

Fiscal Openness Fact Sheet

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Fiscal openness commitments are the most popular policy area within action plans for members of the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\)](#) and have delivered a quarter of OGP's strongest results.
- ✓ A majority of commitments focus on increasing the transparency of fiscal information, but commitments that include participatory and oversight elements show even stronger results.
- ✓ OGP members should aim to include more participatory and oversight elements into future fiscal openness commitments, especially for monitoring the use of emergency and recovery pandemic funds.

WHY FISCAL OPENNESS?

Citizens deserve to know and have a voice in how their government is getting money, what is being prioritized for spending, and whether the money is being used effectively. Given the added financial hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, public oversight of government spending, including record-breaking stimulus packages in many countries, is more essential than ever before. Fiscal openness – which encompasses transparency, public participation, and legislative oversight throughout the budget and fiscal cycle – delivers greater value for money and reduces the cost of borrowing. Participatory budgeting, especially, can improve the efficiency of public service delivery and strengthen tax compliance.

STATUS QUO

- **Focus is needed on participation.** In general, [OGP countries are better at](#) disclosing key budget and spending information and allowing for public audits (transparency and oversight), but provide few opportunities for people to give input into plans and audits (participation).
- **Participation gets results.** Nearly 40% of participatory budgeting commitments show strong early results. This is roughly double the global average for all commitments.
- **Local examples stand out.** Fiscal openness commitments at the local level are particularly ambitious and effective. Over a quarter of local fiscal openness commitments show strong early results, and over 80 percent of local participatory budgeting commitments are highly ambitious.

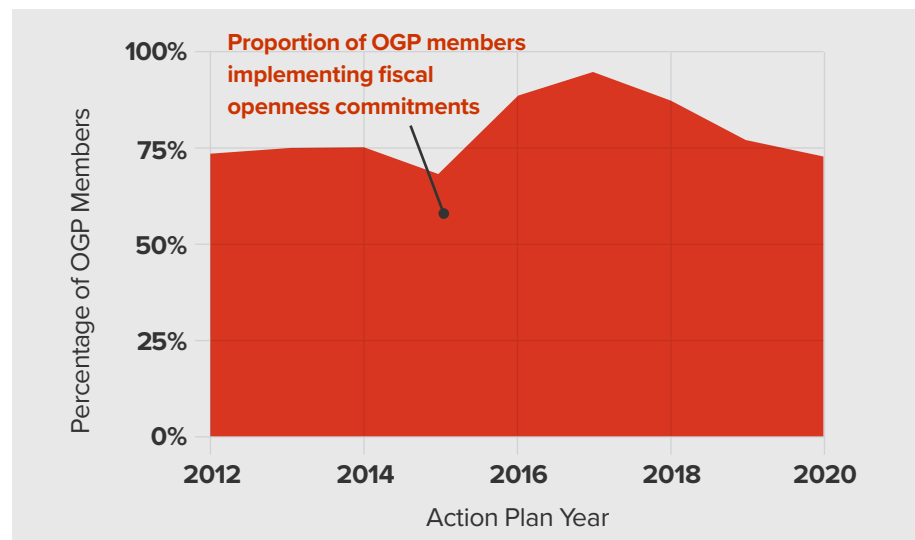
Commitment data analyzes all commitments through the 2020 action plan cycle. As of 2020, OGP consisted of 98 national and local members.

Open
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COMMITMENT PROGRESS

Fiscal openness has been a consistently popular policy area among OGP members (see figure below). Currently, 34 OGP members are implementing fiscal openness commitments from their 2019 or 2020 action plans. Altogether, over 90 percent of members have made a total of 671 fiscal openness commitments since OGP was established in 2011, which is more than nearly any other policy area.



WHAT ARE OGP MEMBERS DOING?

- Publishing budgets and other fiscal information, including COVID-19 emergency funds
- Increasing public participation in budgeting, specifically participation of women and marginalized groups
- Opening budgetary oversight through feedback mechanisms
- Ensuring fiscal information is published in accessible language
- Applying fiscal openness to specific sectors (e.g. education, health)

WHERE TO NEXT

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

Oversight and Accountability

- Move beyond transparency of budget planning and approval to disclose data on budget execution, performance, and oversight. Consider disclosing data on revenue projections, tax expenditures, and equity of spending.
- Create [independent](#) and [legislative public oversight](#) mechanisms to ensure COVID-19 emergency funds are spent effectively and equitably. Ensure that the public can support [audit institutions](#) in their work.

Civic Participation

- Increase citizen participation and monitoring throughout the budget cycle, including planning, execution, and oversight.
- Apply open and participatory budgeting to specific sectors such as education and health care.

Inclusivity

- Include [gender-responsive budget reviews](#) to ensure that public resources are allocated in ways that promote gender-equitable spending and represent the interests of all citizens.

NOTABLE COMMITMENTS

Recent Results



Côte d'Ivoire - Piloting Local Participatory Budgeting (2016)

Through its 2016 action plan, Côte d'Ivoire enacted participatory budgeting in 10 municipalities. The government established local committees to monitor community projects and budgets and offered training opportunities to 350 leaders in civil society organizations and women's groups on social accountability, budgeting, and facilitation.



Scotland - Implementing Community Choices (2017)

The "Community Choices" is a group of officials in 32 local governments in Scotland that set aside at least one percent of their budgets for participatory budgeting. This totaled £160 million per year. The practice paused during the pandemic, but leaders reaffirmed the one percent target in 2021.

Commitments to Watch



Indonesia - Disclosing COVID-19 Budget Information (2020)

In its 2020 OGP action plan, Indonesia committed to improving transparency around COVID-19 related budgets at the local and national levels by allowing the public to monitor and provide feedback through a budget transparency application. In response to the spread of COVID-19, the need for mass vaccinations, and the urgency to boost their economy, Indonesia raised its budget for the National Economy Recovery program to [533 trillion rupiah](#) (USD 39.4 billion) in January 2021.



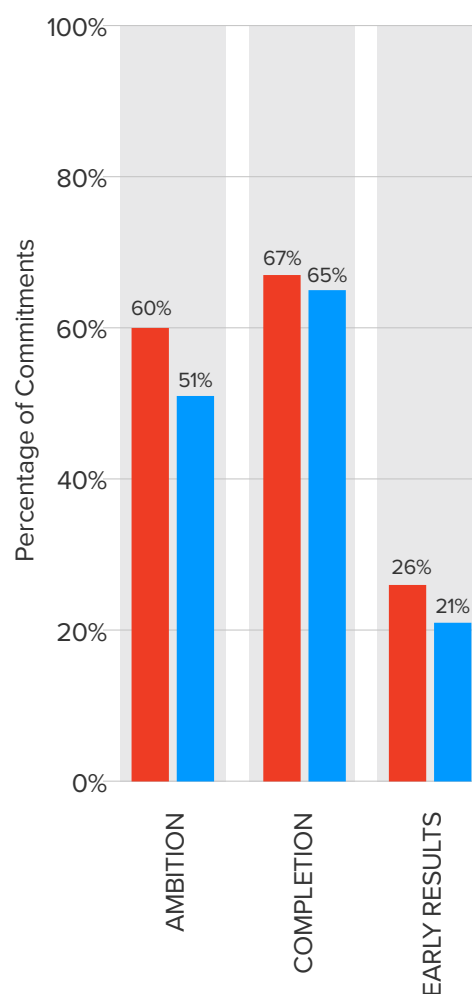
Colombia - Ensuring Transparency and Accountability of COVID-19 Response (2020 - [Commitment 1](#), [Commitment 2](#))

After increasing their 2021 budget by [18.5 trillion pesos](#) (\$5.16 billion) for COVID-19 response and relief measures, Colombia has placed transparency, accountability and participation at the center of their recovery efforts. Its 2020 action plan includes a commitment to publish information on public contracts and emergency COVID-19 related procurements in an open data format to achieve traceability of public resources. Another commitment in the plan aims to promote citizen participation by publishing information on COVID-19 emergency projects financed by royalties to enable citizen monitoring of public spending.

IRM QUICK STATS

According to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), fiscal openness commitments tend to have much higher ambition and stronger early results than the average OGP commitment.

Commitment Performance



Fiscal Openness 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.