

# Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): South Korea Transitional Results Report 2018–2020

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This report was prepared by the IRM staff.

## Table of Contents

<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II. Action Plan Implementation</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1. General highlights and results	3
2.2. COVID-19 pandemic impact on implementation	3
2.3. Early results	5
2.4. Commitment implementation	8
<b>III. Multistakeholder Process</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 Multistakeholder process throughout action plan implementation	11
3.2 Overview of South Korea’s performance throughout action plan implementation	13
<b>IV. Methodology and Sources</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Annex I. IRM Indicators</b>	<b>16</b>

## I. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership is a global partnership that brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. Action plan commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate an entirely new area. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) monitors all action plans to ensure governments follow through on commitments. Civil society and government leaders use the evaluations to reflect on their progress and determine if efforts have impacted people's lives.

The IRM has carried out this evaluation. The IRM aims to inform ongoing dialogue around the development and implementation of future commitments. For a full description of the IRM's methodology, please visit <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/independent-reporting-mechanism>.

This report covers the implementation of South Korea's 4<sup>th</sup> action plan for 2018–2020. In 2021, the IRM will implement a new approach to its research process and the scope of its reporting on action plans, approved by the IRM Refresh.<sup>1</sup> The IRM adjusted its implementation reports for 2018–2020 action plans to fit the transition process to the new IRM products and enable the IRM to adjust its workflow in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on OGP country processes.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/process/accountability/about-the-irm/irm-refresh/>.

## II. Action Plan Implementation

The IRM transitional results report assesses the status of the action plan's commitments and the results from their implementation at the end of the action plan cycle. This report does not revisit assessments for verifiability, relevance, or potential impact; the IRM assesses those three indicators in IRM design reports. For more details on each indicator, please see Annex I in this report.

### 2.1. General highlights and results

South Korea's fourth national action plan (2018–2020) included 12 commitments, which the IRM organized into 13. Eight commitments were fully implemented, four saw substantial implementation, and one commitment saw limited progress by the end of the action plan cycle. The completion rate was similar to the previous action plan, where 10 out of 13 commitments were completed by the end of the implementation cycle. However, despite a high completion rate, it is not clear for all commitments what actual results have been achieved in terms of changes to government practice. In preparing this report, the IRM reached out to implementing agencies but, as detailed in Section 2.4, received few responses.

An important challenge during implementation was personnel rotation within government institutions responsible for commitments. While most officials were supportive of the process, the learning curve impacted continuity of activities. Civil society remained engaged throughout implementation of the action plan. The research conducted for this report found at least two instances where CSO or citizen input was considered to adjust implementation of commitments. These adjustments meant changing availability of sensitive information for a specific group or improving quality of available data.

The three noteworthy commitments (5.2, 10, and 11) as identified in IRM's 2018–2020 design report were completed. Commitments 10 and 11, which focused on publishing data on priority areas and enhancing the quality of public data, were both completed. However, there is not enough information available to determine if any early results were achieved. The IRM requested information on how new available datasets and standards for disclosure reflect citizen input, and on the level of engagement by civil society organizations during the process. The IRM did not receive a response from implementing agencies.

Three commitments (4, 5.1, and 5.2) have demonstrated early results, including two that were not identified as noteworthy in the design report (4 and 5.1). Commitment 4 has contributed to major changes in government practice through citizens petitions; the government has conducted safety inspections for different product categories and has taken specific measures according to its findings, including product recall, disposal, and import restrictions. As part of Commitment 5.1, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a policy recommendation contest that allowed citizens to provide input on relevant issues. As a result, MOFA introduced changes to the new electronic passport for citizen convenience. Commitment 5.2 regarding operating the open communication forum, Gwanghwamoon 1<sup>st</sup> Street, resulted in 111 policy suggestions being adopted by the government, one of them resulted in the introduction of a simplified insurance-benefit claims process without a paper-based application.

### 2.2. COVID-19 pandemic impact on implementation

South Korea's response to COVID-19 has been praised internationally as it allowed the country to flatten "the epidemic curve quickly without closing business, issuing stay-at-home orders, or implementing stricter measures."<sup>1</sup> South Korea's success relied on detection, containment, and treatment, with a collaborative approach to decision making between the government and scientific community.<sup>2</sup>

Both government and CSO representatives consulted for this report agreed that the only relevant change from the COVID-19 pandemic on the OGP process was the transition from in-person to online meetings. A government representative highlighted how this allowed for more remote

participation during the process.<sup>3</sup> She added that despite concentrating more resources on the pandemic response, public participation remained as a priority in government policy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> June-Ho Kim et al., “Emerging COVID-19 success story: South Korea learned the lessons of MERS” (Our Word in Data, 5 Mar. 2021), <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-exemplar-south-korea>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Jihye Park (Ministry of the Interior and Safety), response to an IRM questionnaire, 8 April 2021.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

### 2.3. Early results

In 2015, the IRM introduced the “Did it Open Government?” variable to measure results and outcomes from commitment implementation. This variable looks at how government practice, in areas relevant to OGP values, has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation. The IRM acknowledges that results may not be visible within the two-year timeframe of the action plan and that at least a substantial level of completion is required to assess early results.

Section 2.3 focuses on outcomes from the implementation of commitments that had an ambitious or strong design, per the IRM design report’s assessment, or that may have lacked clarity or ambition but had successful implementation with “major” or “outstanding” changes to government practice.<sup>1</sup> Commitments considered for analysis in this section had at least a “substantial” level of implementation, as assessed by the IRM in Section 2.4.<sup>2</sup> While this section analyzes the IRM’s findings for the commitments that meet the criteria described above, Section 2.4 includes an overview of the level of completion for all the commitments in the action plan.

<b>Commitment 4. Adoption of a Safety Inspection System Powered by the Public Petition</b>	
<b>Aim of the commitment</b>	The purpose of this commitment was to facilitate public participation in ensuring food and drug safety. It would allow the public to petition for the inspection of items and increase access to this information. The commitment envisioned creation of selection standards and a committee to select items for inspection from public petitions on a quarterly basis. Inspection findings would be published on a dedicated website. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Did it open government?</b>  <b>Major</b>	<p>The petition-based safety inspection system initiates inspections by the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety upon the receipt of 2,000 signatures. A dedicated website and YouTube channel were launched in December 2019 to publish information on petitions and inspection results.<sup>4</sup> According to the government, a selection committee was established to guarantee objectivity and expertise in the selection process and validity of inspection results.<sup>5</sup> It includes 100 members from consumer organizations, the legal sector, and relevant technical fields.</p> <p>According to the government’s self-assessment, as of August 2020, the ministry has conducted ten inspections.<sup>6</sup> Some of the product categories inspected include wet wipes, children’s diapers, herbal medicine ingredients, and protein supplements. As a result, authorities have issued recalls, disposals, and import restrictions.</p> <p>This commitment is a major change in government practice in the areas of public access to information and civic participation in safety inspections. Before its implementation, the government only shared information on inspections that did not comply with food and drug standards, and the public had no opportunity to request inspections. Now, citizens can request inspections on products while authorities take specific measures based on their findings.</p> <p>The IRM reached out to civil society organizations to include their perspectives on this commitment but did not receive a response.</p>
<b>Commitment 5- I. Establishment of a Participatory Diplomacy System to Foster G2P Communication</b>	
<b>Aim of the commitment</b>	The purpose of this commitment was to facilitate citizen engagement and participation in determining South Korea’s foreign policy. It would do this by building and operating a public diplomacy center at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to receive, analyze, and incorporate public opinion on diplomatic issues.

	<p>Although this center is offline, the commitment also envisioned a broader citizen participation system which would include fulltime online access to enhance government-to-public (G2P) communication and strengthen public support of foreign policy.<sup>7</sup></p>
<p><b>Did it open government?</b></p> <p><b>Marginal</b></p>	<p>The government established the Center for Participatory Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in May 2018. A mobile application service was launched in June 2019. This app was the result of the 2018 contest for foreign policy recommendations. In 2019, the government held a public diplomacy user created content (UCC) open call, resulting in the decision by MOFA to make changes to the new electronic passport, allowing citizens to add their birthplace for greater convenience.</p> <p>Implementation of this commitment marginally changes government practice in decision-making regarding foreign affairs. Citizens can now provide input on foreign policy through official channels, which could later be reflected in government practices. However, the only early results seen so far through the development of the new app are minor administrative changes (such as adding birthplace to the passports as a result of citizen’s feedback) and not policy changes.</p> <p>MOFA continued to collect citizen input on the scope and methods of consular assistance to protect overseas Korean nationals through three surveys, Q&amp;A sessions, and consultations; 200 citizens participated in the process, selected based on their gender, age, and residence. MOFA expects input from this process to be reflected in the Consular Assistance Act for the Protection of Overseas Koreans. Including aspects relevant to citizens in this instrument would advance changes in government practice.</p> <p>The IRM reached out to civil society organizations to include their perspectives on this commitment but did not receive a response.</p>
<p><b>Commitment 5-2. Operation of an On- and Offline Open Communication Forum, 'Gwanhwamoon 1<sup>st</sup> Street'</b></p>	
<p><b>Aim of the commitment</b></p>	<p>This commitment aimed to expand the Gwanhwamoon 1<sup>st</sup> Street platform’s capacity to boost citizen participation. The commitment sought to identify chronic social problems and address them by operating public forums for policy discussions between citizens and policymakers. The commitment also aimed to relaunch an online platform that connects multiple participation channels and directs citizens to offline services via announcements and livestreams. Policy ideas and forum outcomes would be forwarded to relevant ministries. The commitment also foresaw organization of the “Day of Citizen Participation” to share the entire process with the public through a ceremony and white paper.</p>
<p><b>Did it open government?</b></p> <p><b>Marginal</b></p>	<p>The government conducted the first round of consultations in 2017, prior to the start of the action plan. It received 180,705 sets of citizen ideas, selected 1,718, and 99 were reflected in policy tasks. According to the government’s self-assessment,<sup>8</sup> the new participation platform and open communication forum were launched in 2019. During forums held in 2018, 2019, and 2020, the government received a total of 169 policy suggestions. A total of 111 policy suggestions have been adopted. Examples of suggestions include the installation of icepack-only collection bins to prevent microplastic pollution, led by the Ministry of Environment, and the introduction of a simplified, insurance-benefit claims process where the claims can be made online without a paper</p>

	<p>application, led by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The submission channel of the Public Participation Platform has been integrated into the Government Innovation Public Forum to ensure continuity. According to Transparency International Korea, the forum has been a useful tool for civic participation. Anybody can suggest their policy idea and cast their vote for any suggestion posted on the website. The committee with ordinary citizen participation then reviews and decides whether to select the suggestion.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Inclusion of this pre-existing initiative in the action plan aimed to make Gwanghwamoon 1<sup>st</sup> Street a permanent space for citizen participation. Despite continuing forums and the launch of the new participation platform, IRM did not see evidence to conclude that there was a major expansion of the existing forum or any new features that would make this a major change compared to the status quo. Outcomes of these activities are a positive but only marginal change in government practice in the area of civic participation. The government aims to continue efforts to make this a permanent participation initiative in the country.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> IRM design reports identified strong commitments as “noteworthy commitments” if they were assessed as verifiable, relevant, and have “transformative” potential impact. If no commitments met the potential impact threshold, the IRM selected noteworthy commitments from the commitments with “moderate” potential impact. For a list of South Korea’s noteworthy commitments, see the executive summary of the 2018–2020 IRM design report, <https://bit.ly/344tKDI>.

<sup>2</sup> Two commitments, assessed as noteworthy in South Korea’s design report, are not included in Section 2.3 because there is not enough information to assess results: Commitment 10: Disclosure of the Nation’s Priority Data with High Utility, Demand, and Value in the Public Arena; and Commitment 11: Enhancement of the Quality Management of Public Data through Collecting the Public’s Opinions.

<sup>3</sup> IRM staff, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): South Korea Design Report 2018–2020* (OGP, 17 Dec. 2020), <https://bit.ly/344tKDI>.

<sup>4</sup> 국민청원안전검사제 [National Petition Safety Inspection System]: <https://petition.mfds.go.kr/main.do>.

<sup>5</sup> Government of the Republic of Korea, *South Korea End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report for Action Plan 2018-2020* (OGP, 16 Dec. 2020), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/south-korea-end-of-term-self-assessment-report-2018-2020/>

<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> IRM staff, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): South Korea Design Report 2018–2020*.

<sup>8</sup> Government of the Republic of Korea, *South Korea End-of-Term Self-Assessment*.

<sup>9</sup> Sanghak Lee (Transparency International Korea), email to IRM staff, 14 Jun. 2021.

## 2.4. Commitment implementation

The table below includes an assessment of the level of completion for each commitment in the action plan.

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Completion</b> <i>(no evidence available, not started, limited, substantial or complete)</i>
<b>1. Establishing a Public-Private Partnership Anti-Corruption System</b>	<b>Complete:</b> Eight policy suggestions made by the Public Private Partnership Committee were adopted by the government. The committee met over 100 times at different operational levels, both national and local. Transparent Society Agreements were signed by 17 governors, as well as four sectoral agreements in the areas of national defense, the defense industry, public business, and accounting. According to Transparency International, activities at the regional level include meetings, educational seminars, and discussions. <sup>1</sup> There is no evidence, however, on how the agreements have translated into improving anticorruption practices.
<b>2. Expansion of a Management System of Technical Information for Performance Venues</b>	<b>Limited:</b> The Korean Cultural & Arts Centers Association (KOCACA) website offers information on 104 venues out of 507. Information on 96 was available before the implementation cycle. The integrated management system was not established due to budget constraints.
<b>3. Real-name Policy System</b>	<b>Complete:</b> Information on almost 3,000 central government policy tasks (2018–2020) subject to real-name disclosure is available at <a href="http://open.go.kr">open.go.kr</a> . Gwanghwamoon 1 <sup>st</sup> Street website now offers applications for, and submissions, to the real-name policy system. There is no publicly available information on the type of submissions received and how they have been considered, or if there have been any policy outcomes. The IRM requested information about the number and nature of submissions and subsequent results from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, but did not receive a response.
<b>4. Adoption of a Safety Inspection System Powered by the Public Petition</b>	<b>Complete:</b> For details regarding implementation and early results, see Section 2.3.
<b>5-1. Establishment of a Participatory Diplomacy System to Foster G2P Communication</b>	<b>Substantial:</b> For details regarding implementation and early results, see Section 2.3.
<b>5-2. Operation of an On- and Offline Open Communication Forum,</b>	<b>Complete:</b> For details regarding implementation and early results, see Section 2.3.



<b>“Gwanghwamoon 1<sup>st</sup> Street”</b>	
<b>6. Government Innovation Citizen Forum to Realize Participatory Democracy</b>	<p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>A Government Innovation Citizen Forum, committee, and support unit were established by presidential instruction. Two public forums were held in October 2018 and 2019. There is no publicly available information on the outcomes of the forum.</p>
<b>7. Disclosure of the Amount of Harmful Substance Contained in Foods</b>	<p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>Information on contamination from harmful substances, fungal toxins, dioxin, PCBs, benzopyrene, 3-MCPD, and melamine has been published on the Food Safety Korea website. IRM requested information on the number of food groups included on the database, how often data is updated, and on citizen engagement during implementation, but did not receive a response from the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety, who is responsible for implementing this commitment.</p>
<b>8. Open Data for Future Culture and Tourism Industries</b>	<p><b>Substantial:</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism adopted standardized metadata to publish cultural data. Outreach and awareness occurred to promote data publication and use at both the national and local level. The Open Data Forum<sup>2</sup> serves as the public-private partner for data utilization and includes participation from CSOs and government agencies.</p>
<b>9. Disclosure of the Cultural Heritage Resources for New Industries in the Private Sector</b>	<p><b>Substantial:</b></p> <p>A cultural heritage 3D web portal was launched, and 299 datasets were published. The goal of publishing 2,000 public datasets was not achieved during implementation; only 1,521 were published. There is no information on participation in best practice exchange activities as outlined in the action plan. According to government information, changes in availability and data quality were made following public input.</p>
<b>10. Disclosure of the Nation’s Priority Data with High Utility, Demand, and Value in the Public Arena</b>	<p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>Data on 63 areas of artificial intelligence and new industries were disclosed. The government met with an expert committee and surveyed citizens to establish disclosure priorities. IRM requested more detailed information about citizens’ feedback and priority areas identified for disclosure but did not receive a response from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, who is responsible for this commitment.</p>
<b>11. Enhancement of the Quality Management of Public Data through Collecting the Public’s Opinions</b>	<p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>According to the government self-assessment, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety selected 120 standards for data disclosure and established a preventive quality control system. Relevant public and private sector entities participated in the process. In addition, the ministry facilitated demand surveys and a year-round suggestion box for public data users. There is no information on any activities to increase data use. IRM requested information from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety on what suggestions, if any, were received and how they were incorporated into the</p>

	quality management processes. The ministry did not respond to this information request.
<b>I2. Transition towards the Customs Administration System Based on Voluntary Compliance</b>	<b>Substantial:</b> Most activities for this commitment were completed, except for an initiative to support SMEs getting officially certified. Key challenges include increasing citizens' awareness of legislation to prevent unintentional offenses and changing government officials' attitudes to provide better support. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sanghak Lee (Transparency International Korea), IRM questionnaire, 29 March 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Open Data Forum Korea: <http://odf.or.kr/>.

<sup>3</sup> Korea Customs Service, IRM questionnaire, 20 April 2021.

### III. Multistakeholder Process

#### 3.1 Multistakeholder process throughout action plan implementation

In 2017, OGP adopted the *OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards* to support participation and co-creation by civil society at all stages of the OGP cycle. All OGP-participating countries are expected to meet these standards. The standards aim to raise ambition and quality of participation during development, implementation, and review of OGP action plans.

OGP's *Articles of Governance* also establish participation and co-creation requirements a country or entity must meet in their action plan development and implementation to act according to the OGP process. South Korea did not act contrary to OGP process.<sup>1</sup>

Please see Annex I for an overview of South Korea's performance implementing the co-creation and participation standards throughout the action plan implementation.

**Table 1: Level of Public Influence**

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply it to OGP.<sup>2</sup> In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire to "collaborate."

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

The Open Government Forum Korea (OGFK) was responsible for monitoring implementation of the action plan and holding meetings every quarter. In addition, the OGFK organized a working group on youth with participation from nearly 60 young leaders. As part of their activities, they visited implementing agencies to monitor implementation and make proposals for the 5<sup>th</sup> action plan.<sup>3</sup>

During OGFK quarterly meetings, the government provided updates on implementation progress to civil society organizations. Meetings were conducted online, which allowed for remote participation. According to a representative from the Ministry of Interior and Safety, this is an area of opportunity that the government is committed to improve in future action plans.<sup>4</sup>

Government agencies consulted for this report explained how, in some cases, changes to implementation were made because of input received from the public. For example, the Culture Heritage Administration explained that after receiving an opinion on the quality of 3D data released on the website, they decided to launch a request system targeted toward users who require professional-quality data.<sup>5</sup>

A representative from Transparency International Korea explained that for implementing Commitment 1, his organization had an active role during implementation; they provided input and in some cases their contributions were considered to make changes in the process.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Acting Contrary to Process: Country did not meet (1) “involve” during the development or “inform” during implementation of the action plan, or (2) the government fails to collect, publish, and document a repository on the national OGP website in line with IRM guidance.

<sup>2</sup> IAP2, “IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum” (2018),

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum\\_8.5x11\\_Print.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Government of the Republic of Korea, *South Korea End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report for Action Plan 2018-2020* (OGP, 16 Dec. 2020), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/south-korea-end-of-term-self-assessment-report-2018-2020/>.

<sup>4</sup> Jihye Park (Ministry of the Interior and Safety), IRM questionnaire, 8 April 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Culture Heritage Administration, IRM questionnaire, 22 April 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Sanghak Lee (Transparency International Korea), IRM questionnaire, 29 March 2021.

### 3.2 Overview of South Korea's performance throughout action plan implementation

Key:

Green= Meets standard

Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken, but standard is not met)

Red= No evidence of action

<b>Multistakeholder Forum</b>	During Development	During Implementation
<b>1a. Forum established: There is a forum to oversee the OGP process</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>
1b. Regularity: The forum meets at least every quarter, in person or remotely	Green	Green
1c. Collaborative mandate development: This standard was assessed in the IRM design report	Green	N/A
1d. Mandate public: Information on the forum's remit, membership, and governance structure is available on the OGP webpage <sup>1</sup>	Green	Green
<b>2a. Multistakeholder: The forum includes both government and nongovernment representatives</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>
2b. Parity: The forum includes an even balance of government and nongovernment representatives	Green <sup>2</sup>	N/A
<b>2c. Transparent selection: Nongovernmental members of the forum are selected through a fair and transparent process</b>	Green	N/A
2d. High-level government representation: The forum includes high-level representatives with decision-making authority from government	Green	Green
<b>3a. Openness: The forum accepts input and representation on the action plan process from any civil society or other stakeholders outside the forum</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>
3b. Remote participation: There were opportunities for remote participation in at least some meetings and events through e-mail, phone, or videoconference	Red	Green
3c. Minutes: The government publishes meeting minutes on the OGP Korea website <sup>3</sup>	Green	Green

Key:

Green= Meets standard

Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken, but standard is not met)

Red= No evidence of action

Action Plan Implementation	
4a. Process transparency: The OGP Korea website provides information on open government activities in the country <sup>4</sup>	Green
4b. Communication channels: A dedicated forum allows citizens to provide input or comments on topics relevant to the OGP agenda in the country <sup>5</sup>	Green
4c. Engagement with civil society: Civil society organizations are informed of implementation progress during OGFK quarterly meetings	Green
4d. Cooperation with the IRM: The IRM report is not available on the OGP Korea website. The IRM reached out to government entities responsible for implementing commitments but received limited responses.	Red
4e. MSF engagement: The OGFK monitors and deliberates on how to improve implementation of the NAP.	Green
4f. MSF engagement with self-assessment report: There is no evidence available that the government submitted its end-of-term self-assessment report to the national multistakeholder forum for comments and feedback.	Red
<b>4g. Repository: Meeting minutes for the forum and thematic divisions, as well as reference materials for implementation of the action plan are available on the OGP Korea website.<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Green</b>

<sup>1</sup> OGP Korea website: <http://ogpkorea.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> The IRM did not find information on forum composition during implementation.

<sup>3</sup> OGP Korea, “회의록” [Minutes], (accessed Aug. 2021), [http://ogpkorea.org/?page\\_id=41](http://ogpkorea.org/?page_id=41).

<sup>4</sup> OGP Korea website: <http://ogpkorea.org/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of the Interior and Safety, “OGP 최근 업데이트된 채널” [Recently updated channels] (accessed Aug. 2021), <https://ogp.parti.xyz/>.

<sup>6</sup> OGP Korea website: <http://ogpkorea.org/>.

## IV. Methodology and Sources

Research for the IRM reports is carried out by national researchers. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control led by IRM staff to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

The International Experts Panel (IEP) of the IRM oversees the quality control of each report. The IEP is composed of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

Current membership of the International Experts Panel is

- César Cruz-Rubio
- Mary Francoli
- Brendan Halloran
- Jeff Lovitt
- Juanita Olaya

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual<sup>1</sup> and in South Korea's 2018–2020 design report.

### About the IRM

**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 (IRM) assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.



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<sup>1</sup> IRM, *IRM Procedures Manual* (OGP, 16 Sep. 2017), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>.

## Annex I. IRM Indicators

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.<sup>1</sup> A summary of key indicators the IRM assesses is below:

- **Verifiability:**
  - Not specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, do the objectives stated and actions proposed lack sufficient clarity and specificity for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
  - Specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, are the objectives stated and actions proposed sufficiently clear and specific to allow for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
- **Relevance:** This variable evaluates the commitment's relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text, the guiding questions to determine the relevance are:
  - Access to information: Will the government disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public?
  - Civic participation: Will the government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions or policies?
  - Public accountability: Will the government create or improve public facing opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions?
- **Potential impact:** This variable assesses the potential impact of the commitment, if completed as written. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:
  - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
  - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan; and
  - Assess the degree to which the commitment, if implemented, would impact performance and tackle the problem.
- **Completion:** This variable assesses the commitment's implementation and progress. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the IRM implementation report.
- **Did It Open Government?:** This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how government practice, in areas relevant to OGP values, has changed as a result of the commitment's implementation. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the IRM implementation report.

### Results-oriented commitments?

A potentially starred commitment has more potential to be ambitious and to be implemented. A good commitment design is one that clearly describes the:

1. **Problem:** Describe the economic, social, political, or environmental problem rather than describing an administrative issue or tool (e.g., 'misallocation of welfare funds' is more helpful than 'lacking a website').
2. **Status quo:** What is the status quo of the policy issue at the beginning of an action plan (e.g., "26% of judicial corruption complaints are not processed currently")?
3. **Change:** Rather than stating intermediary outputs, what is the targeted behavior change that is expected from the commitment's implementation? E.g., "Doubling response rates to information requests" is a stronger goal than "publishing a protocol for response."

### Starred commitments



One measure, the “starred commitment” (★), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating entities. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- The commitment’s design should be **verifiable**, **relevant** to OGP values, and have **transformative** potential impact as assessed in the Design Report.
- The commitment’s implementation must be assessed by IRM implementation report as **substantial** or **complete**.

This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the IRM implementation report.

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<sup>1</sup> IRM, *IRM Procedures Manual*, (OGP, 16 Sep. 2017), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>.