

Independent Reporting Mechanism Sweden: Progress Report 2012–13

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SWEDEN

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2012–13

Sweden developed a comprehensive action plan focused on enhancing transparency in international aid. In the next OGP phase, the country should build on its reputation as a front-runner in transparency and accountability. It should strive to release an ambitious action plan with potentially transformative commitments across a variety of sectors and actively engage civil society.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a biannual review of the activities of each OGP participating country.

Sweden officially began participating in OGP in September 2011, when Gunilla Carlsson, Sweden's minister for international development co-operation declared the government's intent to join.

The Department for Aid Management at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) had the overarching responsibility for the development and implementation of Sweden's OGP action plan. Due to its narrow scope, the MFA cannot enforce broader open government commitments in other areas of government. The coordination of the OGP action plan would be better placed in the hands of a government entity with an overarching remit.

OGP Process

Countries participating in the OGP follow a process for consultation during development of their OGP action plans and during implementation.

Notice was given to a limited number of civil society organisations (CSOs) of an in-person consultation on development of the Swedish action plan. Only one comment was received during this meeting, which some stakeholders perceived as an informational meeting rather than a consultation to gather public comments.

Government did not organise a public consultation online.

The MFA claims to have held meetings with civil society about topics related to the OGP commitments as a way to gather input during the implementation period. The IRM researcher could find no evidence of regular forums for consultation during the implementation of the action plan.

The MFA received no comments from the 10 CSOs that were asked for input on the self-assessment report.

At a glance

Participating since: 2011
Number of commitments: 7

Level of Completion

Completed: 0 of 7
Substantial: 4 of 7
Limited: 0 of 7
Not started: 0 of 7
Unclear: 3 of 7

Timing

On schedule: 3 of 7

Commitment emphasis:

Access to information: 6 of 7
Participation: 1 of 7
Accountability: 6 of 7
Tech & innovation for transparency & accountability: 4 of 7
Unclear: 1 of 7

Number of commitments with:

Clear relevance to an OGP value: 6 of 7
Moderate or transformative potential impact: 0 of 7
Substantial or complete implementation: 4 of 7
All three: 0 of 7

Commitment Implementation

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. Table 1 summarizes each commitment, its level of completion, its ambition, whether it falls within Sweden's planned schedule, and the key next steps for the commitment in future OGP action plans. Sweden's plan was almost entirely focused on increasing transparency in international aid. Sweden made commendable progress towards the achievement of that goal, despite falling short of completing any of its seven commitments.

Table 1: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION				TIMING	NEXT STEPS
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE		
1. Continuing the development of the openaid.se platform —to include quality insurance, funds recipients' updates, documents about funds allocation, results and evaluations, enhanced use of open format, and more on the openaid.se platform.									Unclear	New commitment building on existing implementation
2. Ensuring full implementation of the IATI standard by 2015 —to consult CSOs and report on IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative) optional components.									On schedule	New commitment building on existing implementation
3. Implementing the commitments in the Busan Partnership document —to include an agreement on open standard for aid information and make it publically available.									On schedule	New commitment building on existing implementation
4. Playing a leading role in the Building Block on Transparency —to support multi-stakeholder partnerships on accountability, predictability, and transparency. This will be done with the involvement of a wide range of actors.					Unclear				Unclear	Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable
5. Contributing to further define the work towards an EU transparency guarantee —to establish a forum to hold technical discussions and share information amongst EU member states.					Unclear				Unclear	Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable
6. Engaging in the Open Aid Partnership and promoting ICT4D —to support and invest in initiatives related to open data and information and communication technology.					Unclear				Unclear	Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable
7. Broadening open government commitments —to launch an open government strategy, and broaden Sweden's OGP commitments as part of the strategy.									On schedule	New commitment building on existing implementation

Table 2 summarizes the IRM assessment of progress on each commitment

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
1. Develop openaid.se platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Clear Potential impact: Minor Completion: Substantial 	openaid.se is a data hub providing information on Swedish aid disbursements in an open format. Since creating the platform in 2011, the government has constantly been developing the platform to meet IATI standard and added new functionalities, such as fixing bugs, releasing monthly updates from more fund recipients, publishing more documents, and creating a new whistle-blower mobile application. Stakeholders saw the platform as innovative but commented on its complexity. Stakeholders and the IRM researcher recommend that the government, with stakeholders' input, raise the platform usability, add impact measurement tools, and publish more forward-planning data.
2. Implement IATI standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Clear Potential impact: Minor Completion: Substantial 	The IATI's aim is to implement a range of common principles on aid transparency. During the implementation period, Sweden has followed civil society recommendations and made changes in the way aid data is published, making considerable progress in making more datasets available. However, to fully implement the IATI standard, Sweden still needs to make some progress, such as improving the publishing of performance data and completing its pilot of the IATI identifier.
3. Implementing Busan Partnership commitments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Clear Potential impact: Minor Completion: Substantial 	The Busan Partnership sets out time-bound commitments to fully publish aid information to a common standard by 2015. Sweden contributed to reaching an agreement on a common open standard for electronic publication of aid information and has published an implementation schedule according to the official timetable. However, the implementation of activities is not due until 2015, making this commitment difficult to evaluate. To make this commitment more ambitious, Sweden should act as a driving force to ensure that donors provide forward-spending and implementation plans to all developing countries with which they co-operate.
4. Playing a leading role in the Building Block on Transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Clear Potential impact: None Completion: Unclear 	The Building Block on Transparency is a voluntary initiative by "coalitions of the willing" and seems to have lost its importance. Sweden is now engaging in other relevant forums and initiatives. Given the commitment's vague language, the IRM researcher could not measure its level of completion and would recommend revising this commitment to make it more measurable.
5. Define work towards an EU transparency guarantee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Clear Potential impact: None Completion: Unclear 	The EU transparency guarantee serves to promote aid transparency at the EU level. The commitment was formulated with no clear deliverables, making it difficult to evaluate. Sweden should add concrete deliverables to the commitment in order to make it more achievable and measurable.
6. Engaging in Open Aid Partnership and promoting ICT4D <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Clear Potential impact: None Completion: Unclear 	The commitment's language is vague and does not commit the government to specific, measurable actions. Nonetheless, Sweden has taken a number of actions consistent with the commitment's topic such as creating a new ICT for development unit and investing in new ideas and expertise through public tenders. In the future, Sweden should consider funding specific projects within the Open Aid Partnership.
7. Broadening open government commitments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OGP Value Relevance: Unclear Potential impact: Minor Completion: Substantial 	The launch of the new e-Government strategy was carried out with only a slight delay and was developed in a participatory way. The strategy refers to the OGP and declares that Sweden aims at broadening its commitments within the OGP initiative beyond the field of development cooperation. However, the strategy does not explain by which ministry/entity this work will be led or carried out and does not have a budget attached. Stakeholders would like to see more ambitious OGP commitments around online participation and better open data in the public sector.

Recommendations

Sweden is a front-runner in the transparency, accountability, and technology and innovation fields. International indices generally place Sweden in top ranking positions in terms of ICT readiness, e-government, and the socio-political impact of the Web. Nonetheless, there still exist areas for further development that could be integrated in future OGP commitments.

More concrete and ambitious commitments

Most of the commitments in Sweden's action plan pre-existed OGP and had unspecified deliverables, making it hard to assess progress in meeting them. The action plan was generally seen as unambitious by consulted stakeholders. The IRM researcher recommends setting more ambitious and measurable commitments in the next action plan.

Stakeholder engagement

The government should develop new channels for civil society consultation in the next iteration of the action plan. This involves including a wider circle of CSOs in the process, not only those in the field of aid transparency; academia and the private sector; and organisations located outside of the capital.

Consultations should provide an opportunity for meaningful collaboration between the government and stakeholders involved. Alternative ways for consultation could include smaller group meetings or online discussion forums.

Communication

The majority of stakeholders consulted by the IRM researcher were not aware of the OGP or had a limited knowledge of it. The government should elaborate a communication strategy including awareness-raising activities to disseminate information about OGP to a broader audience.

Ownership

Given the MFA's limited mandate, ownership of the OGP should be transferred to an agency with broader oversight. Potential candidates include the prime minister's office, the Ministry of Finance, or the Minister for Information Technology and Energy.

Eligibility Requirements, 2012: To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions of open government. Third-party indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, visit <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/how-join/eligibility-criteria>. Raw data have been recoded by OGP staff into a four-point scale, listed in parentheses below.

Budget Transparency: Executive budget and audit report	(4 of 4)	Access to Information: Law enacted	(4 of 4)
Asset Disclosure: Senior officials and politicians	(4 of 4)	Civic participation: 10 of 10	(4 of 4)

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The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.



I. BACKGROUND

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder international initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In pursuit of these goals, OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and sharing amongst governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector, all of which contribute to a common pursuit of open government. OGP stakeholders include participating governments as well as civil society and private-sector entities that support the principles and mission of OGP.

Introduction

Sweden officially began participating in OGP in September 2011 when Gunilla Carlsson, Sweden's minister for international development co-operation, declared the government's intent to join.

To participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government by meeting a set of minimum performance criteria on key dimensions of open government that are particularly consequential for increasing government responsiveness, strengthening citizen engagement, and fighting corruption. Indicators produced by organisations other than OGP to determine the extent of Sweden's progress on each of the dimensions, with points awarded as described below. Sweden entered into the partnership exceeding the minimal requirements for eligibility, with a high score in each of the criteria. At the time of joining, the country had the highest possible ranking for Open Budgets (2 out of a possible 2),¹ an access-to-information law,² the highest possible rankings in Asset Disclosure for Senior Officials,³ and a score of 10 out of a possible 10 on the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index Civil Liberties subscore.⁴

All OGP participating governments must develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Governments should begin their action plans by sharing existing efforts related to a set of five "grand challenges," including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. (See Section 4 for a list of grand challenge areas.) Action plans should then set out each government's OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant grand challenge. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

Along with the other cohort 2 OGP countries, Sweden developed its national action plan from January through April 2012. The effective start date for the action plan submitted in April was officially 1 July 2012 for implementation through 30 June 2013. Sweden published its draft self-assessment during October 2013. According to the OGP schedule,⁵ officials and civil society members are to revise the first plan or develop a new plan by April 2014, with consultation beginning January 2014.

Pursuant to OGP requirements, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) of OGP partnered with an experienced, independent local researcher to carry out an evaluation of the development and implementation of the country's first action plan. In Sweden, the IRM partnered with Alina Östling, an independent researcher with expertise in

governance and Information and Communications Technology, who authored this progress report. It is the aim of the IRM to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP participating country.

Institutional Context

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and, in particular, the Department for Aid Management had the overarching responsibility for the development and implementation of Sweden's OGP Action Plan. In line with the mandate of the lead ministry and department, all but one commitment focused on increased transparency in development cooperation. The only broader commitment, "broadening open government commitments", fell under the responsibility of the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, and was included in its e-Government strategy (2012).

The current institutional setting is not ideal for addressing the challenges of open government. The current OGP coordinator, the MFA, is in charge of aid and development, foreign and security policy, and trade and promotion of Sweden. Hence, the MFA cannot enforce broader open government commitments in other areas of government. The coordination of the OGP Action Plan would be better placed in the hands of a government entity with an overarching remit. (See the subsection on "Ownership" in Section VI: MOVING FORWARD, for further details.)

Methodological Note

IRM researchers review two key documents provided by the national governments: the first national action plan⁶ and the government's draft self-assessment of the first action plan process.⁷ The IRM researcher also gathered opinions from civil society and interviewed appropriate government officials and other stakeholders. The IRM report was reviewed by OGP staff and a panel of experts.

To gather the voices of multiple stakeholders, the IRM researcher (i) created a Web page where she informed stakeholders about the OGP process and the Swedish action plan and invited them to get in touch with her⁸; (ii) interviewed a range of stakeholders individually, either face-to-face or by telephone; (iii) organized a consultation meeting in Stockholm with governmental and civil society organisations; and (iv) carried out a Web survey with a larger set of stakeholders. Summaries of these meetings and the Web survey, as well as more detailed explanations, are given in the Annex.

Additional documents used in preparing this report can be found at <http://bit.ly/1eHxcp6>

¹ Open Budget Partnership, *Open Budgets Change Lives* (Washington, DC: Open Budget Partnership, 2012). http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/2010_Full_Report-English.pdf

² <http://www.right2info.org/laws/constitutional-provisions-laws-and-regulations#sweden>

³ Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, "Disclosure by Politicians" (working paper 2009-60, Tuck School of Business: <http://bit.ly/19nDEFK>; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Types of Information Decision Makers Are Required to Formally Disclose, and Level of Transparency," *Government at a Glance 2009*, (OECD, 2009) <http://bit.ly/13vGtqS>; Ricard Messick, *Income and Asset Disclosure by World Bank Client Countries* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009). <http://bit.ly/1clokyf>

⁴ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat" *Economist* (2010), Available at: <http://bit.ly/eLC1rE>

⁵ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP%20Calendar%20For%20All%20Countries.docx>

⁶ <http://bit.ly/17mdRFp>

⁷ <http://bit.ly/1c6Iq1U>

⁸ The OGP Sweden Web page: http://alinaostling.wordpress.com/?page_id=313&preview=true

II. PROCESS: DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

A limited number of civil society organisations (CSOs) were consulted in the process of developing the Swedish action plan. Stakeholders interviewed perceived the consultation as an informational meeting rather than a true means of gathering input.

Countries participating in OGP follow a set process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan. According to the OGP' Articles of Governance, countries must

- Make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation
- Consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector; seek out a diverse range of views and; make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online
- Undertake OGP awareness-raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation
- Consult the population with sufficient forewarning and through a variety of mechanisms—including online and through in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage.

A fifth requirement, during consultation, is set out in the OGP Articles of Governance. This requirement is dealt with in the section “III: Consultation during Implementation”:

- Countries are to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation. This can be an existing entity or a new one.

This is dealt with in the next section, but evidence for consultation both before and during implementation is included here and in Table 1 for ease of reference.

Table 1: Action Plan Consultation Process

Phase of Action Plan	OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)	Did the government meet this requirement
During Development	Timeline and process: Prior availability	No
	Timeline: Online	No
	Timeline: Other channels	No
	Advance notice	Yes
	Advance notice: Days	14
	Advance notice: Adequacy	Yes
	Awareness-raising activities	No
	Online consultations	No
	In-person consultations	Yes
	Summary of comments	No
During Implementation	Regular forum	No

Advance Notice of Consultation

The MFA organised a meeting about OGP at their offices in Stockholm on 11 April 2012. The meeting was organised in collaboration with the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) CONCORD Sweden, which is a branch of the European NGO confederation for relief and development (CONCORD).

CONCORD Sweden's mission is to conduct information and advocacy on EU development cooperation and policy, with a focus on poverty reduction. It currently has 48 member organisations and is open to membership for any Swedish CSO and for umbrella organisations of CSOs. CONCORD Sweden conducts advocacy works by a continuous dialogue with policymakers in Sweden, including with the MFA regarding development effectiveness.

CONCORD Sweden sent out the meeting invitation by e-mail, 14 days in advance of the meeting. The MFA did not advertise the meeting in any other way. No online consultation took place.

Quality and Breadth of Consultation

The meeting took place within the MFA's established framework for consultation with civil society. It was not exclusively about OGP. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation was also discussed.

On behalf of the MFA, CONCORD Sweden invited 10 CSOs, which are part of its steering group for aid and development effectiveness. Five of these organisations (CONCORD Sweden, Diakonia, Plan Sweden, ActionAid, and We Effect) participated in the meeting.

No report or notes are available from the meeting. According to the MFA, the Swedish CSOs have shown little interest in the OGP. The CSOs present at the meeting only made one comment regarding the OGP action plan, suggesting that transparency in decision-making and the involvement of civil society should be enhanced in the field of development cooperation. According to one of the CSO participants, the meeting focused on informing rather than consulting stakeholders.

One month before the MFA meeting just described, six Swedish and international CSOs sent a letter to the former minister for international development cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson, asking her to include progress on aid transparency in Sweden's OGP action plan. In particular, they asked the Minister to continue to improve Sweden's IATI data—specifically by publishing 2011 data, implement IATI fully by December 2015, and set a timetable for publication of development-related flows, including climate finance. The two former requests have been included in the OGP plan. But the last one has remained unfulfilled. Sweden has not set a timetable for development-related flows and could still improve reporting regarding climate finance and about funding going through the private sector.

In sum, only a limited circle of CSOs, all based in Stockholm, were invited to the consultation meeting, and few organisations actually attended. The gathering was perceived to be an information meeting about OGP, rather than a proper consultation where power was shared with the participants on decisions regarding commitments or action areas. The final version of the OGP action plan included some, but not all, of the measures proposed by civil society organisations.

III. PROCESS: CONSULTATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

There was no specific forum for regular stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation in Sweden.

As part of their participation in OGP, governments commit to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation. This can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

Consultation Process

The Swedish MFA claims that they held meetings with civil society organisations about topics related to the OGP commitments in established forums. As an example, the MFA cites the EU's Foreign Affairs Council meetings in Brussels.¹ It is worth noting that these meetings would have been carried out whether or not Sweden was part of OGP. Furthermore, despite multiple attempts, the IRM researcher was unable to obtain information regarding other OGP-related meetings that the MFA claimed it had organised

¹ Interview carried out on 24 October 2013 with Linn Ohlsson, OGP contact point and special adviser, Department for Aid Management, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS

All OGP participating governments develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Governments begin their OGP country action plans by sharing existing efforts related to their chosen grand challenge(s), including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. Action plans then set out governments' OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant policy area. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

OGP commitments are to be structured around a set of five “grand challenges” that governments face. OGP recognizes that all countries are starting from different baselines. Countries are charged with selecting the grand challenges and related concrete commitments that most relate to their unique country contexts. No action plan, standard, or specific commitments are to be forced on any country.

The five OGP grand challenges are

1. Improving Public Services—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications, and any other relevant service areas by fostering public-service improvement or private sector innovation.
2. Increasing Public Integrity—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom.
3. More Effectively Managing Public Resources—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources, and foreign assistance.
4. Creating Safer Communities—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats.
5. Increasing Corporate Accountability—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement.

While the nature of concrete commitments under any grand challenge area should be flexible and allow for each country's unique circumstances, OGP commitments should be relevant to OGP values laid out in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Declaration signed by all OGP participating countries. The IRM uses the following guidance to evaluate relevance to core open government values:

- **Access to Information**—These commitments
 - pertain to government-held information;
 - are not restricted to data but pertains to all information;
 - may cover proactive or reactive releases of information;
 - may pertain to strengthening the right to information; and
 - must provide open access to information (it should not be privileged or internal only to government).
- **Citizen Participation**—Governments seek to mobilise citizens to engage in public debate, provide input, and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative and effective governance. Commitments around access to information
 - open up decision making to all interested members of the public; such forums are usually “top-down” in that they are created by government (or actors empowered by government) to inform decision making;

- often include elements of access to information to ensure meaningful input of interested members of the public into decisions;
 - often include the enhancing citizens' rights to be heard, but do not necessarily include the right to be heeded.
- **Accountability**—There are rules, regulations, and mechanisms in place that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.
 - As part of open government, such commitments have an "open" element, meaning that they are not purely internal systems of accountability without a public face.
- **Technology and Innovation**—Commitments for technology and innovation
 - promote new technologies and offer opportunities for information sharing, public participation, and collaboration.
 - should make more information public in ways that enable people to both understand what their governments do and to influence decisions;
 - may commit to supporting the ability of governments and citizens to use technology for openness and accountability; and
 - may support the use of technology by government employees and citizens alike.

Countries may focus their commitments at the national, local and/or subnational level—wherever they believe their open government efforts are to have the greatest impact.

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multi-year process, governments should attach time frames and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, wherever possible.

This section details each of the commitments that Sweden included in its initial action plan. The commitments follow the same sequence as the action plan.

While most indicators given on each commitment fact sheet are self-explanatory, a number of indicators for each commitment deserve further explanation.

- **Relevance:** The IRM researcher evaluated each commitment for its relevance to OGP values and OGP grand challenges.
 - **OGP values:** Some OGP commitments are unclear in their relationship to OGP values. To identify such cases, the IRM researcher made a judgment based on a close reading of the commitment text. This identifies commitments that can better articulate their relationship to fundamental issues of openness.
 - **Grand challenges:** While some commitments may be relevant to more than one grand challenge, the reviewer only marked those that had been identified by government (as almost all commitments address a grand challenge).
- **Ambition:**
 - *Potential impact:* OGP countries are expected to make ambitious commitments (with new or pre-existing activities) that stretch government practice beyond an existing baseline. To contribute to a broad definition of ambition, the IRM researcher judged how potentially transformative a commitment might be in the policy area. This is based on the researcher's findings and experience as a public policy expert.

- *New or pre-existing:* The IRM researcher also recorded, in a non-judgmental fashion, whether a commitment was based on an action that predated the action plan.
- Timing:
 - *Projected completion:* The OGP Articles of Governance encourage countries to put forth commitments with clear deliverables with suggested annual milestones. In cases where this information is not available, the IRM researcher makes a best judgment, based on the evidence of how far the commitment could possibly be at the end of the period assessed.

1. Continuing the Development of the Openaid.se Platform

By continuously developing the Openaid.se platform, transparency and openness will increase and facilitate accountability to Swedish taxpayers and people in our partner countries. Continued development will include (i) further quality assurance; (ii) monthly updated information from all public actors allocated funds under the international development cooperation expenditure area; (iii) an expanded range of published documents explaining when, to whom, and why money has been made available; (iv) enhanced visibility of the aid chain/activity structure displaying the linking between e.g. a policy decision and a disbursement; (v) a spotlight on results and evaluations; (vi) enhanced use of the open format (Application Programming Interface, API), which enables consumers to reuse the data; (vii) data from CSOs; and (viii) a focus on Sida's recently developed whistle-blower function. Those who use the data are able to contribute to the development of the platform by proposing improvements through the customer service function on the Web site.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry for Foreign Affairs				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		High (commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing			Potential impact			
Pre-existing			Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)			
Level of completion						
Start date:	End date:		Actual completion		Substantial	
Unclear	Unclear		Projected completion		No dates or milestones attached or inferable	
Next steps		New commitment building on existing implementation				

What happened?

This commitment saw significant progress. OpenAid.se is a data hub providing information on Swedish aid disbursements in an open format. Sweden is constantly developing the openaid.se platform in line with the IATI standard.

Progress on the commitment's milestones can be summarised as follows:

(i) *further quality assurance*: Quality assurance is an essential and continuous activity in managing the platform. According to IATI's annual report (2013), some of the activities planned by Sweden in order to implement the IATI standard have not been fulfilled in time because of limitations in the quality assurance system.¹ On the positive side, new levels of detail have been added in several hundreds of activities, and many bugs and stability issues have been solved during the OGP evaluation period.

(ii) *monthly updated information from all public actors allocated funds under the international development cooperation expenditure area*: Progress has also been made on this deliverable. Six new public organisations now publish information: the Nordic Africa Institute, the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Swedish Institute, the Swedish Institute Alexandria, Swedfund, and Swedpartnership. In total, 12 relevant public organisations could publish information in the future.

(iii) *an expanded range of published documents explaining when, to whom, and why money has been made available* and (iv) *enhanced visibility of the aid chain/activity structure displaying the linking between, for example, a policy decision and a disbursement*: These deliverables are closely linked. The organisation Publish What You Fund (PWYF) asserts that Sweden has shown real ambition in publishing information that goes well beyond traditional reporting in relation to IATI commitments, especially concerning project documentation.² Over the evaluation period, about 50,000 documents have been made available on activity level, raising the total number to more than 100,000. Moreover, activities can now be sorted by disbursing agency, extending agency, and implementing partner.

(v) *a spotlight on results and evaluations*: PWYF has praised Sweden also for its progress in publishing results data. However, the deliverable is somewhat delayed. According to IATI's annual report (2013), Sweden is six months late with publishing of data on results. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), which manages openaid.se, assures that the data will be published in December 2013.³

(vi) *enhanced use of the open format (Application Programming Interface, API), which enables consumers to reuse the data*: In terms of this deliverable, Sida states that the openaid.se API has been spread to third-party online API-collections.

(vii) *data from CSOs*: All 16 CSOs that have a framework agreement with Sida now publish data in a machine-readable format. However, these data have yet to be incorporated into the openaid.se platform.

(viii) *a focus on Sida's recently developed whistle-blower function*: This deliverable has been implemented by the release of a mobile app for iOS and Android that allows users to browse Openaid.se through a special interface (for small screens) and report suspicion of fraud directly through the app.

Did it matter?

Openaid.se was launched in April 2011, and its continued development was a commitment that preceded the OGP implementation period. At the time, Openaid.se was seen as a very innovative platform and received international acclaim. According to PWYF, Openaid.se is still amongst the most user-friendly open aid portals currently available.⁴ Moreover, Sweden has shown real ambition in publishing information that

goes well beyond traditional reporting, including project documentation, geo-coding and results data.⁵

However, stakeholders assert that the progress of *openaid.se* has now slowed down considerably. A structural problem, reported by one of the interviewees, is that *openaid.se* is a proprietary system with a funder-centric view.⁶ In practice, this means that the software was tailor-made for the donor country (Sweden) and does not necessarily combine with other donor or recipient systems. As of today, information across various development actors is not easily accessed, aggregated, or even understood. This criticism applies not only to Sweden; most other donors are also locked in to their specific systems.⁷

Moreover, *opendaid.se* offers limited opportunities for citizen engagement. The platform is not sufficiently user-friendly and does not show what the aid is actually achieving. Furthermore, although the site visits have increased during the evaluation period, the data has not been widely re-used, for example, for building applications. Stakeholders claim that it is difficult to reuse the interfaces of *openaid.se* as well as to build on or improve them. The site provides few opportunities for interaction. The only feedback channel is an opinion button, which people mostly use for reporting bugs.

Moving forward

The *openaid.se* platform aims at targeting the population at large, but the information is still represented in a complex way that limits its accessibility to a lay citizen. Sweden, as is true of several other donors, publishes large amounts of information; but it is useful only to a limited audience.⁸ To address this weakness, *openaid.se* could, for example, be complemented with and integrated into an ecosystem of tools for field monitoring and evaluation, storytelling, project visualisation, distributed publishing, and feedback (e.g., Ushahidi).⁹ The government seems to be aware of this issue, given that the budget bill for 2014 contains provisions to raise the level of requirements for usability on *openaid.se*.¹⁰ However, it is unclear what commitments are planned in this area for the next OGP action plan. The draft self-assessment states that the *openaid.se* platform will be further adapted to the IATI standard and renewed but does not explain how.

Based on this assessment of the commitment's impact, the IRM researcher recommends that Sweden should strive towards jointly developing and sharing (to the extent possible) the *openaid.se* platform with other donor and recipient countries. As recommended by previous research, ambitious international transparency initiatives need to form partnerships with local accountability initiatives in recipient countries to realize their true potential. Sida is already piloting a "budget identifier" with Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Publish What You Fund (PWYF) initiative, which follows the aid money all the way to implementation. The IRM researcher suggests that Sweden expand these types of activities and also work directly with CSOs in developing countries that develop open budget applications, i.e., applications that enhance public access to information about governmental budgets.¹¹

In terms of data publishing, stakeholders emphasise that Sweden should commit to publishing more forward-planning data for the benefit of the recipient countries. One of the interviewees also points out that data about refugee costs, although they represent a significant portion of the development cooperation budget (13 percent),¹² are missing from *openaid.se*.

More importantly, *openaid.se* does not really show what impact Swedish development aid actually has and whether it is effective¹³ despite the fact that both the consulted stakeholders and the development literature stress the importance of presenting not only inputs but also outputs and outcomes for the sake of aid transparency.¹⁴

The consulted stakeholders suggest that questions about how the openaid.se data will be used and by whom should be given absolute priority in the future. Sida should hold broad stakeholder consultations about the future of the platform and run more user tests.

¹ IATI, *Annual Report*, 2 April 2013.

² Publish What You Fund, "New Stewards for Aid Transparency," 12 September 2013. <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/news/new-stewards-aid-transparency/>

³ IATI, *Annual Report*, 2 April 2013.

⁴ Publish What You Fund, "Sweden—Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency," 2013. <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/sweden/>

⁵ Publish What You Fund, "New Stewards for Aid Transparency," 12 September 2013.

<http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/news/new-stewards-aid-transparency/>

⁶ Thomas Bjelkeman-Pettersson, "OpenAid.se, Swedish Development Aid Transparency," Open for Change. 4 April 2011. <http://openforchange.info/content/openaidse-swedish-development-aid-transparency>

⁷ Peter van der Linde, "The road to Open UN-Habitat." Akvo. 5 September 2012.

<http://akvo.org/blog/the-road-to-open-un-habitat/>

⁸ Rebekah Heacock and David Sasaki, "ICT4 Transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa.. In *Increasing Transparency and Fighting Corruption through ICT Empowering People and Communities*," the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm: Stockholm University. <http://bit.ly/1aEukFv>

⁹ Peter van der Linde, "The road to Open UN-Habitat," Akvo. 5 September 2012.

<http://akvo.org/blog/the-road-to-open-un-habitat/>

¹⁰ Ministry of Finance. "Budget Bill for 2014," Expenditure Area 7: International. Govt. 2013/14: 1, p. 43. 18 September 2013.

¹¹ Rebekah Heacock and David Sasaki, "ICT4 Transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa." In *Increasing Transparency and Fighting Corruption through ICT Empowering People and Communities*, Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) ICT4D Series No. 3, 2010. Stockholm: Stockholm University. <http://bit.ly/1aEukFv>

¹² CONCORD, *Aid Watch 2013: The Unique role of European Aid, the Fight against Global Poverty*. October 2013.

¹³ Thomas Bjelkeman-Pettersson, "OpenAid.se, Swedish Development Aid Transparency," Open for Change. 4 April 2011. <http://openforchange.info/content/openaidse-swedish-development-aid-transparency>

¹⁴ The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2013). Development Initiatives.

2. Ensuring Full Implementation of the IATI Standard by 2015

To further broaden Sweden's implementation, measures will be taken to extend and improve the data, conduct investigations of the efforts needed to report on some of IATI's optional components (including publishing information on results, conditions, activity-level budgets and future flows, and all documents in machine readable and accessible format) and improve the coverage of planned disbursements. Improvements to the data contained in Openaid.se will result in improved IATI reporting and vice versa. Through consultations and dialogue with CSOs, Sweden continuously receives input to the process and reviews how to publish more data in response to feedback from CSOs and to move closer to complete fulfilment of the IATI standard.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry for Foreign Affairs				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		High (commitment language provides clear, measurable, verifiable milestones for achievement of the goal)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
	1. Ensuring full implementation of the IATI standard by 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing Pre-existing			Potential impact			
			Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)			
Level of completion						
Start date:		End date:		Actual completion		Substantial
Unclear		2015		Projected completion		Substantial
Next steps		New commitment building on existing implementation				

What happened?

Sweden has made considerable progress towards the achievement of this commitment (due 2015). The IATI is a coalition of donor governments, governments of developing countries, and NGOs that was formed in 2008. Its aim is to implement a range of

common principles of aid transparency. Sweden, a founding member of IATI, was one of the first donors to publish information according to the IATI standard. Sweden also seconded staff to the IATI Secretariat in the run-up to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 to enhance capacity for political engagement and ensure coordination with the Building Block on Transparency (co-chaired with the World Bank).

The MFA claims to have had a continuous dialogue with civil society about the IATI implementation. Moreover, Sida participated in and co-funded the Open Knowledge Festival in Finland in September 2012, which is a community-driven event focused on collaboration and participant engagement. At the festival, IATI was discussed in the session “Open Development and Aid Flow: Using Open Aid Data.”¹ Sweden also tried to address PWYF’s recommendations and has made changes to the way documents and data types are published in the time frame of the OGP action plan.

In terms of IATI compliance, Sweden is between step 4 (publishing IATI-compliant data) and 5 (improving data with more detail, new data items, and sources) on a five-point scale.² Sweden published IATI-conformed data for the first time in November 2011. Holding fourth place on the list of publishers, Sweden has to date published 158 datasets.³ Moreover, Sweden was the first to publish its entire links to activity documentation.⁴ Sweden refreshes data on a monthly basis, and its data definitions and references are following the IATI standard.⁵

As shown in Table 1, under the evaluation period (July 2012–June 2013), Sweden has completed three of the IATI’s key attributes and plans to make progress on another four attributes by December 2015. Publishing of one of the key attributes, “results,” planned for March 2013, has been delayed.⁶

Table 2. Sweden’s Progress on IATI’s Key Attributes ⁷

Completed during evaluation period	Plans to complete by December 2015
Implementing organisation (November 2012)	Activity forward planning
Geographical data (summer 2013)	Budget alignment with recipient financial year ⁸
Commitments (partial, February 2013)	Use of recipient language
	Text of conditions

This commitment is tightly linked to the next one, “Implementing the Commitments in the Busan Partnership document,” given that the IATI standard is part of the common standard that the Busan Outcome Document requires all the signatories to implement fully by 2015. Hence, implementation of the IATI standard is a prerequisite for meeting the commitment made in Busan.

Did it matter?

This commitment was a pre-existing one, and the level of ambition is rather limited. However, it is a positive step in the relevant policy area, and Sweden shows commendable progress regarding the implementation of the IATI standard. On the 2013 Aid Transparency Index, Sweden ranks fourth out of 49 bilaterals and second amongst countries. It scores 60 out of 100, which is equal to “good” progress (“very good” is the highest level). Sweden has improved its progress ranking from “fair” to “good,” compared to the 2012–edition of the index. However, it now occupies ninth rather than seventh place, among all Index categories (bilaterals, countries, alliances etc.). In recent years a number of countries and organisations have made significant progress in aid transparency.⁹ Hence, the competition for the top rankings is growing.¹⁰

The overall index score consists of three sub-scores. Sweden ranks highly on the first one, "commitment to aid transparency" (9.69 out of 10), which means that it is committed to an ambitious Busan/IATI implementation schedule, has provided good accessibility to aid information through openaid.se, and meets the requirements for freedom of information (FOI) legislation. Sweden ranks less well on the second score "publication at the organisation level" (17.74 out of 25). Finally, Sweden's lowest score concerns "publication at the activity level" (32.95 out of 65). However, PWYF underlines that Sweden does publish documents in its activity files but that these were incorrectly coded. Hence, the latter score is probably underrated.¹¹

Moving forward

There is still some progress to be made to fully implement the IATI standard. The expert organisation in the field of aid transparency, PWYF, recommends that Sweden should ¹²

- continue to improve its publication to IATI so that it is comprehensive and uses all fields, in line with its ambitious implementation schedule;
- complete its pilot of the IATI budget identifier and share lessons with the IATI community; and
- update its OGP action plan to include more ambitious commitments to implement IATI fully.

In particular, PWYF emphasises that Sweden should improve the publishing of its performance data. The only results data available are currently in PDF format. Of the indicators that take format into account, over three quarters are published in machine readable formats. However, this does not include information on planned dates or planned expenditure. Sweden made several improvements to its IATI organisation file in July 2013, but it still does not include forward-looking budgets for recipient countries or country-specific strategy papers.¹³

On a positive note, Sweden, as part of a multi-stakeholder consortium with UNDP, UNOPS, Ghana and Development Initiatives, in September 2013 assumed the new secretariat role within the IATI. Sweden now leads IATI's political engagement and outreach to donors and ensures liaison between the IATI Secretariat and other relevant forums.¹⁴ Sweden's new engagement is laudable and will probably contribute to streamlining these important forums with OGP.

¹ See the festival's Web archive at: <http://2012.okfestival.org/open-development/#sthash.xYX6Be02.dpuf>

² The five-point scale is provided by IATI, ranging from (1) an initial feasibility assessment and (2) commitment by publishing a schedule to (5) improving data with more detail.

³ IATI, "Publishers." Web page. <http://www.iatiregistry.org/publisher>

⁴ Joni Hillman, "100 Development Organisations Now Publish through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)," IATI. 20 November 2012. <http://bit.ly/XvPbay>

⁵ IATI, "Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency." Web page. <http://www.iatiregistry.org/publisher/sidaS>

⁶ Publish What You Fund, "Sweden, Sida, 2013 Index Results and IATI Data Quality.. Web page. <http://bit.ly/1hVimha>. 2 April 2013.

⁷ IATI, *Annual Report*, 2 April 2013.

⁸ Sweden is aiming to publish forward-looking information specified by the financial year of the recipient country.

⁹ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Sweden Praised for Aid Transparency," 24 October 2013. <http://www.government.se/sb/d/17191/a/227158>

¹⁰ Sida. "Sweden Is the Next Best Country in the World on Transparency (Sverige näst bästa land i världen på transparens)," 24 October 2013. <http://bit.ly/1gL726t>

¹¹ Publish What You Fund, "Sweden: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency." Web page. <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/sweden/>

¹² PWYF. <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/sweden/>

¹³ PWYF. <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/donor/sweden/>

¹⁴ Joni Hillman, "Consortium Chosen to Host Global Transparency Initiative," IATI. 27 March 2013. <http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/consortium-chosen-to-host-global-transparency-initiative>

3. Implementing the Commitments in the Busan Partnership Document

Implementing the commitments in the Busan Partnership document includes contributing to the agreement on a common, open standard for the electronic publication of aid information by December 2015, making the full range of information publicly available, focusing on transparent public financial management and aid information management systems, and making development cooperation more predictable. A common standard is essential to enable access to information about aid flows and activities in both donor countries and partner countries; a common global standard can enforce transparency throughout the chain of aid information and provide timely, comparable, detailed and accessible data.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry for Foreign Affairs				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		Medium (commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing			Potential impact			
Pre-existing			Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)			
Level of completion						
Start date:		End date:	Actual completion		Substantial	
Unclear		2015	Projected completion		Substantial	
Next steps		New commitment building on existing implementation				

What happened?

The Busan Outcome document, or Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, agreed to on 1 December 2011, sets out timebound commitments to fully publish aid information to a common standard by 2015. As of March 2013, the combination and progressive convergence of three systems (the OECD Development

Assistance Committee's (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS), the Forward Spending Survey (FSS), and IATI) form the basis of that common standard. Currently Busan endorsers are focusing on making the three standards converge into one.¹

Sweden, as co-chair of the international working group on transparency in development, together with the World Bank, contributed to reaching an agreement [DCD/DAC/EFF (2012) 9] on the common open standard for electronic publication of aid information.² In December 2012, Sweden also published an implementation schedule according to the official timetable. Implementation of activities in the schedule is not due to occur until 2015.

The Busan document also has other timebound commitments in addition to the common standard. One of these is related to aid transparency: "By 2013: donors to provide indicative forward-spending and/or implementation plans to all developing countries with which they co-operate." It is unclear how much progress has been made on this commitment.

Did it matter?

The Busan commitment was a pre-existing obligation, and the level of ambition is rather limited. However, it is laudable that Sweden contributed actively to reaching the agreement on the common standard. Moreover, the agreement was reached ahead of schedule.

The evaluation of this commitment was complicated by the fact that the Busan common standard is still a work in progress. The Busan partners have agreed that the combination and progressive convergence of the three systems (CRS, FSS, and IATI) forms the basis of the common standard. However, other efforts to converge the systems will need to be discussed by a full range of actors (IATI, DAC, OECD Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT), other providers of development co-operation, and CSOs); and any solutions will need to be approved by the respective governance bodies (WP-STAT and the IATI Steering Committee). The full implementation of the Busan standard, as such, does not yet exist.³

Moving forward

According to the self-assessment, Sweden will revise its implementation schedule to further accelerate achievement of the common standard. This is a reasonable commitment, but it could be made more ambitious. Sweden should also commit to acting as a driving force to secure that donors provide forward-spending and implementation plans to all developing countries with which they co-operate (one of the Busan Outcome Document commitments on aid transparency). This is particularly important because several of the interviewed stakeholders stressed that this is an area where Sweden itself is lagging behind.

¹ OECD, "Common Standard: FAQ," 6 March 2013. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/acommonstandard.htm>

² Ministry of Finance, "Budget Bill for 2014," Expenditure Area 7: International. Govt. 2013/14: 1. 18 September 2013.

³ OECD, "Common Standard: FAQ," 6 March 2013. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/acommonstandard.htm>

4. Playing a Leading Role in the Building Block on Transparency

Sweden will continue to act as a driving force to secure implementation of the Building Block on Transparency through its role as co-chair. We will support ongoing multi-stakeholder partnerships on accountability, predictability and transparency, and different actors' work on effectiveness, results and transparency. Further, it will be done by ensuring involvement of a wide range of actors including donors, partner countries, multilateral organisations, civil society and the private sector. We will ensure that work is carried out in a coordinated and effective manner to ensure the transparency agenda is taken forward the best way possible to accomplish steady progress. A comprehensive approach to existing initiatives is essential. Sweden will promote the inclusion of comprehensiveness in the work of the Building Block.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry for Foreign Affairs				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		Low (commitment language describes an activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
		✓		✓		
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing			Potential impact			
Pre-existing			None (the commitment maintains the status quo)			
Level of completion						
Start date:		End date:	Actual completion		Unable to tell from government and civil society responses	
Unclear		Unclear	Projected completion		Complete	
Next steps		Revision of the commitment to be more achievable and measurable				

What happened?

Given the commitment's vague language, the IRM researcher could not measure its level of completion. Building blocks are voluntary initiatives by "coalitions of the willing."¹ At the moment of the OGP-commitment, Sweden was and still is the co-chair of the Building Block on Transparency jointly with the World Bank. According to the draft self-assessment, following the establishment of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation at the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, fewer activities have taken place within the framework of the Building Block on Transparency.²

The Building Block on Transparency has lost its importance, and Sweden seems to have moved its efforts to other forums, for example, by leading IATI's political engagement and outreach to donors and ensuring liaison with other initiatives within the IATI Secretariat.

Did it matter?

Given that this commitment had an ambiguous deliverable (i.e., to support ongoing multi-stakeholder partnerships), its impact is also unclear. The civil society organisations did not have any comments about the Building Block on Transparency.

Moving forward

The Building Block on Transparency seems to have lost its importance. The government's self-assessment states that this commitment has been fulfilled and the "way forward" is to host the new IATI Secretariat. Given the ambiguity of the relation between the current commitment and the proposed way forward, the IRM researcher would recommend revising this commitment to make it more measurable.

¹ CONCORD, *Aid Watch 2012: Making Sense of EU Development Cooperation Effectiveness*, 2012.

² Aidinfo, "One Year On: Where Have We Got to Since Busan?" 6 December 2012.
<http://www.aidinfo.org/one-year-on-where-have-we-got-to-since-busan.htm>

5. Contributing to Further Define the Work towards an EU Transparency Guarantee

This will be done by working towards the establishment of an appropriate forum for EU Member State and European Commission transparency specialists to hold technical discussions and share information, and that EU MS work towards a clear and common goal for increased transparency and accountability. Further, Sweden will contribute to the process by sharing its experiences of implementing a national transparency initiative, ensuring leverage from its role as one of the key actors in the ongoing international discussions on how to deliver on the Busan commitments. Where appropriate, Sweden should also promote dialogue on technical issues with non-EU entities involved in transparency with a view to fostering informed EU discussions.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry for Foreign Affairs				
	Supporting institutions	None				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		Low (commitment language describes an activity that can be construed as measurable with some interpretation on the part of the reader)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
		✓		✓		
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing			Potential impact			
Pre-existing			None (the commitment maintains the status quo)			
Level of completion						
Start date:		End date:	Actual completion		Unable to tell from government and civil society responses	
Unclear		Unclear	Projected completion		Complete	
Next steps		Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable				

What happened?

The commitment was formulated in a way that makes it difficult to evaluate. No clear deliverables were envisioned. According to the self-assessment, Sweden has fulfilled this

commitment by participating and sharing its experience in workshops and seminars organized by the European Commission and IATI. For example, in March 2013, Sweden participated in a technical seminar to prepare for the second meeting of the Busan Global Partnership Steering Committee and in November 2012, a technical workshop on aid transparency and the implementation of the common standard. The seminar and the workshop were organized by the European Commission in Brussels.

Did it matter?

The types of activities carried out to fulfil this commitment cannot be considered ambitious, nor can their impact be measured. The EU transparency guarantee does not seem to have a stand-alone value but essentially supports other international aid transparency initiatives and forums, such as the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) and the IATI. The guarantee mainly serves for promotion of aid transparency on the EU-level. This commitment complements the other Swedish commitments in the field of development transparency but does not raise the level of ambition.

Moving forward

Sweden should add concrete deliverables to the commitment in order to make it more achievable and measurable. According to the 2012 AidWatch report, the European Commission and EU member states need to strengthen the EU transparency guarantee by outlining how they will work together to implement their Busan commitments on aid transparency.¹ Sweden seems to be on the same line of thought in the self-assessment, by envisioning that “Sweden's role in the IATI Secretariat will leverage the possibilities to further spur the implementation of the EU Transparency Guarantee.”

¹ CONCORD, “Aid Watch 2012: Making Sense of EU Development Cooperation Effectiveness,” 2012.

6. Engaging in the Open Aid Partnership and Promoting ICT4D

Innovative technologies, such as geocoding aid activities is a powerful way to show what donors are doing and where, and therefore also helpful in increasing transparency and in the debate on the division of labour. Recognising the significant impact that these innovations can have on improving development effectiveness, the World Bank Institute and bilateral donor partners, foundations and civil society have formed an Open Aid Partnership. Further, support to initiatives related to open data and information and communication technology (ICT) that create opportunities for increased participation from a broader spectrum of the population. Exploring and investing in ICT is key for enhanced accountability, increased openness and transparency worldwide. The Swedish agenda for ICT in development cooperation includes Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) with the purpose of contributing to improved prospects for poverty reduction, Business for Development, accountability, increased democratic participation, inclusive economic growth, freedom of expression and knowledge development, ICT for enhanced accountability and eGovernment

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA)				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		Medium (commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
		✓		✓	✓	
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing			Potential impact			
Pre-existing			None (the commitment maintains the status quo)			
Level of completion						
Start date:		End date:	Actual completion		Unable to tell from government and civil society response	

Unclear	Unclear	Projected completion	Complete
Next steps		Revision of the commitment to be more achievable or measurable	

What happened?

The commitment was formulated in a way that makes it difficult to evaluate its level of completion. The commitment language is vague and does not commit the government to specific, measurable actions.

However, a number of actions have been taken during the implementation period consistent with the spirit of the commitment language. Sweden has increased its capacity for implementing ICT4D projects through a new unit created in January 2013 within the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). This unit focuses on implementing innovative solutions that take advantage of developments within the field of ICT. Also the MFA has reorganized internally to strengthen its policy capacity in ICT4D by creating a new position of Internet and development adviser.

Moreover, Sida has invested in bringing in new ideas and expertise through public tenders in the areas of ICT for development and democracy and ICT for empowerment of women and girls, both launched in October 2012. Sida and the MFA also arranged the third “Stockholm Internet Forum for Internet Freedom and Development” in May 2013, which was one of the largest Internet policy gatherings in Europe and focused on the intersection of international politics, development, and democracy. One of the sessions, “Transforming International Development through ICT,” included several CSO participants.

In terms of the deliverable related to the Open Aid Partnership (OAP). Sweden hosted an international OAP seminar on geocoding in Stockholm, but it took place prior to the IRM evaluation period (in April 2012).

Did it matter?

The Sida tenders in ICT for development and democracy and ICT for empowerment of women and girls were very successful in terms of the number of organisations applying. The former call received 950 applications, while the latter got more than 300 applications. According to SIDA’s Web site, 25 applications in the area of ICT for development and democracy were selected for an in-depth assessment, while 5 ICT applications for empowerment of women and girls got funded.¹

The new ICT4D unit at Sida is responsible for developing initiatives in the field of ICT4D. The aim is to assist developing countries in the use of ICT with the overall objective to help people, especially women, living in poverty to improve their lives. The unit also has a specific remit to increase cooperation in the area of ICT4D among local, national, and international actors. Given that the unit has only existed since January 2013, it is premature to assess its impact.

Moving forward

According to the draft self-assessment, Sweden is planning to commit approximately US\$60 million to ICT4D-related projects in the coming five years. However, it is unclear how much of this funding is going to projects targeting open government.

In the future, Sweden should consider funding specific projects within the OAP. The OAP runs activities, such as literacy boot camps for CSOs and journalists. Hence, targeted funding of similar initiatives (within the framework of the OAP or elsewhere) could boost a wider use of the existing open data in Sweden, for example, on the openaid.se

platform. This is especially important because the data are currently open only to a limited circle of experts, while different social groups should have equal opportunity to engage.²

¹ Sida's Web site, "Applying through Calls for Proposals," 2013.

<http://www.sida.se/English/Partners/Civil-society-organisations/How-to-cooperate/Applying-through-calls-for-proposals/>

² Eliza Anyangwe, "Open Government: Open, but for Whom?" *The Guardian*. 28 October 2013. <http://bit.ly/16GW88h>

7. Broadening Open Government Commitments

Sweden intends to broaden its OGP commitments in the ongoing process of defining the next generation strategy for open and smart government. The upcoming strategy will broaden the initial focus on effectively managing public resources in development cooperation to include the government as a whole. The upcoming strategy will thus provide a coherent policy framework for a smart and open government supporting innovation and participation. Under the current timeframe, the strategy will be launched in autumn 2012.

Commitment Description						
Answerability	Lead institution	Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications				
	Supporting institutions	No				
	Point of contact specified?	Yes				
Specificity and measurability		Medium (commitment language describes an activity that is objectively verifiable but does not contain specific milestones or deliverables)				
Relevance	OGP grand challenges	More effectively managing public resources				
	OGP values	Access to information	Civic participation	Accountability	Tech & innovation for trans. & acc.	None
						✓
Ambition						
New vs. pre-existing			Potential impact			
Pre-existing			Minor (the commitment is an incremental but positive step in the relevant policy area)			
Level of completion						
Start date:		End date:		Actual completion		Substantial
Unclear		Autumn 2013		Projected completion		Substantial
Next steps		New commitment building on existing implementation				

What happened?

This commitment saw substantial progress. The launch of the new e-Government strategy (N2012/6402/ITP), planned in autumn 2012, was carried out only with a slight delay, in December 2012. The strategy aims at guiding the government's work on internal digitisation and enhancing digital collaboration within the government offices.

One of the strategy's key goals is a more open government that supports innovation and participation. The strategy refers to the OGP and declares that Sweden aims at broadening its commitments within the OGP initiative beyond the field of development cooperation.¹

The strategy also mentions that the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems (Vinnova) will launch an open data portal (opnadata.se). Its purpose is to provide easy access to public open data and make it simpler for third parties to refine the information into products and services, which should increase transparency in the public sector.

Did it matter?

This commitment has a limited level of ambition. The e-Government strategy affirms that Sweden aims to broaden its OGP-commitments. However, the strategy does not explain by which ministry/entity this work will be led and how it will be carried out. Moreover, the status of the strategy as a policy document is rather weak. It is perceived within the government administration as a mission statement and does not have any budget attached. According to the interviewed stakeholders, the broadening of open government commitments is still at a conceptual stage.

The e-Government strategy was developed in a highly participatory way. The Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications held 10 workshops to discuss the draft strategy with numerous ministries and agencies. The strategy was also discussed at an important e-Government conference (Offentliga rummet), at the key political forum in Sweden (Almedalen Week), through a hearing with the private sector, and with the general public on Facebook.² According to the ministry, state and private actors, as well as consultants and app developers, joined the discussion on Facebook.³ This type of multi-channel and multi-stakeholder consultation around the strategy could be used as a model for developing the next OGP action plan.

As to the new open data portal (opnadata.se) launched in December 2012, it offers files in XML, CSV, and JSON and gives access to a broad range of datasets (more than 100 datasets) in 10 topical areas. The open data provided by the government are widely used by developers for creating applications. However, some areas are still relatively underdeveloped because of the limited access to data (e.g., geo-data). Moreover, the opnadata.se portal faces some weaknesses with regard to clear licencing, i.e., a number of key datasets have been published without an open licence.⁴

Moving forward

One of the goals of the e-Government strategy is to enhance public participation. In this regard, both the draft OGP self-assessment and the e-Government strategy mention that Sweden plans to make its public consultation procedure more open and accessible. However, the only activity planned by the e-Government strategy is the commissioning of a pre-study into this topic.⁵ The pre-study will certainly be valuable, given that the current public consultation procedure has some limitations. For example, it is difficult to find information about ongoing consultations, and electronic submission of comments is not supported. However, more ambitious commitments could be envisioned in the field of public participation, especially in online participation where Sweden has shown limited progress to date. Moreover, the consulted stakeholders point out that, when it comes to public consultations, there is a need for more transparency in procedures and reasons and the facts on which those reasons are based. This is also in line with current literature in the field of democracy.⁶

Moreover, even if some Swedish authorities have come a long way in terms of opening up data, progress is slower than expected.⁷ Changes that do happen are often because of

single open-data enthusiasts. Open-data stakeholders therefore call for more open data in the public sector.⁸ Sweden could make an ambitious OGP commitment in this area.

¹ Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, "The Government's Strategy for Digitally Collaborative Government Services" (Regeringens strategi för en digitalt samverkande statsförvaltning), December 2013.

² Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, "A Smarter and More Transparent Management—Discussions with Stakeholders on Facebook" (En smartare och öppnare förvaltning - samtal med intressenter på Facebook), 9 May 2012. <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/4902/a/192608>

³ Riksdag and Departement, "The Ministry Takes a Step Out on Facebook" (Departementet tar steget ut på Facebook), 31 May 2012. <http://bit.ly/JZ3o2W>

⁴ Open Data Institute and World Wide Web Foundation, "Open Data Barometer: 2013 Global Report," October 2013. <http://www.opendataresearch.org/barometer>

⁵ Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, "The Government's Strategy for Digitally Collaborative Government Services" (Regeringens strategi för en digitalt samverkande statsförvaltning), December 2013.

⁶ Mansbridge, Jane, "A 'Selection Model' of Political Representation," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17, 4: 369–398.

⁷ Alpman, Marie, "The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute Releases its Weather Data" (Nu släpper SMHI sitt väder fritt). *Ny teknik*, 2 October 2013. http://www.nyteknik.se/nyheter/it_telekom/allmant/article3774580.ece

⁸ Karlsson, Soren, "Release the Data, It Is Ours!" (Släpp datan loss, den är vår!). *Helsingborgs Dagblad*, 23 October 2013. <http://bit.ly/1bQUFRR>

V. SELF-ASSESSMENT

Each OGP participating country is required to publish a self-assessment report. While the draft Swedish self-assessment report was available on the OGP Web site by the set deadline, a final version has yet to be published.

The MFA asked civil society for comments on the self-assessment report through the CSO CONCORD Sweden. By e-mail, CONCORD Sweden forwarded the request to 10 organisations that are part of their steering group for aid and development effectiveness. No comments were received. According to CONCORD Sweden, this was partly due to the short time frame for commenting.

There is some divergence about how many days the CSOs had at their disposal to comment on the self-assessment. The MFA claims that the stakeholders had over one week of time, while one of the interviewees states that they had less than one week.

As of 7 November 2013, the final version of the self-assessment has not been officially published.¹ However, the draft report is available on OGP's Web site.²

Table 3: Self-Assessment Checklist

Was annual progress report published?	Yes
Was it done according to schedule?	No
Is the report available in the local language?	No
According to stakeholders, was this adequate?	Yes
Is the report available in English?	Yes
Did the government provide a two-week public comment period on draft self-assessment reports?	No
Were any public comments received?	No
Is the report deposited in the OGP portal?	Yes
Did the self-assessment report include review of the consultation efforts?	Yes
Did the report cover all of the commitments?	Yes
Did it assess completion according to schedule?	Yes
Did the report reaffirm responsibility for openness?	Yes
Does the report describe the relationship of the action plan with grand	Yes

challenge areas?

¹ E-mail dated 7 November 2013 from Linn Ohlsson, OGP contact point and special adviser, Department for Aid Management, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

² <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/sweden/assessment>

VI: MOVING FORWARD

This section puts the OGP action plan into a broader context and highlights potential next steps, as reflected in the preceding sections, as well as stakeholder-identified priorities.

Country Context

Sweden is a frontrunner in transparency, accountability, technology, and innovation.¹ International indexes generally place Sweden in top ranking positions in terms of ICT readiness, e-Government and the socio-political impact of the Web.² Nonetheless, there still exist areas for further development that could be integrated in future OGP commitments. The suggested areas are outlined under “Stakeholder Priorities” and “Recommendations.”

Stakeholder Priorities

Although OGP’s challenges and values have a broad scope, Sweden’s action plan is narrowly focused on aid transparency. This is due to time constraints at the time when Sweden joined the OGP. The time frame for gathering input and gaining consensus on the scope of the action plan among government departments was very limited. The MFA, which received the OGP invitation in the first place, therefore decided to take on the coordination role and develop the action plan on the basis of its pre-existing commitments.

Today, however, most of the consulted stakeholders (governmental and nongovernmental) would like to broaden future OGP commitments to include not only transparency in development but also other areas relevant to open government. In fact, both the stakeholder interviews and the Web survey show that “broadening open government commitments” is the most important commitment made by Sweden.³ Also the current coordinator of the Swedish OGP action plan, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) would like to broaden future commitments. However, the MFA has no mandate to enforce policy obligations in other branches of government.

The following areas are recommended for future OGP commitments:

Aid transparency, not a stand-alone issue

A more comprehensive approach that involves the whole government is needed for future OGP commitments in the field of aid transparency. Given its overarching goals in terms of open government, the OGP could be used for building synergies between policy areas and in particular for promoting the principle behind the Swedish development policy (‘Politik för global utveckling’, PGU). According to the PGU, the government should take into account development cooperation objectives in all its policy areas, not only in development policy.⁴ However, today, certain policy areas in Sweden still have goals that are conflicting with Sweden’s development policy, for example, goals related to trade issues and arms exports.

Sweden should take concrete steps towards fulfilling the PGU principle in the framework of an OGP commitment. Such a commitment could, for example, be combined with the next stakeholder recommendation to open up the Swedish budget and spending. If the entire government spending data were made open, one could, for example, both visualise development cooperation flows and the weapons export revenue for a specific country. This would give a comprehensive picture of geopolitical relations and show the gaps in the realisation of the PGU. OGP, with its broad scope, could be an appropriate tool for making such a commitment.

Open budget and spending

According to the OKFN's Open Data Census, Sweden has a good ranking, holding eighth position among 75 countries. However, the area with the lowest score (5 out of 100 percent availability) is national government spending.⁵ In line with this data gap, several of the consulted stakeholders and desk review sources proposed that the whole Swedish budget and spending should be released as open data, both at the level of government and the public sector, on national and local levels. This data should be made comparable with other countries' data, following the example of OKFN's OpenSpending project.⁶ This could facilitate citizens' control over the tax money and stimulate users to build apps to allow a broader use of the data.

Public participation

Given its strong tradition in democracy, Sweden should lead the way in public participation. However, the party-centred and collectivistic tradition of political engagement in Sweden does not favour citizens' direct participation in political processes.⁷ Also, the current system for public consultation ('remissförfarande') is focused on established civil society organisations and does not encourage participation from individual citizens. The experimentation with new forms of public engagement has, to date, taken place in scattered and experimental ways, mostly in small-scale settings on the local level. Hence, Sweden should envision more ambitious commitments in the field of public participation, especially with regard to individual citizen engagement and participation facilitated by new technology. Sweden should take advantage of ICT, which allows much broader involvement in public consultations and facilitates the aggregation of opinions.

Making open data a priority

Public information transparency in Sweden has a long tradition. Sweden was the first country in the world to issue a bill for the free access to information in 1776. The heart of this tradition is the principle of public access ('offentlighetsprincipen'), which implies that all documents handled by the authorities be made public unless ad-hoc legislation restricts their access. This principle is very broadly observed and often places Sweden near the top of transparency rankings.⁸ However, the transition to providing electronic access to data is going slowly. Most public authorities are currently not obliged to disclose information electronically, but only in paper-format.⁹

According to a recent survey carried out by the Swedish e-Delegation, few public authorities produce and publish open data, and most are not even planning to do so in the near future. The most frequent reasons cited are lack of funding, personnel, and knowledge. According to an interviewee, the slow adoption of digital public access also depends on juridical barriers and unwillingness to innovate amongst the older generation of public servants and politicians. A political decision to make open data a priority is imperative.

In terms of fields where there is a specific urge for open data, the OKFN's Open Data Census shows that Sweden is lagging behind in open data on legislation, company registers, national maps, and post codes (about 50 percent availability).¹⁰ One of the interviewed open-data experts also pointed to a lack of data on public procurement and tenders and stated that data currently published should be more detailed and up to date. Several sources mention the new open-data Web site of the Swedish parliament - <http://data.riksdagen.se/> - launched in September 2013, as a good practice that other Swedish authorities and especially the government should follow.

The legal aspects of open data

Several stakeholders also point out that there is no specific legal regulation of open data and open data sources,¹¹ resulting in a juridical vacuum in relation to the reuse of data. Moreover, there are certain incompatibilities between Swedish and the international law with regard to data reuse. Sweden already took some steps to address the problem of the reuse of public-sector information by creating a specific guidance document in January 2013 and forming a working group for further work on this issue. However, further work could be done in this direction, also through a future commitment.

Interactive development of open data

Taking the open-data development a step further, Sweden could also use open data in two-way communication with citizens, industry, and organised stakeholders. It is important that data providers collaborate with users in order to create useful tools and ideas for improving data.¹² In addition to providing feedback to improve the quality of the data, users could also contribute to governance and to public administration processes, for example, on platforms similar to Fixmystreet, a Web site through which users can report problems with streets/roads in the United Kingdom to their local council and get feedback.¹³

An interactive approach to open data would enhance the potential for development of new online and mobile applications to make further use of public datasets. It could also help break down walls between government and citizens, favouring enhanced democracy instead of proliferation of Web sites on which data is published. This is particularly important, given that open data are today mostly used by open-data specialists. The challenge ahead is to let all social groups benefit from such data.¹⁴

Recommendations

More concrete and ambitious commitments

Most of the OGP commitments were pre-existing and had unspecified deliverables. Hence, it is unclear whether the OGP accelerated any of the achievements. In fact, the commitments were perceived as unambitious by several of the consulted stakeholders. The IRM researcher therefore recommends setting more ambitious and measureable commitments in the next action plan.

Stakeholder engagement

The government should develop channels for civil society consultation in the context of the next OGP action plan. There is a range of established consultation channels with, for example, the MFA and Sida.¹⁵ However, these might not be sufficient for the OGP remit and are not always easily accessible to newer (as opposed to established) or smaller civil society actors.

Sweden should make an effort to involve a broad range of stakeholders in all phases of the OGP process. This includes involving

- a wider circle of civil society organisations, not only those working in the field of aid transparency but also (potential) open government stakeholders;
- academia and the private sector, which were absent from the past OGP consultation;
- organisations not only active in Stockholm but also in the rest of Sweden, especially regarding potential commitments in the field of open data (e.g., organisations such as West Coast Big Apps in Gothenburg), or in the field of public participation (e.g., the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, working with local e-participation).

Alternative ways for consultation could take the shape of smaller group meetings to discuss specific OGP commitments or even to develop solutions together (e.g.,

following the example of the Open Development
Camps: <http://openforchange.info>).

The consultations should be truly interactive, giving all the participants the opportunity to express their views, as opposed to simply informing them about the OGP. The consultations could be carried out both live and online, but, most importantly, a summary of the received comments and the government's answers to them should be published online.

Communication

The majority of the stakeholders contacted by the IRM researcher were not aware of the OGP or had at most limited knowledge of it. Also the media has overlooked Sweden's engagement in the OGP. As a case in point, a search of the term "Open Government Partnership" on Web sites of two of the main Swedish newspapers (Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet) gives zero results. The government should therefore undertake awareness-raising activities around the OGP and the future action plan, preferably also elaborating a communication strategy to disseminate the information to a broader audience.

Ownership

Most of the consulted stakeholders agree that future OGP commitments should be broadened beyond the field of aid transparency. However, the current OGP coordinator, the MFA, cannot enforce broader policy commitments in other branches of government. Hence, the OGP coordination should be placed in the hands of another entity.

The consulted stakeholders suggested that the prime minister's office, the Ministry of Finance, or the Ministry for Information Technology and Energy (which has a cross-cutting mandate in the field of ICT) could be appropriate OGP coordinators. This would ensure that other government entities are actively involved in the OGP process and accountable for progress on the commitments. Moreover, given that open government is an overarching goal, all of the ministries and state agencies should be consulted regarding future OGP commitments.

¹ Transparency International, Corruption by Country/Territory: Sweden. <http://www.transparency.org/country#SWE>

² Examples of such indexes are the World Economic Forum's "The Networked Readiness Index" (Sweden held first place in 2012), the WWW Foundation's "Web Index" (first place in 2012) and the UN's "e-Government Development Index" (seventh place in 2012).

³ The Web survey included a question about the priority of current commitments; see respondents' ranking of the commitments in Table 5 in "Annex: Methodology: Sources."

⁴ Ministry for Foreign Affairs. "Policy for Global Development" (Politik för global utveckling), 17 March 2008. <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10423>

⁵ OKFN, "Open Data Census: Sweden," 2013. <http://census.okfn.org/country/overview/Sweden>

⁶ The link to OKFN's OpenSpending project: <http://openspending.org/>

⁷ Joachim Åström, et al., "Crisis, Innovation and e-Participation: Towards a Framework for Comparative Research," Electronic Participation Lecture Notes in Computer Science Vol.8075, pp. 26–36.

http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-642-40346-0_3

⁸ Martin Vielajus, et al., "The Challenge of Accountability for Development Agencies within Their Own Countries and before Their Peers," Draft document for the AFD-DevCom Workshop Transparent, Reliable, Understandable, and Interactive: Challenges in Donors' Domestic Accountability, 15–16 December 2009.

⁹ Peter Krantz, OpenGov Web site. <http://www.opengov.se/sidor/oppen-data/>

¹⁰ OKFN, "Open Data Census: Sweden," 2013. <http://census.okfn.org/country/overview/Sweden>

¹¹ Christer Månsson, et al., "From Bureaucracy to Innovation: An Introduction to How to Work with Open Data" (Från byråkrati till innovation - en introduktion till att arbeta med öppna data), March 2013.

¹² Joni Hillman, "Transparency in Practice: IATI Implementation," IATI. 12 May

2011. <http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/transparency-in-practice-iati-implementation>

¹³ Link to the Web site FixMyStreet: www.fixmystreet.com

¹⁴ Anyangwe, Eliza, "Open Government: Open, but for Whom?" *The Guardian*, 28 October

2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/oct/28/open-government-partnership-citizen-engagement>

¹⁵ The MFA holds regular CSO consultation meetings and runs a blog where people are invited to discuss topics relevant to development cooperation with the possibility to leave comments directly via Facebook and Twitter (<http://blogg.ud.se/utvecklingspolitik/>). Sida also holds various consultations with the civil society, and its www.openaid.se platform has an opinion button.

ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

As a complement to the government self-assessment, an independent assessment report is written by well-respected governance researchers, preferably from each OGP participating country.

These experts use a common OGP independent report questionnaire and guidelines,¹ based on a combination of interviews with local OGP stakeholders as well as desk-based analysis. This report is shared with a small international expert panel (appointed by the OGP Steering Committee) for peer review to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

Analysis of progress on OGP action plans is a combination of interviews, desk research, and feedback from nongovernmental stakeholder meetings. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's own self-assessment report and any other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organisations.

Each local researcher carries out stakeholder meetings to ensure an accurate portrayal of events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, the IRM cannot consult all interested or affected parties. Consequently, the IRM strives for methodological transparency, and therefore where possible, makes public the process of stakeholder engagement in research (detailed later in this section). In those national contexts where anonymity of informants—governmental or nongovernmental—is required, the IRM reserves the right to protect the anonymity of informants. Additionally, because of the necessary limitations of the method, the IRM strongly encourages commentary on public drafts of each national document.

Stakeholder Selection

The IRM researcher contacted both governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The handful of CSOs and state actors that were involved in the development and implementation of the OGP action plan were all invited to the stakeholder meeting. Given that only few of them could attend, other CSOs, with limited knowledge about OGP were also invited to the same meeting. To gather opinions from those who could not participate in the meeting, interviews were carried out with (potential) OGP stakeholders. Finally, a Web survey was sent out to a broader circle of CSO and state actors, beyond those working in the field of development cooperation and transparency. The researcher tried to respect gender balance when selecting participants.

Stakeholder Meeting

The stakeholder meeting took place on 24 October 2013 in the meeting room of one of the CONCORD Sweden member organisations (RFSU) in Stockholm. The IRM researcher invited 23 people to the meeting (7 state entities and 16 CSOs, including NGOs, universities, foundations, and religious organisations working with development aid). However, only six persons attended (see below). The meeting was gender balanced with three women and three men among the participants.

The list of attendees included

Thomas Bjelkeman-Pettersson	Akvo
Kristina Henschen	Sida
Linn Ohlsson	MFA
Anna Samuelsson	Plan Sweden
Peter Sörbom	CONCORD Sweden

Martin Vogel

Swedish Church

According to the responses to the meeting invitations and the feedback from the CSO engaged in OGP in Sweden, the reasons for such a low interest and attendance at the meeting was the low awareness about the OGP and the limited involvement of the civil society organisations in the development of the Swedish OGP action plan. Moreover, the OGP action plan builds on existing obligations within international forums, such as the IATI and the Busan Partnership, where CSOs already have established channels to influence government. At the same time, several of the consulted state actors emphasised that there is a need for a pool of interested CSOs to contact for consultations around open government.

Out of the six attendees, only two had been involved in the OGP in Sweden. One of them was the Swedish OGP contact point from the MFA and the other one was a representative of a civil society network that acted as an intermediary between the MFA and its network members interested in the OGP commitments (CONCORD Sweden). All of the attendees are working in the field of development cooperation. They were familiar with some of the OGP commitments, given that they build on government's existing obligations within international forums. However, most of the attendees were not aware of the OGP process or the country action plan.

The meeting took place in a semi-structured format. It began with an explanation of the ORM process, emphasising the importance of input from civil society into the development and implementation of OGP commitments. In a second phase, the Swedish OGP contact point, Linn Ohlsson, briefly presented the current OGP action plan and the rationale behind its development. The most important phase of the meeting, in terms of time and level of interaction, was dedicated to the future OGP plan. All of the attendees were encouraged to ask questions, express their opinions, and make suggestions.

Interviews

The ORM researcher contacted 29 persons, asking for an interview, but received a positive reply only from 11 persons (7 men and 4 women). Most interviewees work in the public sector, three are working for a CSO, and one for an international organisation. The interviews took place either face to face in Stockholm or over the telephone.

List of interviewees:

Name	Organisation
Linn Ohlsson	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Carl Elmstam	Sida
Pernilla Näsfors	Open Aid Partnership Secretariat, hosted by the World Bank
	Institute Innovation Labs
Carl Fredrik Wettermark	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Björn Hagström	The Swedish e-Government Delegation
Erik Borälv	VINNOVA
Daniel Lindvall	Ministry of Justice
Jessica Steinmetz	Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications
Peter Sörbom	CONCORD Sweden
Thomas Bjelkeman-Pettersson	Akvo

Questionnaire

The IRM researcher also carried out an online survey among (potential) OGP stakeholders. The sample consisted of

- (i) member organisations of CONCORD Sweden,
- (ii) member organisations of Forum Syd (a Swedish nongovernmental member organisation working in the field of development),
- (iii) CSOs that have a framework agreement with Sida, and
- (iv) other relevant organisations and experts (e.g., Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA); Swedfund, which provides risk capital, expertise, and financial support for investments in emerging markets; academic researchers; and experts in the field of ICT and development).

To avoid having the same people expressing their opinion twice, participants in the stakeholder meeting and interviewees were not invited to take the survey.

The invitation was sent out by e-mail, and the respondents were given one week to answer the survey. A reminder was sent out a couple of days after the first invitation.

The survey was sent to 79 organisations/persons. The response rate was 16 percent. Given the few responses (13), the survey results cannot be considered as representative. Nevertheless, the results still represent the opinion of a number of OGP stakeholders, most of which were not even aware of the OGP before receiving the survey (see Table 4 below). Most of the respondents work for a nongovernmental organisation (57 percent), a minor share work for a governmental organisation (14 percent) or a private organisation (7 percent), while 21 percent indicated “other.”

The survey was made available through Google Form² and consisted of questions about OGP awareness and involvement, as well as about the importance ascribed to Sweden’s current OGP commitments and suggestions regarding possible areas for the next plan.

Only 13 percent of the respondents were involved in the consultation about the OGP action plan, while most were not even familiar with the OGP (see Table 4). Moreover, interest in participating in the development of Sweden’s next action plan was limited (46 percent answered yes to this question).

Table 4 The Extent of Knowledge about and Involvement in OGP

<i>Are you familiar with the OGP?</i>	<i>(%)</i>
I am not familiar with the OGP	60
I am familiar with the OGP process but I/my organisation has not been involved in it	27
I/my organisation have/has been consulted regarding the OGP	13
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100</i>

As shown in Table 5 all of the commitments were given some importance.

“Implementing the commitments in the Busan Partnership document” and “broadening open government commitments” emerged as the most important commitments. The comment space, where respondents could indicate why they considered any particular commitment(s) as important, received only a few comments: “The current commitments are important in synergy with each other. However, the most important task is to broaden future commitments since aid flows are only a small part of open government.”

and “Sweden is currently lagging behind in terms of openness and transparency; at the same time, these values are very important for keeping citizens’ trust in the public sector.”

Table 5 “What Commitment(s) in Sweden’s Current OGP Action Plan Do You Consider as the Most Important?”

	(%)
3. Busan Partnership document	21
7. Broadening open government commitments	21
1. Openaid.se	14
4. Building Block on Transparency	14
5. EU Transparency Guarantee	14
2. IATI standard	7
6. Open Aid Partnership and ICT4D	7
None of the above are important	0

As to the most important areas for the next OGP plan, the most votes went to Accountability and Transparency (see Table 6. The key area for the current commitments, “more effectively managing public resources,” received fewer votes (12%).

Table 6 “Which of the Following OGP Challenges/Principles Would You Like to See in Sweden’s OGP Action Plan for 2014?”

	(%)
Accountability	21
Transparency	19
Increasing public integrity	12
More effectively managing public resources	12
Citizen participation	12
Increasing corporate accountability	9
Improving public services	7
Creating safer communities	5
Technology and Innovation	5
None of the above are important	0
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>102*</i>

** More than one answer was possible in this question. In the actual questionnaire, the OGP challenges/principles contained not only the headings (as in the table) but also a brief description.*

When giving comments to their answers about future OGP areas, respondents stated that the bureaucracy has to be reduced and that citizens should be offered accessible and understandable information. One respondent confirmed something already expressed by some of the interviewees: the need for more open data in Sweden.

Respondents emphasised that in recent times it has become more difficult for civil society to participate in political processes—that is, the authorities exercise more direct control in some areas, and the time frames for submitting comments to public consultations have become too short. This trend should be reversed, and some of the measures proposed are to inform people about how they can engage and visualize the existing channels for public consultations and to develop feedback and complaint mechanisms in the public sector.

There were also a couple of specific recommendation regarding increasing transparency and control of funding channelled to international organisations in order to manage public resources more effectively and setting up independent performance and reporting criteria in order to increase corporate accountability.

Some of the questions and answers to the questionnaire are not outlined above because they either had a very limited response rate (four or fewer respondents) or had little relevance to the OGP.

About the Independent Reporting Mechanism

The IRM is a key means by which government, civil society, and the private sector can track government development and implementation of OGP action plans on a bi-annual basis. The design of research and quality control of such reports is carried out by the International Experts' Panel, comprising experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

The current membership of the International Experts' Panel is

Yamini Aiyar

Debbie Budlender

Jonathan Fox

Rosemary McGee

Gerardo Munck

A small staff based in Washington, DC, shepherds reports through the IRM process in close coordination with the researcher. Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the staff at irm@opengovpartnership.org

¹ Full research guidance can be found at <http://bit.ly/120SR0u>

² Link to the survey: <http://bit.ly/18Qy2si>