

Implementing the Paris Climate Agreement through Transparency, Participation, and Accountability

How the Open Government Partnership can support country implementation

Countries must reduce carbon emissions much more aggressively this decade and mainstream adaptation to climate change across their economies to have any chance of meeting the 1.5 degrees Celsius target in the Paris Agreement -- and avoid the most catastrophic climate impact on human societies and ecosystems in modern history. Climate change is also deepening existing societal inequalities by increasing the vulnerability of the poor and marginalized. Moreover, the primary causes of climate inaction are no longer lack of knowledge or technology, but rather challenges related to politics and governance. These include ensuring public support for climate action translates to more ambitious actions that generate benefits for those most at risk, eliminating carve-outs and subsidies for high-emitting sectors, and strengthening public oversight on the implementation of short and long-term commitments.

Capacity building and international finance can play important roles in strengthening governance and providing political incentives for greater ambition. But that won't be sufficient. To sustainably address climate change, countries will need to build and channel public support into ambitious and equitable climate actions that are backed with the political will and institutional capacity to implement them. This is possible by making sure climate information is accessible and useful, that decision-making processes are transparent and offer meaningful opportunities for participation, and that resulting decisions have accountable oversight, with mechanisms for raising grievances and seeking redress.

For over ten years, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) -- founded on the values of transparent, participatory, and accountable governance -- has provided a platform for national and subnational governments to collaborate with their respective civil societies in identifying and implementing policy actions to help solve their most pressing problems, across a range of sectors and themes. These co-created policy "commitments," which include concrete milestones on what is to be achieved in a specified timeframe, are then implemented and independently tracked and assessed for progress. The OGP platform and action plan process provide a ready-made



mechanism for ensuring that countries' implementation of the Paris Agreement adopts open government principles.¹

The OGP platform is already being used by members in the Americas to generate roadmaps for implementation of the regional environmental standards outlined in the “Escazú” Agreement on access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making processes, and access to justice in environmental matters.

This brief as a guide to open government approaches

This brief is focused on what open government approaches OGP members can take for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance as outlined in the Paris Agreement. It is intended for climate change authorities, open government officials, oversight commissions, or bodies such as legislatures, courts, and supreme audit institutions, as well as civil society organizations and other non-state actors interested in taking action on climate.

While the brief draws on actions taken by OGP members, it can be used by stakeholders from non-OGP members as well. It includes examples on how open government principles of transparency, participation, and accountability can be applied to: the development and monitoring of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) plans; measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) processes; climate-related expenditures; the implementation of Article 12 of the Paris Agreement; green procurement; and a just energy transition. Given the wide range of applicable issue areas and examples, this brief is not exhaustive in its treatment of these themes. Additionally, readers will find references to a selection of resources organized by theme at the end of the brief.

Section I summarizes how open government can help governments achieve climate goals while building public awareness and support through inclusive and accountable processes.

Section II describes how other sectors within the open government community (open contracting, fiscal openness, and fossil fuels) are mainstreaming climate change into their work and provides resources for OGP members interested in learning more about these intersections.

Section III provides a list of commitment ideas on implementation of the Paris Agreement for OGP members to consider adopting for their own action plans.

¹ As of 2021, 63 OGP members have developed 178 open government policy reforms related to environment and climate.



Section I: An open government approach to implementing the Paris Agreement

An open government approach involves embedding principles of transparency, participation, and accountability in the development and implementation of policies and actions to tackle climate change as outlined in the Paris Agreement. These principles are closely linked to procedural rights of access to information, public participation, and access to justice, which are [internationally recognized human rights](#). Policies and actions may include laws, regulations, decrees, directives, plans, and programs, as well as fiscal instruments to address climate change mitigation or adaptation. Ultimately, using open government principles helps promote the legitimacy, effectiveness, equitability, and sustainability of climate policies and actions.

Transparency

Access to information and data is fundamental for citizens to exercise their voice on climate issues (as well as all others) and effectively monitor and hold their governments to account. The importance of access to information and data for building mutual trust and confidence is the basis of Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, establishing an “Enhanced Transparency Framework,” which requires countries to report on emissions and progress on climate mitigation, adaptation, and finance. Proactive disclosure of and access to information and data on climate-relevant activities should include: information related to mitigation and adaptation; policy responses such as legislation, long-term strategies, Nationally Determined Contributions, national adaptation plans, and detailed budget information; and government’s justification for these decision-making processes. Proactive disclosure refers to the practice of making information public at the initiative of the public body holding that information. Best practices include the disclosure of information in a timely fashion and in a range of formats that are accessible to users with different technical abilities. In addition, information on opportunities for participation should be disclosed in a way that the public can easily locate, understand, and use in a timely fashion. Access to information is also critical for parliaments, as the institutions representing the people, to be able to exert democratic scrutiny on climate action and planning by the executive.

EXAMPLE: Argentina aligned its climate and open government goals in its 2017-2019 OGP action plan by making critical data and information on greenhouse gases and their sources as well as climate vulnerability maps more localized, accessible, and easier to understand by a broader audience. A multisectoral group, including civil society, helped to implement the commitment.

Participation

The impacts of climate change are often unjustly and inequitably distributed, harming those who are poorer with less access to critical services and insurance opportunities. Additionally, mitigation efforts are often opposed by powerful polluting interests. For these reasons and more, the participation of a diverse range of social groups in climate decision-making is important. This means providing early, adequate, and accessible opportunities for residents and citizens, especially those that are potentially more adversely affected by climate impacts and policies, or who have been historically marginalized or disenfranchised.



Many countries have faced problems of elite capture, where organized interests with privileged access to political decision-makers dominate or undermine outcomes from public participation. In other instances, the views and ideas of civil society do not receive acknowledgment or response from public officials or are not reflected in final policies. Ensuring accessibility means considering the unique barriers that various groups face based on differences in gender, race or ethnicity, disability, age, location, or other characteristics.² There are entry points for participation in planning and in budgeting, as well as in implementation and monitoring.

EXAMPLE: A growing number of national and subnational governments have adopted the innovation of “citizen assemblies” to convene a more representative body of citizens to identify critical policy issues, learn from experts on policy options, deliberate on these options, and report their recommendations publicly, and often directly to policymakers. The UK, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Denmark, and Finland have all held national assemblies on climate change, as have numerous localities. The Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA) provides information on their development, integration into the policy process, and their potential for impact. While climate assemblies have been concentrated in Europe thus far, learning exchange is occurring internationally.

Accountability

Accountability mechanisms enable citizens to hold their government to account for its performance, as well as support responsible and effective use of public resources. Accountability is anchored in standards and systems that ensure: that power is exercised responsibly; that environmental and social safeguards as well as fiduciary standards are enforced; that independent grievance redress mechanisms are in place when these are violated; and that legal counsel is accessible to individuals seeking redress. Governments can also support accountability by making clear the roles and responsibilities of different actors in implementing national climate actions and providing measurable indicators of successful performance.

Access to justice provisions may be provided for in constitutions or administrative law. Codified rights of access to justice provide the legal basis for civil society to challenge the decisions or inaction of government and private sector actors and seek grievance or redress. This provides a credible bottom-up accountability measure when the challenge is on procedural grounds--i.e., lack of information disclosure or inadequate public participation -- as well as when the challenge is on substantive grounds, such as lack of enforcement of climate measures to reduce mitigations or adapt to risk. The rise in climate litigation³ attests to the need for such redress mechanisms.⁴

Legally-binding international instruments such as the Aarhus Convention⁵ raise the bar for the implementation of domestic legislation on access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters. Regular Meetings of the Parties and the Compliance

² [Scotland’s Equality Evidence Finder](#) is a good example of a tool that collects, analyzes, and publishes equality evidence across a wide range of policy areas.

³ From 1986-2014, there were 800 recorded cases, followed by 1,000 cases from 2015-2021, according to the [London School of Economics and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment](#).

⁴ According to the London School of Economics and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment [“Global Trends in Climate Litigation: 2021 Snapshot.”](#) Note that litigation is on the rise both in support of climate action and in attempts to delay or stop action.

⁵ The [Aarhus Convention has 47 parties](#), including 46 countries and the European Union.



Committee provide forums and mechanisms for building capacity, monitoring, and reporting progress, and for challenging non-compliance. The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (or “Escazú” Agreement) entered into force in April 2021, with 12 ratifying parties. The Escazú Agreement notably goes beyond the Aarhus Convention on establishing the obligations of parties to protect environment and climate defenders. These instruments provide an important avenue for governments to convene to raise mutual ambition and for civil society to pressure governments, but ultimately their [effective integration into national laws and institutions depends on domestic political will and institutional capacity](#).

EXAMPLE: Ecuador and Panama have each made OGP commitments to support implementation of the Escazú Agreement. Ecuador’s commitment in its 2019-2021 Action Plan redoubles the government’s commitment to implement the Escazú Agreement in full and increases opportunities for participation through the creation of a national observatory with members from civil society, academia, and local groups that will collaborate with government on a roadmap and oversee its implementation. Panama’s commitment in its 2021-2023 Action Plan identifies specific actions to promote compliance with the Escazú Agreement, including implementing a participatory process for updating Panama’s environmental information platform and ensuring institutional support and feedback mechanisms with civil society are in place. This will help protect against regression on the sharing of important environmental information.

How will an open government approach support the implementation of climate goals?

1) Explicitly connect OGP commitments to implementation of Paris Agreement obligations

By linking their work to efforts to enhance public access to information and public participation under The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), national OGP stakeholders can make clear to their climate counterparts the opportunity to meet multiple national objectives on open government and climate action simultaneously.

Article 6(a) of the 1992 [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) establishes that:

“Parties shall promote and facilitate at the national level, and as appropriate, subregional and regional levels, and in accordance with national laws and regulations, and within their respective capacities... (ii) public access to information on climate change and its effects; (iii) public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses...”

Additionally, Article 12 of the Paris Agreement states:

“Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.”



On the basis of Article 6, negotiators agreed in 2012 to “[Action on Climate Empowerment](#)” (ACE), which seeks “to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, through education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.” The UNFCCC invited parties to [create and support national focal points for ACE](#) to coordinate and implement activities across government. The majority of parties have established focal points, though they are often underfinanced and under-capacitated, according to submissions from [parties and observer NGOs](#). ACE underwent a review from 2020-2021 as part of the larger Doha work programme and will potentially be renewed at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021.

If ACE is renewed in some form at COP26, OGP stakeholders can build and strengthen political coalitions for a more robust open government approach to climate action that is also coherent with Paris Agreement implementation by including and engaging ACE focal points in OGP processes. National and sub-national parliaments can be [important allies of the new ACE framework](#), as it is unlikely that the transformative potential of ACE will be realized without decisive political and institutional buy-in. Parliaments can provide momentum for ACE delivery at the national level, ensure appropriate financing and resources for ACE, and serve as delivery partners of ACE (e.g., through the convening of climate assemblies).

Under the Paris Agreement’s “Enhanced Transparency Framework,” [countries must report](#) their greenhouse gas emissions with more consistency and clarity, as well as progress towards mitigation and adaptation actions through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), and the support — including finance — that they have provided or received. However, neither the Convention nor the Paris Agreement stipulate the transparency of a country’s decision-making process towards its civil society or how civil society should be involved in the decision-making process or implementation of NDCs. Countries are [expected to report](#) on their national planning processes in their NDCs and on the institutional arrangements they have put in place in their Biennial Transparency Reports. OGP commitments to make national processes more transparent, participatory, and accountable could be reflected here. For example, this could include: open data commitments to facilitate reporting; participatory processes to enhance NDCs or develop long-term strategies; and the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders in providing oversight on measuring/monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) processes.

EXAMPLE: While the Paris Agreement requires parties to implement MRV processes to provide clarity and transparency on the progress of their actions to reduce emissions, there are no obligations on parties to involve civil society or make the MRV process accessible beyond a technical audience. Despite this, following a participatory process to develop its 2016 National Policy on Climate Change, in its 2018-2020 OGP action plan Uruguay committed to developing an MRV system through consultation with civil society that would be open access and enable the public to monitor the government’s progress in reducing emissions across sectors.

2) Strengthen the transparency and accountability of domestic systems for managing climate finance

Strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms can help safeguard climate finance from corruption and mismanagement. This is important because investments in climate resilience and low-carbon technology must be made rapidly. Yet, the mechanisms through which these



funds are starting to flow are new and relatively untested. Ultimately, boosting transparency and accountability mechanisms helps ensure that funds are reaching the most vulnerable communities and [effectively empowering local actors in adaptation decision-making](#).

EXAMPLE: Climate finance flows have surged in recent years, but many countries still face challenges in adequately monitoring climate finance, including a lack of appropriate institutional arrangements. This endangers the safe delivery of funds to where they are needed. In the Philippines, a group of civil society organizations launched a comprehensive investigation on the spending of climate funds. They discovered that, while \$880 million had been committed from 2010–2013, only \$396 million had been disbursed, and only a fraction of this money was destined for local communities. The Oversight Committee on Climate Change was subsequently established by the Philippine parliament.

3) Draw from learning and expertise across OGP thematic areas to address challenges of public participation in climate policymaking

Strengthening transparency and public participation can foster legitimacy and cooperation from the public and civil society, helping officials mobilize support for national climate goals. Several countries -- primarily in Europe thus far -- are taking up climate policy challenges with citizen assemblies. They're seeking to address past challenges of public participation by ensuring a more representative cross-section of society, providing citizens with access to experts and an evidence base to inform their conclusions, as well as in some cases legally requiring policy-makers to consider and respond to the final reports.⁶

National and sub-national parliaments and legislative bodies, as the institutions representing the people, are well-placed to advance innovative formulas for participation in decision-making on climate, such as deliberative democracy through climate assemblies. [Guidance tools](#) have been developed to assist parliamentarians to adapt the principles of deliberative democracy to their national circumstances across the income ladder.

EXAMPLE: In the UK, in June 2019, the House of Commons commissioned a citizens' assembly to understand public preferences on how the UK should deliver its net-zero target by 2050. This was a joint initiative of six committees (Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy; Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities, and Local Government; Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury).

"Climate Assembly UK" brought together 108 people from all walks of life chosen through a civic lottery. The public body was designed to strengthen and support the UK's parliamentary democracy by ensuring that elected representatives understand public preferences on reaching the net-zero target. Their final report was published and presented to the six select committees in September 2020. The Path to Net Zero report, informed by the findings of the Climate Assembly report, was debated in the House of Commons plenary in November 2020.

⁶ The KNOCA network was established with support from the European Climate Foundation with the purpose of sharing best practice on the design and implementation of climate assemblies. [It has collected and organized information on climate assemblies across Europe here.](#)



In July 2021, the House of Commons, Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy Committee published “Climate Assembly UK: Where are we now?,” in which it recommended--inter alia--that the Government publish a Net Zero Public Engagement Strategy. [In September 2021, the Government](#) responded that it is using the findings from the Assembly to “inform the development of the Net Zero Strategy, the Heat and Buildings Strategy, the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, as well as to inform the development of public engagement approaches.” The contributions of the Climate Assembly UK’s recommendations to parliamentary oversight work distinguish it from an assembly convened by an executive or decision-making branch of government, such as the French Citizens’ Convention on Climate.

4) Open Data and Access to Information support collaboration across government and with civil society to develop climate responses

Urgent climate change responses require coordination and cooperation across sectors, with subnational actors, businesses, and civil society. While global datasets, such as climate models and remote sensing support national decision-makers, inevitably there is data that national authorities must collect, manage, and share -- from the extent and nature of extreme weather events and data on activity that produces greenhouse gases to power plant generation and emissions. Implementing open data policies as part of national climate actions can make coherent, cross-government responses more effective and efficient, while enabling civil society to reuse data to make tools and visualizations to better reach different audiences.⁷

EXAMPLE: Denmark’s Climate Atlas (Klimaatlas), developed by the Danish Meteorological Institute, was part of Denmark’s 2019–2021 OGP Action Plan. It draws from international and national data sources to provide Danish municipalities with open data on future temperature, rainfall, extreme rainfall, storm surge, and sea level for different emission scenarios. The Atlas is intended as a resource for municipalities and their residents to understand risks and take actions to protect infrastructure and citizens from future climate threats.⁸

Open data can improve coordination, increase value-added reuse, and reduce inefficiencies.

When a wider array of users and thematic experts can access government-held data they can scrutinize data consistency and quality as well as create new tools or visualizations that target less data-literate audiences. Open data can make reporting to the UNFCCC or international donors more efficient and help avoid costly duplicative data products.⁹

Open data allows the most vulnerable countries to use the best available tools to adapt to climate impacts, assess risks and make robust decisions in a changing climate.

National datasets can help to downscale regional climate models to make them more relevant for planners and communities in assessing climate risks, such as extreme weather events. This can inform decisions on infrastructure options, urban development, coastal resilience, water

⁷ Grinspan and Worker. 2021. “Implementing Open Data Strategies for Climate Action: Suggestions and Lessons Learned for Government and Civil Society Stakeholders.” *World Resources Institute*. Washington, D.C.

⁸ Ministry of Environment Denmark/Environmental Protection Agency. <https://en.klimatilpasning.dk/tools/climate-atlas/>. Accessed September 23, 2021.

⁹ Grinspan and Worker. 2021. “Implementing Open Data Strategies for Climate Action: Suggestions and Lessons Learned for Government and Civil Society Stakeholders.” *World Resources Institute*. Washington, D.C.



resources management, and agriculture, among others. In some cases, subnational governments may benefit from enhanced access to the sources of emissions to develop their own mitigation plans and actions.

EXAMPLE: Indonesia's open data [InaSAFE](#) platform provides real-time hazard data along with modeled population data to enable first responders to identify and prioritize vulnerable communities. The tool promoted participation as disaster managers used it to develop disaster contingency plans with communities.



Section II: Leveraging the expertise of diverse OGP communities to drive more transformative, cross-cutting commitments

Due to the [cross-cutting effects](#) of climate change and its role as a “threat multiplier,” Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 -- which calls on countries to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”-- has been recognized as important to achieving all other SDGs. Responses to climate change must therefore be cross-sectoral, integrated, and multi-level.

The call for cross-sectoral strategies to respond to climate change is reflected across the open government community, as illustrated below. OGP is working with partners in these sectors to support OGP members for more effective action on climate change. Cross-cutting commitment examples are included in Section III, Potential actions by OGP members to implement the Paris Agreement using open government principles.

Open contracting

Public procurement is one of the most impactful areas for opening government as every year \$13 Trillion is spent worldwide on deals between government and businesses, yet only 3 percent of those contracts are published openly. Many of these have significant impacts on climate and the environment and where public access to information through open contracting processes is critical to informing debates and policy about climate change adaptation and mitigation.¹⁰ In addition to the transparency of contracts, countries can ensure that procurement projects are compatible with national emission targets and climate adaptation plans (e.g., avoiding investment in climate-exposed infrastructure or ensuring materials have a sustainable life-cycle). The importance of public procurement as a climate solution was recognized in SDG Target 12.7 and there are [global networks to raise visibility](#).

Government spending on goods and services, including infrastructure, electricity, and transportation, presents a massive opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and integrate climate adaptation considerations. [The International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\) has provided guidance for this](#). In addition, green procurement is increasingly being institutionalized in EU member states through [Green Procurement Guidelines](#) and has high uptake, and the [EU’s Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) has mandated that at least 37 percent of country expenditure be on climate reform and investments, which [requires transparent management and accounting](#). Open contracting can power more climate-friendly procurement by helping with structured and clean procurement data, smart market engagement to unlock green innovations, and real-time public reporting. The [Open Contracting Partnership](#) is currently developing guidance on how to unlock and use open data on procurement for green purchasing.

Within OGP action plans, this remains an untapped area of work in commitments. OGP members should consider bridging open contracting innovations with more sustainable and green procurement.

¹⁰ Cement alone, for instance, is responsible for nearly 5 percent of global emissions, according to the 2020 UN Emissions Gap Report.



Fiscal openness

Given the scope of the climate challenge, it is estimated that hundreds of billions of dollars per year must be mobilized globally as new funds to adequately respond to climate change. The management of these large sums, whether funded through international finance or domestic resources, is often in the hands of national and subnational governments and their domestic budgeting systems. The potential for misuse, waste, and corruption -- at the cost of the highest priorities in the country and the well-being of those communities most impacted by climate change -- is very high. [The International Budget Partnership, UNDP](#), and their partners in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and the Philippines have identified the importance of an “accountability ecosystem” to complement climate “tagging” of expenditures that are relevant to mitigation and adaptation. An accountability ecosystem includes formal oversight institutions, civil society, citizens, and media that “have both the ability and opportunities to monitor the amount and use of climate change funds and participate in decision-making and oversight of policies, programs, and activities.”¹¹

Fiscal openness is a popular theme in OGP action plans, and its cross-section with climate holds much potential for impact. Subnational members can draw inspiration for instance from [examples gathered by People Powered on participatory budgeting on climate change](#) in cities around the world.

EXAMPLE: In September 2020, France published its first “green budget” as an annex to its 2021 Finance bill to evaluate the environmental and climate impact of state and tax expenditures. While France is not the first country to assess environmental impacts of its budget, it is groundbreaking in the comprehensiveness of its approach and the six categories against which expenditures are evaluated: 1) fight against climate change, 2) adaptation to climate change and prevention of natural disasters, 3) water resources management, 4) circular economy, waste, and technological risk prevention, 5) fight against all forms of pollution, and 6) protection of biodiversity.

France promotes an open government approach by publishing the budget for the public and national assembly to read and understand prior to national debate. Expenditures are classified as “green” (favorable), “mixed” (favorable on some criteria, harmful on others), “neutral” (no impact either way), and “brown” (unfavorable). France’s General Inspectorate of Finance and General Council for Ecology and Sustainable Development collaborated to develop the methodology which could now allow for setting incentives for different ministries to minimize “brown” and maximize “green” expenditures.¹²

EXAMPLE: In its [2020-2022 Action Plan](#), Chile committed to making all climate-related public investments (for adaptation, mitigation, or both) transparent using open data standards as part of a bi-annual reporting process on the implementation of its Covid-19 recovery plan. A working group will be convened that the action plan describes will be “transparent, multilateral, and participatory” to review the classification and measurement of public expenditures for reporting.

¹¹ International Budget Partnership and United Nations Development Program. 2018. “[Budgeting for a Greener Planet: An Assessment of Climate Change Finance Accountability in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and the Philippines.](#)”

¹² Ministère de l’Economie des Finances et de la Relance, 2020. “[Budget vert: La France est le 1er pays au monde à mesurer l’impact du budget de l’État sur l’environnement.](#)”



Chile views this commitment as an opportunity to: enable the population to better monitor climate action implementation; ensure the budget aligns with climate priorities; develop a methodology for classifying, measuring, reporting, and verifying public investment in climate; facilitate public-private investment; and enable the Ministry of Environment to better track the relevant climate actions of other Ministries and promote coordination.

Fossil fuels and energy transition

Government subsidies for the production and consumption of fossil fuels is delaying climate action by artificially lowering costs. The International Institute for Sustainable Development [estimates](#) that G20 countries provided an average of \$584 billion annually between 2017-2019 in the form of direct budgetary transfers and tax expenditures, price supports, public finance, and fossil fuel investments by state-owned enterprises. In many G20 countries, fossil fuel subsidies increased during the Covid-19 crisis. Outside of the G20, several countries are part of the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform, including OGP members Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and Uruguay.

Best practices include disclosure by countries on current and proposed spending, by fossil fuel project. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) has [outlined the different types of fossil fuel subsidies](#) and what the EITI standard requires of its members, several of which are also OGP members, in order to create greater transparency about the actual cost and impact of state support for subsidies.

In addition to the direct negative effect that financing and subsidization of fossil fuel projects have on climate change mitigation, broader discussions around a just energy transition are hampered by lack of disclosure on important relevant information. This includes data on fossil fuel reserves, their carbon content, and costs to extract them; exit and transition plans, including related licenses and contracts, their cost, and alignment with climate goals; barriers to renewable energy production; and strategic minerals for clean technology, among others. The Natural Resource Governance Institute published [guidance](#) on what transparency measures are needed in fossil fuel projects for a more just energy transition.

EXAMPLE: The German Environmental Agency has regularly published a report on environmentally-harmful subsidies that provides information on financial assistance and tax concessions for fossil fuels. The [Ireland Central Statistics Office](#) publishes amounts and types of direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies on its website.



Section III: Potential actions by OGP members to implement the Paris Agreement using open government principles

How can OGP drive progress on the Paris Agreement?

OGP brings governments and civil society together around a collaborative action plan creation process, providing a space for dialogue and cooperation on how to improve government's openness to its citizens.

Additionally, it provides targeted technical support through its Support Unit and partner expertise, and provides opportunities and platforms for capacity-building through peer exchange and learning across many levels -- geographical, institutional and sectoral.

OGP is structured around an action plan framework with concrete milestones for delivery on a reform within a specified time frame, as well as an independent mechanism for evaluating and reporting on progress. As such, OGP is a ready-made tool for advancing on obligations and standards in global agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Escazú Agreement in the Americas, in a transparent, inclusive, and accountable way.

By using the domestic, multistakeholder OGP process to advance progress on existing climate initiatives and goals, governments can build political momentum behind these initiatives, buttress the legitimacy of plans at home, and demonstrate their efforts internationally. Parliaments can provide decisive momentum to the institutionalization of these goals.

Commitment ideas

Below are examples of commitments that OGP members, both national and subnational, can integrate into their action plans to ensure that their implementation of the Paris Agreement adopts open government principles. While they are organized in this brief by the principles -- transparency, participation, and accountability -- for ease of identification, in practice commitments often incorporate more than one, which also strengthens their open government impact.

Greater scope of transparency

- Disclose, track, and publicize climate-relevant policies, their implementation and results.
 - Develop, track, and publish nationally-relevant milestones and indicators of climate policies, such as those associated with Nationally Determined Contributions, 2020 pledges, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, and green growth/sustainable development strategies relevant for the SDGs. In cases where capacity is limited, an open process could help determine which policies would be prioritized for tracking.



- Provide greater transparency of information on climate in national budgets.
 - Implement cross-government budget systems and processes that enable the identification, tracking, and regular reporting of domestic resources mobilized for low- and high-emission activities. This can align revenue and expenditure decisions with low-emission, climate-resilient national development strategies.
 - Publish climate change budget reports, by mapping the receipt, use, and outcomes of international and domestic climate change financial resources, ensuring transparency and enabling the monitoring of collective global goals.
 - Make public the type and amount of fiscal support for fossil fuels to promote accountability in their removal. For maximum impact, transparency should be at the level of fossil fuel projects. Countries can support this by committing to [undergoing peer review](#) to improve reporting and transparency and sharing the experience.
 - Improve the consistency, comprehensiveness, and comparability of timely and public reporting by all providers of climate finance, including information on the status, sources, financial instruments, and thematic focus of financing provided to developing country partners.

- Provide greater transparency on off-budget subsidies to fossil fuels and their impact.
 - Implement the EITI Standard on disclosures from state-owned enterprises on their quasi-fiscal expenditures. For most impact, greater transparency should be at the level of fossil fuel project.

- Disclose climate-related investment risks and corresponding mitigation measures.
 - Require national financial institutions and private sector investors, insurers, and banks to publicly disclose relevant information on the climate and natural resources-related financial risks of their investments, as well as measures adopted to manage these risks and investments that contribute to climate solutions. This can help align public and private financial flows with a zero-carbon and climate-resilient development trajectory, while also increasing companies' and investors' integration of climate and natural resource risks, related commodity price volatility, and other shocks into decision-making. The French example of the law on energy transition, with Article 173 related to the mandatory disclosure of climate-related information by companies, offers a good practice to be shared more widely.

- Improve transparency of the use and impact of green transition funds and plans.
 - Disclose information on recipients and contracts of green transition funds in line with the Open Contracting Data Standard.
 - Provide greater transparency on how funds will be used and their alignment with obligations to the Paris Agreement.
 - Publish related audit reports and impact assessments.



- Release data to meet user needs for sustainable development and climate risk resilience.
 - Open up the most relevant climate and development related datasets that can enable innovation, improved mitigation, and adaptation planning and accountability. This data can include:
 - Impact, climate risk, and climate scenario information from energy, industry, transport, agriculture, and forestry sectors, including from concessions to these sectors.
 - Data can go beyond emissions to include information on a country's power sector, satellite imagery, and transport infrastructure.
 - Develop the necessary legal, regulatory, or institutional mechanisms to enable the collection, management, and proactive disclosure of climate and sustainable development data.
 - Make datasets publicly available in open data formats with an accessible explanation of uncertainty levels to help educate, empower, and engage all stakeholders. When it is possible to do so without violating citizens' privacy, governments should disclose, in open data format, available data used to undertake gender-disaggregated assessments of vulnerability.

Civic participation

- Embed transparency and participation in the development of climate policies at the subnational and national levels, including (but not limited to) climate plans, budgets, mid-century low emission strategies, and other national submissions requested under the Paris Agreement's new transparency framework.
 - Create public participation processes that are gender-responsive and provide early, adequate and accessible opportunities for the public to engage.
 - Ensure a breadth of consultation with relevant ministries, civil society, scientists, trade unions, marginalized and vulnerable groups, local authorities, and the private sector. This could include participation of civil society actors and academic actors in technical working groups on climate change adaptation or mitigation or a permanent multistakeholder mechanism to advise on climate change policy, for instance.
 - Create participatory budgeting processes on climate to build support for adaptation and mitigation approaches.
 - Create public participation mechanisms in impact assessment processes, including environmental, health, and social impact assessments.
 - Build trust by publishing public inputs and government responses to these processes in formats and media that are accessible to the wider public.
- Create mechanisms for public participation in implementation and oversight of climate policies. For example, by including civil society in providing oversight on Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of greenhouse gas mitigation processes.



Institutional reforms and practices to improve accountability

- Adopt institutional reforms that strengthen oversight of climate policies and budgets, and access to the information required for oversight.
 - Initiate reforms to empower right to information (including falsification and non-reporting) for required data, decisions, and documentation.
 - Initiate reforms to empower the right to public participation in climate-related open data initiatives and decision-making.
 - Strengthen the legislature's role in climate policy oversight.
 - Create mechanisms for formal oversight institutions, civil society, citizens, and media to monitor the amount and use of climate change funds and participate in decision-making and oversight of policies, programs, and activities.

- Create robust channels for citizens to seek remedy and redress for harms, present and future.
 - Establish and enforce grievance and redress mechanisms through administrative tribunals, courts, and/or supreme audit institutions; ensure functioning appeals processes and make records of outcomes public.
 - Strengthen legal mechanisms that ensure that citizens have the legal right to challenge government and private actors for violations on procedural or substantive grounds.
 - Lower accessibility barriers by improving grievance processes' timeliness and affordability.

- Annually disclose information on: detection of illegal activity; prosecution of offenders; and issuance of sanctions and/or fines against government and private actors breaching climate and closely related environmental laws, such as in the forestry sector.



List of resources

Accountability and environment:

[*Aarhus and Escazú: The two sides of the Atlantic in the field of public participation in environmental matters.*](#) The Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment, August 2021.

Budgets and climate:

[*Budgeting for a Greener Planet,*](#) International Budget Partnership, February 2018.

Climate resilience:

[*Locally Led Adaption: Principles for locally led adaptation.*](#) World Resources Institute.

Escazú Agreement:

[*OGP as a Key Partner to Implement the Escazú Agreement,*](#) Open Government Partnership, July 2021.

Fossil fuels and energy transition:

[*Subsidies at What Cost? Shedding light on state support for fossil fuel consumption.*](#) Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, March 2021.

[*IEA's Ambitious Climate Scenario Underscores Need for More Transparency on Fossil Fuel Projects,*](#) Natural Resource Governance Institute, May 2021.

Green procurement

[*Public Procurement and Innovation for Low-Carbon Infrastructure,*](#) International Institute for Sustainable Development, January 2017.

[*How to Tell Green Procurement from Greenwashing,*](#) Open Contracting Partnership, July 2020.

Open data for climate action:

[*Implementing Open Data Strategies for Climate Action: Suggestions and lessons learned for government and civil society stakeholders.*](#) World Resources Institute, March 2021.

Participation and inclusion:

[*National Climate Assemblies.*](#) KNOCA Network.

[*Can Public Participation Accelerate the Transition to Net-Zero? Innovations and challenges for advancing the field of climate engagement,*](#) Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, September 2021.

[*Contributions of Participatory Budgeting to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation,*](#) People Powered, September 2020.

[*The Role of Parliaments as Drivers of Action for Climate Empowerment \(ACE\),*](#) Westminster Foundation for Democracy.



Acknowledgements

Authors: Jesse Worker and Delfina Grinspan, World Resources Institute and Adna Karamehic-Oates, Open Government Partnership

This paper is a collaboration between the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) as part of WRI's work under the OGP MultiDonor Trust Fund. For several years, WRI has provided technical assistance and convening support to OGP members, facilitating learning and innovation as they develop OGP action plan commitments in the climate change arena.

Thank you to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Open Contracting Partnership, Open Data Charter, Publish What You Fund and Westminster Foundation for Democracy for their comments and contributions.

Special thanks to OGP Support Unit staff members Sandy Arce, Tonu Basu, Joseph Foti, Lotte Geunis, Maria Koomen, Rosario Pavese, Jose Perez Escotto, Luciana Vajnenko and Peter Varga.

