

Making Climate Commitments through the Open Government Partnership

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Incoming co-chairs of the Open Government Partnership*

I. Why should the Open Government Partnership be used as a forum to make climate commitments?

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. The [Paris Agreement](#) adopted in December 2015 provides a framework for multilateral cooperation on climate change. A central issue in the new Agreement is the strengthening of transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure countries make progress on achieving their national determined contributions and other commitments. One of the key areas for transparency improvement is the design and implementation of climate policies. The Paris Agreement is premised on effective:

- i. Transparency on greenhouse gas emissions, targets and their adequacy and the implementation of mitigation actions and adaptation efforts;
- ii. Transparency on the level of financial support, technology transfer and capacity building provided or received;
- iii. Transparency as part of the compliance and review process;
- iv. Transparency on policy and project level decision-making that can contribute to decarbonisation of the economy at national, subnational and company levels;
- v. Capacity building and public participation to enhance actions under the Agreement;
- vi. Measures to ensure the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions for national climate action.

The Paris agreement also constitutes an unprecedented recognition of the role of non-State actors in tackling climate change and contributing to the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures. Responding to this opportunity, subnational entities (local authorities, cities and regions) and businesses have made thousands of climate commitments, announced at COP21.

The success of the Paris agreement now lies in its implementation, in particular through the transposition of national contributions into strong public policies and investment plans for mitigation and adaptation. Cooperation among actors, exchange of good practices, and access to information is central to effective implementation. In this respect [Article 12 of the Paris Agreement](#) notes the importance of public participation and public access to information to enhancing actions under this Agreement.

Article 12 requires countries to develop new capacities for collecting, processing, and sharing information on country level action. It implies a similar effort from subnational actors that have made commitments related to climate action. It also requires new levels of progressive action to facilitate public access (whether at national or subnational level) to data and information on climate change initiatives, policies and results of actions to ensure the public can participate in decision-making processes to address and respond to climate change. While the UNFCCC remains the body responsible for the preparation and the adoption of the decision on transparency and public participation, ***we believe governments can accelerate progress on these objectives by making climate action commitments in their OGP National Action Plans. City,***

municipal and regional governments can adopt a similar approach at the local level under the OGP Subnational Governments Pilot Program.

Why make open government commitments on the implementation of the Paris Agreement?

The OGP offers an opportunity for governments to build on momentum around the implementation of the Paris Agreement and incorporate transformational open government climate commitments into national level programs.

This next section of this brief offers specific climate commitments for consideration by governments, subnational actors and civil society organizations in OGP National Action Plans.

II. What types of climate commitments can be made?

There are a number of different types of commitments that could be made by countries; several of these are directly applicable to subnational government authorities.

- a. ***More transparent and participatory development of climate policies at the local, national and international level*** (using proxies measures on both mitigation and action)
 - i. **Creating timely, robust and transparent public participation processes** for the design of local and national climate strategies and plans, including nationally determined contributions; long-term, mid-century low emissions strategies; and other national submissions (including National Communications, Biannual Reports and Biannual Update Reports, National Adaptation Plans, etc.).
 - ii. **Ensuring a breadth of consultation** with relevant ministries, including civil society, scientists, trade unions, marginalized groups, local authorities and the private sector, to seek a diverse range of views and inputs. Also providing adequate notice to ensure accessibility and opportunity to engage in the preparation and submissions of national and local climate submissions to international bodies (National Communications, Biannual Reports and Biannual Update Reports, National Adaptation Plans, etc.)
 - iii. **Documenting the outcome of public consultation and government responses** and all individual written comment submissions that were made available (e.g. online, through dashboards).

- b. ***Providing user-friendly data and information regarding climate-related action***
 - i. **Creating a user-friendly public tool to track policy implementation** with critical milestones in specific sectors. Countries and subnational actors could commit to track policies through a central database that showcases progress on commitments, including toward specific greenhouse gas targets, renewable energy, forest restoration, clean mobility, green buildings, and other policy goals and targets.
 - ii. **Providing adequate and relevant climate information to the public at the policy and project level (reactively and proactively)** with a focus on usability, accessibility and publicity.

- iii. **Releasing information or datasets in open data formats** to meet the requirements of the [Doha Plan of Action](#) that would help educate, empower and engage all stakeholders.
- c. **Measures to ensure the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions for national climate action.**
 - i. **Establish national legislative frameworks** for open and inclusive climate change institutions, policy making and reporting processes;
 - ii. **Build the awareness and understanding of diverse country-level stakeholders** concerning national commitments and needs for climate change policies through multiple communication channels, including for ministries (e.g., environment, energy, planning, finance, agriculture), local authorities, civil society, private sector, parliamentarians, and academia; and
 - iii. **Establish an appropriate legal and regulatory framework for the collection and supply of climate-change relevant data, including from the private sector**, and build partnerships with national statistics bodies, climate research institutions, and regional centers of excellence to enhance understanding of climate change impacts. *The French example of the law on energy transition, with Article 173 related to the mandatory disclosure of climate-related information by companies, offers a good practice to be shared more widely.*

III. Current OGP Climate Commitments

Only a few OGP countries have currently incorporated pioneering climate commitments in their respective national action plans which other countries can draw on. These include:

- i. **France: [2015-2016 Action Plan](#)** committed to: Involve civil society in the COP21 conference and promote transparency regarding the agenda and negotiations; Invest in Opening data sets and creating visualizations related to climate and sustainable development; Provide on the platform [data.gouv.fr](#) data, models and simulators regarding climate, energy transition; Release and publish data from impact assessment; Initiate new collaborations with civil society to develop innovative solutions to meet the challenges of climate change; Open and organize dialogue between stakeholders in climate change in a participatory approach.
- ii. **Mexico: [2013-2014 Action Plan](#) committed to:** Strengthen the collection of information and data on the environment and change climate to improve public policy decision-making. Priority is given to statistical and geographical information made available in open formats.
- iii. **United States: [2013-2014 Action Plan](#) committed to:** Manage Arctic Data as a Strategic Asset; Work to Stimulate Partnerships and Innovation; Release high-value climate-related datasets and data products and work to expand the availability and accessibility of climate-relevant data worldwide and promote the development of new technologies, products, and information services that can help solve real-life problems.

IV. Recommendations

1. Countries should consider including transformational commitments in their NAPs to strengthen the implementation of the Paris Agreement based on the following elements:

- i. *More transparent and participatory development of climate policies at the national level;*
- ii. *Releasing in open data key environmental datasets and climate models and encourage their reuse;*
- iii. *Measures to ensure the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions for national climate action.*

Subnational governments and local authorities can adopt a similar approach.

2. The OGP provides an opportunity for promoting open government innovations in the climate arena. Through the OGP, like-minded governments and city administrations can develop a strong and accountable process for co-creation of commitments with civil society and robust reporting through the Independent Reporting Mechanism.
3. Opportunities should be sought to promote learning and understanding on climate commitments between non-OGP member countries and OGP members. Civil society organizations can play a role in sharing lessons learnt and adoption of best practices from the OGP with the climate community.

RESOURCES

- For tools that help you measure the status of National Determined Contributions see <http://cait.wri.org/>
- For tools that help measure how open and participatory law and practice is in relation to the environment, see the [Environmental Democracy Index](#).

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