

OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit



What is the purpose of this handbook?

Dear reader,

Welcome to OGP's Participation and Co-creation Toolkit! Following on the heels of the Participation and Co-creation Standards roll-out in 2017, this Toolkit is to guide you through the various steps and best practices laid out therein, illustrated with a multitude of rich examples and models from across the Partnership.

OGP's promise is to do government differently, opening it up by bringing (back) citizens into the design, implementation and monitoring of government. Not just for the principle of it, but most importantly to make government more effective and efficient, less corrupt, more trusted. In short, to make government deliver better for the people. It is more important than ever that citizen engagement and public participation are enacted properly to provide the necessary impetus and oversight for good governance.

As OGP we have learned a lot about creating opportunities for dialogue and participation. Getting co-creation wrong is very easy, getting it right is hard work. Sometimes it fails because there is no real willingness to engage, more often because we lack the skills and knowledge.

This handbook will hopefully help with getting it right. I hope it will not only inspire you to nail co-creation and participation within OGP but perhaps more importantly to get it right across government.

This Toolkit would not have existed without the great examples you have shared with the OGP Support Unit over the years. Your experiences help us inspire your peers every day. Special thanks also to Tim Hughes and Peter Varga for pulling it all together in such a compelling way. I hope the Toolkit before you will be helpful and inspirational in your efforts to co-create open government reforms.

OGP is ultimately about making governments work for and with their people, to everyone's benefit. We hope that this Toolkit will benefit you in this endeavor and trust that your efforts will yield ever more impressive results and examples of co-creating for a better and more open government.

Sincerely,

Paul Maassen

Chief Country Support
Open Government Partnership



How to use this toolkit

This interactive Toolkit was arranged in a useful Question& Answer format. It allows you to navigate its contents and find the relevant sections you are looking for through three main ways, to be found on the navigational header on top of each page. In the top left-hand corner, you can click on "Contents", "Matrix" or "Map" to take you to these navigational options.

CONTENTS

Not surprisingly, this points to the table of contents with the list of questions and answers grouped in three main Parts and ten chapters:

- Part I (with Chapters 1 through 3) is for every stakeholder working on OGP, governments and civil society actors alike.
- Part II (with Chapters 4 through 7) contains guidance mainly relevant for government decision-makers and official, while
- Part III (with Chapters 8 through 10) provide guidance deemed useful mostly for civil society stakeholders.

You can also jump directly to these Parts by clicking the relevant title at the top of each page.

MATRIX

This table serves as a neat catalog of all Participation and Co-creation Standards in a single-page layout. You can click on any standard - be it a basic requirement or an advanced step - from whichever phase of the co-creation cycle you prefer, covering any of the three main areas of engaging civil society (i.e. dissemination of information, provision of spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-ownership and joint decision making), to take you to the page of that specific standard and the examples to help implement it.

MAP

The Toolkit relies on over 100 examples from 39 participating entities across the Partnership to illustrate the variety and resourcefulness in implementing OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards. The Map collects these examples and allows you to easily find and navigate to them for inspiration.

Acknowledgements:

We sincerely thank all national and local stakeholders and OGP supporters, as well as OGP Support Unit staff who contributed their rich experiences about public participation and co-creation good practices from across the Partnership.

This Toolkit was written and assembled by Tim Hughes from Involve and Peter Varga from the OGP Support Unit, and designed by [Richard Scott](#).

Naturally, not all the myriad good practices could be featured, and we welcome your comments and inputs for later editions via ideabox@opengovpartnership.org.

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How to use this toolkit

Throughout the Toolkit you will also find a grey margin on the left-hand side to help you find what you are looking for easier. Various icons assist you to quickly zoom in on the type of content you need:



Basic requirement



Advanced step



Standards applicable throughout the Action Plan cycle



Standards applicable when developing an Action Plan



Standards applicable when implementing an Action Plan



Standards applicable for dissemination of information



Standards applicable for spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation



Standards applicable for co-ownership and joint decision making



Interactive content, where you can click for navigation or more information



Indicates an example from a country or local entity



Indicates other OGP or third-party materials



Indicates value propositions and benefits



Indicates mandatory requirement



Indicates possibility for commenting or further input



Indicates further resources online



Indicates stand-alone checklist for you to track your progress

Glossary

AP - Action Plan

C&S - Criteria and Standards Subcommittee

CSO - civil society organization

IAP2 - International Association for Public Participation

IRM - Independent Reporting Mechanism

MSF - multi-stakeholder forum

NGO - non-governmental organization

OECD - Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development

OGN - Open Government Network

OGP - Open Government Partnership

PoC - Point of Contact (normally used in OGP for government PoCs)

SAR - Self-assessment Report

SC – Steering Committee

SU – Support Unit

ToR - Terms of Reference

WB - World Bank

WG - Working Group

Table of contents

Introduction	1
How to use this Toolkit	2
Acknowledgement	2
Glossary	3
Table of Contents	4
Standards Matrix	6
Map of examples	7

Part I. Guidance for all stakeholders

1. What is the case for co-creation?	8
Case study 1: Ukraine	8
1.1. Why are participation and co-creation important?	8
Box 1: Civil society roles in open government reform	10
1.2 How do I make the case for open government reforms?	11
2. What are co-creation requirements governments must fulfill?	12
Case study 2: Argentina	12
2.1. What are the requirements for an OGP dialogue?	13
2.2. When do the requirements apply?	14
2.3. What are the levels of engagement?	14
Box 2: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation	15
2.4. How will consultation processes be assessed?	16
Box 3: IRM process assessment	16
2.5. When and how do we provide reasoned response?	17
Box 4: Example of reasoned response for determining action plan themes	18
Box 5: Example of reasoned response for defining specific proposals	18
2.6. When will a country be considered as acting contrary to process?	18
2.7. What if my government has an alternative approach?	20
3. Where can we get more help?	21
3.1. What support is available from OGP?	21
3.2 What is the OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund?	23
3.3: What type of activities does the Trust Fund support?	23
3.4: Who can receive funding from the Trust Fund?	23
3.5. How can we share our good practices and accomplishments?	23

Part II. Guidance for government decision-makers and officials

4. What are ways to engage civil society throughout the OGP process?	24
Case study 3: Italy	24
4.1. What do the Participation and Co-creation Standards say?	25
4.2. What information should be communicated about the OGP process?	27
Box 6: Summary of key information to publish	28
Box 7: Summary of key information to communicate to stakeholders	29
Box 8: Elements of a repository	30
Box 9: Examples of document repositories	31
4.3. How should information about the OGP process be communicated?	31
Box 10: Examples of OGP websites and webpages	32
5. What is a multi-stakeholder forum?	35
Case Study 4: Philippines	35
Box 11: Ways to create a multi-stakeholder forum	37

Table of contents

5.1. Why should we establish a multi-stakeholder forum?	38
5.2. What role should the multi-stakeholder forum have?	39
5.3. Who should be involved in the multi-stakeholder forum?	41
5.4. How should the multi-stakeholder forum make decisions?	43
Box 12: Decision making approaches	44
Box 13: Seven principles of public life	45
Checklist 1: for engaging civil society throughout the OGP process	46
6. How should we develop an OGP Action Plan?	48
Case study 5: Australia	48
6.1. What do the Participation and Co-creation Standards say?	49
6.2. What information should be communicated about the Action Plan development?	52
6.3. When should we start?	54
Box 14: Considerations for scheduling the development of an Action Plan	55
6.4. Who should be involved in developing an Action Plan?	55
6.5. How should we involve stakeholders in developing the Action Plan?	57
Box 15: Online tools for crowdsourcing ideas	59
Box 16: Online tools for co-drafting commitments	60
Box 17: Tools for collecting public comments	62
6.6. What is the role of the multi-stakeholder forum in developing the Action Plan?	62
Checklist 2: for the Action Plan development stage	65
7. How should we implement, monitor and report on an OGP Action Plan?	67
Case study 6: Nigeria	67
7.1. What do the Participation and Co-creation Standards say?	68
7.2. What information should we communicate about the Action Plan implementation?	69
Box 18: Examples of commitment status dashboards	70
7.3. Who should be involved in implementing and monitoring an Action Plan?	70
7.4. How should we involve stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the AP?	71
7.5. What is the role of the multi-stakeholder forum in implementing the AP?	72
7.6. Who should be involved in reporting on an Action Plan?	74
Checklist 3: for the Action Plan implementing and monitoring stage	75
Part III. Guidance for civil society organisations and activists	
8. How to use OGP as an advocacy platform?	76
8.1. What is civil society's role in developing an action plan?	76
8.2. What are the key points for influencing an OGP action plan?	76
8.3. What tactics can I use to successfully advocate?	78
9. How can I mobilise and coordinate civil society advocacy?	81
9.1. Why is civil society mobilisation and coordination important?	81
9.2. How should a coalition/network be organised?	81
Box 20: OGP civil society coalitions	82
Box 21: Examples of civil society coalition terms of reference	83
9.3. Who should be involved in an OGP civil society coalition?	83
9.4. How should the coalition/network make decisions?	83
Box 22 Example: the UK OGN's decision making process	84
10. How can I ensure commitments are implemented?	85
10.1. What is civil society's role in implementing an action plan?	85
10.2. What is civil society's role in monitoring and evaluating an action plan?	85
Box 23: Advice from civil society leaders	86



Standards Matrix



✓ = BASIC
⚙ = ADVANCED

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION



Throughout AP cycle

- dedicated OGP website
- lead agency and PoC
- all administrative languages
- document repository
- advance communication



During development of AP

- involvement opportunities communicated
- regular development progress updates
- overview of contributions



During implementation of AP

- regular progress updates
- public comments possible
- regular joint gov't-CSO updates
- commitment progress dashboard

SPACES AND PLATFORMS



- MSF is formed
- MSF open to input
- remote participation possible
- Records are kept
- outreach and awareness-raising



- opportunities for participation in AP development
- adequate background information
- appropriate consultation methodology
- feedback on draft commitments, w/ opportunity to respond



- open implementation meetings
- implementation input encouraged



- strategy of inclusion
- wide-ranging outreach
- online discussion forum



- collaborative agenda-setting
- active promotion of opportunities for participation
- WGs for refining commitment ideas
- feedback on draft AP solicited



- public consultation on SAR
- meeting opportunity w/ minister(s)
- interactive progress discussion
- IRM findings discussion

DECISION-MAKING



- jointly developed MSF remit and governance
- balanced MSF
- fair and transparent NGO selection
- proactive reporting on activities
- high-level representatives on MSF



- MSF meets monthly - feasibility discussion
- commitments discussion and reasoned response



- implementation monitoring and improvement by MSF
- SAR discussed with MSF



- joint gov't-NGO chairing
- decision-making mandate
- code of ethics



- joint design for AP development process
- equal veto power
- joint decision on commitments



- WGs formed for commitment implementation and monitoring
- quarterly WG meetings
- biannual progress updates



Map of Co-creation good practices



1 ALBANIA
Websites

2 ARGENTINA
Case study
Websites
Feedback
Dashboard
Document repository
Civil society coalition

3 ARMENIA
Communications channels
Outreach

4 AUSTIN
AP development

5 AUSTRALIA
Case study
MSF
Website
Dashboard
Informing the public
ToR
Document repository

6 BRAZIL
MSF

7 BUENOS AIRES
Document repository
AP development

8 BURKINA FASO
MSF
ToR

9 CANADA
Informing the public
Websites
Accessibility
MSF
Dashboard
Civil society coalition

10 CHILE
Political leverage
Informing the public

11 COSTA RICA
Website
MSF
Communications channels
Civil society coalition
ToR

12 CROATIA
AP development
Feedback
Informing the public

13 EL SALVADOR
Dashboard
Informing the public

14 ESTONIA
Informing the public

15 FINLAND
Informing the public
Document repository
Accessibility
Plain language
Outreach

16 FRANCE
Websites
Informing the public
Consultation platform

17 GEORGIA
MSF

18 GERMANY
Websites
Stakeholder mapping
Civil society coalition
ToR

19 HONDURAS
Dashboard

20 IRELAND
Website
Informing the public
Document repository
Consultation platform
AP development

21 ISRAEL
Consultation platform

22 ITALY
Case study
Informing the public
Website
Document repository
Consultation platform
Dashboard

23 JALISCO
Document repository

24 MEXICO
Dashboard

25 MONGOLIA
Communications channels
AP development

26 NETHERLANDS
Informing the public
Timeline
Website

27 NEW ZEALAND
Informing the public
Websites
Consultation platform

28 NIGERIA
Case study
Civil society coalition
MSF
Political leverage
Websites

29 PARAGUAY
Document repository
Discussion forum
Website
Communications channels
Dashboard
Document repository

30 PHILIPPINES
Case study
MSF
Political leverage

31 ROMANIA
Outreach

32 SÃO PAULO
AP development

33 SCOTLAND
Civil society coalition
Informing the public

34 SERBIA
Websites
Civil society coalition
Dashboard

35 SIERRA LEONE
Informing the public
Outreach program
Implementation monitoring
Website

36 SRI LANKA
Dashboard

37 UKRAINE
Case study
AP development

38 UK
Informing the public
Civil society coalition
Thematic working groups
ToR
Website
Dashboard
Implementation monitoring

39 URUGUAY
Document repository
AP development
Dashboard



Part I. Guidance to all stakeholders

1. What is the case for co-creation?



CASE STUDY 1

Ukraine

Ukraine's post-Soviet history has seen revolution and unrest stemming from corruption and elite capture. Public procurement especially suffered from capture by oligarchs, so reformers from all sectors joined forces and introduced the e-procurement system ProZorro. This open contracting platform is open-source and contains all public purchasing data in open data standards. ProZorro allows for monitoring all government tenders and procurement data, which has resulted in saving an average of UAH 60 million (EUR 2.1 million) each day since its launch in 2014¹.

ProZorro's creation has been an effort of true co-creation between civil society, government and the private sector. The idea itself came from civil society activists, the system was developed by the private sector on a pro-bono basis, and the government has now universally adopted use of the system. Linked to the ProZorro data, a public participation platform was also created at www.dozorro.org inviting civil society to monitor procurement data and provide feedback. The [early results](#) of this cross-sector collaboration are encouraging - as of January 2018, Dozorro had 22 CSOs monitoring procurement that used to platform to find over 5,000 cases of suspicious activity over a six-month period.

1.1. Why are participation and co-creation important?

Collaboration between government, civil society and other stakeholders is at the heart of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) process. The [OGP Articles of Governance](#) state that 'OGP participants commit to developing their Action Plans (APs) through a multi-stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society'.

This requirement is not set because of a lofty principle, but to reflect the realities of making open government reforms work. Put simply, the collaboration of citizens, civil society, political and official champions and other stakeholders is essential to developing, securing and implementing lasting open government reforms.

In the report "[Open Government: The Global Context and Way Forward](#)", Involve and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development ([OECD](#)) outline that:

"Collaboration between government, citizens and civil society is necessary for achieving open government reforms for at least three reasons:

I. Normative: *Open government redefines the relationship between government and society, and citizens and civil society must be involved in that process.*

II. Instrumental: *Open government mechanisms rely on the participation of citizens*

1. <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/document/prozorro-public-procurement-platform-spreads-its-wings-prozorro>



and civil society, who also have a critical role to play in identifying issues and priorities, incubating ideas, and contributing to policy.

III. Political: Open government reforms are complex and inherently political, requiring collaboration between reformers across different parts of the governance system to have a chance of success.”

I. Normative

Civic participation, alongside transparency and public accountability, is a core aspect of open government. Often, at its heart is the democratic principle that people should be able to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Open government reforms redefine the rights and responsibilities of citizens and their governments, and change how they interact. Therefore, citizens and civil society should be involved in defining open government reforms.

II. Instrumental

Across sectors and policy areas, it has become increasingly recognised that social outcomes are not achieved by government alone, but are dependent upon the actions of citizens, civil society, business and others. This is just as true for governance, where civil society plays an essential role in vibrant democracies. The World Economic Forum, for example, recognised that²:

“Civil society represents a fundamental part of the democratic system and highlights issues of importance. It has the ability to express controversial views; represent those without a voice; mobilize citizens into movements; build support across stakeholders; and bring credibility to the political system by promoting transparency and accountability. In terms of policy formulation, civil society is a valuable partner in providing deep subject-matter expertise based on first-hand experience, trialling and scaling up innovations in social services and facilitating citizen participation.”²

Civil society and other stakeholders can contribute significant energy and expertise to developing, implementing and monitoring open government reforms. As outlined by Involve and the OECD (see [Box 1: Civil society roles in open government](#)), civil society can adopt a variety of roles in realising open government reforms.

III. Political

Open government reforms are inherently political and rarely uncontested. While they will receive support from reformers inside and outside government, they may meet resistance from others. This makes collaboration between reformers from all sectors essential:

“Transformative and sustainable change requires the efforts of coalitions drawn from across different sectors and groups (e.g. ministers and officials, national and local CSOs, citizens, parliamentarians and the media). Reformers inside government require the support of those outside to challenge inertia, rent seeking, vested interests, corruption and deeply embedded power structures within the system [...] On the other hand, reformers outside government require the support of those inside to secure and embed change within government institutions. Reform might require legislative or even constitutional change, and at the very least will necessitate commitment to new policy and practice.”³

2 WEF (World Economic Forum) (2013), “The future role of civil society”, World Scenario Series, WEF, Cologne/Geneva.

3 Involve (2016) “The role of citizens and civil society in open government reforms”, in Open Government: The Global Context and Way Forward, Paris: OECD http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/open-government_9789264268104-en

**BOX 1****Civil society
roles in open
government
reform**

Involve and the OECD identified the following variety of roles that civil society can play in and the benefits it can bring to open government reforms at various stages of the policy-making cycle:

ROLE IN**AGENDA SETTING****POLICY FORMULATION****DECISION-MAKING****POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION****POLICY EVALUATION**

1.2. How do I make the case for open government reforms?

When thinking about how to make the case for a strong OGP process to your stakeholders, you will want to consider their incentives and motivations. They may already be knowledgeable and supportive of open government, but if they are not, you will need to link it to something they do care about. As part of this calculation, it is worth also considering the incentives and motivations of their colleagues and superiors.

Beyond the arguments made above, you may want to consider some of the following:

I. You will be better able to deliver on your priorities

- You will be able to advance your agenda/priorities. You will have support in delivering on your campaign goals and promises.
- You will be better positioned to deliver on international commitments. You will work with a broad civil society coalition who can help you maximise traction on international commitments. Beyond that, OGP can connect you to technical experts and can facilitate peer support to assist where needed.

II. You will get access to ideas, expertise and assistance

- You will be part of a global community of like-minded reformers and have access to a unique support network.
- You will have access to a wealth of ideas, international experiences and expertise to help you advocate for and implement effective public services reforms.
- You will be better positioned to recruit and retain high quality staff.

III. You will consolidate your position

- You will be in a better position to win internal battles on open government reform. OGP is another tool in the toolbox to help you persuade others of the multiple benefits open government can deliver.
- You will be in a better position to realise your full potential as a leader in open government reform.

IV. You will gain recognition as a leader of reform

- You will get the buy-in and recognition of citizens in advocating for and implementing your reforms.
- You will gain international visibility and recognition as a leader in open government reform. OGP is a globally recognised platform that allows your every opportunity to showcase your work.
- You will position your country or local government as a pioneer in open government, regionally and globally.

V. You will strengthen your government

- You will transform the way your government interacts with its citizens.
- You will change the way you 'do government' in your country or local government, creating a culture of 'open by default'.
- You will increase your opportunities for consolidating democracy in your country or local government.



2. What are co-creation requirements governments must fulfill?

CASE STUDY 2

Argentina

Argentina has been a member of the Open Government Partnership since 2012. During this time, it has produced three OGP Action Plans, covering 2013 to 2014, 2015 to 2017 and, most recently, 2017 to 2019.

Argentina's third AP demonstrated a particularly strong participation and co-creation process. It involved 28 government institutions and 54 civil society organisations in the development of national commitments, as well as 11 provincial governments and 90 civil society organisations in the development of local commitments.

Drawing on the recommendations of OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), Argentina set out to achieve four objectives with the development of the latest AP:

- Establish wider and more solid commitments in connection with Open Government pillars (i.e. transparency, citizen participation and accountability);
- Federalize the preparation and participation in the third Action Plan;
- Extend participation of government institutions; and engage other branches of power/other state agencies;
- Institutionalize collaborative work between government and the civil society.

In pursuit of the fourth objective, Argentina established a multi-stakeholder forum (for more on these, see [Section 5. What is a multi-stakeholder forum?](#)), named the National Open Government Roundtable. This roundtable includes eight representatives apiece from government and civil society and was responsible for leading the development of the Action Plan. The activities of the roundtable include:

- Establishing priorities, and analysing and classifying proposed commitments with participating institutions;
- Drafting the final version of commitments;
- Carrying out a follow-up and evaluation of commitments during implementation;
- Publicly reporting on implementation of commitments to the national and international open government community.

The process of developing the Action Plan consisted of five steps, each of which had clearly defined objectives:

I. Suggestion of ideas

An online form and series of meetings across the country were used to collect ideas for commitments. In parallel with this a programme of awareness raising among government ministries took place in order to foster the collection of ideas. These efforts resulted in 210 and 40 proposals respectively for the national and provincial governments.



II. Priorities for proposals

Commitment proposals were analysed according to their fit with the principles of open government, as well as the time period, institutional complexity and resources required for implementation. Based on this assessment, proposals were categorised into four groups: 1) Proposals to be incorporated in the third Action Plan; 2) Inadmissible proposals; 3) Proposals to be incorporated in future Action Plans; and 4) Proposals to be admitted with changes.

III. Participation at roundtables

A series of roundtables were held with national and provincial institutions to discuss and agree on admissible proposals and prepare draft commitments with milestones for the Action Plan. Nationally, 24 roundtables were carried out with 28 public institutions and 54 civil society organisations. Locally, 11 subnational governments joined the co-creation process with more than 90 civil society organisations and 330 participants.

IV. Definition and drafting of commitments

The National Open Government Roundtable reviewed, completed and improved the drafting of national and provincial commitments in line with discussions from the national and local roundtables and guidance from the Open Government Partnership Support Unit.

V. Public consultation

The selected commitments were made available at a [public consultation portal](#) for 19 days so that citizens and civil society organisations could comment on the commitments.

2.1. What are the requirements for an OGP dialogue?

OGP's [Participation and Co-creation Standards](#) set out requirements for engaging civil society, citizens, and other stakeholders at every step of the OGP co-creation process. All OGP participants, both at national and local level, are expected to follow the standards. The standards are divided into basic requirements (which all participants are expected to meet), and advanced steps (the best practices OGP participants should strive towards):



- **Basic requirements** - All OGP participants are expected to meet the basic requirements outlined in the standards unless they can present a compelling reason for adopting an alternative approach that can be judged to be of a comparable or greater standard.



- **Advanced steps** - Participants are not obliged to meet the advanced steps, but will be supported and encouraged to do so.

These requirements and recommendations cover three overarching elements of dialogue:



- **Dissemination of information**—Provide the public, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders with timely information about all aspects of the OGP process, including feedback on how their inputs are taken into account.



- **Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation**—Facilitate an inclusive and ongoing dialogue using a variety of spaces and platforms appropriate to the context.



- **Co-ownership and joint decision making**—Government, civil society, and other stakeholders should jointly own and develop the process.

As outlined in the Participation and Co-creation Standards:



“Participants are expected to improve the quality of each cycle of the OGP process, complying with more of the advanced steps outlined in these standards and moving from consult to collaborate on the [IAP2 Spectrum](#).”

The following sections set out the requirements and recommendations of the Participation and Co-creation Standards in full, with advice and examples on how governments can fulfill them.

2.2. When do the requirements apply?

The Participation and Co-creation Standards apply to all stages of the OGP cycle, including:



Throughout the OGP cycle

- These standards outline what is expected of governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their OGP process throughout the full Action Planning cycle.



When developing a Action Plan

- These standards outline what is expected of governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their OGP process during the development and publication of a Action Plan.



When implementing, monitoring and reporting on a Action Plan

- These standards outline what is expected of governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their OGP process during the implementation, monitoring and reporting of an Action Plan.


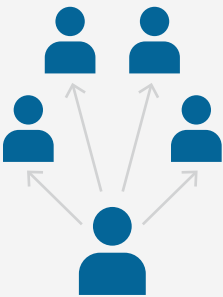
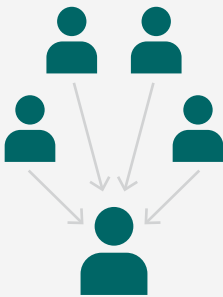
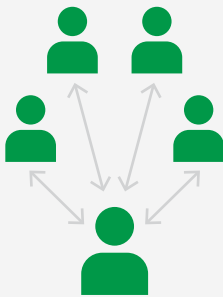
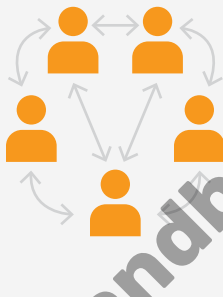

2.3. What are the levels of engagement?

OGP uses the International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2) “Participation Spectrum” as a guide for the levels of engagement in developing an Action Plan.

- **Inform**—government keeps civil society informed.
- **Consult**—government keeps civil society informed, listens to and acknowledges concerns and aspirations, and provides feedback on how public input influenced the decision. They seek feedback on drafts and proposals.
- **Involve**—government works with civil society to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provides feedback on how public input influenced decisions.
- **Collaborate**—government works together with civil society to formulate solutions and incorporates advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
- **Empower**—government and civil society make joint decisions.



BOX 2
IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
					
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	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 solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE 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 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 look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES	Fact sheets White papers Info bulletins	Online consultation Focus groups Surveys Public debate Public hearing	Workshops Deliberative polling Expert advisory panel	Citizen advisory board Consensus-building Participatory decision-making Citizens' Assembly	Citizen juries Ballots/Referenda Delegated decision

The IRM uses these levels of participation to evaluate dialogue during the development and implementation of an Action Plan (See Section below: [How will consultation processes be assessed?](#)). The Participation and Co-creation Standards seek to ensure that all OGP participants operate at least at the level of "Consult", but push to reach the levels of "Collaborate" and even "Empower".



2.4. How will consultation processes be assessed?

Government Points of Contact (PoCs) are required to report on their fulfillment of the Participation and Co-creation Standards through their self-assessment report (SAR).

Additionally, the IRM uses metrics associated with each requirement to assess the performance of a government on the Participation and Co-creation standards. The IRM assessment includes both an assessment of a subset (18) of the detailed basic requirements used as proxy indicators (see [Box 3: IRM process assessment below](#)), while additional ones are included as part of the qualitative narrative provided in the IRM report process section.

Moving forward, the IRM will also highlight a “starred process” defined as a country that has achieved 10 out of 18 basic requirements including at a minimum that the development of the Action Plan was open, a forum exists, the forum is multi-stakeholder, it is selected through a transparent process, provides reasoned response on decisions, and government has a repository.

BOX 3

IRM process assessment

The IRM assesses a subset of 18 proxy indicators to determine if a country “meets the standards”, is “in progress to meet the standards” or shows “no evidence of action to meet the standards”. The assessment will also include supporting qualitative review of the Participation and Co-creation Standards.

Multi-stakeholder Forum

1. MANDATE

! **Forum established:** There is a forum to oversee the OGP process

Regularity: The forum meets at least every quarter, in person or remotely.

Collaborative mandate development: Members of the forum jointly develop its remit, membership and governance structure.

Mandate public: Information on the forum’s remit, membership and governance structure is available on the OGP website/page.

2. COMPOSITION

! **Multi-stakeholder:** The forum includes both governmental and non-government representatives

! **Transparent selection:** Non-governmental members of the forum are selected through a fair and transparent process.

Parity: The forum includes an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives

High-level government representation: The forum includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government

3. CONDUCT

! **Openness:** The forum accepts inputs and representation on the AP process from any civil society or other stakeholders outside the forum



= mandatory

Remote participation: There opportunities for remote participation in at least some meetings and events

Minutes: The OGP forum proactively communicates and reports back on its decisions, activities and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders

Action Plan development and implementation

4. COMMUNICATION

Reasoned response: The multi-stakeholder forum publishes its reasoning behind decisions and responds to major categories of public comment. (See [Section 2.5: When and how to provide reasoned response?](#))

Process transparency: There is a domestic OGP website (or OGP webpage on a government website) where information on all aspects of the OGP process is proactively published.

Documentation in advance: The forum share information about OGP to stakeholders in advance to guarantee they are informed and prepared to participate in all stages of the process.

Awareness-raising: The forum conducts outreach and awareness raising activities with relevant stakeholders to inform them of the OGP process.

Communication channels: The government facilitates direct communication with stakeholders to respond to AP process questions, particularly during times of intense OGP activity.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Repository: Government collects and publishes a document repository on the domestic OGP website/webpage, which provides a historical record and access to all documents related to the national OGP process, including (but not limited to) consultation documents, National Action Plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and supporting documentation of commitment implementation (e.g links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications).

Self-assessment: A self-assessment was published.

2.5. When and how to provide reasoned response?

Providing reasoned response to civil society inputs should happen at least at two critical junctures while developing Action Plans:

1. when determining the scope of overall themes for commitments to be included in APs
2. when defining specific proposals within themes

1. Determining scope of action plan themes:

In order to provide reasoned response to civil society and the public make available a summary of major categories proposed for inclusion, amendment or rejection.

BOX 4

Sample example of reasoned response for determining action plan themes

The Government of Matehuala wanted to focus on open government reforms that aligned with the National Strategy on Corruption Reduction. Early in the consultation, a number of CSOs pushed for reforms and commitments outside of the scope of the the National Strategy. These included:

- Climate change adaptation
- College graduation rate reporting
- Public medical treatment cost transparency

In order to address these concerns, the government, with members of the Multi-stakeholder Forum decided to include a “public services track” to focus on health and medical reforms. Because of the prior existence of commitments and an action plan under the Paris Climate Agreement for Matehuala, it was determined to be redundant to include additional commitments.

2. Defining specific proposals:

In order to provide reasoned response to civil society and the public make available a summary of proposed commitments with reasons for inclusion, amendment or rejection

BOX 5

Example of reasoned response for defining specific proposals

The thematic working group on medical costs discussed a number of proposals. These included:

1. Transparency on costs charged by public hospitals
2. Theft rates of controlled substances
3. Public participation in negotiation of prescription drug costs
4. Shortening patent and trademark times for major life-saving medicines.

1 and 2 are now subjects of commitments 7 and 8 respectively (“Open data on medical costs” and “Social Tracking on Medicine”). Proposal 3 was found to be compelling, but was not included in the action plan for legal reasons, as negotiations are protected by confidential business information around research and development. Proposal 4 is outside of the scope of open government, as it does not include transparency, participation, or accountability components in addition to being beyond the scope of a two-year action plan.

2.6. When will a country be considered as acting contrary to process?

Participation in OGP may be reviewed by the [Criteria and Standards Subcommittee](#) (C&S), or by the full Steering Committee upon recommendation by the C&S, if it acts contrary to OGP process, or contrary to OGP principles, as outlined in the [Procedural Review](#) policy.

A country⁴ is considered to have acted contrary to process when:

- I. The country does not publish an Action Plan within 4 months of the due date (by December 31).
- II. The government does not meet the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) “Involve” requirement during development or “Inform” during implementation of the Action Plan as assessed by the IRM.
- III. The government fails to collect, publish and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.
- IV. The IRM Report establishes that there was no progress made on implementing any of the commitments in the country’s Action Plan.

Specific definitions of the above four triggers:

I. Delayed Action Plan:

OGP Action Plans should be published by the August 31st deadline. If a country delivers its AP late but within four months of the August 31 deadline (before January 1 of the following year), the calendar end date for the AP will not change. However, as a result, the amount of time for implementation of the commitments will be reduced (Action Plan implementation period ends on August 31 of the second year of implementation, regardless of start date).

If a government delivers its new AP after January 1 of the year in which it was due (i.e. more than four months late after the August 31 deadline) it will be shifted to the following year’s cohort (e.g. from odd-year to even-year or vice versa) and be considered to be starting a new AP cycle. Such government will have acted contrary to OGP Process for that Action Plan cycle. The government will receive a letter from the Support Unit noting this occurrence, and the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee will consider any additional actions or support as necessary.

II. Minimum participation requirements during co-creation and implementation:

In line with [OGP’s Participation & Co-creation Standards](#), in order to meet IAP2’s “Involve” level of public influence during AP development governments will have to provide evidence in their Action Plan and online repository that the following three standards were met:

1. Forum exists. The forum meets at least once every 3 months (i.e. four times a year)
2. Forum is multi-stakeholder, i.e. both government and civil society participate in it
3. Reasoned response: i.e the government documents and makes available feedback during the co-creation process (See [Section 2.5: When and how to provide reasoned response?](#))

Governments can fulfil the requirement to meet IAP2’s “Inform” level of citizen engagement during Action Plan implementation by fulfilling the document repository requirement.

III. Online Repository

Starting in 2018, OGP participating governments have to collect, publish and document a repository on the domestic OGP website in line with IRM guidance. The repository should serve as a transparent and easy way to provide all interested parties an update on the creation and implementation of all OGP commitments and processes. The OGP lead agency and POC will lead

⁴ At this point in time, the Procedural Review policy will not yet apply to the OGP Local participants, though OGP Local participants are expected to act according to these standards.

on the creation, update and maintenance of the repository, in close coordination with agencies responsible for implementing commitments. OGP recognizes that governments need space to innovate with digital repositories in a way that is context-specific and flexible. Therefore, principles will be applied rather than specific Standards.

Governments may choose any platform or system for their online repository as long as it follows the following guiding principles.

- **Available online:** no barriers to access, no passwords or credentials required.
- **Real-time or regular:** evidence and assessment updated often.
- **Evidence-linked:** relevant evidence for progress and completion is clearly available.
- **Complete:** public can find evidence of all consultations and all commitments.
- **Granular:** public can find evidence of completion at the commitment level.

For more advice on what elements a document repository should contain, please see [Box 8: Elements of a repository](#)

IV. No progress made

If the IRM Report establishes that there was no progress made on implementing any of the commitments in the country's submitted Action Plan, a procedural review will automatically be triggered, regardless of being the first or second occurrence of acting contrary to process.

What if my government has an alternative approach?

All OGP members are expected to meet the basic requirements outlined in the Participation and Co-Creation Standards unless they can present a compelling reason for adopting an alternative approach that can be judged to be of a comparable or greater standard.

The Participation and Co-creation Standards were developed based on well-established and recognized principles for good engagement, and any alternative approach should similarly comply with such principles. The [IAP2 Core Values](#) state that:

1. *"Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process."*
2. *"Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision."*
3. *"Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers."*
4. *"Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision."*
5. *"Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate."*
6. *"Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way."*
7. *"Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision."*

The IRM assessment will describe whenever a government is using alternative/innovative approaches that are comparable to the Participation and Co-creation Standards.



= mandatory requirement

2.7.



3. Where can we get more help?

3.1. What support is available from OGP?

The OGP Support Unit assists participating countries and local actors to broaden ownership, raise ambition and ensure credible implementation of open government reforms. Specifically, OGP's support can be broken down into areas designed to deepen ownership, raise ambition, strengthen co-creation, and provide enhanced implementation support for Action Plan design and implementation.

I. Core Support

Core support is the cornerstone of the OGP model and can be found in every OGP national and local participant as a fundamental set of services across the Action Plan cycle. Support is provided through the Support Unit's country and local support program - in collaboration with strategic partners on different thematic areas of open government reform -, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), and the OGP Steering Committee. Core support includes assistance to countries and local participants interested in joining OGP, and regularly liaising with government and civil society counterparts to raise awareness, build ownership and coordinate co-creation processes on APs. It also includes guidance to establish multi-stakeholder forums to enable continuous collaboration between government and civil society partners in developing, implementing and monitoring key policy reforms in the Action Plans. In addition to this, the IRM monitors progress made towards implementing commitments and provides recommendations for improvement.

II. Enhanced Co-creation Support

While the development of Action Plans is at the heart of the OGP approach, often government and civil society counterparts lack the requisite political will, financial, technical or organizational capacity to develop truly transformative reform commitments. Through enhanced co-creation support, OGP can help reformers overcome these hurdles by supporting participants through targeted outreach, helping engagement with marginalized groups for inclusive co-creation, coalition building for both government and civil society counterparts, providing targeted thematic technical expertise and peer learning, setting up one-on-one meetings and workshops for senior officials, and brokering or providing financial support for convening, logistical and learning activities.

Nigeria is an example of a country where the enhanced co-creation approach is being piloted. Since it joined OGP, the Support Unit has organized a series of meetings and workshops aimed at building political buy-in, technical expertise and strengthening co-creation processes.

III. Implementation Support

Most reform failures happen during delivery, illustrated by the fact that only 20 percent of commitments assessed to date by the IRM have been fully implemented. To improve overall AP completion rates and the likelihood of transformative commitments being fully implemented, OGP brokers thematic partnerships and connects to potential sources of funding, and is additionally developing a program of implementation support, which includes activities to forge resilient reform coalitions, build technical capacity for implementation, and galvanize political commitment to ensure the success of reforms through targeted funding from the OGP Trust Fund.

The [Carter Center](#), a key OGP partner and lead organisation of OGP's access to information workstream has worked closely with the Government of Liberia to assist in implementing the



country's access to information commitment, providing peer learning and technical assistance to the Independent Information Commission in the law's implementation, oversight, enforcement and use. The working group has encouraged Liberia to consider the right to information implications in other commitments throughout its Action Plan, as well as a way to incorporate a gender-inclusive approach in its Access to Information commitments.

IV. In-country Learning and Accountability Support

A key component of OGP's core support are assessments conducted by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). Participants learn from their IRM assessments, iterate and course correct to incorporate lessons across AP cycles. Depending on need and opportunity, OGP leverages IRM reports to convene government and civil society stakeholders for a deeper dive to identify hurdles and challenges to implementation, thereby strengthening learning outcomes. Additionally, OGP can building capacity for monitoring and evaluation, provide dashboards and tools, and run workshops to identify gaps to support in-country learning and accountability.

For example, the Support Unit organized a sub-regional meeting with Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Panama and Peru led by the IRM to create an opportunity for learning and accountability, through which Colombia was able to develop an action plan with five starred commitments.

V. Global Coalition and Collective Action Support

OGP continues building a global alliance of open government practitioners around key policy areas which need political ownership and collective action at a transnational level in order to succeed, such as many of those outlined in the [Paris Declaration](#). To this end, OGP works strategically with partners to build political ownership across several countries through convening activities at high level forums (UNGA, G20, London Anti-Corruption Summit etc.), OGP summits and regional meetings, and through regional and sub-regional workshops. To ensure that the reforms committed to internationally also materialize at domestic levels, OGP actively promotes peer exchange activities to inspire innovation, collaboration and competition to implement these reforms. OGP's Thematic Leadership Subcommittee [leads on developing these activities](#).

In addition to convening high level events, examples of support include regional and subregional learning events such as the Francophone Africa peer exchange workshop in Burkina Faso in June 2017. The workshop brought together over thirty government officials, civil society participants and development partners from ten Francophone Africa countries as well as eligible and near eligible countries.

VI. Integrated Cross-Participant Country and Local Support

The support area brings together all the key services for an integrated approach which encourages learning across different participants, and specifically between coalitions for change around specific reforms in those contexts. This leverages the different services around political engagement, peer learning, coalition building and iterative learning, and tackles a specific open government reform challenge, such as open contracting or beneficial ownership transparency, where international peer-to-peer support is essential. By bringing together different stakeholders facing similar challenges in real-time, OGP can truly inspire a race to the top on specific reforms and create an environment for sharing of innovation and learning.

In September 2017, the OGP Support Unit and the Steering Committee's Thematic Leadership Subcommittee organized a high-level practical workshop on public beneficial ownership registers featuring the experiences from pioneering countries Slovakia, the UK and Ukraine.

The event brought together for the first time legislators, implementing agencies, as well as expert users and advocates from across several countries and international partners to exchange good practices and create a network of practitioners around beneficial ownership transparency.

Through these six support areas, OGP aims to empower reformers and give them the tools to address context-specific challenges and implement transformative reforms that will have a lasting impact on citizens. While OGP has been utilizing conventional financing sources to deliver services in the past six years, it has developed a new channel of funding for enhanced services through the [OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund](#).

3.2 What is the OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund?

The Open Government Partnership and the World Bank (WB) have created a dedicated funding mechanism to support OGP participants in developing and implementing promising open government commitments; broadening the stakeholder base participating in the domestic process; supporting non-OGP countries that are considering participation; as well as deepening learning and research on the results and impact of open government reforms.

3.3 What type of activities does the Trust Fund support?

The Trust Fund has distinct funding windows to support national and local participants. Activities that address technical or financial constraints to implementing or developing commitments in a national/local action plan will occur through Window 1 on country and local entity support. Through Window 2, the Trust Fund will support activities that advance cross-country research, learning and thematic priorities, help advance OGP's "race to the top" on different policy areas and deepen understanding of the impact of open government reforms.

3.4 Who can receive funding from the Trust Fund?

The OGP Trust Fund supports activities carried out by government, civil society, research institutions and non-government entities in countries and local governments that are [classified by the World Bank](#) as Low Income, Lower-Middle Income, and Upper-Middle Income economies. For activities under Window 1, only OGP participating entities with a functioning multi-stakeholder forum will be considered for selection. Grants to support implementation will largely be given to governments and the implementing agency for commitments in the action plan. Given the type of activities undertaken in the co-creation process, civil society are expected to carry out these grants. Governments and civil society – through the multi-stakeholder forum – are encouraged to jointly decide who will be best placed to carry out the activities and manage the grants prior to submitting their application.

Support to activities that advance thematic priorities, research or learning under Window 2 will be provided to government, non-government, research/academic institutions and civil society who are well placed to lead on cross-country projects and are able to demonstrate need.

3.5 How can we share our good practices and accomplishments?



We want to hear the story of your OGP process and what it has achieved. You can get in touch via: ideabox@opengovpartnership.org

Part II. Guidance for government decision-makers and officials

4. What are ways to engage civil society throughout the OGP process?

This section outlines advice and good practices on participation and co-creation **throughout the full Action Planning cycle**. Following sections cover requirements, advice and best practice specific to the phase of **developing an Action Plan** ([Section 6](#)), and the phase of **implementing, monitoring and reporting on an Action Plan** ([Section 7](#)).

CASE STUDY 3

Italy

Italy has been a member of the OGP since 2011. During this time, it has produced three Action Plans, covering 2012 to 2013, 2014 to 2016 and 2016 to 2018.

Italy has developed a strong OGP process based around its Open Government Forum (OGF). The Open Government Forum was established to develop Italy's third Action Plan. It has a membership of over 50 representatives from universities, civil society organisations, consumer associations, businesses and think tanks. The AP subsequently formalised the forum by including it as an activity under the commitment "[Strategy for Participation](#)", which also included a commitment to [develop guidelines for public consultation](#) by public authorities. An annex to the AP sets out the scope, functions, composition, organisations and operating rules of the Forum.

Any civil society representative may apply to join the Open Government Forum by completing an online form. The Forum is intended to meet every six months in plenary and has three working groups - covering Transparency and Open Data, Participation and Accountability, and Digital Citizenship and Innovation - that also meet on a more regular basis. In order to facilitate broad participation, Forum members may attend the OGP meetings remotely, as well as face-to-face.

The goals of the Forum are outlined as 1) allowing the regular consultation of civil society organizations on open government issues, improving communication with them; 2) greater citizens' involvement in developing the plan; 3) building an appropriate feedback process to identify civil society's needs and jointly monitoring the implementation of actions. The Forum is not intended to be decision-making body and cannot therefore adopt any act or measure, but it may make recommendations to the Italian government's OGP team or agencies where there is agreement of the majority of attendees.

Following the establishment of the Forum, the Action Plan development phase took place in two phases. The first phase, lasting 5 weeks, included consultation with the members of the Forum on the priorities for the third AP. In the second phase, lasting 6 weeks, an online consultation was held on the draft commitments arising from the first phase. This took place

on Italy's dedicated OGP website, and enabled respondents to respond in comments to the draft commitments.

Italy has committed to its Open Government Forum meeting once every six months in plenary, and working groups meet at least once every two months, during the implementation of its Action Plan. This is intended to provide an opportunity for agencies to [report back on the implementation](#) of commitments and for civil society to provide feedback and input. Italy also uses its dedicated [OGP website to host consultations](#) on its self assessment and aspects of the implementation of commitments.

4.1

What do the Participation and Co-creation Standards say?

OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards set out requirements for governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their OGP process. Specifically, they set out the following basic requirements and advanced steps for engagement **throughout the full OGP Action Planning cycle**.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- ➔ There is a OGP website (or OGP webpage on a government website) where information on all aspects of the OGP process is proactively published. The website or webpage should be visible, accessible and searchable.
- ➔ The lead agency and point of contact for OGP is clearly identified and their contact details are publicly available on the OGP website/webpage.
- ➔ The government publishes OGP information and documents in all administrative languages.
- ➔ Government collects and publishes a document repository on the OGP website/webpage, which provides a historical record and access to all documents related to the OGP process, including (but not limited to) consultation documents, Action Plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and supporting documentation of commitment implementation (e.g links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications).
- ➔ The government communicates information about OGP to stakeholders in advance to guarantee they are informed and prepared to participate in all stages of the process.



ADVANCED STEPS

- ➔ The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) publishes information and documents in plain and accessible language that can be understood quickly, easily and completely
- ➔ The government and/or MSF uses a range of channels commonly used by citizens, civil society and other stakeholders, including traditional and new media (e.g. newspapers, television, radio, email, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.) as appropriate, for awareness raising and dissemination of progress updates.
- ➔ The government and/or MSF conduct targeted outreach to relevant stakeholder groups to raise awareness of open government, the OGP and opportunities to get involved.
- ➔ The government and/or MSF use visualisations, infographics, videos or other appropriate media to communicate relevant information and updates on the process and its outcomes to a non-expert audience.



SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- ➔ A multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) is formed to oversee the OGP process. It meets on a regular basis (i.e. at least every quarter) in person or remotely, as appropriate.
- ➔ The government and/or MSF accepts inputs and representation on the Action Plan process from any civil society or other stakeholders
- ➔ Opportunities for remote participation are provided for at least some meetings and events to enable the inclusion of groups unable to attend in person.
- ➔ The government facilitates a mechanism for direct communication with stakeholders to respond to Action Plan process questions, particularly during times of intense OGP activity. Government keeps a record of communications and responses to make available to the IRM researcher.
- ➔ The government and/or MSF conducts outreach and awareness raising activities to relevant stakeholders (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, local governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to inform them of the OGP process.

ADVANCED STEPS

- ➔ The MSF has a strategy to bring in additional government and non-government actors into the OGP process.
- ➔ The MSF coordinates multiple face-to-face outreach and engagement events around the country or locality, which are open and accessible to any interested members of the public, civil society and other stakeholders to attend (e.g., at suitable times and locations).
- ➔ An online forum is established to enable ongoing discussion across stakeholders involved in the OGP process.





CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- ➔ Members of the MSF jointly develop its remit, membership and governance (e.g. frequency of meetings, who sets the agenda, how decisions are made, how conflicts are managed, the level of detail of minutes, and decision making authority), which are communicated on the OGP website/webpage.
- ➔ The MSF includes an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives.
- ➔ Non-governmental members of the MSF are selected through a fair and transparent process. The forum's rules should allow non-governmental members to lead their own selection process.
- ➔ The MSF proactively communicates and reports back on its decisions, activities and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders.
- ➔ The MSF includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government to ensure it is sufficiently empowered to take action (e.g. the Ministerial level OGP point of contact).



ADVANCED STEPS

- ➔ The MSF is jointly chaired by government and civil society
- ➔ The MSF includes a variety of government and non-government actors (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) that bring in a diverse range of views
- ➔ The MSF acts in a decision making capacity, with key decisions regarding the process and content of AP made jointly by its members.
- ➔ Members of the MSF commit to ethical standards (e.g. honesty, transparency, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and acting in the public interest) through signing an ethics statement and conflict of interest declaration, with clear sanctions in the case of breach.

4.2. What information should be communicated about the OGP process?

An OGP co-creation process, as with any participatory process, needs to be founded on accurate and timely information shared with (potential) participants. For example, participants will need to know how and when they can get involved in the Action Planning cycle, what the progress of commitments is, and who to contact when they have a question.

I. Publishing information about the OGP process

There are a number of standard pieces of information that participants tend to find useful throughout the OGP process. We recommend engaging with key stakeholders in your country or locality to understand what further specific information they would want and need for proper participation.



BOX 6

Summary of key information to publish

I. Contact details of the point of contact for OGP; for example:

[El Salvador](#)

[Estonia](#)

II. Introduction to the OGP (e.g. why it was established, how it works, the opportunity it presents, etc.); for example:

[Australia](#)

[New Zealand](#)

[Italy](#)

III. Introduction to your national/local membership (e.g. date joined, number of Action Plans, key themes, commitment progress, etc.); for example:

[Canada](#)

[Scotland](#)

[UK](#)

IV. Details of OGP structures (e.g. multi-stakeholder forum membership and terms of reference; working group memberships and responsibilities; civil society or other coalitions; etc.); for example:

[Australia](#)

[Chile](#)

[Finland](#)

V. Key information about the OGP process (e.g. key deadlines, schedules of events, opportunities to engage, etc.); for example:

[France](#)

[Netherlands](#)

[Ireland](#)

Perhaps the most important information that should be made readily accessible to potential participants are the contact details of the government point of contact on OGP. Stakeholders should be able to easily find out who they should address questions or send commitment proposals to, and otherwise engage with about the OGP process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“The lead agency and point of contact for OGP is clearly identified and their contact details are publicly available on the OGP website/webpage.”

OGP recommends keeping a record of any frequently asked questions to help identify information that should be proactively published in future. As well as helping to make key information more accessible for stakeholders, it will also reduce the amount of time the government point of contact spends answering common questions.

EXAMPLE

Italy

Italy has a [dedicated website](#) with comprehensive information about its membership of the OGP. The website provides background information on open government and the OGP, and outlines Italy’s involvement in the initiative to date. Italy’s first and second Action Plans are presented on the website, along with their IRM reports. Italy’s third Action Plan is presented in an accessible online format, with progress against milestones clearly stated. The website also outlines details of Italy’s Open Government Forum, which was convened by the Minister for Simplification and Public Administration to develop Italy’s third Action Plan. Presented on the website is information of the Forum’s purpose and principles, and details on how civil society representatives can apply to participate.



II. Communicating information about OGP

Stakeholders will need access to basic information about OGP in order to be able to engage with the OGP process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“The government communicates information about OGP to stakeholders in advance to guarantee they are informed and prepared to participate in all stages of the process.”

When communicating information about the OGP, it is important to consider which information is the most essential to enable and encourage stakeholders to engage. For example, knowing that Action Plans are independently monitored by the IRM may give stakeholders confidence that it is worth engaging, whereas knowing how OGP was founded may not be particularly consequential.

BOX 7

Summary of key information to communicate to stakeholders

- What OGP is, and what opportunity it presents for stakeholders;
- How the Action Planning process works and when and how stakeholders can engage; and,
- How the implementation and monitoring processes work, and when and how stakeholders can engage.

III. Publishing a document repository

As well as enabling and encouraging stakeholders to engage, the publication and communication of information on the OGP process also plays an important transparency and accountability function. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“Government collects and publishes a document repository on the OGP website/webpage, which provides a historical record and access to all documents related to the OGP process, including (but not limited to) consultation documents, Action Plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and supporting documentation of commitment implementation (e.g links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications).”

Collecting such a document repository performs a number of functions. First, it allows any stakeholders to understand the background and development of the OGP process. Second, it performs a transparency and accountability function, by enabling stakeholders to scrutinise the performance of their government over time. Third, it provides data and information for civil society partners, OGP, IRM and third party researchers to assess the performance of open government commitments overall. Fourth, it helps governments prepare reports on the progress of their open government efforts to IRM or third-party compliance initiatives.

BOX 8

Elements of a repository

Repositories should comply with the following in order to be assessed compliant with OGP requirements. Not meeting the below requirements might trigger a procedural review for acting contrary to OGP process (for more on this, please see more in [Section 2.6: When will a country be considered as acting contrary to OGP process?](#)):

- **Repository is online and available to stakeholders without barriers** to access: No password or credentials required
- **Repository is updated real-time or regularly:** evidence of implementation and assessment is updated at least once every six months
- **Repository is evidence-linked:** relevant evidence for progress and completion is clearly available

As further guidance, OGP recommends the following documents to be included in a document repository:

Plans for public consultations on the development of the action plan

- Timelines, listing external invitations, interdepartmental invitations

Evidence of setting up multi-stakeholder coordinating committees (forums, task forces, working group)

- Term of Reference for a coordinating group
- Minutes/memos of decisions to set up working groups
- Composition of the group, listing organizations and individuals included

Evidence of public consultation and multi-stakeholder forums

- Advertising or notice for public consultation
- Invitations sent out
- Permanent dialogue mechanism meeting agendas
- List of participants listing organizations and groups present (in case names cannot be publicly disclosed due to privacy considerations)
- Written proposals submitted by CSOs or other members of public
- Documents, reports, plans, that are relevant to establish commitment baseline and government objectives

Documentation for implementation of commitments:

- Draft of laws and status of legislative process on issue areas relevant to commitments
- Records of decision making, new regulations or administrative orders
- Evidence of commissioning research, procurement or consultancy terms of reference, calls for proposals
- Evidence of technical documents relating to databases, IT etc.
- Work plans and inter-governmental monitoring
- Evidence of budget decisions, financial and HR resource allocations
- External/third party analysis of documents (CSO shadow reports, independent tracking of commitment progress)
- Audit reports
- Photos, videos, multimedia as evidence of progress on commitments, events held
- User statistics (if relevant)

The OGP lead agency and focal point are responsible for the creation, update and maintenance of the repository, in close coordination with agencies responsible for implementing commitments. OGP is neutral as to the specific platform of the repository, although the ideal platform will be archived or perma-linked and provide interoperable data.

BOX 9

Examples of document repositories

The following are a selection of online document repositories established by OGP-participating governments



4.3

How should information about the OGP process be communicated?

The information you communicate is only half of the consideration. How you communicate the information is just as important. At a minimum, information should be easily searchable and accessible by stakeholders looking to find out more about the OGP process. However, most successful OGP processes go beyond this and conduct general and targeted outreach to raise awareness and encourage stakeholders to engage.

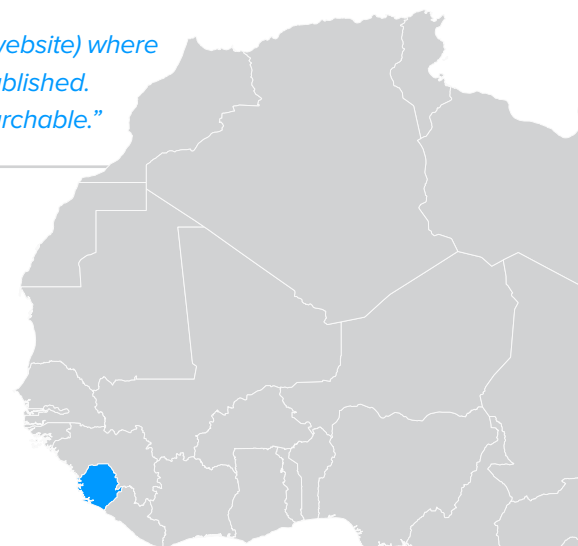
The first step towards publishing information should be establishing a suitable web presence. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

*“There is a OGP website (or OGP webpage on a government website) where information on all aspects of the OGP process is proactively published.
The website or webpage should be visible, accessible and searchable.”*

EXAMPLE

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has an [“Open Governance Initiative” website](#) which includes information about the OGP process—. The website contains information about OGP commitments, progress on implementation, reports, meetings, discussion and events on OGP. The website also communicates information on broader open government projects in the country.



When establishing the web presence, consider whether it is most appropriate to establish it as a stand-alone website, or whether to integrate it into existing websites or other initiatives. Questions that you may wish to consider in this process include:

- Where are stakeholders most likely to look for information on the OGP process?
- What are the content and editorial limitations of existing sites?
- Are there related initiatives that the OGP process could benefit from being linked to?

Whichever approach you choose, it is essential that the website or webpage is “visible, accessible and searchable” - not hidden away in an obscure corner of an agency website, or hidden on an unvisited website.



BOX 10

Examples of OGP websites and webpages

RED

Websites or webpages that have been established by governments to present information about the OGP process

GREEN

Civil society in a number of countries has established its own website to present information about the OGP. These are a few examples

→ [CANADA](#)

→ [UK](#)

→ [IRELAND](#)

→ [NETHERLANDS](#)

→ [FRANCE](#)

→ [GERMANY](#)

→ [ITALY](#)

→ [ALBANIA](#)

→ [SERBIA](#)

→ [COSTA RICA](#)

→ [SIERRA LEONE](#)

→ [NIGERIA](#)

→ [PARAGUAY](#)

→ [ARGENTINA](#)

→ [ARGENTINA](#)

→ [AUSTRALIA](#)

→ [AUSTRALIA](#)

→ [NEW ZEALAND](#)



Another dimension of accessibility is the language used to communicate information about the OGP process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“The government publishes OGP information and documents in all administrative languages.”

EXAMPLES

Canada and Finland

Canada, which has English and French as its two official languages, publishes all information on its [website](#) in both languages, including on open government. Similarly, Finland [publishes](#) all relevant information in both of its official languages: Finnish and Swedish.



The accessibility of language is, of course, not just about which language is used, but about the complexity and level of jargon. On this, the Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum publishes information and documents in plain and accessible language that can be understood quickly, easily and completely.”

EXAMPLE

Finland

Finland has developed a [handbook](#) for consulting young people and children, which includes advice on the use of clear language and visualisation. The fact sheet states that:

- Clear and understandable language is essential when dealing with children.
- Visualisation, e.g. illustrations, comics and videos make it easier to get the message across.
- Plain language serves the needs of children with an immigrant background and children with disabilities, but can also be useful for other age groups.
- Children and young people cannot be expected to be familiar with administrative jargon or practices. These should be avoided in communication or at least explained thoroughly.

Consider whether it is appropriate to use terminology or acronyms, or whether concepts can be explained in more basic (and likely engaging) terms. Text is often not the most accessible nor engaging way of presenting information, particularly for non-specialist audiences. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum use visualisations, infographics, videos or other appropriate media to communicate relevant information and updates on the process and its outcomes to a non-expert audience.”

Once you have a visible, accessible and searchable web presence, where information is regularly published and updated in an engaging format, you can turn your attention to conducting outreach. In order to bring new stakeholders into the OGP process it will be necessary to find ways of communicating with different audiences.

There are two types of outreach that you may wish to conduct: broad outreach - where you throw the net wide to a large audience - and targeted outreach - where you identify key individuals or organisations to engage.

The first mode of outreach - broad outreach - will require using channels of communication that reach a large number of citizens, civil society and other stakeholders. This could include traditional media (e.g. newspapers, radio, television, etc.) and/or social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Whatsapp, etc.). The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum uses a range of channels commonly used by citizens, civil society and other stakeholders, including traditional and new media (e.g. newspapers, television, radio, email, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.) as appropriate, for awareness raising and dissemination of progress updates.”

EXAMPLE

Mongolia

Mongolia communicated details of its Action Plan consultation and draft commitments via a [government website](#), national newspapers, including the “Daily Newspaper” and the “National Post”; [radio](#); various [news portals](#); the official “OGP Mongolia” [Facebook group](#); a “@OGP_Mongolia” [Twitter account](#); emails to CSOs; and the Mongolian National Broadcaster. The Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Mongolia also sent out an official request to the governors of Mongolia’s provinces to consult on the draft Action Plan at a local level.

EXAMPLE

Armenia

Armenia has a special OGP Armenia [TV program](#) to help raise citizen awareness on open government reforms and OGP.

The second mode of outreach - targeted outreach - requires a clear idea of who you want to engage and the best route to reach them. This could include the use of emails, letters, and face-to-face meetings. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum conduct targeted outreach to relevant stakeholder groups to raise awareness of open government, the OGP and opportunities to get involved.”

EXAMPLE

Finland

Besides broad online and offline consultations (workshops and seminars with civil society, conference sessions with experts and a web portal for the general public), the Finnish open government team also used a targeted approach to involve rural communities and students in the development of the 2015-2017 Finnish Action Plan, namely by organising 11 roundtables for civil servants across the country, or soliciting ideas at the Christmas Market in Vaasa and at a student event at the University of Eastern Finland.

How you communicate should be defined by what you want to achieve. Are you seeking to raise general awareness in open government and OGP, or are you seeking to mobilise a specific stakeholder group (e.g. young people, rural communities, etc.)? Being clear on your objectives will enable you to develop an appropriate communications strategy and plan, including identifying the most appropriate channels and messaging to reach your intended audience.



5. What is a multi-stakeholder forum?

CASE STUDY 4

Philippines

The Philippines has been a member of the Open Government Partnership since 2011. During this time, it has produced four Action Plans, covering 2012 to 2013, 2013 to 2015, 2015 to 2017 and 2017 to 2019.

The Philippines formed a multi-stakeholder forum in 2015, named the PH-OGP Steering Committee (PH-SC). Initially, this committee was made up of three representatives from national government, one representative from local government, three representatives from civil society, and two representatives from business groups. However, later in 2015 the PH-SC was extended to include representatives from the public sector labor unions, academia and the legislature. At the same time it was decided that the chair of committee meetings would alternate between the government and non-government representatives.

The PH-SC oversaw the development of the third open government Action Plan, which for the first time included a nationwide consultation with civil society, academia, business groups, media and development partners. The inputs from this initial round of consultations was processed and reviewed by members of the PH-SC, before being put out for another round of consultation with civil society. The emerging AP was subsequently published online for comments. In parallel, government agencies were also asked to propose commitments for the Action Plan, which were discussed with civil society, other stakeholders and the PH-SC.

The PH-SC met on a quarterly basis during the implementation of the Action Plan, at which commitment updates were discussed, areas of concern identified and actions agreed. Some of the agencies responsible for implementing OGP Commitments were invited to these meetings upon the request of an PH-SC member. In addition to steering committee meetings, a wider programme of workshops was held to update and solicit feedback from various stakeholders on the progress of the AP.

National elections were held in 2016 and a new administration came into power. A programme of outreach and advocacy helped to ensure continued commitment to the OGP process through the political transition. A key meeting of the PH-SC was held in October 2016 at which the Philippines OGP process was linked to the initiatives of the new administration.

In 2017, the Philippines published its fourth AP. Preparations for the Action Plan began in 2016 where the PH-SC met to discuss the development process. This was subsequently made publicly available through the [Participatory Governance Cluster website](#) and the [PH-OGP's official Facebook page](#).

In December 2016, a call was put out to national government agencies for OGP commitments, following which 26 proposals were received. These proposals were evaluated by the Steering

Committee according to the following criteria: 1) Have ambitious targets; 2) Be anchored on one or more [OGP Grand Challenge](#) and OGP Values; 3) Secure government support or buy-in (priority initiative of concerned agency/ies); and 4) Have existing funding. The proposals were further narrowed down by a technical working group. The remaining proposals were subsequently put out for regional and thematic consultation events, which involved national and local government, civil society, business groups, academia, public sector unions, international development partners, and the media.

Through a vote, participants were asked to select and rank three shortlisted initiatives, the results of which were considered in the final selection of commitment. Participants also had the opportunity to propose a new OGP commitment, which would be considered if consistent with the commitment selection criteria.

Following the regional and thematic consultations, a first draft of the Action Plan was published for online consultation. As a result of the consultation, a new commitment on people's planning for shelter assistance was co-created and included in the plan. The PH-SC met in June 2017 to finalise the commitments and agree the 4th AP.

The Philippines intends to continue engagement in the Action Plan process through a programme of monthly meetings and semi-annual assessment workshops on the implementation of the plan. In addition, the government has committed to the publication of semi-annual status reports on each commitment via the [Governance Cluster website](#) and social media.

A multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) is a group of both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders that meets on a regular basis to oversee and coordinate an OGP process. An MSF is probably the most important mechanism for putting in practice OGP's principle of co-creation between government and civil society. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

"A multi-stakeholder forum is formed to oversee the OGP process. It meets on a regular basis (i.e. at least every quarter) in person or remotely, as appropriate."

As further outlined in [section 5.3. Who should be involved in the multi-stakeholder forum?](#), the MSF should include an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives; have a jointly agreed remit, membership and governance; and proactively engage with other stakeholders.

For a summary of the key features of a multi-stakeholder forum and a detailed explanation of how these features will be assessed by IRM, please see [Section 2.4. How will governments be assessed?](#)



When setting out to establish a multi-stakeholder forum, it is worth following these steps:

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

For a much more detailed guidance on setting up and operating a multi-stakeholder forum, please see [OGP's multi-stakeholder forum toolkit](#).

BOX 11**Ways to create a multi-stakeholder forum**

OGP's experience on establishing multi-stakeholder forums shows that they are normally established in three main ways:

	 ADVANTAGES	 DISADVANTAGES
Through administrative decisions, such as an executive decree : under this scenario a government formalizes the Forum by means of issuing administrative norms, such as presidential decrees or ministerial decisions.	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.	It can be difficult to draft and approve the decisions necessary for the Forum or to reform government's own operations. Administrative regulations may also require some time to be drafted, approved and published.
Through build on existing laws or creating new ones : Passing a new law – or, more frequently, taking advantage of existing laws or statutory bodies – gives participants a place to house the Forum and OGP decision-making.	Creates a strong and stable formal framework for the Forum, providing it with stability over 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.	Drafting and passing legislation could be a burden, given that it requires the collaboration of the legislature. If a relevant statutory body is prescribed by law or may even already exist, there may be some deficiencies in its adaptability to OGP needs.
Formal and informal agreements : The most common way to create a Forum is through agreements between various stakeholders, giving it flexibility to adapt to various contexts and demands. Agreements can be informal or written down formally as by-laws, a procedures manual, terms of reference or guidelines.	Provides actors with flexibility to set the rules of engagement and to adapt them if needed.	There is no guarantee of the Forum's permanence, so continued operation relies heavily on participants' commitment.



EXAMPLE

Canada

The Canadian government and Canadian Open Government Civil Society Network have developed a [multi-stakeholder forum](#) to enable ongoing dialogue between government and civil society on open government issues. The MSF provides input and advice to the government on the development and implementation of OGP commitments. The Forum was set up following a commitment in Canada's third Action Plan. It includes eight civil society representatives and four representatives of Canadian government departments. The eight civil society representatives are selected through a process organised by the civil society network, based on a set of predefined criteria. This includes an open nomination process where candidates are required to provide a CV, cover letter, published material they have produced related to open government issues, as well as two references. The nomination phase is followed by a selection phase, in which a selection committee reviews the nominations, conducts interviews and makes the final selection.

5.1

Why should we establish a multi-stakeholder forum?

A good MSF will help to ensure that the OGP process benefits from the leadership and ownership of a broad range of stakeholders. Managing an OGP process through a multi-stakeholder forum can have a number of benefits, including:

I. Accessing new ideas, networks, and resources

A multi-stakeholder forum, with a diverse membership of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, will provide access to new ideas, networks and resources that can be invaluable to a successful OGP process. This will open up the range of possibilities for both the quality of the OGP process and the ambition of the Action Plan.

II. Building collaborative relationships and establishing mutual understanding and expectations

A multi-stakeholder forum can be key to building common purpose between a diverse group of stakeholders. Through regular engagement, built on principles of openness and honesty, members of MSF can build trust and identify common objectives. This creates the basis for a constructive and successful OGP process.

EXAMPLE

Romania

The Romanian government's OGP team created the "[OGP Club](#)" in order to establish a constant dialogue and collaboration with those interested in open government. From 2014 to 2017, 27 meetings were held with representatives from government, academia, civil society, and the private sector. Materials and [notes of all of the meetings](#) are published on Romania's dedicated OGP website.



Securing broad ownership of the process and Action Plan

Through giving stakeholders influence over an OGP process, a multi-stakeholder forum can help build ownership of the process and Action Plan. The more engaged stakeholders are in the development of an Action Plan, the more invested they are likely to be in ensuring a successful outcome.

5.2 What role should the multi-stakeholder forum have?

The precise role of a multi-stakeholder forum should be jointly agreed by all stakeholders in an OGP process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“Members of the multi-stakeholder forum jointly develop its remit, membership and governance (e.g. frequency of meetings, who sets the agenda, how decisions are made, how conflicts are managed, the level of detail of minutes, and decision making authority), which are communicated on the OGP website/webpage.”

When establishing an MSF, [OGP's guidance](#) further **suggests** that:

“It is useful to map out 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 the key 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?*”

At a minimum, the multi-stakeholder forum should oversee the OGP process to ensure it is open and inclusive of all stakeholders and meets the requirements outlined in OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards. Beyond the role of overseeing the OGP process, an MSF may be assigned a range of other responsibilities.

I. Outreach and engagement

The multi-stakeholder forum should not be the only mechanism for governmental and non-governmental actors to engage on OGP. Rather, its members should be responsible for conducting and/or overseeing outreach and engagement with other relevant stakeholders throughout the OGP process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum conducts outreach and awareness raising activities to relevant stakeholders (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to inform them of the OGP process.”



EXAMPLE

Paraguay

All meetings of Paraguay's multi-stakeholder forum are open to the public and broadcast live via streaming. The forum has promoted news and activities via a [dedicated website](#); social networks, such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#); awareness events across the country; and a [television program](#) on "Paraguay TV" called #GobiernoAbiertoPy.

Though outreach can be led by government independently, coordinating through the MSF can help to maximise the use of time and resources, demonstrate first-hand the principle of co-creation, and add greater legitimacy. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

"The multi-stakeholder forum coordinates multiple face-to-face outreach and engagement events around the country or locality, which are open and accessible to any interested members of the public, civil society and other stakeholders to attend (e.g., at suitable times and locations)."

While outreach and engagement are principally the responsibility of government, civil society may choose to organise its own independent activities in order to mobilise new groups and coordinate advocacy.

EXAMPLE

Nigeria

Nigeria created a multi-stakeholder forum in the form of a 42 member steering committee consisting of government officials, civil society and the private sector. The steering committee, which developed the country's first Action Plan, is co-chaired by government and civil society. Thematic working groups of government and civil society were responsible for the development of the different commitments contained in the AP. While the Steering Committee does not meet regularly, the working groups regularly meet to take stock of progress against the commitments in the AP they are responsible for implementing.

II. Decision-making

A multi-stakeholder forum can have a range of levels of decision-making responsibility and authority, from being an advisory body to a decision-making body. An advisory body makes suggestions or recommendations, which the government and any other actors involved in the process have discretion over if and how they are implemented. A decision-making body on the other hand makes binding decisions that the government and other actors must carry-out. Decision-making bodies typically require government and/or the legislature to invest powers in them through a formal mechanism (e.g. a presidential order or legislation).

EXAMPLE

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso's multi-stakeholder forum is a steering committee with government and civil society representation. The steering committee is a sub committee within the government's



National Council for the Modernization of Administration and Promotion of Good Governance (CN-MABG). This Council is responsible for coordinating and directing matters relating to the modernization of administration and good governance in Burkina Faso. The OGP steering committee developed the country's first Action Plan and, as with other sub-committees in the Council, will report to the Council on progress made in the implementation of the AP through regular updates.

III. Monitoring and learning

OGP processes can be complex and dynamic processes, with lots of stakeholders and factors that determine their success. The success of current and future processes can be greatly increased through putting in place a process of monitoring and learning that supports you to understand what is working and what is not, and adapt accordingly. This typically benefits from the involvement of a range of stakeholders that can contribute different perspectives on the process. An MSF is, therefore, well placed to lead a process of monitoring and learning.

IV. Reporting

Finally, a multi-stakeholder forum can also oversee the reporting of progress on an Action Plan. As a general rule, the more the MSFs is empowered to make decisions on the OGP process, the more responsibility it should take for reporting progress and being accountable to external stakeholders.

EXAMPLE

Australia

Australia established a multi-stakeholder forum called the [Open Government Forum](#) in July 2017, in accordance with a commitment in Australia's first AP. The purpose of the forum is to monitor and drive implementation of Australia's first Open Government Action Plan, help develop the future ones, and raise awareness about open government.

5.3

Who should be involved in the multi-stakeholder forum?



The precise membership of the multi-stakeholder forum should be jointly agreed by all stakeholders in an OGP process. Furthermore, it should include an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives.

EXAMPLE

Georgia

The multi-stakeholder 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 forum 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 Action Plan. The forum secretariat is in charge of convening meetings, defining the agenda, preparing the meeting's minutes, and preparing reports of 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 on the forum's web page.

On the governmental side, beyond ensuring an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives, the Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“The multi-stakeholder forum includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government to ensure it is sufficiently empowered to take action (e.g. the Ministerial level OGP point of contact).”

EXAMPLE

Costa Rica

Costa Rica created the National Commission of Open Government by [executive decree](#) to promote policies, guidelines, strategies, and evaluation methodology in the field of open government. Its membership includes the vice-minister of the presidency, one representative from the ministries of justice, planification and finance, one representative from the private sector, one representative from higher education, and two representatives from civil society. Minutes of the commission’s meetings are published on a dedicated open government website.

On the non-governmental side, the Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“Non-governmental members of the multi-stakeholder forum are selected through a fair and transparent process. The forum’s rules should allow non-governmental members to lead their own selection process.”

EXAMPLE

Brazil

In Brazil, CSO representatives on the Advisory Work Group of the Interministerial Committee for Open Government are selected through an open process, which is detailed in an edict from the Secretary of Transparency and Prevention of Corruption: 1) CSOs express interest in participating in the selection process online; 2) the Organizing Commission reviews the information to verify CSOs have met eligibility requirements; 3) the names of CSOs considered for participation in the process as electors and candidates are published online; 4) non-governmental entities are clustered in electoral colleges, based on three categories: civil society, private sector, and labor unions; and 5) CSOs vote online for the candidate organizations. Those with the most votes are elected, and the list is published online.

Beyond these basic requirements, the Participation and Co-creation Standards recommend that the multi-stakeholder forum includes a variety of government and non-government actors (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, local governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) that bring in a diverse range of views.





EXAMPLE

Philippines

The Philippines established a multi-sectoral group—PH-OGP Steering Committee—composed of five representatives from national government, one representative from local government, three representatives from civil society, one representative from academia, two representatives from business groups, one representative from the public sector union, and two representatives from the Philippines Congress. The committee oversees the development and implementation of Action Plans, meets at least quarterly (with special meetings called when necessary), and is co-chaired by government and civil society. The committee also jointly drives awareness raising activities at the national and subnational level on OGP and members convene thematic learning events throughout the year.

Succession planning is vital for ensuring the ongoing success and sustainability of a multi-stakeholder forum. The OGP's guidance on MSF **recommends** that:

"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."

5.4

How should the multi-stakeholder forum make decisions?

As outlined earlier, a multi-stakeholder forum can have a range of levels of decision-making responsibility and authority, from being an advisory body to a decision-making body. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



"The multi-stakeholder forum acts in a decision making capacity, with key decisions regarding the process and content of Action Plans made jointly by its members."

Where an MSF has decision making powers, it will need an agreed way of making decisions. Even where a Forum is advisory, it will likely still require a mechanism for reaching conclusions and making recommendations. There are a range of approaches that an MSF can take to making decisions. The agreed approach should be clearly outlined in the Forum's terms of reference (ToR).



BOX 12**Decision making approaches**

OGP's [guidelines on multi-stakeholder forums](#) set out the following models of decision making:

	 ADVANTAGES	 DISADVANTAGES
CONSENSUS Decisions are based on reaching unanimous agreement, with no party opposing the decision.	Promotes dialogue and inclusion of all points of view in the decision-making process. Decisions are acceptable to all parties involved.	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.	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.	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).	Middle-of-the-road alternative to consensus and majority rules.	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.	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.	The decision to hold a vote can be seen as arbitrary without a clear benchmark to determine when the dialogue has been exhausted.

Whichever model of decision making a multi-stakeholder forum adopts, it is essential that its members model the highest levels of ethical behaviour. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“Members of the multi-stakeholder forum commit to ethical standards (e.g. honesty, transparency, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and acting in the public interest) through signing an ethics statement and conflict of interest declaration, with clear sanctions in the case of breach.”



BOX 13

Seven principles of public life

The following seven principles of public life - otherwise known as the Nolan principles - are commonly used ethical standards for decision makers:



INTEGRITY

Avoid placing yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence you in your work. Do not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. Declare and resolve any interests and relationships.



OBJECTIVITY

Act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Be accountable to the public for your decisions and actions and submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.



SELFLESSNESS

Act solely in terms of the public interest.



HONESTY

Be truthful.



OPENNESS

Take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.



LEADERSHIP

Exhibit these principles in your own behaviour. Actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Checklist 1: for engaging civil society throughout the OGP process

The following checklist summarises some of the key recommendations for engaging civil society throughout the OGP process.



DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- ☐ Make your OGP website or web page as engaging and accessible as possible. Use plain language and include a clear call to action for people to get involved.
- ☐ When communicating information about the OGP process, consider what channels or media are commonly used by citizens, civil society, and other stakeholders (e.g., newspapers, television, radio, e-mail, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.).
- ☐ Keeping a well-maintained document repository will be important for those outside the process to understand what has happened and why, but it can be equally useful as a reference tool for those involved in a Action Plan process.



SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

- ☐ See OGP's guidance on "Designing and Managing an OGP Multistakeholder Forum" for detailed recommendations on establishing a multi-stakeholder forum.
- ☐ In addition to the multi-stakeholder forum, consider establishing working groups around specific issues or commitments.
- ☐ The role of the multi-stakeholder forum is to coordinate and oversee the OGP process. Ensure that there are other channels for wider civil society and stakeholder engagement in the OGP process.
- ☐ Ensure there is a mechanism for nonmembers to feed into multi-stakeholder forum meetings, and consider inviting non-members to attend specific meetings (e.g., as observers or to present on specific activities, issues, or commitments).



CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING

- ☐ Ensure that there is sufficient political support for the multi-stakeholder forum.
- ☐ Agree with government and non-government stakeholders about the basic features or characteristics of the forum.
- ☐ Ensure that the forum includes a mix of government, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- ☐ Ensure that members of the forum are selected through a fair and transparent process. To ensure independence, civil society should be able to lead its own selection process.
- ☐ Ensure that the forum has a clear remit, membership, and governance. Consider establishing a rotation policy so it is clear when seats will come up for reselection.
- ☐ Define what decision-making power the multi-stakeholder forum has (e.g., advisory body, decision-making body, mixed model), and how the forum will reach decisions (e.g., consensus, simple majority vote, qualified majority vote).



DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- ☐ Consider using visualizations, infographics, videos, or other appropriate media to communicate relevant information and updates on the process and its outcomes.
- ☐ OGP has a range of videos, graphics, photos, and other material that may be used to help communicate the initiative to stakeholders.
- ☐ OGP has developed a communications toolkit to prepare and equip you with everything you need to know to clearly communicate your Action Plan.



SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

- ☐ Consider conference calls, webinars, and/or livestreaming services for broadcasting meetings and events to those who cannot attend in person.
- ☐ Ensure that you respond quickly to questions about the OGP process from stakeholders, particularly where they are time sensitive. We suggest a maximum of 20 working days to respond, but an even faster response is preferred, if possible.



CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING

- ☐ Consider requiring multi-stakeholder forum members to agree to a set of ethical principle — (See [Box 13: The 7 principles of public life](#))—and establish a mechanism for removing members that abuse their positions.
- ☐ Consider establishing a policy for managing any disputes that arise between forum members. It is always better to have such policies in place before they are required.
- ☐ See the OGP's guidance on “Designing and Managing an OGP Multistakeholder Forum” for detailed recommendations on establishing an MSF.

6. How should we develop an OGP Action Plan?



CASE STUDY 5

Australia

The development of Australia's 2016-18 Action Plan was led by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and included a number of channels such as a formal submission process, teleconferences and a workshop. The government organized public meetings in five capital cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Canberra) and an online webinar in an initial awareness raising phase.

A public wiki—ogpau.wikispaces.com—was established for stakeholders to suggest commitments for the Action Plan.

Between February and May 2016, almost 1,000 people visited the site and put forward around 200 suggestions for commitments. A workshop, attended by 63 people, was held to discuss and prioritize the commitments with stakeholders, government representatives, civil society, the OGP Support Unit, and others. Participants at the workshop drafted 14 commitment templates.

Following a hiatus in the process due to elections, Australia established an Interim Working Group to oversee the drafting of its action plan. This was made up of equal numbers of government and non-government representatives. The non-government representatives were selected through an open nomination process. The Interim Working Group also developed guidance for agencies in implementing OGP Commitments, which outlines requirements covering partnership with civil society, awareness raising, consultation process and progress updates.

The draft plan was subsequently released for a three-week online public consultation, which included public meetings in five capital cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Canberra) and an online webinar.

Since the publication of the Action Plan, the Interim Working Group has been developed and formalised into a fully fledged multi-stakeholder forum to monitor and drive implementation of the Action Plan, help develop the next plan, and raise awareness about open government.



6.1.

What do the Participation and Co-creation Standards say?



The OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards require all members to engage civil society and other stakeholders in **developing an OGP Action Plan**. Specifically, they set out the following basic requirements and advanced steps.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- The government or multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) proactively communicates, via the OGP website/webpage and other channels of communication used, with adequate notice, the process for the development of the Action Plan. This should include a timeline of key stages and deadlines; opportunities to be involved (e.g. details of meetings, events, written consultations, feedback mechanisms); and the decision making process for agreeing commitments and finalising the AP
- The government publishes, via the OGP website/webpage, regular (i.e. at least every month) progress updates on the development of the AP, including notes of events, drafts of commitments, and other relevant information.
- The government publishes an overview of public and civil society contributions, and the government's response, on the OGP website/webpage.



ADVANCED STEPS

- The government and/or MSF publishes all written contributions (e.g. consultation responses) to the Action Plan development on the OGP website/webpage.
- The MSF publishes, via the OGP website/webpage, its reasoning behind the selection of commitments in the AP, including justifications for commitment proposals not adopted.





SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- The government, guided by the MSF, provides opportunities to any interested stakeholders (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, local governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to participate in the development of the AP
- The government provides adequate background information (e.g. about open government, the OGP, the scope of the AP, and development process), to participants in order that they can participate in an informed manner. This should be provided via the OGP website/webpage and at meetings/events.
- The government or MSF develops an appropriate methodology for the consultation. This should include an appropriate combination of open meetings and online engagement for the context, involve groups throughout the country or locality, and be open for an adequate duration.
- The government publishes and collects feedback on draft commitments. This information should be available and disseminated (i.e. via the OGP website/webpage and other appropriate channels), include a range of options for stakeholders to respond (e.g. written responses, online discussions, surveys, face-to-face or remote meetings), and be open for an adequate duration (e.g. at least 2 weeks).



ADVANCED STEPS

- The MSF engages civil society and other stakeholders in setting the agenda for the Action Plan. This may include selecting thematic priorities, identifying problems to resolve and/or suggesting ideas for commitments.
- The MSF ensures there are a range of opportunities available for civil society and other stakeholders to engage with developing the Action Plan, including a programme of outreach and engagement events around the country or locality and online discussions.
- The MSF oversees the formation of working groups including relevant stakeholders from government, civil society and beyond to discuss and refine ideas into full draft commitments.
- The MSF forum collects feedback from stakeholders on the draft AP. This should be well publicised, include a range of options for stakeholders to respond (e.g. written responses, online discussions, surveys, face-to-face or remote meetings), and be open for an adequate duration.





CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- The MSF meets frequently (e.g. at least once a month), and discusses, agrees and oversees the AP development process (e.g. number of events, location, format)
- During the development of commitments, government representatives discuss with other members of the MSF the government's priorities for commitments and the political feasibility of adopting civil society priorities and proposed commitments.
- Once commitments have been drafted, government representatives review with the MSF their comments, the final selection of commitments to be included in the AP and state clearly their reasoning behind decisions.



ADVANCED STEPS

- The MSF jointly designs and agrees the AP development process (e.g. number of events, location, format), though government retains ultimate responsibility for the quality of the process.
- Commitment proposals are assessed by the MSF through an open and transparent process. All parties have equal veto power over commitments included in the AP.
- Government and civil society, via the MSF, jointly agree the commitments to be included in the Action Plan.

OUT OF DATE

current: www.bit.ly/ogp-handbook



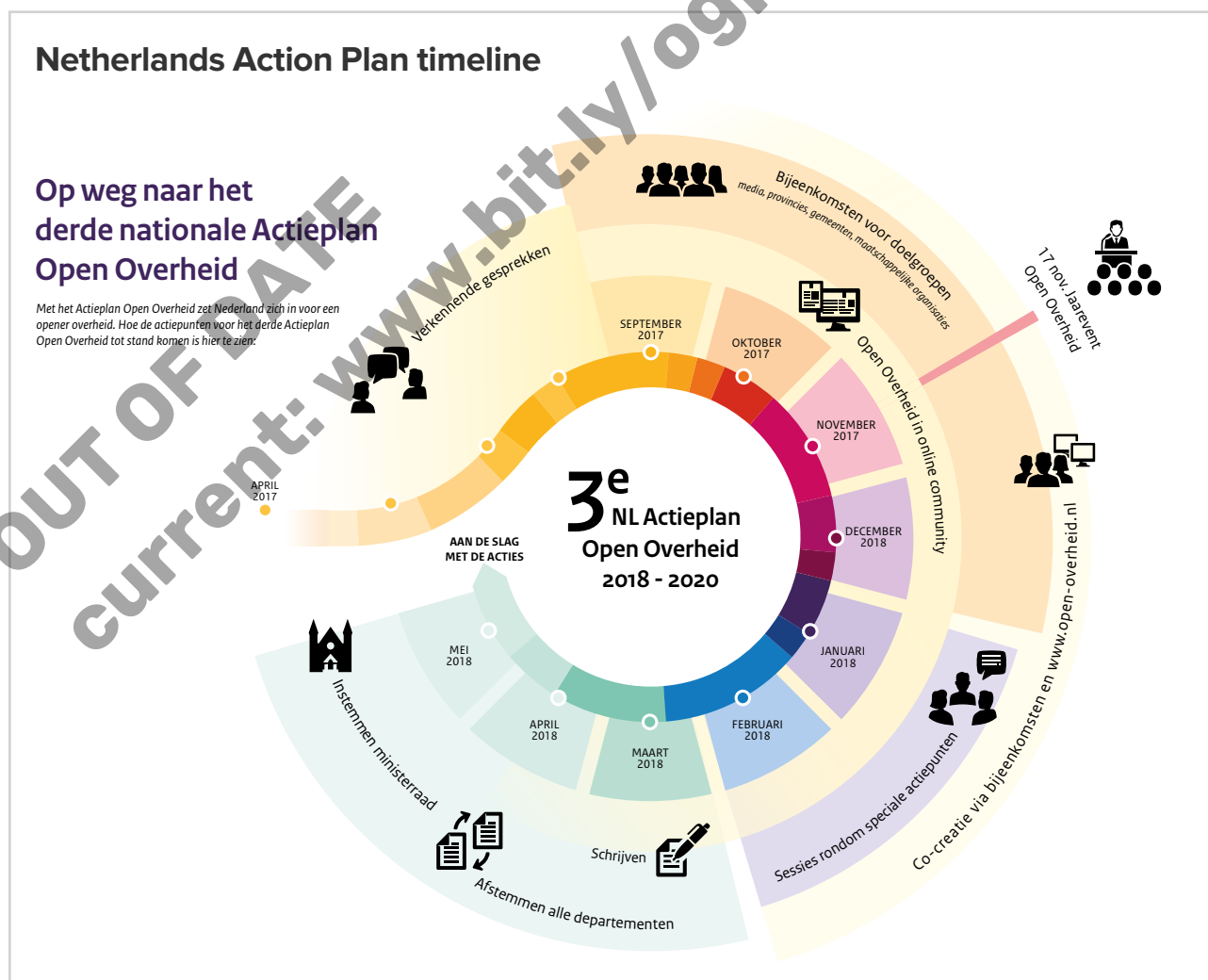
6.2. What information should be communicated about the Action Plan development?

During the development of an Action Plan there are specific pieces of information that should be published to enable the involvement of stakeholders. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“The government or multi-stakeholder forum proactively communicates, via the OGP website/webpage and other channels of communication used in the country or locality, with adequate notice, the process for the development of the Action Plan. This should include a timeline of key stages and deadlines; opportunities to be involved (e.g. details of meetings, events, written consultations, feedback mechanisms); and the decision making process for agreeing commitments and finalising the Action Plan.”

It is important that this information is not only published, but communicated in an accessible way. The Netherlands, for example, presents its Action Plan development timeline in an engaging graphical format, while Costa Rica developed an [informative video](#) explaining the process.





As outlined in section [4.3. How should information about the OGP process be communicated?](#), how the information is communicated will depend on what is most appropriate for the target audiences. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum uses a range of channels commonly used by citizens, civil society and other stakeholders, including traditional and new media (e.g. newspapers, television, radio, email, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.) as appropriate, to publicise the Action Plan development process and opportunities to get involved.”

As well as information on the process and opportunities to get involved, it is important that stakeholders are regularly kept up to date with progress during the course of developing the Action Plan. This might include feeding back from consultation events, presenting working drafts of commitments, and notifying stakeholders of any changes to the process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“The government publishes, via the OGP website/webpage, regular (i.e. at least every month) progress updates on the development of the Action Plan, including notes of events, drafts of commitments, and other relevant information.”

As well as enabling and encouraging stakeholders to engage, the publication and communication of information during Action Plan development should make the process transparent and accountable. One aspect of this is making government accountable to external stakeholders for its response to the contributions of participants in the Action Plan development. One approach to doing this is producing a report that provides an general overview of how public contributions were addressed. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“The government publishes an overview of public and civil society contributions, and the government’s response, on the OGP website/webpage.”

The ideal, however, is to produce a more detailed report that provides the reasoning behind why commitments were selected or rejected. This can help demonstrate to stakeholders that the government has paid serious consideration to their contribution. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



“The multi-stakeholder forum publishes, via the OGP website/webpage, its reasoning behind the selection of commitments in the Action Plan, including justifications for commitment proposals not adopted.”

EXAMPLE

Croatia

During the development of Croatia’s first Action Plan, the [Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#), which leads the OGP process in Croatia, published information about the different stages of the consultation, reported on all public discussions, replied to all the proposals and suggestions received, and published minutes of the National OGP Council’s meetings. It was able to attract 180 participants to the first meeting in the Action Plan development process. At the culmination of the development of the second AP, the [National OGP Council](#) and Office for Cooperation with NGOs published a [document outlining all of the proposals](#) made during the consultation and their reasons for adoption or rejection.



EXAMPLE

Argentina

Argentina established a spreadsheet giving details of all proposals under its Action Plan process, indication of whether it was accepted or not, and the reasoning behind the decision. Argentina has also made all of the documentation of its Action Plan processes open via a public GoogleDrive folder.

Another aspect of making the process transparent and accountable is making open who has contributed and how. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum publishes all written contributions (e.g. consultation responses) to the Action Plan development on the OGP website/webpage.”

EXAMPLE

Ireland

Ireland’s [dedicated OGP website](#) hosts information about the Action Plan development process. This includes information on consultation opportunities, all ideas for commitments proposed, notes from consultation events and draft Action Plans for comment. All submissions to the consultation are published with details of who made it, whether they are an individual or organisation, and when the submission was made.

There may be some legitimate reasons why stakeholders wish to remain anonymous when making their contribution, but these circumstances should be agreed and outlined in advance.

6.3. When should we start?

A good action planning process takes time to develop and carry out. It requires time to engage and mobilise internal stakeholders, conduct outreach and engagement to external stakeholders, and reach decisions on the detail and inclusion of commitments. The more time you give yourself, the more opportunity you will have to engage a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, and the higher the likely quality of the AP.

Action Plans need to be submitted by August 31st. At a minimum, there should be at least four months dedicated to the co-creation process. However, a proper consultation lasting six to nine months has the opportunity to be significantly more robust and ambitious. Beyond this rule-of-thumb, the exact time you require will depend on a number of factors and will be specific to your aims and context. As well as the dates you control, it is important to consider other external events that may have a bearing on the development of the Action Plan (e.g. elections, budget cycles, global summits, etc.).

BOX 14

Considerations for scheduling the development of an Action Plan

Here we outline a number of common considerations for scheduling the development of an Action Plan.

- **Planning and preparation** - It takes time to plan and prepare for developing an Action Plan. Devoting enough time at this stage will likely save considerable time and wasted effort on poorly thought through plans. Consider how much time is needed to engage with internal and external stakeholders, and to prepare to develop the AP.
- **Outreach and mobilisation** - Depending on who you are seeking to engage in developing the AP, it will take you time to reach them and them time to mobilise to respond. Consider how much time is required on both sides to mobilise.
- **Engagement** - Stakeholders will need sufficient notice and time to engage with the AP. This will depend in part on the complexity of your intended process (e.g. are there multiple stages?). Consider how much time stakeholders will need to engage in each stage of the process.
- **Decision making and sign-off** - Consider how much time is needed for the Action Plan to be agreed and receive sign-off from the multi-stakeholder forum, ministers and any other relevant stakeholders.
- **Launch** - Consider when would be a good opportunity to launch the AP. This might be an OGP Summit or a national/local event.
- **Deadline** - Consider when the deadline is for submitting your AP to OGP - currently August 31st.

It is advisable to start with deadline and work backwards - designating blocks of time - to arrive at the start date.

6.4. Who should be involved in developing an Action Plan?

The development of an OGP Action Plan should be open to any interested stakeholders to take part. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



"The government, guided by the multi-stakeholder forum, provides opportunities to any interested stakeholders (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to participate in the development of the Action Plan."

Open opportunities for engagement require that there are no restrictions placed on who can contribute, and that a general invitation is issued and publicised for anyone to take part. As outlined further in [Section 6.5: How should we involve stakeholders in developing the Action Plan?](#), this will also require an "appropriate combination of open meetings and online engagement for the country context".



EXAMPLE

Uruguay

Following a limited consultation process for Uruguay's first Action Plan, a group of 14 civil society organisations formed an Open Government Network (OGN) in an effort to increase civil society participation in the OGP process. This helped result in a much more extensive consultation process to develop Uruguay's second AP. This participatory process was overseen by an expanded OGP working group, with additional representatives added from academia, the local government association and civil society. The civil society members were selected by civil society itself, through the OGN. The Uruguayan government also invited the participation of UNESCO in the process, who provided independent international oversight, examples of international good practice, assistance to working groups and neutral facilitation and convening of meetings. The consultation process itself consisted of a couple of elements. First, a two month online consultation was held to collect feedback on initiatives proposed by public agencies and on the final draft of the Action Plan. This was publicised through government websites, media, workshops and a direct mail campaign. Second, the Uruguayan government established a process for selecting proposals and developing the AP in collaboration with civil society, the private sector and academia. This consisted of three roundtables through which stakeholders could advocate for specific commitments and input into the AP, facilitated by an external facilitator to ensure constructive dialogue and engagement. The roundtables provided a route through which civil society could suggest proposals beyond those pre-selected by government agencies. Civil society and government agencies agreed the final commitments and Action Plan by consensus. Commitments that did not make it into the AP have not been lost. Some were adopted as "agreements", due to the fact they did not meet the criteria to be commitments (e.g. SMART metrics), and will be followed up by the working group for potential inclusion in future Action Plans.

Creating open opportunities for engagement - where anyone can choose to contribute - is an important principle and starting point for an OGP process, but open opportunities alone will not produce widespread participation. Although there should be a range of open opportunities where anyone can choose to contribute, not every meeting, event or online engagement need necessarily be open. It may be appropriate to use some closed, targeted engagement opportunities to reach specific groups. For a variety of participation techniques, please see [Box 2: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#)

The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

"The multi-stakeholder forum ensures there are a range of opportunities available for civil society and other stakeholders to engage with developing the Action Plan, including a programme of outreach and engagement events around the country or locality and online discussions."

Some of the best OGP processes have made specific efforts to broaden the group of government and non-government actors involved in the process to include new groups (e.g. youth, grassroots organisations, parliaments, media, private sector).





EXAMPLE

Sierra Leone

Prior to developing its Action Plan, Sierra Leone carried out a program of awareness raising in 12 districts, the Western Area (rural and urban), and in the diaspora (Belgium, the United States, and the United Kingdom). This was followed by a nationwide consultation held in all 14 districts.

Targeted outreach and engagement is needed in order to involve groups and communities that would not typically take part in open government discussions. This will require you to select groups that you wish to target, and then design communications and engagement that fit their motivations, needs and characteristics. For example, young people may be better reached through digital engagement, whereas ethnic or religious minority groups may be better engaged face-to-face through faith, cultural or other institutions.

6.5. How should we involve stakeholders in developing the Action Plan?

Your approach to engaging stakeholders in developing an Action Plan should be informed by your country or local context and the motivations, needs and characteristics of any specific groups you wish to engage. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“The government or multi-stakeholder forum develops an appropriate methodology for the consultation. This should include an appropriate combination of open meetings and online engagement for the country or local context, involve groups throughout the country or locality, and be open for an adequate duration.”

A key consideration for how you engage stakeholders will be the purpose of your engagement. During the development of an OGP process, there are a variety of different purposes your engagement might have at different stages.

1. Selecting thematic priorities

Stakeholders may be engaged at the beginning of the development of an Action Plan with the purpose of selecting thematic priorities to be addressed by commitments. For example, it may be decided that an Action Plan focus on tackling a specific national or local issue, such as reducing corruption, improving public services or increasing sustainability. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:


“The multi-stakeholder forum engages civil society and other stakeholders in setting the agenda for the Action Plan. This may include selecting thematic priorities, identifying problems to resolve and/or suggesting ideas for commitments.”

This purpose of engagement would likely require opportunity for stakeholders to propose, discuss, prioritise and select priority issues for the Action Plan to address. It may lend itself to engaging citizens directly, in order to connect the AP to their priorities.



EXAMPLE

Croatia



Croatia has run two successful Action Plan development processes, led by its multi-stakeholder forum, the [National OGP Council](#). The first action, published in 2012, was developed through three public meetings. The first meeting attracted 180 participants, with 40 of them continuing engagement for the more technical discussions in meeting three. Based on the input through these meetings, the National OGP Council developed and discussed a series of drafts of the Action Plan, which then went out to a three week consultation. The Office for Cooperation with NGOs, which leads the OGP process in Croatia, conducted some outreach to CSOs based outside of the capital. This process saw a number of civil society proposals be incorporated into Croatia's first AP. Again led by the National OGP Council and supported by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs, the development of Croatia's second AP followed a similar process. The process started with the Council identifying priorities for the new Action Plan, including continuing the implementation of a number of commitments from the first Action Plan. A two-week online consultation was held on these priorities for the Plan, followed by a series of more than 30 meetings organised by the Council and Office for Cooperation with NGOs to discuss and develop related proposals. The National OGP Council engaged relevant government and civil society representatives to discuss all of the proposals received. The resulting draft Action Plan was put out for a one-month online consultation.

Thematic priorities should link to real world issues that a country or community faces. Therefore, starting from the perspective of problems that need to be solved and then identifying if/how open government initiatives can help, can help to ensure that an Action Plan is relevant and beneficial to the lives of citizens.



EXAMPLE

Austin

In Austin, city staff engaged with CSOs to identify “pain points” that could be alleviated by open governance initiatives. Five teams, made up of government and civil society representatives, were formed to develop and implement Austin's commitments. The impetus for a number of these commitments either came directly from civil society, or from discussions of city officials and civil society organisations. Each of the teams also used survey data and interviews to collect input from citizens, city staffers, council members, and other community leaders to inform each commitment. This included City officials receiving responses from 1,904 citizens of East Austin, a region of the city that has traditionally received an uneven share of city resources, which informed the City's commitment on increasing equitable decision-making. Input was also collected by city staff visiting community gatherings hosted by its civil society partner, [Open Austin](#), which resulted in input from nearly 2,000 citizens.

II. Generating commitment ideas

Early in the development of an Action Plan stakeholders may engage with the purpose of generating ideas for commitments to be included in the Action Plan. For example, stakeholders

may be asked to propose open government reforms that would address a national or local issue, or given the opportunity to advocate for their priority reform(s).

This purpose of engagement would likely require some form of open call for ideas and/or crowdsourcing process. It may lend itself to widespread engagement, and the use of online engagement to collect and record ideas.

BOX 15

Online tools for crowdsourcing ideas

The following selection of online tools can be used for crowdsourcing ideas:



Your Priorities

<https://www.yrpri.org>

Your Priorities is a free web-platform that can be used to crowdsource ideas. Users can submit their own proposals, and vote and comment on the proposals of others.



Discuto

<https://www.discuto.io/>

Discuto is a freemium (i.e. a basic version is accessible for free, with a cost for additional features) and gamified web-platform that can be used to crowdsource ideas. Users can submit their own proposals, and vote, comment and suggest edits to the proposals of others.



See the [OGP Toolbox](#) for other tools:

A number of governments have also developed their own consultation platforms; for example:

[France](#)

[Israel](#)

[Italy](#)

[Ireland](#)

[New Zealand](#)

NB: A customizable open source solution is [Consul](#), developed by the city of Madrid, that enables online debates, proposal submission, commenting, voting, and even participatory budgeting. For help with your own customisable solution, please contact the Support Unit.

EXAMPLE

Armenia

Armenia ran a crowdsourcing process, supported by the UNDP, to collect ideas for commitments for its third Action Plan. More than 130 people were engaged through a series of outreach events, and 80 suggestions were made by CSOs, experts, citizens, and government agencies via an online tool. This was the first time Armenia had used crowdsourcing to develop government policy. High-level government officials came together with CSO counterparts, experts, and private sector partners for a two-day workshop to discuss and build upon the suggested commitments.

III. Prioritising and selecting commitment ideas

Midway through the development of an Action Plan the purpose of stakeholders' engagement may be to help prioritise and select commitment ideas. For example, stakeholders may be asked to review and respond to ideas generated during a crowdsourcing phase, or those proposed by government departments and agencies.

This purpose of engagement would likely require some opportunity for stakeholders to comment, prioritise and/or vote on commitment ideas. It may lend itself to widespread engagement through online commenting and voting, and/or in-depth face-to-face engagement to advocate for and prioritise commitments.

EXAMPLE

Ireland

Ireland ran a multistage process to develop its second Action Plan. In the first stage, an online portal was used to collect suggestions for commitments. Participants could view, share, and comment on other people's suggestions. Submissions could also be made via post and telephone, which were manually put into the system. Fifty-five submissions were received. In the second stage, two civic forums were held to discuss and debate possible commitments to include in the second Action Plan. Findings from the forums were published on the OGP Ireland website. The feedback was analyzed by an independent organization, which submitted a report to the government listing the possible commitments that could be made. The report was also published on the OGP Ireland website. The government considered the list of possible commitments and developed a draft of the Action Plan, which was published for public comment. Participants in the previous stages were invited to respond, and a social media awareness campaign was conducted.

IV. Drafting commitments and the Action Plan

Towards the end of the development of an Action Plan stakeholders may engage with the purpose of drafting commitments and the AP. For example, stakeholders may be engaged to develop the detail of commitments, such as the specific actions and milestones to be completed. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

"The multi-stakeholder forum oversees the formation of working groups including relevant stakeholders from government, civil society and beyond to discuss and refine ideas into full draft commitments."

This purpose of engagement would likely require an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss commitment ideas in detail, and some form of collaborative drafting process. It may lend itself to engaging open government experts, who can provide detailed input and feedback on the detail of commitments.

BOX 16

Online tools for co-drafting commitments

The following selection of online collaborative word processors can be used for drafting commitments together with stakeholders:



[Google Docs](#)



[Etherpad](#)



[Dropbox Paper](#)



[Quip](#)

See the [OGP Toolbox](#) for other tools



EXAMPLE

Ukraine

Ukraine engaged a large number of CSOs in the development of its third Action Plan. The process began when a call for proposals was published on the Government's "Civil Society and Government" website in October 2015. This was followed by executive agencies developing their own proposals for commitments in December 2015 and January 2016. In January 2016, a number of open meetings of the Coordinating Council working groups were held, which included representatives from CSOs and executive agencies. During February 2016, regional public discussions were held to engage a large number of CSOs on the development of the Action Plan - several of these organized and run by CSOs. Proposals collected during these events were reviewed by the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers. Additional meetings were held with executive agencies and relevant experts to further develop individual proposals. Lastly, in conjunction with the launch of the IRM report of the preceding Action Plan, a final consultation was held using the "world cafe" format to vote on ideas to go into the draft Action Plan. Finally, the draft Action Plan was put out to online public consultation. Over 400 proposals from CSOs were considered during the process and at least 80% of the resulting Action Plan is said to have come from CSO proposals.

V. Reviewing the Action Plan

Stakeholders may be engaged at the end of the development of an Action Plan with the purpose of reviewing and agreeing the Action Plan. For example, stakeholders may be asked to provide comments on a draft Action Plan and/or sign off the Action Plan or particular commitments. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

"The multi-stakeholder forum collects feedback from stakeholders on the draft Action Plan. This should be well publicised, include a range of options for stakeholders to respond (e.g. written responses, online discussions, surveys, face-to-face or remote meetings), and be open for an adequate duration."

This purpose of engagement would likely require some form public consultation, where the draft Action Plan is published for comments. It may lend itself to more formal consultation methods, such as written responses, and/or the use of online tools to collect and record feedback. Alternatively, it could involve a vote on priority commitments, as happened in São Paulo.

EXAMPLE

São Paulo

In São Paulo, the development of the Action Plan was divided into three main phases. First was a diagnosis phase to identify gaps in the city's openness, as well as and priorities for commitments. This was conducted via a survey of citizens and civil society, both online and offline. Second, commitments were drafted through three workshops, attended by 41 civil society representatives, and an online consultation, completed by 34 civil society representatives. Third, an online poll was held to select five commitments from the pool of proposals. To help to ensure thematic diversity in the Action Plan, during this last phase the 16 proposals were divided into five categories, with each voter being allowed to select one priority commitment from each. 711 civil society representatives took part in this vote.



As well as the purpose of engagement, the opportunities you provide for engagement should also take account of who your stakeholders are, including their motivations, needs and characteristics. It is important not to make sweeping assumptions or generalisations when doing this. Rather, some light touch research into examples of previous engagement (both successful and unsuccessful) can help you to understand what has most chance for success.

This exercise should help you decide the appropriate balance between, for example: online or offline, formal or informal, and in-depth or light-touch engagement. As outlined throughout this handbook, there are a wide range of approaches, methods and tools that can be used to involve stakeholders.

BOX 17

Tools for collecting public comments

The following online tools can be used to collect public comments on a document:



Civocomment

www.civocomment.com

Civocomment allows you to upload and collect comments on a PDF document. It does not require registration from respondents, lowering the barriers to use, and allows comments on and up- or down-voting of previous comments.



Discuto

www.discuto.io

Discuto converts a document you upload into an interactive and gamified webpage, allowing respondents to up- or down-vote and comment on each paragraph. Discuto requires respondents to register, which can provide you with data on who has contributed, but may restrict who participates.



Google Docs

docs.google.com

Google Docs operates as an online word processor, which enables respondents to leave comments and suggest edits on documents that you share with them.

See the [OGP Toolbox](#) for other tools

6.6. What is the role of the multi-stakeholder forum in developing the Action Plan?

The MSF will perform a critical role overseeing and coordinating the development of the Action Plan. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

"The multi-stakeholder forum meets frequently (e.g. at least once a month), and discusses, agrees and oversees the Action Plan development process (e.g. number of events, location, format)."

As outlined in [Section 5. What is a multi-stakeholder forum?](#), the design of the Action Plan will likely benefit from the close involvement of the MSF for a number of reasons. These include accessing new ideas, networks and resources, building collaborative relationships and

establishing mutual understanding and expectations, and securing broad ownership of the process and AP. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“The multi-stakeholder forum jointly designs and agrees the Action Plan development process (e.g. number of events, location, format), though government retains ultimate responsibility for the quality of the process.”

EXAMPLE

Mongolia

Mongolia established a Working Group (WG) to lead the development of its second AP, comprised of representatives from government and CSOs. A number of channels were established for collecting feedback on the draft AP, including face-to-face meetings, email and letters. The principle consultation mechanism was an event held with over 80 representatives from government, the private sector, civil society organisations, international organisations, and the media. This took the form of five sector-specific groups organised around the [OGP Grand Challenges](#) and facilitated by members of the WG. Proposals from a range of sources were discussed at the meeting, including from ministries, provinces, civil society organisations and international organisations. Participants in the meeting gave feedback and recommendation on the commitments to be included in the Action Plan.

Critical to the success of an Action Plan is finding areas of common purpose where ambitious commitments can be agreed and implemented. This requires an open and honest dialogue between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders about reform priorities and political feasibility. This discussion will inevitably lead to some disagreement. However, if all stakeholders approach it in the spirit of open and honest dialogue to achieve a common ambition, it can result in greater trust, joint ownership and transformative commitments. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“During the development of commitments, government representatives discuss with other members of the multi-stakeholder forum the government’s priorities for commitments and the political feasibility of adopting civil society priorities and proposed commitments.”

This discussion should be ongoing throughout the development of the Action Plan, including reviewing the final selection of commitments. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

“Once commitments have been drafted, government representatives review with the multi-stakeholder forum their comments, the final selection of commitments to be included in the Action Plan and state clearly their reasoning behind decisions.”

EXAMPLE

Croatia

The development of Croatia’s Action Plans is led by its [National OGP Council](#), which is made up of representatives from central and local government, civil society, academia and the media. The OGP Council is responsible for leading the consultation and recommending a AP



to the Croatian government for adoption. The Council may also recommend amendments and addendums of the Action Plan to the Government. The National OGP Council has ‘played a critical role in bringing different actors together around common goals for open government reform in the country.’ Following an extensive Action Plan development process, the National OGP Council and the [Office for Cooperation with NGOs](#) submitted Croatia’s second AP to the Croatian government for approval. Included in the submission was an annex of all proposals made during the consultation process, and the rationale for why they had been adopted or rejected. Citizens can [access the report online](#) through the Office for Cooperation with NGOs website.

Beyond this, however, it is recommended that the multi-stakeholder forum have decision making power over the commitments to be included in the Action Plan. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“Government and civil society, via the multi-stakeholder forum, jointly agree the commitments to be included in the Action Plan.”

This can include stakeholders having an equal veto power, in order to prevent commitments they consider might be damaging. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“Commitment proposals are assessed by the multi-stakeholder forum through an open and transparent process. All parties have equal veto power over commitments included in the Action Plan.”

EXAMPLE

Buenos Aires

In Buenos Aires, a Working Group (WG) was established composed of three government agencies and four civil society organisations. Within the group, government and civil society had equal decision making power, including on defining the Action Plan development process, monitoring and implementation of commitments. A timeline of the AP development process was published online and shared via social media. Overseen by the WG, the Secretariat General coordinated a series of roundtables to generate ideas and priorities for commitments focused on the themes of education, health and transportation. The WG conducted targeted outreach to organisations in these areas. Following these roundtables, the Secretariat General prepared the first drafts of commitments, which were commented upon by civil society online and subsequently agreed by the WG and relevant government leads.

As outlined in [Section 5.4. How should the multi-stakeholder forum make decisions?](#), there are a range of approaches that a multi-stakeholder forum can take to making decisions on issues such as which commitments to include in the Action Plan.





Checklist 2: for the Action Plan development stage

The following checklist summarises some of the key recommendations for developing an OGP Action Plan.



DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- ☐ Ensure that there is a clear timeline published for the OGP process so that civil society and other stakeholders know when to engage.
- ☐ Ensure to provide a good amount of notice. The more warning civil society and other stakeholders have the more likely it is that they will be able to engage.
- ☐ Consider what contacts and networks you can use to spread messages. Invitations to engage do not necessarily only need to come from you. People are typically more likely to get involved if the invitation comes from someone they know and trust.
- ☐ Short but regular progress updates on the development of the Action Plan are likely to be more useful than longer, infrequent updates.
- ☐ Consider using photos, video, or other media to report back on any events.



SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

- ☐ Ensure that you engage your internal stakeholders as well as external ones. Securing the ownership of relevant decision makers, policy leaders, and budget holders will be essential to the Action Plan being a success.
- ☐ Consider what information participants will need in order to be able to engage effectively and how that information can best be presented to them.
- ☐ At events, consider taking participants through a multistep process that helps them engage with the subject, understand how the subject links with their work or issues and allow their perspectives to develop.
- ☐ Ensure that you are reaching a diverse group of participants by providing different opportunities for people to engage: e.g. in different locations, at different times, through different methods, etc.



CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING

- ☐ Involve diverse stakeholders multi-stakeholder members in overseeing and running the Action Plan development process. Make use of their ideas, networks, skills, and resources. Look at opportunities for co-hosting events with civil society and/or other government departments.
- ☐ Consider using online writing platforms (e.g., [Google Docs](#), [Hackpad](#), [Quip](#), etc.) for collaboratively drafting commitment text.
- ☐ Be as open as possible with civil society and other stakeholders about the feasibility of different commitment proposals. This will help them and you prioritize your focus accordingly.
- ☐ Be clear about the level of influence the multi-stakeholder forum has over agreeing on the Action Plan.





DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- ☐ Ensure that you report back to participants on how you took into account their contributions. This is an important principle of engagement. It demonstrates respect for people's time and is vital for encouraging future engagement.



SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

- ☐ Tailor your engagement to your intended participants, including the questions you ask and the methods you use.
- ☐ Be clear about how you will be recording and using participants' inputs.
- ☐ Consider what methods for engaging are most appropriate considering your purpose, context, and intended participants. A database of methods can be found at <http://participedia.net>.



CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING

OUT OF DATE
current: www.bit.ly/ogp-handbook



7. How should we implement, monitor and report on an OGP Action Plan?

CASE STUDY 6

Nigeria

Nigeria joined the Open Government Partnership in 2016. During this time, it has produced one Action Plan, covering 2017 to 2019.

Nigeria created a multi-stakeholder forum - the National OGP Steering Committee (SC) - with 42 members, including government officials, civil society and the private sector. The Steering Committee, which led the development of Nigeria's first Action Plan, is co-chaired by government and civil society.

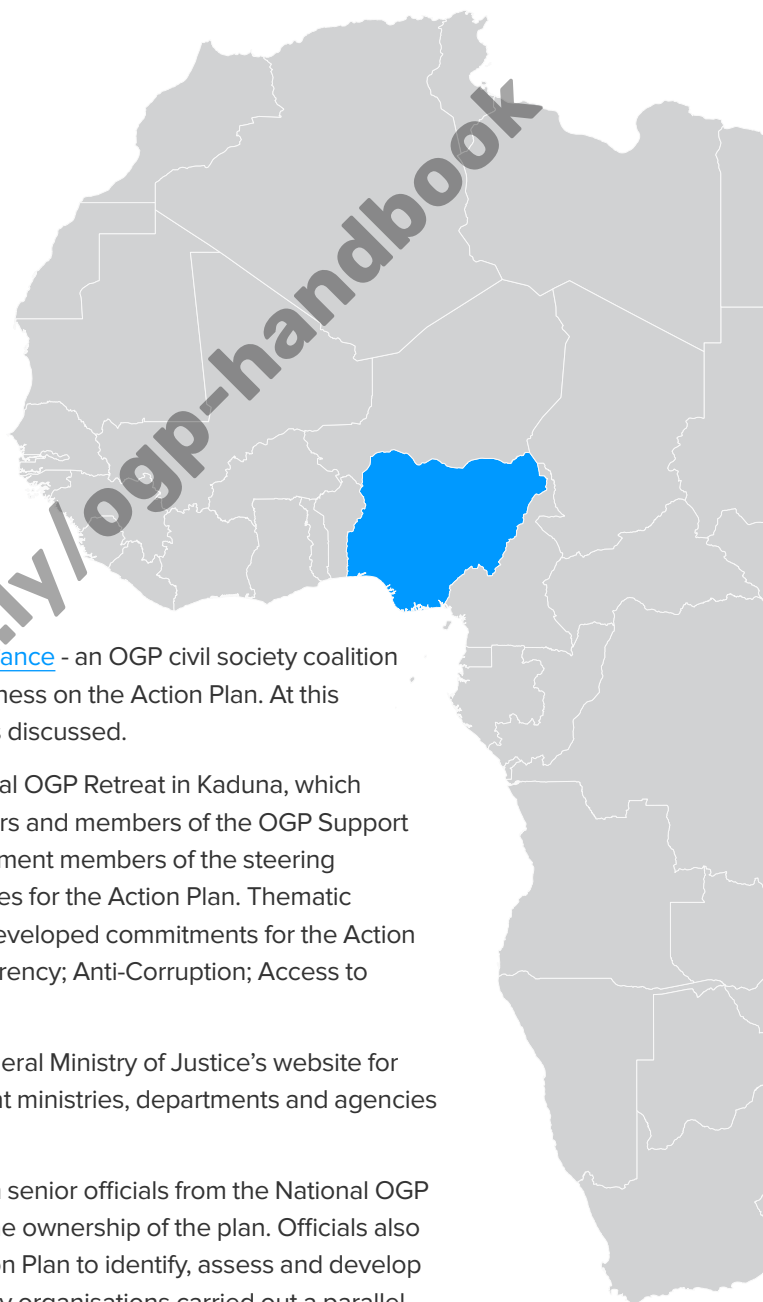
Early in the process, a questionnaire was prepared by the Nigeria OGP Secretariat and shared with key government ministries to collect information on programs and reforms relevant to OGP commitments. At a similar time, the [Open Alliance](#) - an OGP civil society coalition - organised a workshop with civil society and business on the Action Plan. At this meeting, a draft AP developed by civil society was discussed.

The Federal Ministry of Justice organised a national OGP Retreat in Kaduna, which involved members of the SC, development partners and members of the OGP Support Unit. At this meeting government and non-government members of the steering committee discussed and agreed thematic priorities for the Action Plan. Thematic working groups of government and civil society developed commitments for the Action Plan under thematic four headings: Fiscal Transparency; Anti-Corruption; Access to Information; and Citizens' Engagement.

The draft AP was subsequently posted on the Federal Ministry of Justice's website for public comments and distributed to all government ministries, departments and agencies for feedback.

A half-day validation workshop was then held with senior officials from the National OGP Steering Committee to strengthen and broaden the ownership of the plan. Officials also performed a participatory risk analysis of the Action Plan to identify, assess and develop mitigation strategies for potential risks. Civil society organisations carried out a parallel workshop to develop comments and finalise the AP. Civil society organisations also raised awareness of the draft AP through television and radio interviews, and social media.

Although the National OGP Steering Committee has not met regularly during the implementation of the Action Plan, the thematic working groups do continue to meet regularly to take stock of progress against the commitments they are responsible for implementing.



7.1.

What do the Participation and Co-creation Standards say?

The OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards require all members to engage civil society and stakeholders in **implementing, monitoring and reporting on an OGP Action Plan**. Specifically, they set out the following basic requirements and advanced steps.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- ➔ The government publishes via the OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e. at least every six months) on the progress of commitments, including progress against milestones, reasons for any delays, next steps. This is in addition to publishing a self-assessment report (SAR).
- ➔ The website/webpage should have a feature to allow the public to comment on progress updates.

ADVANCED STEPS

- ➔ The multi-stakeholder forum oversees the publication of regular joint government-civil society updates on the progress of commitments in addition to government SARs.
- ➔ The government publishes a dashboard on the OGP website/webpage that provides up to date information on the status of all commitments in an accessible and easy-to-understand format for an average citizen.

SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- ➔ The government holds at least two open meetings with civil society (one per year) on the implementation of the Action Plan.
- ➔ The government shares the link to the IRM report with other government institutions and stakeholders to encourage input during the public comment phase.

ADVANCED STEPS

- ➔ The government holds at least a four-week public consultation on its self-assessment and proactively disseminates and promotes the public comment period through multiple channels (e.g. mailing lists of participants during Action Plan development and the OGP website/webpage).
- ➔ Government provides members of civil society, through the MSF or otherwise, with regular (i.e. at least biannual) opportunities to meet with the responsible minister to review progress, the government self-assessment and IRM reports.
- ➔ Government provides an interactive space on the OGP website for stakeholders to discuss the progress of commitments, and government responds to questions/issues within 20 days.
- ➔ If the IRM report is publically launched, the government sends a high level representative (i.e. minister or senior official)



CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- The multi-stakeholder forum monitors and deliberates on how to improve the implementation of the Action Plan.
- The government submit its SAR to the multi-stakeholder forum for comments and feedback on the content of the report.

ADVANCED STEPS

- Working groups including a range of relevant stakeholders are formed for implementing and monitoring each commitment, with their members selected through an appropriate methods (e.g. by the multi-stakeholder forum or through an open call).
- Government proactively organizes frequent (i.e. at least quarterly) meetings of each working group, who produce regular (i.e. at least biannual) jointly agreed progress updates on the implementation of the commitment. These updates should form the basis for the government self-assessment report.

7.2. What information should be communicated about the Action Plan implementation?

Publishing information on the performance of OGP commitments is critical to ensuring the transparency and accountability of an OGP process. It underpins the participation of civil society and other stakeholders in implementing and monitoring the Action Plan, and helps to inform the OGP and Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:

"The government publishes via the OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e. at least every six months) on the progress of commitments, including progress against milestones, reasons for any delays, next steps. This is in addition to publishing self-assessment report."

A number of countries and local governments have developed online dashboards that present the progress of commitments in an accessible and interactive way. This allows stakeholders to immediately review the progress of a Action Plan overall or delve into the status of specific commitments. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

"The government publishes a dashboard on the OGP website/webpage that provides up to date information on the status of all commitments in an accessible and easy-to-understand format for an average citizen."

Many of these dashboards use RAG (Red-Amber-Green), also known as the "traffic light" system, ratings to communicate the status of a commitment.

BOX 18

Examples of commitment status dashboards

The following are a selection of commitment status dashboards:

[Argentina](#)

[Australia](#)

[Canada](#)

[Costa Rica](#)

[El Salvador](#)

[Honduras](#)

[Italy](#)

[Mexico](#)

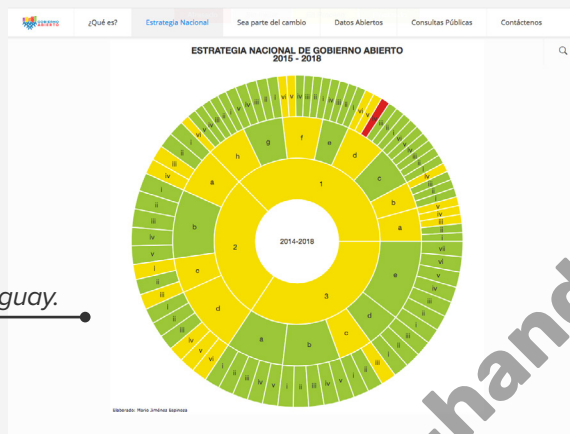
[Paraguay](#)

[Serbia](#)

[Sri Lanka](#)

[Uruguay](#)

Example from Paraguay.



7.3. Who should be involved in implementing and monitoring an Action Plan?

Civil society and stakeholder engagement should begin - not end - with the development of a commitment or Action Plan. The non-governmental organisation, Involve, and the OECD identify five key roles that civil society can play in the **implementation** of open government reforms:

1. **Informer:** Building public awareness of a policy (e.g. new rights, services, etc.)
2. **Expert:** Advising on policy implementation
3. **Service provider:** Implementing the policy
4. **Co-producer:** Partnering with government to implement the policy
5. **Citizenship champion:** Supporting citizens to utilise new rights, services, etc.

The role(s) that non-governmental stakeholders are able and willing to perform will depend on the characteristics of the individual or organisation, as well as the commitment.

As a minimum, there are two groups of stakeholders that commitment leads should seek to engage:

Technical experts - Some non-governmental stakeholders will be able to contribute important technical expertise that can be invaluable to the successful implementation of a commitment. Through their interest and expertise in the reform, these stakeholders are also likely to be the most invested in ensuring its successful implementation, and can therefore play an important scrutiny and accountability role.

Potential users / beneficiaries - To be successful, open government reforms must consider how citizens, civil society and other stakeholders will use the reform, as well as the technical aspects of how government will implement it. The most technically perfect access-to-information law or public service feedback mechanism, for example, will have little (if any) impact unless someone uses it. It is therefore good policy making practice to involve stakeholders in decisions regarding the implementation of the reform.

7.4.

How should we involve stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the AP?

The OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards require and recommend a number of approaches to engaging civil society in the implementation and monitoring of an Action Plan. At a minimum, the Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



"The government holds at least two open meetings with civil society (one per year) on the implementation of the Action Plan."

This should provide a forum through which any civil society or other non-governmental stakeholders can engage with the OGP Point of Contact and commitment leads on the progress of the Action Plan. These meetings should involve senior government officials who can respond to any questions or concerns that are raised by civil society. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



"Government provides members of civil society, through the multi-stakeholder forum or otherwise, with regular (i.e. at least biannual) opportunities to meet with the responsible minister to review progress, the government self-assessment and IRM reports."

Beyond these regular engagement opportunities to review the implementation of the plan overall, the Participation and Co-creation Standards also recommend that the government establishes mechanisms through which civil society and other stakeholders can engage on specific commitments. This includes the opportunity to ask questions or raise issues online. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



"The website/webpage should have a feature to allow the public to comment on progress updates."

EXAMPLE

Paraguay

Paraguay has a [dedicated OGP website](#) which includes a forum for discussion of the development and implementation of Action Plans.

The forum allows users to submit feedback on each commitment, as well as review progress via the monitoring section of the website.

These spaces should ideally be interactive, allowing the discussion of commitments by stakeholders, and receive regular engagement from government representatives to respond to any questions and issues. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



"Government provides an interactive space on the OGP website/webpage for stakeholders to discuss the progress of commitments, and government responds to questions/issues within 20 days."

This form of engagement should allow anyone with an interest in a commitment to engage with its implementation in a quick and accessible way. It therefore opens up the opportunity for involvement to a much broader group than would likely take part in face-to-face meetings.



EXAMPLE

Australia

Australia has a dedicated [OGP website](#) which presents easily accessible information on the progress of commitments. Each commitment milestone is presented with graphics to show whether it is completed, on track, delayed or not started. Users are able to comment on commitments, posting questions on progress or asking for further information.

As outlined above, commitment leads may be able to reap significant benefit from actively engaging civil society and stakeholders directly in the implementation of a commitment. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“Working groups including a range of relevant stakeholders are formed for implementing and monitoring each commitment, with their members selected through an appropriate methods (e.g. by the multi-stakeholder forum or through an open call).”

Such working groups are most likely to be successful when they include a range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with a combination of technical expertise and ambition to use the reform(s) introduced by the commitment. However, they will require support and careful facilitation to ensure members share a common purpose and each is able to contribute their unique perspective. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“Government proactively organizes frequent (i.e. at least quarterly) meetings of each working group, who produce regular (i.e. at least biannual) jointly agreed progress updates on the implementation of the commitment. These updates should form the basis for the government self-assessment report.”

Requiring the agreement of joint progress updates can help provide a regular trigger for government-civil society engagement, as well as helping to ensure their accuracy and forming part of an ongoing learning process.

EXAMPLE

United Kingdom

During the development of the UK’s second (2013-15) Open Government Action Plan, working groups were established with representatives from government and civil society to develop and agree the detail of commitments. These working groups continued into the implementation of the AP, with government and civil society “commitment leads” required to meet and agree progress reports every 6 months.

7.5.

What is the role of the multi-stakeholder forum in implementing the AP?

The multi-stakeholder forum has a central role to play in ensuring the successful implementation of an Action Plan. While there should be other mechanisms through which stakeholders collaborate to implement commitments, the multi-stakeholder forum has a unique oversight and coordination role and responsibility. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



“The multi-stakeholder forum monitors and deliberates on how to improve the implementation of the Action Plan.”

One role of the MSF, therefore, will be overseeing the work of commitment leads and working groups. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



“The multi-stakeholder forum oversees the publication of regular joint government-civil society updates on the progress of commitments in addition to government self-assessment reports.”

Attached to this oversight role is a both a dual strategic and troubleshooting role. On the one hand, the MSF can take a bird’s-eye-view of the Action Plan to help ensure resources and focus are focused where they are most needed and can have most impact. On the other hand, the MSF can play a troubleshooting role of identifying issues with the implementation, and putting in place remedial actions.

EXAMPLE

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has established a dual model for monitoring the implementation of the AP. The General Forum performs the role of a national steering committee and has monthly meetings and ad hoc sessions as needed. Smaller forums, called “cluster hubs,” 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 Directorate (PMSD) in the Office of the President—presents a quarterly evaluation report on the implementation of the plan. The report is discussed and improved in a General Forum then takes the final report to all 14 districts in the country. At the same time, civil society 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.

To perform these functions, the multi-stakeholder forum will need to meet on a regular basis - at least every six months, but ideally quarterly or more regularly - and include high level representation from the government.

It is important that the MSF has authority to make decisions and compel action to address any issues with the implementation of the Action Plan. Therefore, particularly if the Forum is an advisory body, rather than decision-making body, it is essential that the Minister responsible for overseeing the OGP process is engaged in the review process. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



“Government provides members of civil society, through the multi-stakeholder forum or otherwise, with regular (i.e. at least biannual) opportunities to meet with the responsible minister to review progress, the government self-assessment and IRM reports.”

As with other stages of the AP process, the multi-stakeholder forum should support the engagement of other stakeholders in implementing and monitoring the Action Plan. For example, there should be an opportunity for stakeholders to feed any questions or issues into the multi-



stakeholder forum for consideration, and a feedback mechanism to update them on what was discussed and agreed at meetings.

EXAMPLE

Australia

Australia's multi-stakeholder forum, the Open Government Forum, meets every two months to monitor and drive the implementation of its current Action Plan. Stakeholders are encouraged to feed issues and questions into the forum, and agendas and minutes of meetings are openly published on a [dedicated OGP website](#). The precursor to the forum, the Interim Working Group, developed [guidance for agencies in implementing OGP Commitments](#), which outlines requirements covering partnership with civil society, awareness raising, consultation process and progress updates.

7.6. Who should be involved in reporting on an Action Plan?

At a minimum, government should encourage and support the involvement of civil society and other stakeholders in the consultation process with the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



"The government shares the link to the IRM report with other government institutions and stakeholders to encourage input during the public comment phase."

In addition to the IRM consultation, government should also enable civil society and other stakeholders to engage in the self-assessment process. This engagement should take place through the multi-stakeholder forum. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



"The government submit its self-assessment report to the multi-stakeholder forum for comments and feedback on the content of the report."

Beyond engagement with the multi-stakeholder forum, it is recommended that the government conduct broad public outreach and engagement on its SAR. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:



"The government holds at least a four-week public consultation on its self-assessment and proactively disseminates and promotes the public comment period through multiple channels (e.g. mailing lists of participants during Action Plan development and the OGP website/webpage)."

The standard approach to collecting public comments on a document is often to post it as a PDF online, and invite written responses back to a designated email address. However, there are a range of online tools that can be used that can make the process more open, accessible, engaging and collaborative.

Engagement may also take place in the preparation of the self-assessment, through meetings and/or surveys. The ideal scenario is that the commitment updates - jointly agreed by government and civil society stakeholders (see [section 7.4. How should we involve stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the AP?](#)) - form the basis for the government SAR.

The publication of the IRM report is good moment at which to reflect on progress and lessons

learned from the OGP cycle. It is important that this is approached in an open-minded and constructive way, with a commitment to building on the successes and learning from the failures for future Action Plan cycles. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that:

“If the IRM report is publically launched, the government sends a high level representative (i.e. minister or senior official) responsible for the OGP to discuss the findings in open dialogue with other participants.”

Checklist 3: for the Action Plan implementing and monitoring stage

The following checklist summarises some of the key recommendations for implementing, monitoring and reporting on an OGP Action Plan.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- ☐ Consider ways of reporting on the progress of commitments in engaging and easy-to-understand ways (e.g., using graphics, Red-Amber-Green ratings, etc.).
- ☐ Ensure that civil society and other stakeholders are able to comment on progress reports, and, where appropriate, provide timely responses to them.

SPACES AND PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-CREATION

- ☐ Consider ways of involving civil society and other stakeholders in the implementation of commitments. They can bring fresh perspectives, ideas, and capacity, and can help you find ways around challenges when they arise.
- ☐ Strive for open and honest communication with civil society and stakeholders. When implementation challenges arise, open communication will likely elicit a better response than silence or avoidance of the issue.
- ☐ Consider ways of involving civil society and other stakeholders in reporting on the progress of commitments. This can help ensure reports are trusted and any implementation issues are caught early.

CO-OWNERSHIP AND JOINT DECISION MAKING

- ☐ Conducting an evaluation of what worked and what did not during an OGP cycle will help to improve future cycles. The approach and tone should be one of mutual learning and constructive critique, rather than of blame. Consider the extent to which the process achieved your intended outcomes.

Part III. Guidance for civil society organisations and activists

8. How to use OGP as an advocacy platform?

8.1. What is civil society's role in developing an Action Plan?

Civil society has a central role to play in all stages of the OGP cycle, including developing an AP. The OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards outline the ways in which government must involve civil society in developing an AP, as well as recommendations for advanced steps that governments can take. See Part 2. Guidance for government decision-makers and officials for detailed guidance on the Standards.

Civil society can play a variety of roles during the development of an AP, including awareness raising of the process, advocating for specific commitments, and deciding on the contents of the Plan. The role you play will likely depend on a number of internal and external considerations. On the one hand, your organisational mission, approach, capacity and expertise will shape the role that you and your organisation can play. For example, a membership organisation will be better suited to awareness raising and mobilisation than a think tank or advocacy organisation, which will be better suited to developing detailed technical proposals.

On the other hand, the government's approach is likely to dictate the role that civil society adopts. For example, if a government is proactive and open to working with civil society, it is likely that you will achieve more by adopting a collaborative "insider" approach. However, if a government is resistant and unwilling to work with civil society then a more persistent, perhaps even adversarial advocacy approach may be needed. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive - indeed, often you may need to present a carrot and stick - but they can be difficult to balance, particularly for a single organisation or individual. This emphasises the importance of developing a broad civil society coalition, where some organisations or individuals may adopt an insider strategy, while others push externally.

8.2. What are the key points for influencing an OGP Action Plan?

The first step to securing your asks through an OGP process is to identify the key points for influencing the AP. The first question you will likely want to answer is when your national or local government is next due to publish an AP. You can find out what stage of the OGP cycle your government is at, and when it is next due to publish an AP, via their dedicated OGP website.

The next step will be understand the process that will lead up to the publication of the action plan. The key points to influence the development of an AP will depend on the exact process that is put in place. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **require** that:



"The government or multi-stakeholder forum proactively communicates, via the OGP website/webpage and other channels of communication used in the country or locality, with adequate notice, the process for the development of the Action Plan. This should include a timeline of key stages and deadlines; opportunities to be involved (e.g. details of meetings, events, written consultations, feedback mechanisms); and the decision making process for agreeing commitments and finalising the Action Plan."

This should clearly set out the key points at which you can engage with the process. If these details are unclear or not forthcoming, you should direct questions to the government's OGP Point of Contact. In general, the key stages of an OGP process at which civil society should be engaged include:

I. Agreeing the process

The Participation and Co-Creation Standards **require** that an MSF, consisting of equal numbers of governmental and non-governmental representatives, is established to oversee the OGP process (see [section 5: What is a multi-stakeholder forum?](#)). During the development of an AP this group has an important role to play in discussing, agreeing and overseeing the development process (e.g. number of events, location, format). Therefore, either as a member yourself or through the civil society representatives on the Forum, you should be able to influence the process by which the Action Plan is developed.

II. Selecting thematic priorities

The selection of thematic priorities is likely to be an important stage to influence as it will determine the focus of the action plan and commitments. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that the multi-stakeholder forum engages civil society and other stakeholders in setting the agenda for the Action Plan. This may include selecting thematic priorities, identifying problems to resolve and/or suggesting ideas for commitments.

III. Generating commitment ideas

The stage of developing commitment ideas is where you can get your idea or ask on the table for consideration. The best AP development processes will incorporate a open call for ideas. However, if this is not part of the process in your country or locality, consider how you can get your proposal in front of decision-makers. This may be through the MSF, or it could require dedicated advocacy and campaigning approaches.

IV. Prioritising and selecting commitment ideas

Getting your idea or proposal onto the agenda does not necessarily mean it will be included in the Action Plan. The prioritisation and selection of commitments will therefore be an important step in the process to influence in order to ensure the commitments in the AP address priority issues for civil society.

V. Drafting commitments and the Action Plan

The detail of commitments will determine the extent to which they can be monitored and evaluated. It is important that the original intention and ambition of the commitment is well articulated, including with clear and measurable milestones for implementation. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that the multi-stakeholder forum oversees the formation of working groups including relevant stakeholders from government, civil society and beyond to discuss and refine ideas into full draft commitments.

VI. Reviewing the Action Plan

The final stage of reviewing an AP can help to address any remaining issues with the content and detail of commitments. The Participation and Co-creation Standards **recommend** that the MSF collects feedback from stakeholders on the draft AP. This should be well publicised, include a range of options for stakeholders to respond (e.g. written responses, online discussions, surveys, face-to-face or remote meetings), and be open for an adequate duration.

8.3. What tactics can I use to successfully advocate?

The tactics you use to advocate for your asks in the OGP process will need to depend on your country or local context. However, there are some common approaches that have been successful across the OGP.

I. Identify and support allies in government

In any government there will be reformers and those resistant to change. It is important to identify those individuals who are natural allies and provide them with support to help them make the case for necessary reforms internally. As well as identifying allies, you should also assess at who has influence.

One common approach to identifying allies and influencers is to develop a stakeholder map. This is often best achieved by a small group of civil society actors but with a range of different perspectives.

	LOW INFLUENCE	HIGH INFLUENCE
HIGH SUPPORT	Friends Keep informed	Champions Partner
LOW SUPPORT	Onlookers Monitor	Blockers Keep satisfied

EXAMPLE

Germany

German civil society has been advocating for the country's joining to OGP since its inception. Civil society organisations, academics, practitioners and interested individuals founded a working group, called 'Arbeitskreis OGP' in 2011 already, working towards the active involvement of Germany in OGP. When the official joining of the country drew near in 2016 (thanks in part to successful advocacy to include it in the 2013 German coalition agreement), the working group conducted an intensive collaborative mapping of key stakeholders both across government and potential civil society and academia partners yet uninvolved. Key reformers and experts were identified across twenty-five thematic areas ranging from open data through legislative transparency to freedom of information and data privacy. This mapping enabled civil society to bring on board new expertise (growing the network to 25 CSOs and scores of dedicated individuals), find key allies in government and crowdsource a set of 270 recommendations for the country's first AP, even before the co-creation process began. This careful preparation allowed for a co-creating a diverse first AP with commitments involving 11 line ministries and a broad range of government agencies and civil society.

II. Mobilise and coordinate civil society actors (see more in [Section 9](#))

A large group of citizens and civil society organisations advocating for a set of common asks is likely to have significantly more impact than a lone voice, or a cacophony of competing priorities. Rather than compete, look to build diverse coalitions of allies across civil society who can help to advocate for open government reforms. Working through coalitions can require you to make compromises on some of your asks, but ultimately will make you more influential and impactful.



EXAMPLE

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, civil society developed a shadow Action Plan when the government was slow to take action on launching the process for developing the country's first AP in 2016. The CSO AP was developed based on public consultations across Sri Lankan provinces. This draft AP and the consultations that went into producing it eventually had a strong influence on the country's final AP in both substance and form.

III. Engage political parties and/or parliamentarians


Parliaments can be formidable champions of the principles and values of OGP and pivotal partners in advancing the open government agenda. Therefore, as well as seeking allies in government, it is worth looking for allies in political parties and the legislature who may be able to exert influence and pressure over decision makers. This could take a variety of forms, including publicly supporting a proposal or asking questions in parliamentary sessions. Building support across political parties can also help with managing the transition between governments, which can be a make-or-break moment for commitment to OGP.



EXAMPLE

Philippines

Prior to the 2016 Philippines elections, civil society organized debates amongst presidential candidates and their representatives to record their positions on open government and secure their commitment to OGP.



OGP has also developed a [brief](#) on how to work with lawmakers to enlist them as allies for advancing open government, as well as [guidance](#) on using OGP as a platform to drive legislative openness.

IV. Engage the media

The media is an important beneficiary of many open government reforms (e.g. media freedom, access to information, open data, whistleblower protections) and can, therefore, be a powerful ally to call upon. Consider building relationships with supportive and influential journalists who may run stories in support of your advocacy.



EXAMPLE

Ghana

Ghanese CSO SEND coordinated monitoring activities of local schools, involving an extensive network of parents and local farmers visiting schools and gathering data about quality of meals served, safe drinking water and whether funds were being managed transparently. SEND partnered with local media to present findings and run a public advocacy campaign publishing evidence-based stories to highlight the challenges. Thanks to the pressure from the reporting and media attention the government instituted improvements in basic infrastructure and access to clean water. Food was sourced more locally, increasing purchases from local farmers by up to 80 percent in various regions also giving a much needed boost to the local economy.

V. Utilise international moments and spotlight

The international spotlight that the OGP places on governments and their open government reforms can help lock down pledges and plans made before, as well as provide creative energies and peer pressure to design new ones. For example, at the 2016 London Anti-Corruption Summit, many countries pledged to tackle corruption. Out of the 43 countries that participated at the Summit and made such pledges, 22 have since used their OGP Action Plans to fine-tune these ambitions with civil society into a total of 46 commitments. Rather than being forgotten after the Summit, these pledges are actually being delivered on with the involvement of local civil society.

Look to identify and utilise key times at which the spotlight is brightest. These might include:

- Your government sitting as co-chair of the OGP
- Your government sitting as a steering committee member
- Your government attending international summits
- International representatives from OGP visiting your country or locality

A well coordinated media or political engagement campaign at these points can help to spur significant progress from government.

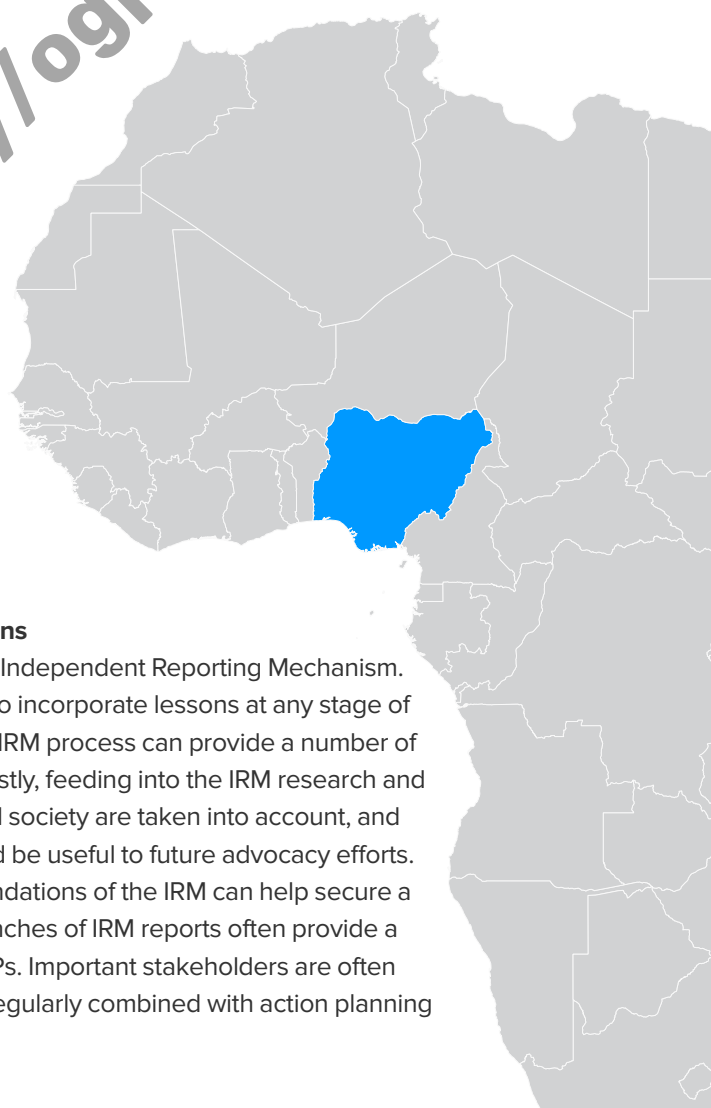
EXAMPLE

Nigeria

President Buhari announced Nigeria joining OGP at the 2016 London Anti-corruption Summit. Following the announcement Nigerian civil society mobilised and sent an agenda-setting draft AP with suggested transformative anti-corruption commitments including open contracting and beneficial ownership transparency, which resulted in the country making some ambitious commitments in its first AP, presented to the world at the OGP Global Summit in Paris. Civil society cleverly used the international spotlight afforded by these two major high-level events to ensure meaningful reforms were introduced at home.

VI. Use the IRM process, findings and recommendations

A key element in OGP are assessments conducted by the Independent Reporting Mechanism. IRM assessments are rich in learnings, making it possible to incorporate lessons at any stage of the AP cycle, as well as future Action Plans. Therefore the IRM process can provide a number of useful advocacy opportunities for civil society partners. Firstly, feeding into the IRM research and assessment process can help ensure that the views of civil society are taken into account, and may prompt some findings or recommendations that could be useful to future advocacy efforts. Secondly, drawing attention to the findings and recommendations of the IRM can help secure a more robust process and action plan in future. Thirdly, launches of IRM reports often provide a moment to reflect on the design and implementation of APs. Important stakeholders are often present to discuss these reports and these launches are regularly combined with action planning events - making them key leverage points for advocacy.





EXAMPLE

Chile

In Chile, civil society used the Independent Reporting Mechanism process to help formalise the multi-stakeholder forum in the country. Since Chile's first Action Plan in 2012, there's been a dialogue with civil society, though never formalised. Civil society asked for a more structured consultation format which recommendation made it into IRM reports. In turn, the government heeded both the IRM recommendations and demands from civil society to establish a formal mechanism ensuring public participation both in the co-creation and implementation phases of the AP cycle. The Open Government Working Group that was finally formed in 2017 shows how successful advocacy through public participation lead to a further strengthening of these avenues with the help of OGP's independent monitoring arm.

9. How can I mobilise and coordinate civil society advocacy?

9.1. Why is civil society mobilisation and coordination important?



Mobilising and coordinating with other civil society actors can help you achieve much greater impact through the OGP process. This can be for a number of different reasons:

I. Coordinated advocacy

A coalition of civil society actors speaking with a unified voice and advocating for a common set of priorities are likely to be significantly more influential than lone voices calling for competing priorities. Among other things, this makes it harder for government to cherry-pick some initiatives and ignore other more significant reforms.

II. Reduced cost

Engaging with an OGP process takes time and capacity, but that cost may be reduced by collaborating with other organisations. The presence of a civil society coordinator or steering committee, for example, by providing focal point and coordination, can reduce the time spent by other actors tracking developments and engaging with the process.

III. Varied tactics

A diverse coalition can bring to bare a range of different tactics to secure reform. For example, some organisations may be better suited to partnering with government reformers, while others might challenge from the outside. Both can be important to creating the conditions necessary for reform.

IV. New resources

A coalition of civil society organisations can bring to bear a range of resources that one single organisation would not have access to. This could include supporter networks, media access, political engagement, technical expertise, meeting spaces and funding.

V. Greater legitimacy

One of the most common criticisms used to delegitimize civil society organisations is that they are unrepresentative of the wider public. This criticism is significantly harder for those resistant to reform to make when civil society organisations are aligned and engaged with citizens, and numerous strong CSOs are at the table.





BOX 21

OGP civil society coalitions

The following are examples of civil society coalitions established to engage with the OGP process in their respective countries or localities:



9.2. How should a coalition/network be organised?

Civil society coalitions often begin life as informal groupings of organisations. However, as they develop and grow, it is often necessary to develop at least some basic governance in order to ensure they themselves are open and accountable, and not captured by specific interests.

This will require establishing some Terms of Reference (ToR) or similar governing document for the coalition, which should be developed and agreed by its membership. This will typically cover the answers to such questions as:

- The purpose of the coalition
- Who can be a member and what is expected of them
- Any specific roles and responsibilities (e.g. coordinator, secretariat, steering committee, etc.)
- How decisions are made

A number of OGP civil society coalitions have appointed coordinators in order to mobilise and manage the coalition. The ToR should outline how the coordinator is selected, what actions they can take on behalf of the wider coalition, and how they are held accountable.

Similarly, a number of OGP civil society coalitions have also developed steering committees in order to oversee and govern the coalition. How members of such SCs are nominated or elected, how long their term is, what actions they can take on behalf of the wider coalition should also be outlined in the ToR.

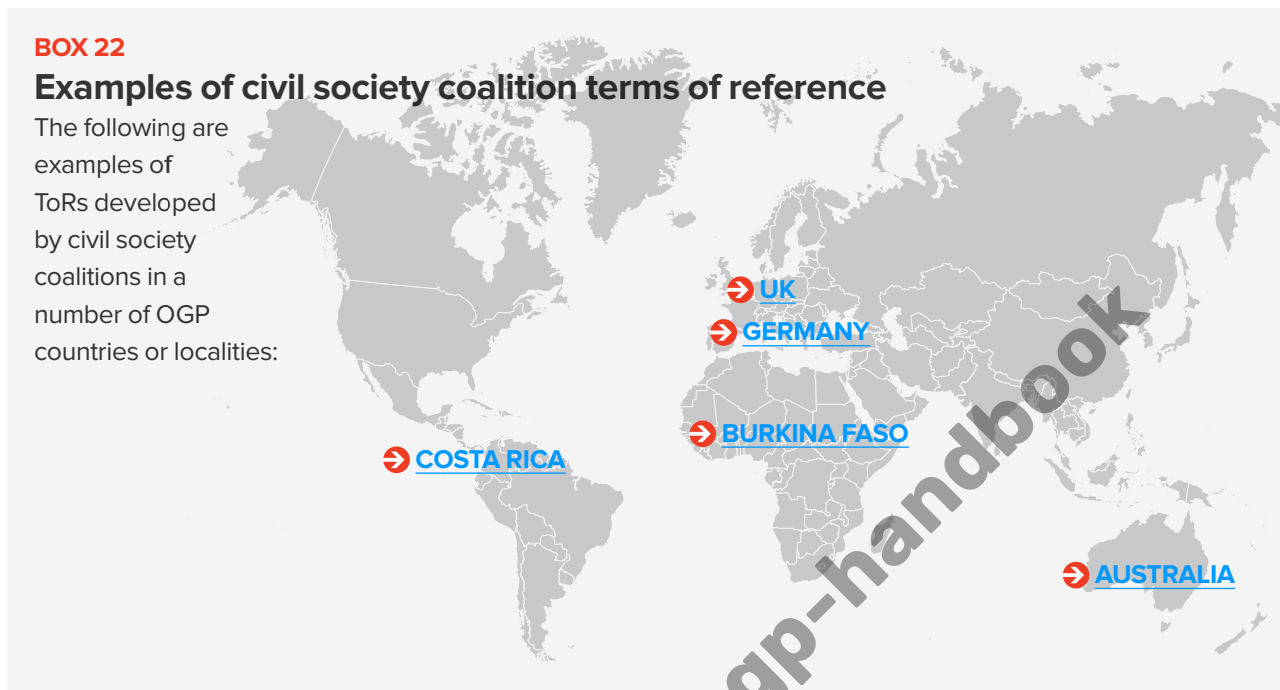




BOX 22

Examples of civil society coalition terms of reference

The following are examples of ToRs developed by civil society coalitions in a number of OGP countries or localities:



9.3. Who should be involved in an OGP civil society coalition?

Who should be involved in an OGP civil society coalition will depend on your country or local context. Civil society organisations working directly on open government initiatives will likely be the starting place, but there should also be scope to extend to a wider range of organisations and associations. Consider, for example, how open government might benefit those working on social or environmental issues.

A balance will need to be struck between a small close knit-group and a large diverse membership. The latter may help to build significant pressure for reform, but it will require significant capacity to mobilise and coordinate to be impactful. The extent to which you seek to mobilise new groups to participate in a coalition, therefore, might be determined by your resources and the pressure you need to bring about the desired reform outcomes.

9.4. How should the coalition/network make decisions?

How the civil society coalition makes decisions should be agreed by its members and outlined in its terms of reference or governing documents. As with the Multi-Stakeholder Forum (see [section 5.4. How should the MSF make decisions?](#)), this may be by consensus, vote or a combination of the two. There will likely be some decision making powers that are entrusted to certain roles within the coalition (e.g. the coordinator, secretariat, steering committee members, etc.).



BOX 22

Example: the UK OGN's decision making process

The following is an example of a decision making process from the [UK Open Government Network's](#) ToR:

Decision Making

- The OGN seeks to operate through a process of consensus decision making.
- Any documents, public statements or positions adopted by the OGN should clearly describe the basis on which they are made.
- Four main methods of decision making and public statement are proposed:

Network consensus

- Where a text has been open for discussion by the network for at least two weeks, and the draft text itself has been posted to the network mailing list for not less than one week, with a clear statement to the effect that it is proposed as a network decision.
- Consensus will be deemed to be reached in the event of (a) no objections or modifications to the text being suggested during that period; (b) all those who have raised objections or suggested modifications being satisfied that their views have been taken into account.
- Network consensus should be used for any strategic decision making by the network.

Network signatures

- Where a text has been put forward, and network members are invited to add their signatures to that statement, either as individuals, or on behalf of their organisations.
- Texts of this form should be presented as coming from 'Members of the Open Government Civil Society Network'.
- This process can be combined with network consensus, to allow for a text to be presented as 'A position of the Open Government Civil Society Network'.
- Where sub-groups are formed (e.g. for conversation with specific government departments), these groups should be clear that they are speaking as a group of members of the Network, and not on behalf of the Network, unless they have a mandate through a consensus process.

Steering Committee vote

- If consensus is not possible due to timescales, the Steering Committee may make decisions on behalf of the Network by a vote, fully taking into account any and all available evidence as to the views of Network members.
- Any such, Steering Committee decisions shall be communicated to the Network mailing list, and shall be communicated publicly as a statement of the 'Steering Committee of the Open Government Civil Society Network'.
- Wherever possible, the Steering Committee should bring issues to the network for consensus discussion.

Coordinator's statement

- The Coordinator of the network may make such operational day-to-day decisions as are required for their role.
- The Coordinator can represent their actions as of 'The Coordinator of the Open Government Civil Society Network'.
- The Coordinator should provide a regular report, no less than annually, to the full Network, on their activities.



10. How can I ensure commitments are implemented?

10.1. What is civil society's role in implementing an action plan?

Civil society has a central role to play in all stages of the OGP cycle, including implementing an Action Plan. The OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards require governments to engage civil society throughout the implementation process. (see [section 7. How should we implement, monitor and report on an OGP Action Plan?](#)).

The non-governmental organisation, Involve, and the OECD identify five roles that civil society can play in the **implementation** of open government reforms:

1. **Informer:** Building public awareness of a policy (e.g. new rights, services, etc.)
2. **Expert:** Advising on policy implementation
3. **Service provider:** Implementing the policy
4. **Co-producer:** Partnering with government to implement the policy
5. **Citizenship champion:** Supporting citizens to utilise new rights, services, etc.

Consider what role you and/or other groups could or need to play in implementing the reform. This might require working with government officials to provide advice and support on how the commitment is implemented. This could take the form of technical advice (e.g. on data standards, model legislation, etc.) or it might be knowledge of the needs or wishes of citizens, groups or organisations that might benefit from it.

Linked to this, there will likely be a need to build the demand and use of any new data, information, rights or opportunities created by the commitment. The existence of an open government initiative or reform very rarely, if ever, has impact in and of itself. Rather, their success depends on their active adoption and use by groups outside of government. It is therefore important to have a clear theory of change for how a commitment will have impact and ensure that the conditions are in place to maximise its potential. This may require actively using the results of the commitment yourself, or building the awareness and capacity of other groups to do so.

10.2. What is civil society's role in monitoring and evaluating an Action Plan?

Civil society has a central role to play in all stages of the OGP cycle, including monitoring and evaluating an AP. The OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards require governments to engage civil society in monitoring and evaluating the AP (see [section 7. How should we implement, monitor and report on an OGP Action Plan?](#)).

The non-governmental organisation, Involve, and the OECD identify five roles that civil society can play in the **monitoring and evaluation** of open government reforms:

- **Informer:** Raising public awareness of government performance
- **Watchdog:** Scrutinising policy formulation and implementation
- **Auditor:** Monitoring legal compliance and detecting fraud
- **Evaluator:** Assessing the impact of a policy
- **Whistleblower:** Exposing wrongdoing



The OGP process ensures that there are some set moments at which civil society can engage with the progress of AP commitments; specifically, these include the development and publication of the government self-assessment and IRM reports. However, civil society can take an active role in monitoring and evaluating an Action Plan throughout its implementation. For example, this might involve developing your own commitment dashboard that tracks and publicises the progress of commitments.

EXAMPLE

UK Anti-Corruption Summit Pledge Tracker

In May 2016 the UK Government held an international Anti-Corruption Summit at which it made fifteen pledges of actions it would take to combat corruption domestically and internationally. However, unlike other Summits, there was no formal mechanism for follow-up or monitoring to ensure that governments are kept accountable for the promises that they made. To fill this gap, Transparency International UK developed its own independent pledge tracker - <http://ukanticorruptionpledgetracker.org> - which provides accessible information on what the pledges were and the extent to which they have been fulfilled.

BOX 23

Advice from civil society leaders

We asked civil society leaders from a range of countries what they wished they had been told when they first started working on OGP. This is what they said:

- Find a balance between ambition and being realistic
- It takes time, commitment, resources and patience to drive the process
- It is important to make the rewards of open government clearer to the public to get buy-in
- Identify and utilize pre-existing networks already doing open government
- Don't spread yourself too thin: prioritize and focus
- Identify themes and build networks around them
- Agree on principles before the process begins
- Feature participants' work/expertise more strongly - be clear about benefits each stakeholder offers
- Promote OGP as a framework rather than projects/programs
- It's not a single shot game: an AP can be amended and there will be future APs too!
- Focus on inter-agency cooperation, not just the multi-stakeholder forum
- Identify a framework for implementation and identify civil society's role within it.
- Stories work: compile and share good examples
- Build (on) peer pressure between governments to raise ambition

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