Table of Contents

1. Roles and responsibilities in OGP domestically . . . 4
1.1 The OGP Government Point of Contact . . . 4
1.2 The Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) . . . 5
1.3 The Local IRM Researcher . . . 5
1.4 The OGP Support Unit . . . 5

2. OGP calendars and timelines . . . 6
2.1 Grouping OGP participants into odd and even years . . . 7
2.1.1 Even years . . . 7
2.1.2 Odd years . . . 8
2.2. Delays . . . 8
2.3 Political transitions and elections . . . 8

3. Participation and co-creation tools . . . 9

4. Guidance on drafting OGP documents: Action plan and End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report . . . 10
4.1 Action plans . . . 10
4.1.1 Main action plan characteristics . . . 10
4.1.2 Format and length . . . 11
4.1.3 Action plan template . . . 12
4.2 End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report . . . 15
4.2.1 Self-Assessment Report template . . . 15
4.3 Challenge Commitments . . . 19

5. Guidance on creating an online repository . . . 21
5.1 What qualifies as a repository? . . . 21
5.1.1. Available online, without barriers to access . . . 21
5.1.2 Linked to evidence . . . 21
5.1.3 Updated regularly . . . 22
5.2 Designing an online repository . . . 23
5.2.1 Using your current OGP website . . . 23
5.2.2 Using ready-made tools . . . 23
5.2.3 Open source repositories . . . 23

6. Minimum participation requirements and acting contrary to process . . . 24
6.1 Delayed action plans . . . 24
6.2 Minimum participation requirements during co-creation . . . 24
6.3 Online repository . . . 25
6.4 No progress made . . . 25

7. Guidelines for national-local integration in action plans . . . 26
7.1 OGP Local . . . 26
7.1.1 Strategic inclusion of Local commitments within the national action plan . . . 26
7.1.2 Minimum requirements for commitments of local governments in the action plan . . . 27
7.1.3 Inclusion of Local open government efforts as additional initiatives in the action plan . . . 27
7.1.4 Knowledge and Learning . . . 28
7.1.5 Conclusion . . . 28

Annexes . . . 28

What is new in the 2021 edition of the OGP National Handbook

1. Updated IRM description and calendars based on the IRM refresh and the new research products. Sections 1.3, and 2.
2. Introducing Challenge Commitments. Section 4.3.
3. New section with Guidelines for National-Local integration in National Action Plans.

1. Roles and responsibilities in OGP domestically

During its first ten years, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) has grown from eight founding countries to today including over 100 participating national and local governments. Within each of these members, interest to be part of the OGP development process has also grown among stakeholders within and outside of the government. This section describes the primary roles of national OGP partners. For local OGP participants please refer to the OGP Local Handbook or section 7 of this guide.

1.1 The OGP Government Point of Contact

When a country reaches eligibility and decides to join OGP, a letter of intent must be submitted that identifies the lead ministry and minister for the OGP agenda, as well as a public official responsible for coordinating a participating government's domestic and international OGP activities. OGP refers to this person as a Government Point of Contact or POC. The role is crucial and multidimensional; points of contact are at the forefront of transparency, participation, and accountability efforts for an OGP participating government.

OGP Point of Contact responsibilities and activities:

- **Engage stakeholders:** Engage civil society and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis. This engagement includes the development and management of a multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) in cooperation with civil society (see section 1.2), per OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards.
- **Engage the OGP Support Unit:** Work with the OGP Support Unit to assist in the action plan development process, assess all available resources, and identify international best practices for potential local application.
- **Government coordination:** Work with other government agencies involved in relevant issues that emerge during the co-creation and implementation process.
- **Online repository:** Collect, publish, and document a repository on the domestic OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance. The repository should include information about OGP processes and commitment completion, including evidence of the completion. It should also be accessible without password or credentials and updated at least every six months (see section 5).
- **Development of an End of Term Self-Assessment Report:** The report captures ongoing engagement with civil society and other members of the multi stakeholder forum and final results of the developed commitments. (see section 4.2).
- **Engage the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM):** Activities include:
  - Communicating with the IRM team and researchers, providing information and contacts to the IRM researcher regarding OGP in the country as well as providing comments during the review process of IRM reports.
  - Assisting and facilitating the use of IRM reports to identify and address areas for improvement and to encourage adoption of IRM recommendations with OGP stakeholders in the country.
  - Engaging with the IRM team and researchers in the uptake and dissemination of IRM findings, for example participating in IRM events and collaborating to secure high-level participation. For more information on the IRM, please visit here or contact the team at irm@opengovpartnership.org.
- **Participate in all global OGP events and all relevant regional events:** This also requires informing senior government officials about OGP events and activities and facilitating their participation and encouraging high-level attendance at regional events and global summits.
- **Participate in peer exchange activities:** Participation includes either providing support to colleagues or requesting opportunities for collaboration and learning.

1.2 The Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF)

The participation of both civil society and government is essential to the success of the Open Government Partnership. That is why OGP participating governments commit to developing and implementing their action plans through a multi stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society. A Multi-Stakeholder Forum is a mandatory, standing consultative body that assists in this process, and is a cornerstone of each participating government's successful participation in the OGP process. It should meet every three months in order to comply with basic guidance.

While the structure of every MSF will vary to reflect local contexts and demands, all MSFs are responsible for assisting in the oversight of the OGP process to ensure that, in accordance with the the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards, it is open and inclusive of all stakeholders. MSFs must also:

- Comprise representation from both government and civil society.
- Meet at least every quarter.

A participating government that does not maintain a MSF in compliance with these requirements has acted *contrary to process* for that action plan cycle (see section 6).

For more information about MSFs and some practical examples, see section 5 of the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit.

1.3 The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM)

OGP's IRM monitors the development and implementation of action plans and provides distinct products to contribute to learning and accountability of OGP processes. Civil society and government leaders use the findings in IRM products to reflect on their progress and improve in the development and implementation of future action plans.

The IRM is responsible for:

- Working with all stakeholders to develop independent assessments of a participating government's development and implementation of its action plan, progress in fulfilling open government principles, and establish recommendations to enhance participation in the OGP process and provision of assistance to adopt these recommendations.
- Offering support and learning to country stakeholders (OGP government points of contact or implementing agencies, civil society organizations, MSFs, and others) on the development and implementation of their action plan. For example, by carrying-out sessions to present OGP's standards and minimum participation requirements, improve the design of commitments, convene stakeholders to reflect on and resolve challenges in implementation of commitments, among others.
- Providing support for learning and enhanced dialogue, and promoting knowledge and adoption of the recommendations made in their IRM reports. For example, presenting IRM findings to key stakeholders to boost implementation of specific commitments or themes.

For a full description of the IRM's methodology, please visit here or contact the team at irm@opengovpartnership.org.

1.4 The OGP Support Unit

The OGP Support Unit was created to provide guidance to government and civil society stakeholders on how to most effectively participate in OGP. As part of this effort, OGP has broadened the support it provides them, including defining and developing a tailored set of services that stakeholders can access across the OGP cycle. The Support Unit aims to ensure that high-quality direction and information is available to OGP stakeholders, whether directly, through institutional partners, or through peer-to-peer engagement. Specific OGP Support Unit activities include:

- **Providing guidance on meeting OGP requirements and best practices:** The OGP Support Unit provides regular guidance to both government and civil society in understanding and implementing the minimum and advanced requirements of the OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards, as well as other rules and procedures.

- **Outreach and awareness raising:** Raising awareness of, and promoting greater engagement with, national and local OGP processes is essential to a successful partnership. The OGP Support Unit provides both general support to stakeholders in designing engagement strategies and assistance reaching out to specific actors.
- **Political engagement:** By mobilizing OGP's Steering Committee, ambassadors, envoys, and other champions, the OGP Support Unit helps build political support for open government reforms. This may include arranging bilateral meetings, leveraging OGP and third-party high-level events, and diplomatic outreach. The OGP Support Unit also provides guidance for ensuring continued support for open government reforms during political transitions.
- **Technical assistance:** With support from relevant partners, experts and practitioners, the OGP Support Unit provides assistance in the development, implementation and monitoring of commitments in a wide array of issue areas, including open contracting, open data, fiscal transparency, public services, anti-corruption, civic space, citizen engagement and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Peer exchange and learning:** The OGP Support Unit can help broker virtual peer-to-peer discussions; leverage bilateral visits for open government-related study tours; arrange for webinars, and cross-country and sub-regional workshops on OGP processes or on specific thematic reforms; and help assist in the establishment of standing sub-regional peer exchange networks.

The OGP Support Unit has been developed to reflect a cross section of OGP teams and stakeholder challenges. Tailored to the specific needs of each participant, the OGP Support Unit includes individual leaders with extensive experience advancing open government reforms across a range of issues and regions (more information about the OGP teams and staff can be found here).

Each OGP participating government is assigned a representative from the Country Support Team at the Support Unit. This representative will serve as the participant's primary contact and resource for support and will be happy to respond to any questions.

2. OGP calendars and timelines

This section outlines the biennial calendar for all participating governments. The Support Unit, based on rules issued by the OGP Steering Committee, provides governments and civil society with this information so they can plan accordingly and avoid delays. Having clear rules about delivery dates, extensions, and consequences allows for planning and the avoidance of delays, as well as the fair treatment of all participating governments and stakeholders.

The OGP process is based on a recurring two-year action plan cycle. As outlined above, this includes the co-creative development of action plans, their implementation, and the monitoring, reporting and assessment of progress (including both self-assessment by the participating government, and independently by the local IRM researcher).

Governments will need to complete an end of term Self-Assessment Report for each action plan upon completion of the two-year cycle. Governments will also be responsible for maintaining and regularly updating regularly an online repository with information and evidence about key co-creation processes and commitment completion, as mentioned in section 1.1.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) will produce two reports during the two-year action plan cycle. Between May and July of the year following action plan submission, the IRM will deliver a Design Report. This report includes an assessment of the co-creation process, action plan scope, and commitment design.

Nine months after the end of the action plan implementation cycle, the IRM will deliver an Implementation Report. This report focuses on the progress and results achieved during the two-year implementation period of the action plan.

The IRM will report on the development and implementation of action plans and provide distinct products to contribute to learning and accountability in OGP processes. For a typical action plan cycle, the IRM will deliver the following three products:

1. **Co-Creation Brief**: to inform the co-creation process and action plan design before the co-creation process starts.
2. **Action Plan Review**: to identify promising commitments or policy areas and inform their implementation four months after the action plan is submitted to OGP.
3. **Results Report**: to produce evidence-based analysis on the level of completion of commitments, results obtained from their implementation and compliance to OGP standards, four months after the end of the action plan cycle.

Exact delivery timelines may vary slightly depending on the moment an action plan is submitted.[1]

2.1 Grouping OGP participants into odd and even years

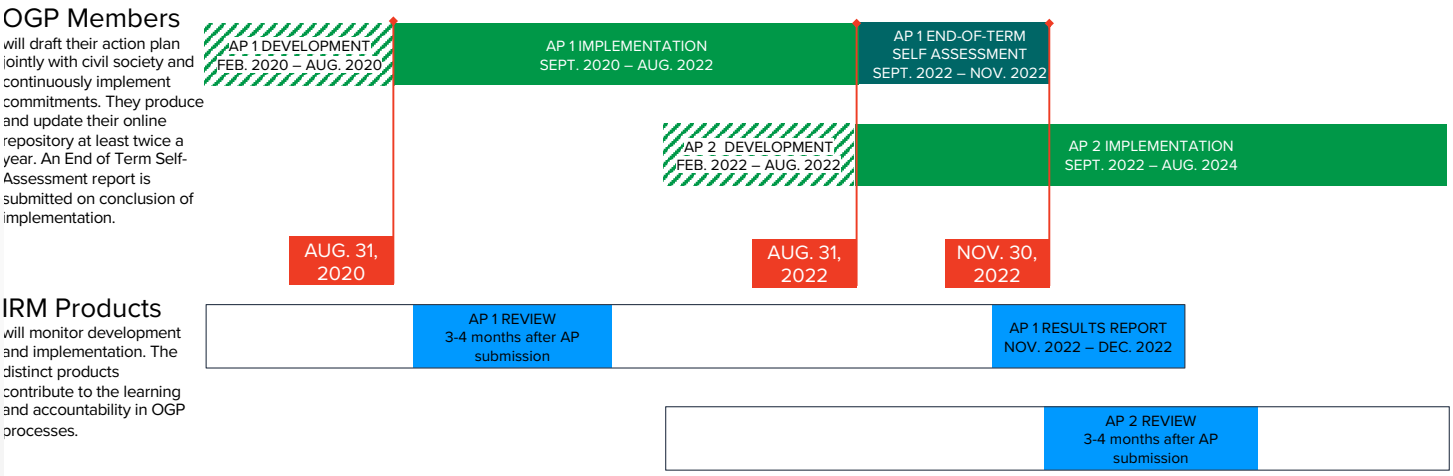
All OGP participating governments join either the even or the odd year cohort. The cohort refers to the year in which the two-year action plan is delivered. For example, participants of the even year cohort will deliver an action plan in 2020, 2022, etc. The complete list of participating governments arranged by cohort is available on the OGP Gazette.

2.1.1 Even years

The following chart outlines a two-year action plan cycle for even year OGP participants:

Even year members with a 2020-2022 Action Plan (AP)

This calendar outlines the two-year cycle for OGP participating members that deliver new action plans in even years. Exact timelines will vary depending on submission dates.



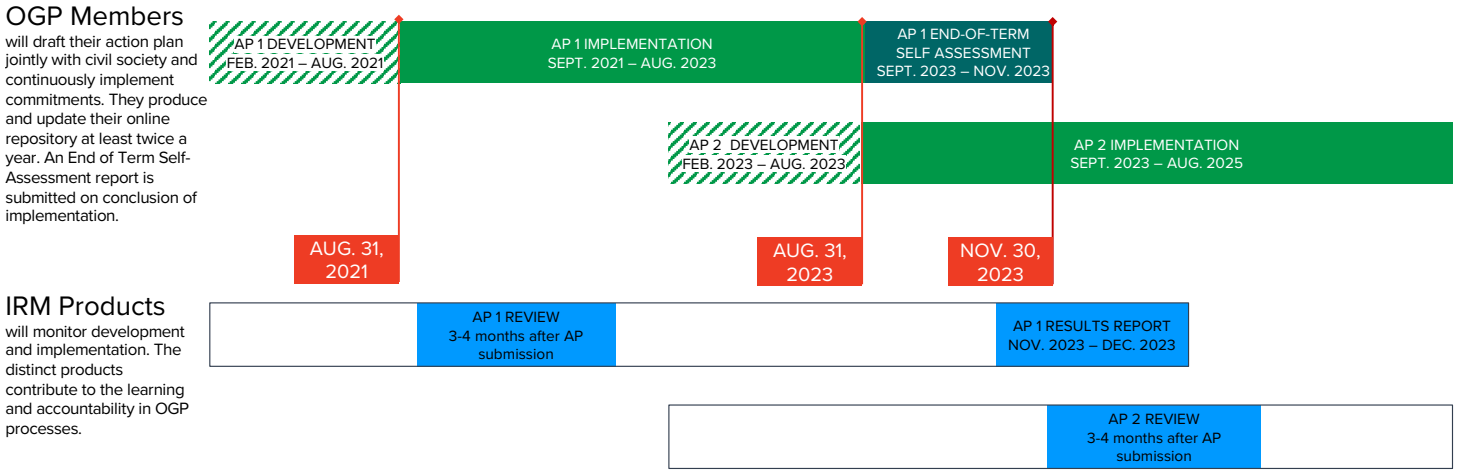
[1] For more information on the new IRM Products you can watch the recordings of the IRM Webinars "Introducing the New IRM Products" available here.

2.1.2 Odd years

The following chart outlines a two-year action plan cycle for odd year OGP participants:

Odd year members with a 2021-2023 Action Plan (AP)

This calendar outlines the two-year cycle for OGP participating members that deliver new action plans in odd years. Exact timelines will vary depending on submission dates.



2.2. Delays

- Participating governments must deliver their action plans on time. Action plans are considered delivered once they are uploaded to the OGP website.
- The OGP Support Unit cannot grant extensions on the delivery of action plans, and the IRM will not change their deadlines to accommodate delays.
- If a participating government submits their action plan after the deadline, the delay will be noted in the IRM report.
- If a participating government delivers a new action plan late, but within four months of the August 31 deadline (that is, before January 1 of the following year), the end date for the action plan (August 31, two years after the original due date) will not change. However, the amount of time for implementation of the commitments will be reduced by the period of the delay.
- If a participating government does not deliver a new action plan before January 1 of the following year (more than four months late of the August 31 deadline), the OGP participating government will be shifted to the following year cohort (e.g., from the odd-year to the even-year cohort) and be considered to start a new action plan cycle. In this circumstance, a participating government will have acted contrary to OGP Process for that action plan cycle (see section 6). The participating government will receive a letter from the Support Unit noting this occurrence, and it will be copied to the Criteria and Standards subcommittee to consider any additional actions or support as necessary (see section 6).

2.3 Political transitions and elections

Political transitions pose clear challenges to the timely delivery of action plans. In advance of and during these periods, it can be difficult to secure high-level political support to develop or implement ambitious commitments. Moreover, it is important that

those responsible for implementing commitments are part of the development process. Given these challenges, the following are options for delivery of an action plan during political transitions:

- **Wait a year:** Several participating countries have successfully waited for one year until the new administration and authorities are in place. It is important to note that the country will be considered to have acted contrary to OGP processes for one cycle (see section 6).
- **Limited action plan:** The second option is to develop a more limited action plan, subsequently allowing the new administration to develop an alternative, more streamlined co-creation process to add new commitments (while acting in accordance with action plan modification rules outlined in section 4.1). This allows a participating government to maintain momentum and avoid acting contrary to process. However, the commitments might not be very ambitious, or they might not be completed, depending on the priorities of the new administration. Note that in these cases, only the first co-creation process will be assessed by the IRM.
- **No adjustment to the action plan:** Some countries have chosen to develop regular action plans during transitions. In the publication "Why OGP Commitments fall behind," the IRM highlights that beyond lack of capacity or coordination, a common cause for commitment failure is *"discontinuity from one administration to another during political transition."* Therefore, if this option is chosen, a participating government should ensure clear communication channels with the incoming administration (and with civil society), and a thorough handover process.

Regardless of the option chosen, it is important to discuss the different approaches within the government, the Multi-Stakeholder Forum, and with the OGP Support Unit representative. The Multi-Stakeholder Forum plays a crucial role during political transitions, particularly in countries with a higher rate of government employee turnover, as it can provide important institutional memory.

3. Participation and co-creation tools

Civic participation is a core component of open government and an essential element of the OGP cycle. The OGP Articles of Governance outline that OGP participants commit to developing their action plans through a multistakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society.

The OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards set out requirements for engaging civil society, citizens, and other stakeholders throughout the OGP process, including:

- **Dissemination of information:** Provide the public, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders with timely information about all aspects of the OGP process, including feedback on how their input is taken into account.
- **Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation:** Facilitate an inclusive and ongoing dialogue using a variety of spaces and platforms appropriate to the government context.
- **Co-ownership and joint decision making:** Government, civil society, and other stakeholders should jointly own and develop the process.

As established in the standards, these requirements reflect the often difficult realities of making open government reforms work. Past, successful reform models make clear that transformative and sustainable change require the efforts of coalitions made up of different sectors and groups, including ministers, secretaries, and officials, national and local CSOs, citizens, parliamentarians, academics, and the media.

The OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit provides guidance on developing successful co-creation and implementation processes. The Toolkit, through the presentation of proven best practices, offers a blueprint for adopting this shared, cross-sector approach.

For information on the minimum requirements for the co-creation process refer to section 6.

4. Guidance on drafting OGP documents: Action plan and End-of-Term Self-Assessment report

4.1 Action plans

Action plans are at the core of a country's participation in OGP. They are the product of a co-creation process in which government and civil society develop ambitious commitments to foster transparency, accountability, and public participation. This chapter reflects lessons learned from OGP participating governments on producing high quality action plans. In addition, the chapter includes templates that will ensure all the necessary information on commitments and the development process is included in the action plan. As participants begin their own processes, it is important to consider the following:

- **Action plans must be submitted to the OGP Support Unit in both the administrative language of the country and English.** Not only is this mandatory, but submitting in English ensures that people from other countries can read more about your open government reforms and that learning across borders can take place.
- **The official version of your action plan is the one published on the OGP website.** If a participating government wishes to amend any part of their action plan, they must do so within one year of the original due date for submission (that is, August 31st of the next year). To change the action plan, the participating government must send an updated version, in English and in the administrative language (if applicable), to the OGP Support Unit that clearly outlines all changes.

4.1.1 Main action plan characteristics

Successful OGP action plans focus on significant open government priorities and ambitious reforms; are relevant to the OGP values of transparency, accountability, and public participation; and contain specific, time-bound, and measurable commitments:

- **Ambitious goals:** OGP aims to promote ambitious open government reforms that stretch the government beyond its current state of practice, significantly improving the status quo by strengthening transparency, accountability, and public participation in government. Participating governments may choose to initiate new open government initiatives in their action plans or improve upon ongoing reforms. They are also encouraged to show clear improvement from one action plan to the next.
- **Relevant:** Participating governments should ensure that each commitment included in the action plan is clearly advancing one or more of the following open government values:
  - **Transparency:** This includes publication of all government-held information (as opposed to only information on government activities); proactive or reactive releases of information; mechanisms to strengthen the right to information; and open access to government information.
  - **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. Commitments on accountability should typically include an outward-facing component (i.e., they are not solely accountable to internal systems, but also involve the public).
  - **Public participation:** Governments seek to engage citizens in a dialogue on public policies or programs, and request their input, feedback, and contributions, which lead to more responsive, innovative, and effective governance.
  - **Technology and innovation:** Governments embrace the importance of providing citizens with open access to technology, the role of new technologies in driving innovation, and the many benefits of increasing its capacity. Technology and innovation cannot be a stand-alone principle but must support/advance the previous three principles.
- **The SMART framework:** Assisting participating governments in seeking effective, clear, and measurable commitments:

- **Specific:** The commitment precisely describes the problem it is trying to solve, the activities it comprises, and the expected outcomes.
- **Measurable:** It is possible to verify the fulfillment of the commitment.
- **Answerable:** The commitment clearly specifies the main agency responsible for implementation, the coordinating or supporting agencies where relevant, and if necessary, other civil society, multilateral, or private sector partners who have a role in implementing the commitment.
- **Relevant:** For each commitment, the action plan should explain its relevance to one or more of the open government principles outlined above (transparency, accountability, public participation, and technology and innovation).
- **Time-bound:** The commitment clearly states the date when it will be completed, as well as dates for milestones, benchmarks, and other potential deadlines.

4.1.2 Format and length

Experience has shown that action plans comprising 5-15 high-quality commitments spread over multiple themes are more effective than those with a large number of less ambitious commitments. In 2017, the Steering Committee strongly recommended that participating governments cap the number of commitments per action plan to 20, with a suggested maximum of five milestones per commitment, with the aim of incentivising more ambitious commitments.

OGP Local participants should deliver no more than five commitments in their action plans.

Additional considerations when determining commitment format and length:

- **Clarity:** Action plans should be clear, succinct, and action-oriented, and should be written in plain language with minimal use of jargon or technical terms.
- **Holistic:** Governments are encouraged to apply a whole-of-government approach to the development and implementation of their commitments.
- **Time-bound:** All action plans should cover a two-year period, with the implementation period ending on 31 August of the second year. At minimum, each commitment should have yearly milestones, so that governments, civil society organizations, and the IRM have a common set of time-bound metrics to assess progress.
- **Extension requirements:** Commitments that will take longer than two years to implement are allowed as long as they are clearly cited in the country's next action plan and include a two-year intermediate milestone.

4.1.3 Action plan template

This section provides an action plan template. Participating governments may modify the format, as long as the information required by this template is included.

<<Participating Government name>>

Action Plan 20XX–20XX

1. Introduction

Briefly explain the national or local context by discussing why open government efforts are important for the participating government. This section should also outline the governance reform priorities for the country or local entity and identify the major social, political, or economic issues to be addressed through its OGP action plan, along with a justification.

2. Open government efforts to date

Provide a brief narrative of key open government initiatives and accomplishments to date, particularly those that reflect collaboration with civil society and how they relate to the co-created commitments. This section should explain how the new action plan builds on previous action plans (if relevant), as well as related efforts to strengthen open government reforms.

3. Action plan development process

Describe the action plan development process, highlighting collaboration between the participating government and civil society and other stakeholders. Please expressly note compliance with the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards, , with particular attention to the minimum participation requirements (please see section 6 of this document). Refer to the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit for more information.

4. Commitments

The following template must be used for each action plan commitment.

Commitment Template	
Name and number of the commitment	
Commitment Start and End Date (E.g., 31 August 2019 - 31 August 2021)	
Lead implementing agency/actor	
Commitment description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	• *Describe the social, economic, political, or environmental problem addressed by the commitment. When available, include baseline data and contextual facts when available.*
What is the commitment?	• *Describe what the commitment entails, its expected results, and overall objective.*
How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?	• *Describe how the commitment will contribute to solving the problem or change government practice towards addressing the problem.* *Tip: In order to do this, explain how the commitment will be implemented. Provide a clear description of how the milestones listed will achieve what the commitment sets out to do and obtain the expected results that will contribute to solving the problem.*
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	*Consider the following questions:* • *Is the commitment disclosing more information, improving the quality of the information disclosed, improving accessibility of information to the public, or enabling the right to information? If yes, the commitment is relevant to transparency.* • *Is the commitment creating or improving opportunities, or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions? Is the commitment creating or improving the enabling environment for civil society? If yes, the commitment is relevant to civic participation.* • *Is the commitment creating or improving rules, regulations, and mechanisms to publicly hold government officials answerable to their actions? If yes, the commitment is relevant to public accountability.* *Once you have reviewed the questions, provide information that aligns the relevance of your responses with each of the commitment values outlined above.*

Additional information	*Use this optional space to provide other useful information, for example:* • *Commitment budget* • *Links to other government programs* • *Links to the National development plan or other sectoral / local plans* • *Links to other relevant plans, such as an Anti-Corruption Strategy* • *Link to the Sustainable Development Goals*

Milestone Activity with a verifiable deliverable	Start Date:	End Date:

Contact information		
Name of responsible person from implementing agency		
Title, Department		
Email and Phone		
Other Actors Involved	State actors involved	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	

4.2 End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report

Participating governments must produce an End-of-term Self-Assessment Report. The report should focus on the final results of reforms completed in the action plan, consultation during implementation, and lessons learned.

The development of the End-of-term Self-Assessment Report should follow guidance established in the Participation and Co-Creation Standards. Refer to the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit for more information.

While the End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report can be written in the country's official language, governments are required to submit an English translation to the OGP Support Unit. This section includes provides a template for the End-of-term Self-Assessment Report. Participating governments may modify the format, as long as the required information is included.

4.2.1 Self-Assessment Report template

<<Participating Government Name>>

End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report for Action Plan 20XX–20XX

1. Introduction and background

Briefly explain the national or local context by discussing why open government efforts are important. This section should reflect upon how the action plan and other governance initiatives are contributing to address major social, political, or economic issues that the country or local entity face.

It should also explain how the OGP commitments are relevant to the core open government values (transparency, accountability, public participation, and technology and innovation for openness and accountability).

2. Action plan process

A. **Participation and co-creation throughout the OGP cycle**
Provide a narrative of the government's approach to participation throughout the OGP cycle. Please expressly note compliance with relevant standards in the OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards.

B. **Participation and co-creation when implementing, monitoring, and reporting on an Action Plan**
Provide a narrative of the government's approach to participation during implementation. Please expressly note compliance with the relevant standards in the OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards.

3. IRM recommendations

Briefly explain how the five key recommendations from the latest IRM report were used to improve the process of action plan drafting and implementation in this action plan cycle.

4. Implementation of action plan commitments

Provide a complete description of the commitment implementation process, conditions, problems, etc. This may include a summary table of the progress and results on all of the commitments. Any information on modifications or updates on the commitments should be included here. Additionally, for each commitment write a brief explanation of the commitment and the main results achieved.

Commitment Completion Template	
Number and Name of Commitment	
Commitment Start and End Date (E.g., 31 August 2019 - 31 August 2021)	
Lead implementing agency	
Commitment Description	
What is the public problem that the commitment will address?	• *Describe the social, economic, political, or environmental problem addressed by the commitment. When available, include baseline data and contextual facts.* *Tip: Use the information contained in your* action plan*. If something has changed, please flag it.*
What is the commitment?	• *Describe what the commitment entails, its expected results, and overall objective.* *Tip: Use the information contained in your* action plan*. If something has changed, please flag it.*
How will the commitment contribute to solving the public problem?	• *Describe how the commitment will contribute to solving the problem or change government practice towards addressing the problem.* *Tip: In order to do this, explain how the commitment will be implemented. Provide a clear description of how the milestones listed will achieve what the commitment sets out to do and obtain the expected results that will contribute to solving the problem.* *Tip: Use the information contained in your action plan. If something has changed, please flag it.*
Why is this commitment relevant to OGP values?	*Consider the following questions:* • *Is the commitment disclosing more information, improving the quality of the information disclosed, improving accessibility of information to the public or enabling the right to information? If yes, the commitment is relevant to Transparency.* • *Is the commitment creating or improving opportunities, or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions? Is the commitment creating or improving the enabling environment*

	for civil society i? If yes, the commitment is relevant to civic participation. • *Is the commitment creating or improving rules, regulations, and mechanisms to publicly hold government officials answerable to their actions? If yes, the commitment is relevant to public accountability.* *Once you have reviewed the questions, provide information in line with the response on how the commitment is relevant to the values outlined above.* *Tip: Use the information contained in your action plan. If something has changed, please flag it.*
Additional information	*Use this optional space to provide other useful information, for example:* • *Commitment budget* • *Links to other government programs* • *Links to the National development plan or other sectoral or local plans* • *Link to the Sustainable development goals* • *Gender perspective analysis.* *Tip: Use the information contained in your action plan. If something has changed, please flag it.*

Completion Level	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed

Description of the results	*Include specific activities within the reporting period (first or second year of the action plan) and, wherever possible, please indicate whether there has been evidence of members of the public using the commitment or whether the commitment has had an effect.*
Next Steps	• •

Milestone status	Start Date:	End Date:	Completion level

Contact information		
Lead implementing agency		
Persons responsible from implementing agency		
Title, Department		
Email and Phone		
Other Actors Involved	Government Ministries, Department/Agency	
	CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups	

Additional Information

5. Progress on eligibility criteria (optional)

Governments that have voluntarily taken steps to improve their performance on the OGP eligibility criteria as part of their action plan should identify those actions and outcomes.

6. Peer exchange and learning

Briefly describe involvement in peer exchange and learning activities. For example, please describe the nature and outcome of activities where you provided assistance to other countries or if you received assistance during action plan development and implementation.

7. Conclusion, other initiatives, and next steps

A. **Lessons learned:** What were overall lessons learned and challenges encountered with respect to the action plan development and implementation?

B. **Other initiatives (optional):** Report on any other initiatives or reforms undertaken to advance OGP values that were not included in the action plan.

C. **Next steps:** What are next steps with regard to OGP generally?

D. **Conclusion:** Report on the positive impact of the activities and related outcomes with respect to each commitment; this could include a broader assessment that may detail actions taken outside of the action plan itself, such as political and electoral developments, cultural changes, and plans for the future.

4.3 Challenge Commitments

In 2021, OGP will introduce "challenge commitments" to enhance flexibility and allow countries that are implementing an action plan to respond to emerging national priorities by using the OGP platform and its participation and co-creation mechanisms, including multi stakeholder forums (MSF), the action plan as a tool to articulate reforms, and the IRM as an accountability mechanism.

Challenge commitments are meant for countries that have a live action plan. Countries that are co-creating are not eligible to add challenge commitments as they should include commitments which address emerging national priorities through their regular OGP co-creation process.

Any country with a live action plan can introduce up to two challenge commitments as long as they follow these guidelines:

1. The commitment must address an emerging national priority(ies). National OGP actors are free to decide what a national priority entails.

2. Challenge commitments do not require a full co-creation process as established in the "Co-Creation and Participation Standards", but must follow co-creation values. A challenge commitment can therefore be proposed by either a government agency or a civil society organization in accordance with the respective national structure or process for OGP, such as a MSF, but can only be included in the plan if it has been worked on collaboratively and the government has provided a reasoned response .

3. Challenge commitments can be introduced at any time during the implementation period but should only be included in live action plans that allow for the commitment to be completed by the end of that action plan.

4. Completion of challenge commitments will be assessed in the IRM Results Report at the end of the action plan implementation period.

All challenge commitments should be included into an updated version of the action plan. The updated version should include a new commitment template for each challenge commitment, a note that describes the process by which the commitment was included and how co-creation with civil society was assured. This updated version should be sent to the OGP Support Unit for publication.

Examples of possible national priorities that could emerge

1. Implementation support to relevant laws passed by parliament / congress.
2. Responding to a major event like a pandemic or a corruption crisis (e.g. COVID spending trackers).
3. Aligning with a major global summit the country is participating in (e.g. integrating commitments made at the London Anti-Corruption or the UN General Assembly Special Session against corruption).

5. Guidance on creating an online repository

An Open Government Repository (OGR) is a website, webpage, or other electronic platform where information and evidence related to the action plan (including process and implementation) is publicly stored, organized, updated, and disseminated. It is meant to be a transparent and easy way for stakeholders to access up-to-date evidence related to a participating government's OGP activities.

Maintenance of online repositories is mandatory, and a country that does not maintain an online repository will have acted contrary to process for that action plan cycle (see section 6).

In addition to setting up the online repository, participating governments may wish to develop a communications strategy where all agencies and other relevant stakeholders share updates on the content, and encourage commentary and interaction on it.

Participating governments are not required to translate repository evidence and information into english. However, OGP encourages information to be provided both in the official language(s) for citizen accountability and in english to foster peer learning among the OGP community.

5.1 What qualifies as a repository?

The IRM guidance for repositories establishes the core requirements for all OGP repositories. This guidance states that participating governments may choose any platform or system for their online repository as long as it follows a set of guiding principles. The repository must be: 1) available online, without barriers to access, 2) linked to evidence, and 3) updated regularly.

5.1.1. Available online, without barriers to access

Anyone should be able to access the repository where the information is hosted. It should not require passwords nor credentials to access.

The website, webpage, or hyperlink to the repository must be visible, accessible, and findable, not hidden away in an obscure corner of an agency website. The ideal platform will be archived or perma-linked and provide interoperable data.

5.1.2 Linked to evidence

Participating governments are expected to publish evidence about the co-creation processes and progress on their OGP commitments. They should document, collect, and publish information on the repository that serves as clear evidence of what happened during the action plan development and implementation processes.

Evidence is defined as "the available facts that justify statements or propositions, proving they are true or valid." It includes primary sources or direct links to objective information that accounts for the status of completion of activities, commitments, or milestones. It does not include secondary source materials, for example claims that describe activities without providing proof of the activity itself.

The following list provides examples of evidence to account for during the development and implementation of the action plan:

- Plans for public consultations on the development of the action plan
- Timelines, public invitations, interdepartmental invitations
- Evidence of setting up multi-stakeholder forums (coordinating committees, task forces, working groups, etc.)
  - Terms of Reference for a coordinating group
  - Minutes/memos of decisions to set up working groups
  - Composition of the group, listing organizations and individuals included

- Evidence of public consultation and multi-stakeholder forums
  - Advertising or notice for public consultation
  - Invitations sent out
  - Multi-stakeholder forum meeting agendas and/or minutes
  - List of participants (affiliations sufficient in case names cannot be disclosed due to privacy considerations)
  - Written proposals submitted by CSOs or other members of the public
  - Documents, reports, and plans that are relevant to establish commitment baseline and government objectives
  - Outputs of consultations (proposals, minutes, pictures, memos, etc.)
  - Feedback on how public inputs or proposals have been considered
- Evidence of how the government has responded to the 5 Key IRM recommendations from the previous report
- Documentation for implementation of commitments:
  - Draft of laws and status of legislative process on issue areas relevant to commitments
  - Records of decision-making, new regulations, or administrative orders
  - Evidence of commissioning research, procurement or consultancy terms of reference, calls for proposals
  - Evidence of technical documents relating to databases, information technology, etc.
  - Strategy documents, concept papers, and work plans produced in the process or as a result of commitments
  - Monitoring and evaluation material (inter-governmental or third party monitoring reports, etc.)
  - Evidence of budget decisions, financial and HR resource allocations
  - External/third-party analysis of documents (CSO shadow reports, independent tracking of commitment progress)
  - Audit reports
  - Photos, videos, multimedia as evidence of progress on commitments, events held
  - User statistics (if relevant)

5.1.3 Updated regularly

As established in the Participation and Co Creation Standards, when implementing, monitoring and reporting an action plan, the government should publish via the OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e. at least every six months) on the progress of commitments. It includes progress against milestones, reasons for any delays and next steps. Therefore, the OGR has to be updated at least every six months.

The IRM suggests to include timestamps on the repositories that indicate when it was last updated.

5.2 Designing an online repository

In the design of their online repositories, participating governments should consider the following issues:

- **Establish some content guidelines.** Key decisions about the type of content accepted by the repository should be made and shared with implementing ministries/agencies beforehand. This ensures a level of quality control over metadata, formatting, and in some cases content of the deposited material. Identifying who will be responsible for documenting each commitment's progress and making sure they understand how evidence should be gathered and uploaded throughout the implementation process will be in the best interest of all stakeholders.

- **Legal considerations.** Make sure the platform of choice complies with national and international regulations, including those relating to data architecture, security, privacy, and accessibility and record-keeping.

5.2.1 Using your current OGP website

The OGP website required by the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards may also be used as the online repository, as long as the requirements noted in section 5.1 are met.

At its most basic version, this could be a series of electronic folders, including at least one per commitment and one for the action plan development process. To enhance accessibility, the folder could be complemented with a spreadsheet that tracks the commitments and the completion evidence available or, as several OGP participants have done, a online tracking dashboard.

It should be noted that a dashboard by itself is not considered a repository. Unless it is linked to evidence and is updated every six months, it will not suffice to cover the repository requirement.

5.2.2 Using ready-made tools

Similar to the basic version proposed above, a participating government may decide to use one of the ready-made online filing systems to house their repository. Two options for doing this are Google Drive or Dropbox. As mentioned previously, if this option is chosen, the government must ensure that this complies with domestic regulations, particularly those that have to do with privacy and security.

There are online manuals available for both Google Drive and Dropbox. In order to use one of these platforms as a repository, folders would have to be created for each of the commitments in the action plan, and one relating to action plan processes. The administrator would have to make sure that the settings allow for public access to the folders and start uploading information as it becomes available. As in the previous case, the folders could be complemented with a spreadsheet to track progress.

5.2.3 Open source repositories

Participating governments may decide to adopt one of the open source open-access repositories that are available. The advantage of this model is that they support for a wide range of formats of documents for archiving are relatively easy to implement and their maintenance is not expensive. The other advantage is that these systems can facilitate the content aggregation to search engines. The following are Open Repository options:

- E-prints: EPrints is generic repository building software developed by the University of Southampton. It is intended to create a highly configurable web-based repository. EPrints is often used to store images, research data, audio archives, or anything that can be stored digitally.

- DSpace: DSpace is an open source software application that enables easy and open access to all types of digital content including text, images, moving images, audio, and data sets. It was developed by MIT and Hewlett Packard, and is completely customizable.

- CONSUL: CONSUL is an open source software designed to allow citizens to participate in day-to-day decisions of government institutions by facilitating the creation of participation initiatives. CONSUL can be customized to include different features and it is free.

6. Minimum participation requirements and acting contrary to process

A government's participation in OGP may be reviewed by the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee (C&S) or by the full Steering Committee upon recommendation by the C&S, if it acts contrary to process or contrary to OGP principles, as outlined in the Procedural Review policy. These are considered the minimum participation requirements for all OGP participating governments.

According to the OGP Articles of Governance, a participating government is considered to have acted "contrary to process" when any of the following occur:

1. The government does not publish a National Action Plan within 4 months of the due date
2. The government did not meet the International Association for Public Participation "involve" during development or "inform" during implementation of the NAP as assessed by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM).
3. The government fails to collect, publish and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.
4. The IRM Report establishes that there was no progress made on implementing any of the commitments in the participating government's action plan (N.B. this trigger automatically places a country under Procedural Review).

When a country is found to have acted contrary to process, the OGP Support Unit will notify the government via a letter that is published in the OGP website and in the OGP Gazette. If a country acts contrary to process for two consecutive action plan cycles, it will be placed under Procedural Review by the C&S. If a country fails to address the problems that lead to the review process, the C&S may consider to recommend to the full Steering Committee that the country be designated as inactive.

OGP Local governments are subject to the same procedural guidelines and their participation will be subject to Procedural Review if they act contrary to OGP Process.

Please see below for specific definitions of these four triggers provided by the OGP Support Unit and the IRM.

6.1 Delayed action plans

If a participating government fails to deliver a new action plan before January 1 of the following year (more than four months late of the August 31 deadline), the OGP participating government will be shifted to the following year cohort (e.g., from the odd-year to the even-year cohort) and be considered to start a new action plan cycle. In this circumstance, a participating government will have acted contrary to OGP process for that action plan cycle. The participating government will receive a letter from the OGP Support Unit noting this occurrence, and it will be copied to the Criteria and Standards subcommittee to consider any additional actions or support as necessary (see section 6).

For a detailed description of OGP calendars please refer to section 2.

6.2. Minimum participation requirements during co-creation

Inline with OGP's Participation & Co-Creation Standards, in order to meet the International Association for Public Participation "involve" level of public influence during development as assessed by the IRM, governments will have to provide evidence in their action plan and online repository that the following three standards were met:

1. **Forum exists:** The forum meets at least once every three months (four times a year).
2. **Forum is multi-stakeholder:** Both government and civil society participate in it.
3. **Reasoned response:** The government will have to document or be able to show how they provided the feedback during the co-creation process, including a summary of major categories and/or themes proposed inclusion, amendment or rejection.

BASIC EXAMPLE: HOW TO PROVIDE A REASONED RESPONSE

1. Providing reasoned response on the selection of categories or priority policy areas identified during the consultation process:

The Government of Taprobane wanted to focus on open government reforms that aligned with the 5-Year Plan on Corruption Reduction. Early in the consultation, a number of organizations pushed for reforms and commitments outside of the scope of the the 5-Year Plan. These included:

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

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

2. Providing reasoned response on the selection of themes:

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

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

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

For more information about the Participation and Co-Creation Standards please consult the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit.

6.3 Online repository

OGP participating governments have to collect, publish, and document a repository on the domestic OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance. The repository is also needed in order to meet the International Association for Public Participation "inform" during implementation.

The IRM will assess whether governments have taken action to meet the standard for repositories. Actions include:

1. Availability online, without barriers to access
2. Linked to evidence
3. Updated regularly

The IRM has developed guidance to clarify what it means to meet the repository requirement and how it will be assessed by the IRM. It provides details on what is the minimum threshold required in order to act according to the OGP process. Please refer to Annex II for the IRM guidance document and to section 5 for additional information on this requirement.

6.4 No progress made

If the IRM Report establishes that there was no progress made on implementing any of the commitments in the action plan, the government will *automatically* be placed under Procedural Review, regardless of being the first or second occurrence of acting contrary to process.

7. Guidelines for national-local integration in action plans

In the past ten years we have seen an increase in the use of the OGP action plans to advance open government at different levels of government. This responds to a desire by national governments to implement open state strategies as well as a demand by local governments and civil society to carry out open government reforms within the OGP process.

The OGP Local Strategy recognizes that open government reforms can have more impact and be made more sustainable when national open government reforms are localized and when local innovations are scaled. As a result, national governments and civil society organizations can promote open local government within OGP action plan processes or through separate national initiatives. In order to ensure the strategic and sustainable collaboration between national governments, local governments, and civil society, below are a series of overarching guidelines for consideration and minimum rules for inclusion of local commitments in theaction plan.

7.1 OGP Local

In December 2018 the OGP Steering Committee tasked the Support Unit to lead the development of a new strategy that would allow OGP to scale its local engagement in a sustainable manner, while protecting core OGP values and principles.

The development of the new strategy was guided by a Steering Committee Task Force, and informed by extensive interviews with the local community inside and outside OGP. It was approved at the Ministerial Steering Committee Meeting held on 29 May 2019 in Ottawa, Canada, and it got green light for implementation in February 2020 at the Berlín Steering committee meeting.

The new strategy consists of three pillars for engagement of open local government:

- Supporting strategic **national-local integratio**n to support effective national government and civil society strategies to foster local open government through national initiatives, including the OGP action plan processes.
- **Enhancing the OGP Local program** by redesigning the current program to be more flexible, scalable and inclusive.
- Developing a **collaborative platform for learning** that provides easy access to knowledge resources, learning opportunities, peer and expert networks to those working on open local government

7.1.1 Strategic inclusion of Local commitments within the national action plan

In order to ensure the national action plan remains strategic as well as manageable in its implementation and assessment it is recommended that commitments which involve local jurisdictions (they are implemented by local governments) meet the following criteria:

- **The commitment seeks to implement a state-wide open government policy.** Some member countries are pursuing open state strategies which involve defining and implementing open government policies that span institutions and levels of government. These commitments, which require the coordination and collaboration across government levels and institutions, would benefit from the co-creation and coordination platform that is the OGP process in the country.
  - For example, countries that want to advance open contracting initiatives state-wide can include a commitment to adopt an open contracting data standard in the national as well as the local administrations. In this occasion the commitment will seek the implementation of the same policy in agencies in different government levels.
- **The commitment seeks to promote coordination across levels of government on an open government policy.** In some cases the same open government policy cannot be implemented across government levels; however, national and local governments may wish to implement their own open government policies in a coordinated fashion. In this case, commitments that enable and promote cross-jurisdictional coordination would benefit from being included as part of the national action plan.

- For example, a country may want to pursue open data standards for publication of information that is different in each jurisdiction and interoperable between jurisdictions at the local and national level. A commitment to achieve this can be the establishment of a coordination mechanism on open data policy composed of representatives of agencies in different levels of government.

- **The commitment seeks to advance implementation by local jurisdictions of national level policies.** In cases where local jurisdictions have to observe national regulations, a commitment to improve such observance may be beneficial, especially if the commitment is co-created with stakeholders from the local government and civil society.

  - For example, national legislation on public financial management often requires minimum standards for transparency and reporting for all recipient agencies of public funds including by local jurisdictions. A commitment to strengthen the implementation of such regulation may take the form of a support program by the national government provided to local authorities.

- **The commitment seeks to raise awareness of open government in local jurisdictions.** In cases where the national government wishes to promote open government within local jurisdictions through knowledge sharing, these specific activities can be included in the action plan. This can include the creation of networks to share experiences and innovations in open government between national and local governments and civil society organizations.

- **The commitment highlights innovations on open government at the local level.** Many times, innovations in open government come from the local level. One way for the national government and civil society to support these efforts is by including them as specific commitments in the action plan. Commitments of this form should curate ambitious open government initiatives that have high potential for impact and can be adapted and adopted by other local jurisdictions.

7.1.2 Minimum requirements for commitments of local governments in the action plan

As national governments and civil society embark in the co-creation of action plans they should ensure that:

- Commitments are co-created between government and civil society as part of the action plan development process.

- Commitments have a local scope but derive from national policies or a nationally led program as outlined in the examples above. Commitments therefore are regularly monitored by the MSF, with progress reported at least every quarter, in line with OGP standards and minimum requirements.

- Commitments in the action plan implemented by local jurisdictions must not be duplicated in OGP Local Action Plans in cases where the local jurisdiction is a member of OGP Local.

If any of these requirements are not met for commitments under consideration, it is suggested that these activities are included in a chapter on additional open government initiatives.

7.1.3 Inclusion of Local open government efforts as additional initiatives in the action plan

In cases where local open government commitments do not meet the aforementioned guidance they can still be highlighted in the action plan by including them in a section as “Additional Local Open Government Initiatives”. These initiatives would not be considered as formal commitments and hence would not be evaluated by the IRM individually. However, if included in the action plan the IRM would refer to the “Additional Local Open Government Initiatives” in its assessments as a whole and provide general highlights on the characteristics and objectives of the initiatives, as well as the relevance to the action plan and OGP process. The initiatives can be showcased and shared with the open government community worldwide.

For example, in Nigeria’s 2017-2019 action plan, the national government invited States to commit to any of the thematic areas adopted for the action plan by developing their own two year action plans composed of co-created commitments which are monitored by the national multi-stakeholder forum.

7.1.4 Knowledge & Learning

Peer learning and sharing is one of the fundamental pillars of the global open government community. The role of governments and civil society involved in the national OGP exercises is fundamental to support the new local jurisdictions, bringing relevant context and experience. There are several entry points in OGP Local for nationals to support new local members:

- Providing Mentorship
- Get involved in Regional Focus Support
- Thematic Support
- Share Training Materials & guidance
- Events, Learning Circles

7.1.5 Conclusion

As demand increases by local governments to adopt open government reforms, it is important that the national action plan continues to be a strategic roadmap for open government reform by OGP countries. In order to achieve this, it suggested that open government commitments which involve local jurisdictions follow the guidelines in terms of the type of commitments more suitable for inclusion in national action plans. In addition, local open government commitments should follow the same minimum requirements of co-creation, monitoring and reporting as national level commitments. Lastly, the national action plan can highlight both national and local initiatives, which are not commitments, but nevertheless deserve to be highlighted and shared with the open government community.

Annexes

- Annex I IRM Guidance on minimum participation requirement during co-creation (threshold for “involve”)
- Annex II IRM Guidance on online repositories

IRM Guidance on minimum threshold for involve

According to OGP's Procedural Review Policy, OGP participating governments must meet the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Involve" requirement during development of the Action Plan, as assessed by the IRM.

> ***Procedural Review Policy***
>
> *A government is considered to have acted contrary to process when:*
>
> 1. *The government does not meet the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Involve" requirement during development or "Inform" during implementation of the Action Plan, as assessed by the IRM. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/procedural-review*

The IRM has designed this document to clarify what it means to meet the IAP2 "involve" requirement during the development of the action plan and how it will be assessed by the IRM.

It is important to understand the difference between meeting OGP standards and acting contrary to process. OGP developed the **OGP's Participation & Co-creation Standards** to outline a set of basic requirements and advanced steps that countries should strive for to support participation and co-creation at all stages of the OGP cycle. However, there is a minimum threshold (or sub set of the standards) that countries should meet in order not to act contrary to OGP process. The IRM will assess the country's compliance to all OGP standards including the minimum threshold required not to act contrary to OGP process.

IAP2 "Involve"

To evaluate the level of public influence during the OGP process the IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply to OGP.[1]

The adapted IAP2 Spectrum describes six different levels of public influence: no consultation, inform, consult, **involve**, collaborate and empower (See Annex 1).

To determine whether a country falls within the category of "involve" on the spectrum, the IRM assesses different elements from **OGP's Participation & Co-creation Standards**. The IRM will assess whether the country complied with the following aspects of the standards during the development of the action plan, which constitute the minimum threshold:

1. A forum exists: there is a forum to oversee the OGP process.
2. The forum is multi-stakeholder: Both government and civil society participate in it.
3. Reasoned response: The government or multistakeholder forum documents or is able to demonstrate how they provided feedback during the co-creation process. This may include a summary of major categories and/or themes proposed for inclusion, amendment or rejection.

[1] "IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum," IAP2, 2014, https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars

How does the IRM assess these elements?

1. **A forum exists**
2. **The forum is multistakeholder**

The standard

As explained in **OGP's Participation & Co-creation Standards**, the standards draw on the practice of many successful OGP countries in requiring the establishment of a multi-stakeholder forum. The standard defines the forum as a group of government, civil society and other stakeholders selected through a fair and transparent process, with a clear remit, membership and governance, that meets on a regular basis to oversee the OGP process. While the standards set out high level criteria that the multi-stakeholder forum should meet, countries are encouraged to adopt a model that fits their specific country context.

The minimum threshold

Although the standard provides multiple characteristics of what constitutes a forum, in order to meet the minimum threshold not to be considered acting contrary to OGP process, the IRM will look into the following basic elements:

When is the government acting contrary to process?
The IRM will consider that **there is no evidence of action** towards meeting this requirement **when**:

- there is no demonstrable proof that a space existed for stakeholders to discuss the OGP process during the development of the action plan
- a space existed, but only for government representatives and did not allow the participation of civil society or any other non-governmental stakeholders during the development of the action plan.

3 Reasoned Response

The standard

According to **OGP's Participation & Co-creation Standards**, when developing a national action plan:

Basic requirements

- *(Dissemination of information) The government publishes an overview of public and civil society contributions, and the government's response, on the national OGP website/webpage.*
- *(Co-ownership and decision making) Once commitments have been drafted, government representatives review with the multi-stakeholder forum their comments, the final selection of commitments to be included in the NAP and state clearly their reasoning behind decisions.*

Advanced steps

- *(Dissemination of information) The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum publishes all written contributions (e.g. consultation responses) to the NAP development on the national OGP website/webpage.*
- *(Dissemination of information) The multi-stakeholder forum publishes, via the national OGP website/webpage, its reasoning behind the selection of commitments in the NAP, including justifications for commitment proposals not adopted*

The minimum threshold

Although the standard provides multiple characteristics of what countries should do to respond to stakeholder input, in order to meet the minimum threshold, the IRM will look into the following basic elements:

When is the government acting contrary to process?

The IRM will consider that **there is no evidence of action** towards meeting this requirement **when**:

- the government or multi stakeholder forum (MSF) is not able to show that they reported back or provided feedback to stakeholders on how their contributions were considered during the creation of the action plan.

Note: The IRM is neutral as to the mechanism or form in which governments or MSFs provide feedback to stakeholders. If there is no evidence that demonstrates reasoned response (e.g. reports, videos, websites, etc), the IRM will rely on interviews with participating stakeholders to understand whether this requirement was met.

Level of public influence	
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.
Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public input was considered.
Consult	The public could give inputs.
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.
No Consultation	No consultation

Updated in March 2020

IRM Guidance for Online Repositories

According to OGP's Procedural Review Policy, starting in 2018, OGP participating governments must document, collect and publish a repository on the domestic OGP website in line with IRM guidance.

Procedural Review Policy

"A government is considered to have acted contrary to process when:

- *The government fails to document, collect and publish a repository on the domestic OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance."*

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/procedural-review

The IRM has designed this document to help governments understand what constitutes a repository and how it will be assessed by IRM researchers.

Definition and purpose of a repository

What is a repository?

A repository, for OGP purposes, is an **online** centralized website, webpage, platform or folder where information and **evidence** related to the action plan (including process and implementation) is **publicly** stored, organized, **updated** and disseminated.

What is the purpose of a repository?

The repository should serve as a tool for accountability. It is meant to be a transparent and easy way for stakeholders to access up-to-date evidence related to the government's OGP activities. It can be used to monitor the action plan development and implementation processes in the country or entity.

What method will the IRM use to assess repositories?

The IRM researchers will assess whether governments have taken action in order to meet the standard of repositories, which should be: 1) available **online**, without barriers to access, 2) linked to **evidence** and 3) **updated** regularly. For each one of these three characteristics, the IRM researchers will determine if:

1. The repository meets the standard

2. The repository is in progress to meet the standard

3. There is no evidence of action towards meeting the standard

Governments will be considered **acting contrary** to process **if there is no repository or no evidence of action** towards meeting all three characteristics of a repository. To understand what this means, please continue reading.

Characteristics of a repository

What qualifies as a repository?

Governments may choose any platform or system for their online repository as long as it follows a set of guiding principles. The repository must be 1) available online, without barriers to access, 2) linked to evidence and 3) updated regularly.

1 Available online, without barriers to access

This means that anyone should be able to access the repository where the information is hosted. It should not require passwords nor credentials to access.

What does a repository looks like?
Governments may choose any platform or system for their online repository. For example, it could be:

- a public website with its own URL
- a public webpage within a government website
- a hyperlink hosted on a government website to a digital platform or folder

Keep in mind that...

- OGP is neutral as to the specific platform or format of the repository. The ideal platform will be archived or perma-linked and provide interoperable data.
- The website, webpage or hyperlink to the repository should be *visible, accessible and findable*, not hidden away in an obscure corner of an agency website.

When is the government acting contrary to process?
The IRM will consider that **there is no evidence of action** towards meeting this standard of repositories **when**:

- the repository is not online
- a password or credentials are required to access the repository

2 Linked to evidence, with information on development and implementation of the action plan

Governments are expected to publish evidence to account for co creation processes and progress on their commitments to OGP. Therefore, they should document, collect and publish information on the repository that serves as clear evidence of what happened during the action plan development and implementation processes.

What is considered "evidence"?

'Evidence' is defined as the available facts that justify statements or propositions, proving they are true or valid. In other words, conclusive information that, on its own, compels the reader to come to a certain conclusion. It includes primary sources or direct links to objective information that accounts for the status of completion of activities, commitments or milestones.

What is not considered "evidence"?

Information considered to be a secondary source, or an interpretation of a primary source is not deemed as evidence. For example, statements or claims that describe activities without providing proof of the activity itself.

When does a repository meet the standard?
The IRM will consider that it meets the standard when the repository contains:

- at least one piece of evidence to account for the development of the action plan
- at least one piece of evidence to account for the implementation of each commitment

Note: For the IRM's Design Report, IRM will only assess if the repository fulfils the first criteria in order to consider that the government has met the standard.

When is a repository in progress to meet the standard?
The IRM will consider that the repository is in progress to meet the standard when it has at least one of the following:

- one piece of evidence to account for the development of the action plan
- one piece of evidence to account for the implementation of one commitment or more

When is there no evidence of action towards meeting the standard?
The IRM will consider that **no action has been taken** to meet the standard **when**:

- There is no evidence on the repository to account for the development of the action plan or the implementation of any commitment.

Keep in mind that…
If repositories only include information not considered to be 'evidence' (as defined above), the IRM will conclude that there is no evidence of action towards meeting the standard.

The following list provides examples of evidence to account for the development and implementation of the action plan:

- Plans for public consultations on the development of the action plan
    - Timelines, public invitations, interdepartmental invitations
- Evidence of setting up multi-stakeholder forums (coordinating committees, task forces, working groups, etc.)
    - Terms of Reference for a coordinating group
    - Minutes/memos of decisions to set up working groups
    - Composition of the group, listing organizations and individuals included
- Evidence of public consultation and multi-stakeholder forums
    - Advertising or notice for public consultation
    - Invitations sent out
    - Multi-stakeholder forum meeting agendas and/or minutes
    - List of participants (affiliations sufficient in case names cannot be disclosed due to privacy considerations)
    - Written proposals submitted by CSOs or other members of public
    - Documents, reports and plans that are relevant to establish commitment baseline and government objectives
    - Outputs of consultations (proposals, minutes, pictures, memos etc.)
    - Feedback on how public inputs or proposals have been considered
- Evidence of how the government has responded to the IRM's 5 Key Recommendations from the previous report
- Documentation for implementation of commitments:
    - Draft of laws and status of legislative process on issue areas relevant to commitments

- Records of decision making, new regulations or administrative orders
- Evidence of commissioning research, procurement or consultancy terms of reference, calls for proposals
- Evidence of technical documents relating to databases, information technology etc.
- Strategy documents, concept papers and work plans produced in the process or as a result of commitments
- Monitoring and evaluation material (inter-governmental or third party monitoring reports etc.)
- Evidence of budget decisions, financial and HR resource allocations
- External/third-party analysis of documents (CSO shadow reports, independent tracking of commitment progress)
- Audit reports
- Photos, videos and multimedia as evidence of progress on commitments, events held
- User statistics (if relevant)

Response to IRM's 5 Key Recommendations

The IRM strongly recommends governments to include a response to the IRM's 5 Key Recommendations in their online repository.

3 Updated regularly, at least every six months

According to the OGP's Participation and Co Creation Standards, when implementing, monitoring and reporting an action plan, the government should publish via the OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e. at least every six months) on the progress of commitments. It includes progress against milestones, reasons for any delays and next steps.[1]

For stakeholders to know whether the information has been updated, the IRM suggests including timestamps on the repositories that indicate when it was last updated.

When does the repository meet the standard?
The IRM will consider that the repository meets the standard when it is updated at least every six months during the action plan cycle.

When is a repository in progress to meet the standard?
The IRM will consider that the repository is in progress to meet the standard when it has been updated at least once throughout the action plan implementation cycle.

When is there no evidence of action towards meeting the standard?
The IRM will consider that **no action has been taken** to meet the standard if the repository is not updated at least once during the action plan implementation cycle.

[1] OGP's Participation and Co Creation Standards, Basic Requirements, Page 12: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP_Participation-Cocreation-Standards20170207.pdf