Environment and Climate
Fact Sheet

KEY TAKEAWAYS

✓ Environment and climate commitments made by members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) have been consistently rated as highly ambitious and effective.

✓ Now, rebuilding from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic presents an even greater opportunity for governments to think long-term and invest in a more sustainable future.

✓ While OGP members have worked mostly on increasing transparency of environment-related information, the focus must shift to giving the public more oversight and a greater voice in environmental decision-making.

WHY ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE?

In the face of intensifying climate change, resilient governments will require new policies and innovations. The values of open government - transparency, public participation, and accountability - allow governments and citizens to see the true costs of pollution, discuss alternative approaches for development, and ensure there is adequate public oversight of government action. Governments and civil society alike can use the OGP platform to act and subsequently share their innovations to help mitigate the worst effects of climate change.
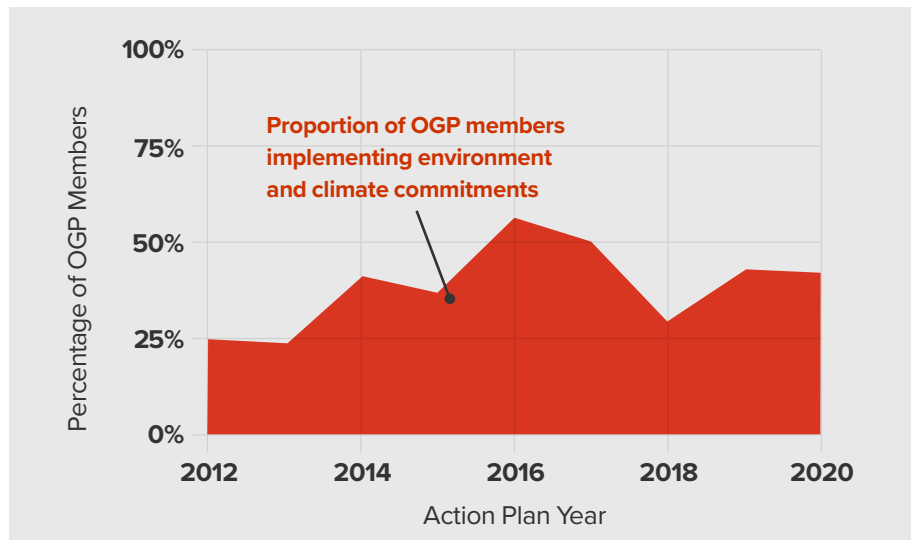
STATUS QUO

➜ **Not-so-green recovery spending:** As part of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many OGP countries created new green initiatives and dedicated recovery spending to green transitions. However, such measures make up only a small fraction of these large amounts of recovery funds, even in countries that portray themselves as climate leaders.

➜ **Ambitious public oversight:** About half of OGP environment and climate commitments involve elements of civic participation. Less than ten percent involve public accountability, but almost all environment and climate commitments with accountability elements have been evaluated as highly ambitious.

Commitment data analyzes all commitments through the 2020 action plan cycle. As of 2020, OGP consisted of 98 national and local members.

Open Government Partnership

COMMITMENT PROGRESS

Members are making more environment and climate commitments in recent years (see figure below). Currently, 20 OGP members are implementing environment and climate commitments from their 2019 or 2020 action plans. Altogether, just over half of OGP members have made 172 total environment and climate commitments since OGP was established in 2011.

Proportion of OGP members implementing environment and climate commitments

Y-axis: Percentage of OGP Members (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)
X-axis: Action Plan Year (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020)

WHAT ARE OGP MEMBERS DOING?

➜ **Creating climate change adaptation and mitigation policy**

➜ **Publishing data and research about pollution and climate change**

➜ **Ensuring citizen participation in the creation of environmental policy**

➜ **Creating public accountability mechanisms for environmental complaints**

WHERE TO NEXT

The following recommendations summarize key actions for OGP members to implement:

Greater Scope of Transparency

➜ Publish sectoral greenhouse gas reporting and ensure data is interoperable for comparison between countries and sectors.

➜ Make fossil fuel subsidies and their impact more transparent.

Civic Participation

➜ Guarantee adequate participation, especially for vulnerable groups, in the design and implementation of green measures.

➜ Invest in climate-smart infrastructure and human systems, and allow the public to help prioritize these investments through participatory budgeting.

Institutional Reform

➜ Promote regulatory reform, such as by enhancing regulatory impact assessment processes, ending enforcement holidays, and applying a multi-stakeholder approach to regulatory changes.

➜ Sponsor research and development with time-limited protections on the data.

➜ Improve institutional resilience to climate change, such as by disclosing climate risks and ensuring legal redress for climate-related harms.

NOTABLE COMMITMENTS

Recent Results

Canada - Expanding Transparency of Federal Science (2016) Prior to 2016, government research lacked transparency and scientists were described as "muzzled." Through their 2016 action plan, Canada's environment and climate department took action to expand access to government research data. This commitment also included the re-establishment of dialogue between government scientists and non-governmental organizations, the appointment of a chief science officer, increased public availability of data and publications from federal science and technology activities, and metrics to track open science activities and assess their impact.

Germany - Increasing Participation in Environmental Policy (2017) As part of their 2017 action plan, the German government hosted four events, including a youth dialogue and a large-scale online consultation, to solicit citizen input on policy topics such as climate change, conservation, and resource efficiency. The commitment also improved the quality of participation by integrating citizen engagement in the binding rules of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety.

Commitments to Watch

Ecuador - Implementing the Escazú Agreement (2019) To make environmental governance more open and accountable, Ecuador committed to implementing the Escazú Agreement. The agreement aims to provide citizens full and effective access to environmental information, opportunities to participate in environmental decision-making, and access to justice for environmental matters. It also increases opportunities for participation through the creation of a national observatory with members from civil society, academia, and local groups. The observatory will collaborate with the government to develop a roadmap with concrete proposals to implement the agreement, and oversee its implementation.
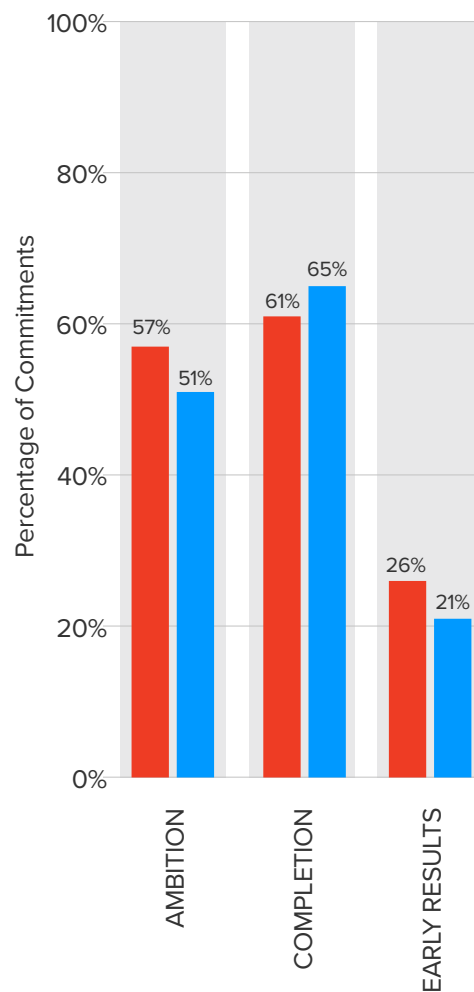
Peru - Improving Interoperability of Environmental Data (2019) Peru's 2019 action plan includes a commitment to improve the quality of their environmental data. Although Peru previously worked on improving access to environmental information in their 2017 action plan, environmental data is still disjointed among national government agencies and regional governments. Improving the interoperability of data will allow citizens to better participate in and monitor environmental decision-making.

IRM QUICK STATS

According to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), environment and climate commitments are a bit more ambitious and achieve stronger early results than the average OGP commitment.

Commitment Performance

Bar chart. Percentage of Commitments (y-axis 0%–100%):
- AMBITION: Environment and Climate 57%, All OGP 51%
- COMPLETION: Environment and Climate 61%, All OGP 65%
- EARLY RESULTS: Environment and Climate 26%, All OGP 21%

■ Environment and Climate commitments
■ All OGP commitments

Ambition - Ambitious commitments are those that the IRM finds would make transformative changes if fully implemented.

Early Results - Strong early results indicate the commitment made significant improvements to government openness.