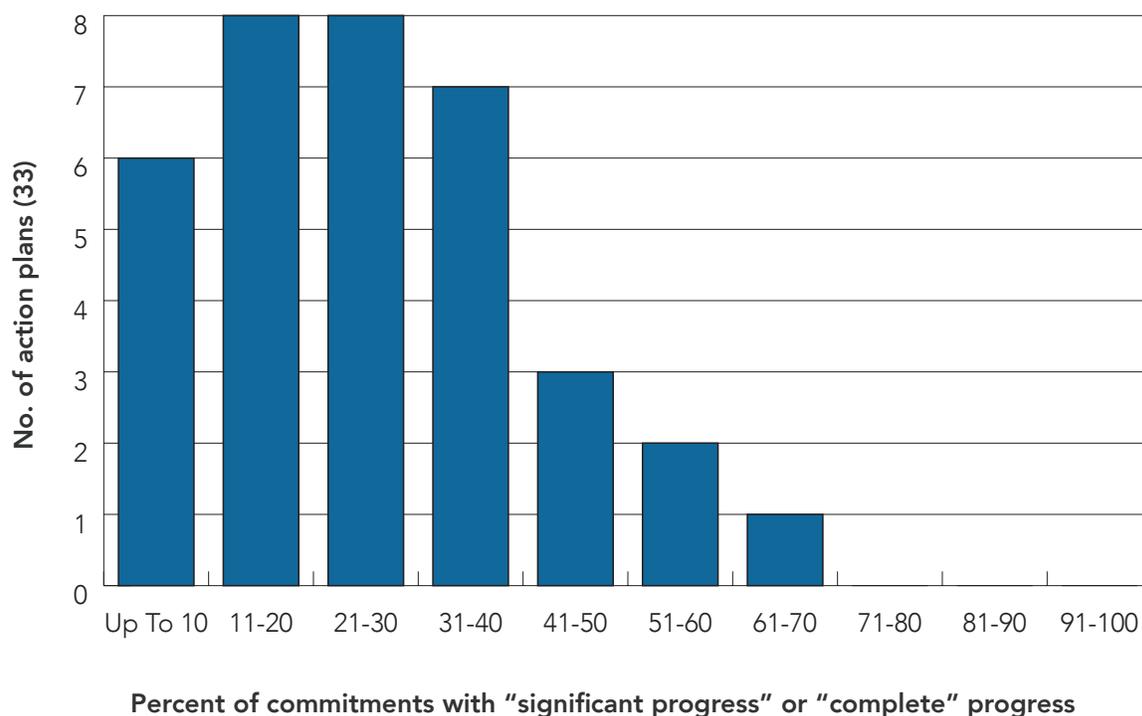
Figure A | Commitments with significant progress or complete showed wide variation.



How many OGP action plan commitments were “model” OGP commitments?

The IRM assigns stars to commitments that are (1) specific enough to be measured; (2) clearly relevant to themes of open government; (3) potentially transformative or moderately impactful; and (4) have significant or better levels of completion. This is a good proxy for countries that are achieving major results through their OGP action plans. On a very positive note, 200 commitments received stars, meaning that significant results have been achieved. Most OGP countries had around 25% of their commitments starred. Although a few lagged behind, other countries saw significant achievements. Those working on OGP would do well to learn lessons from high performers. Again, as the assessment did not include the last several months of implementation, the number of starred commitments can be expected to rise.

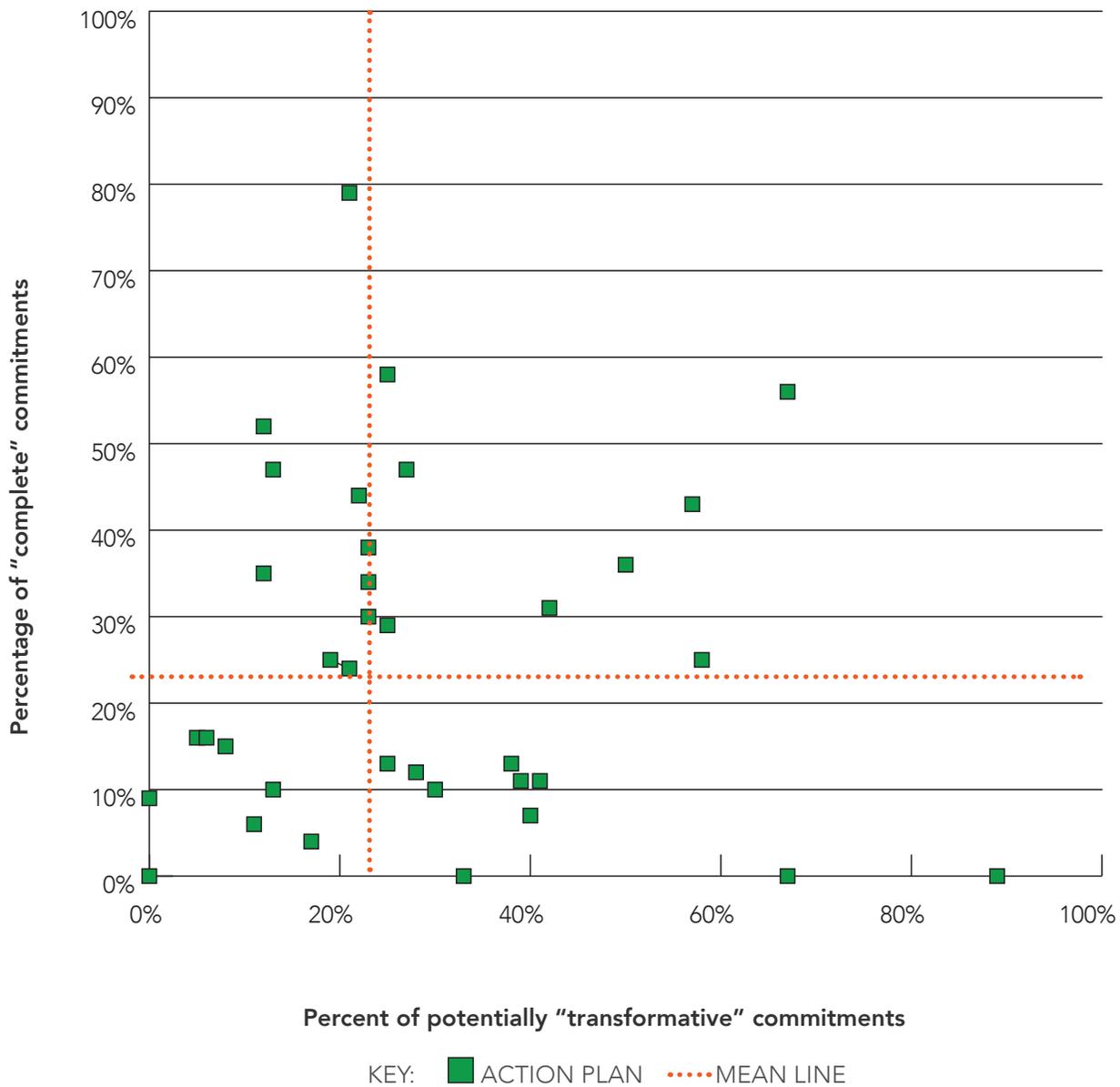
Figure B | Distribution of action plans by percent starred commitments.



Were more ambitious action plans implemented?

More ambitious action plans are not necessarily implemented less often. While some countries with high ambition did not achieve what they set out to do in the first year, many others did. Again, lessons can be drawn from countries with high potential impact and implementation. Figure C below shows how various action plans performed relative to the mean. As can be seen, a number of countries with higher-potential impact action plans also had higher rates of completion. This is promising. Had all high-potential impact action plans remained incomplete, there would be more reason to doubt how much OGP might accomplish. Because of this, a next step for the OGP community will be to learn from countries with high levels of both potential impact and implementation.

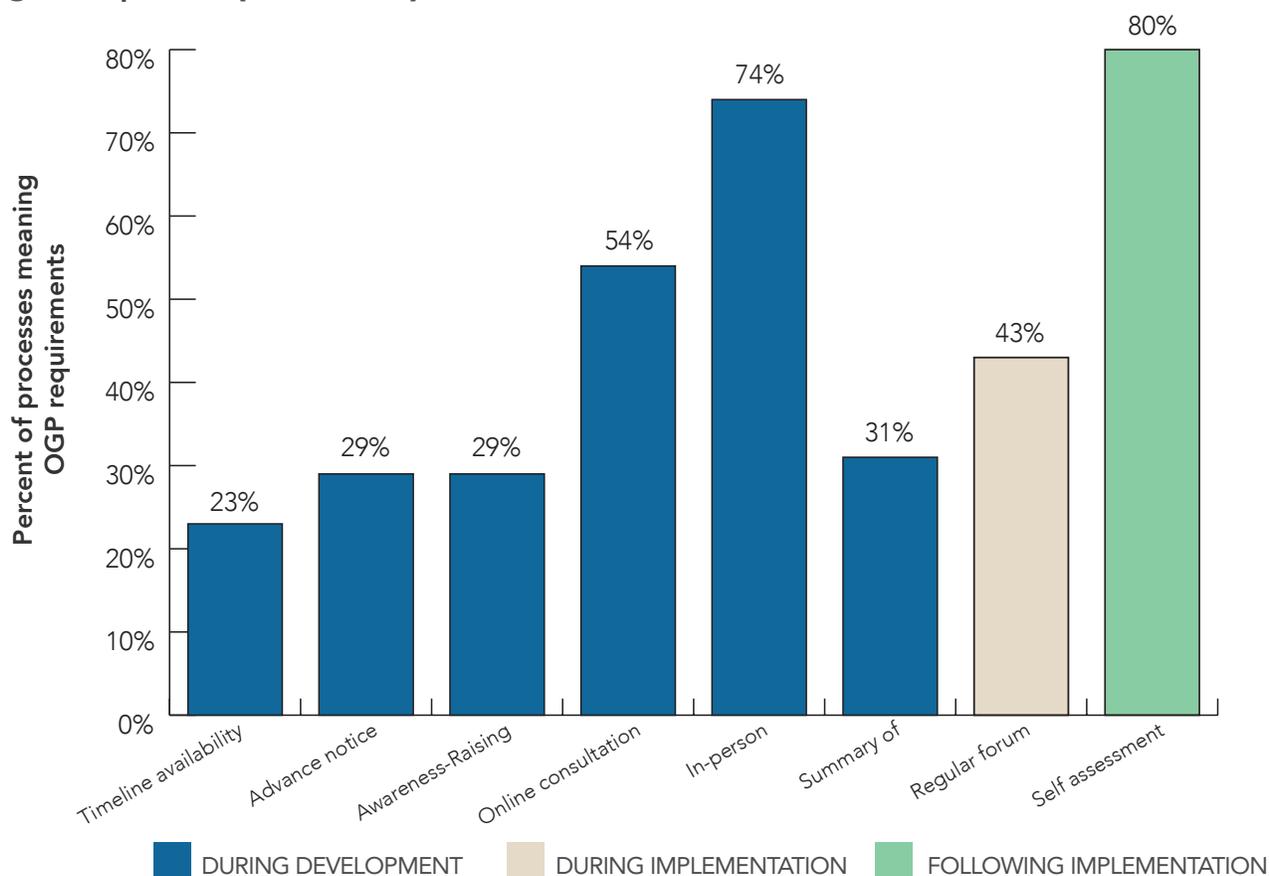
Figure C | Action plans by ambition and degree of completion.



How many OGP countries followed the OGP process?

The IRM assessed governments for conformity to the OGP process for the second cohort of 35 countries joining in 2016. While most countries did not follow all of the OGP process requirements, three-quarters held in-person consultations with civil society and four-fifths completed a detailed self-assessment within three months of the due date. There was, generally, a higher rate of performance during the self-assessment phase when more OGP staff was available to provide guidance to participating countries. Nonetheless, major improvements are needed during the second round of drafting action plans.

Figure D | Which process steps were followed?



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The IRM can serve as a learning tool in addition to an accountability tool, especially around the OGP process, action plan commitments, and institutions. The OGP Support Unit, in collaboration with other organizations, will need to carry out or commission further research to measure ultimate outcomes and impacts.
2. Completed and "starred" commitments are two key indicators of success at the national action plan level. As OGP participating countries implement their next action plans, they will need to continue to innovate and to build off countries with high potential impact commitments and high rates of implementation. Ideally this number will increase over the next round of reports.
3. While there are high performers in many of the aspects of OGP, a large number of countries face deficits with regard to their basic participation in OGP. Priorities will need to be established around which countries will need additional assistance.
4. OGP process requirements are not uniformly followed. Evidence suggests that compliance with process requirements may be related more closely to other measures of success.
5. At this time, it is inconclusive (based on IRM data) which institutional arrangements are more conducive to the successful development and implementation of an OGP action plan.
6. The OGP Support Unit will need continued investment in direct country support, peer learning, and civil society support. It has already begun this work, and future IRM reports will be able to shine light on the fruits of this labor.