

Justice Fact Sheet

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ For members of the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\)](#), justice is a popular policy area for reform that has become an even greater priority in recent years.
- ✓ Justice commitments are often highly effective, particularly those related to open justice.
- ✓ Going forward, OGP members should aim to expand access to legal services beyond formal institutions and broaden their focus beyond the courts to areas like policing and prisons.

WHY JUSTICE?

Investing in open and accessible justice institutions allows citizens to better defend their rights, demand access to public services, and protect their ability to participate in democratic processes. In many countries, citizens may be met by opaque legal processes, unaffordable legal help, or discriminatory practices that prevent them from obtaining equal access to justice. Issues of judicial fairness and independence must also be addressed through increased transparency and accountability. While members have made commitments to advance progress on justice-related priorities since the founding of OGP in 2011, this has increased since the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda and the emphasis on Goal 16's call for equal justice for all.

STATUS QUO

- **Justice needs aren't being met.** [Globally](#), 1.5 billion people at any one time cannot resolve their justice problems. Specifically, [half of justice needs](#) in OGP countries ended in unsatisfactory outcomes through 2017 and 2018.
- **Commitments focus on open justice.** More than half of all justice commitments focus on transparency and accountability reforms that make the justice system more open. Open justice commitments tend to be more effective than other justice commitments.
- **Judiciaries are becoming more involved.** Judiciaries are becoming the lead implementing institutions for justice commitments in a growing number of countries. Over a quarter of 2022 justice-related commitments are being implemented primarily by judiciaries.

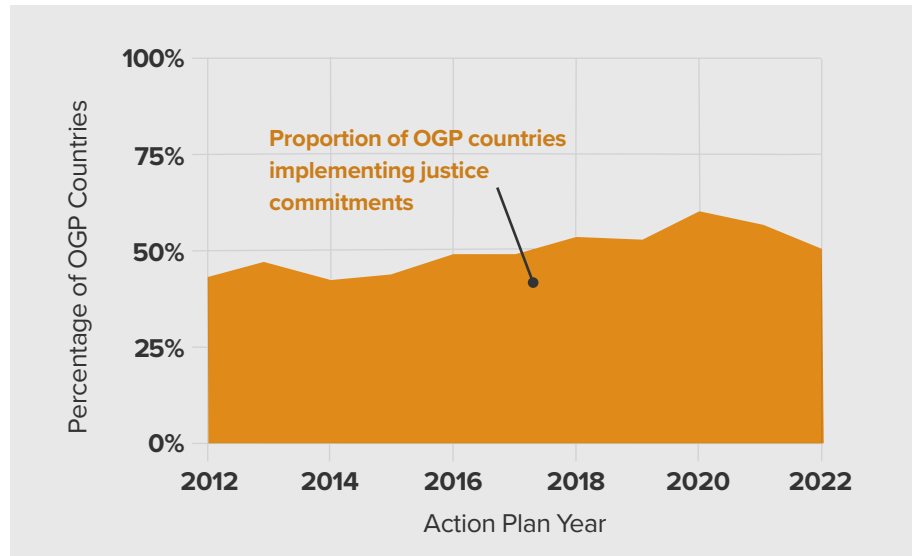
This fact sheet covers all commitments submitted as of June 30, 2023. As of this date, OGP consisted of 76 national and 104 local members.

Open
Government
Partnership

COMMITMENT PROGRESS

Justice has been a consistently popular policy area among OGP countries (see figure below*). Half of active national action plans currently include a justice commitment. Altogether, 59 OGP countries and 10 local jurisdictions have made a total of 315 justice commitments since OGP was established in 2011.

*Figure displays commitment trends at the national level due to recent growth in local members.



WHAT ARE OGP MEMBERS DOING?

- Improving the openness of the justice system
- Strengthening legal empowerment of citizens and improving access to criminal and civil legal aid
- Using the justice system to enforce open government and ensure the rule of law

WHERE TO NEXT

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

Access to Justice

- Measure legal needs and resource availability using surveys, and publish the results.
- Improve legal capability by improving access to information on legal resources and supporting resolution alternatives outside of courts.
- Ensure access to legal help by expanding legal aid, especially in underserved communities.
- Strengthen justice processes through plain language initiatives, specialized courts, and judicial training.
- Continuously evaluate justice outcomes, especially of high-priority areas and populations.

Open Justice

- Publish accessible and standardized court data, including case information and operational measurements.
- Ensure transparency of judicial appointments, and take steps to ensure judicial accountability and independence.
- To improve quality of legal aid, train providers, publicize a means test for eligibility, report annually on access, and make budgets transparent.

Justice as a Means to Enforce Open Government

- Ensure grievance mechanisms exist and are open and accessible for all procedural and substantive rights.
- Train justice sector officials regularly on how to evaluate cases on issues with which they might be unfamiliar, including right to information, tax and equity, and climate change and environmental issues.

NOTABLE COMMITMENTS

Recent Results



Costa Rica - Developing the Judicial Observatory System (2019)

In hopes of delivering more timely justice, Costa Rica's judiciary publicly launched its [Judicial Observatory](#) in September 2021. The Observatory includes information and statistics on the time it takes for the different judicial offices in the country to resolve their cases. As part of its development, the judiciary convened lawyers, journalists, and civil society groups to preview the tool and collect their feedback and recommendations for improvements.



Czech Republic - Publishing Lower Court Decisions (2020)

Prior to this reform, only decisions of the three highest courts in the Czech Republic were published online, and decisions of lower courts were not publicly accessible. A ministerial decree enacted in July 2022 requires the district, regional, and high courts to publish selected final decisions. Now, over 350,000 anonymized decisions from these courts have been published in a public database managed by the Ministry of Justice.

Commitments to Watch



Indonesia - Ensuring Access to Justice (2022)

Building on justice reforms in its previous action plans, Indonesia is currently implementing a commitment to increase access to justice, especially for vulnerable groups. This includes drafting regulations to provide necessary accommodations for people with disabilities during judicial proceedings and monitoring and evaluating how women are treated in judicial processes.



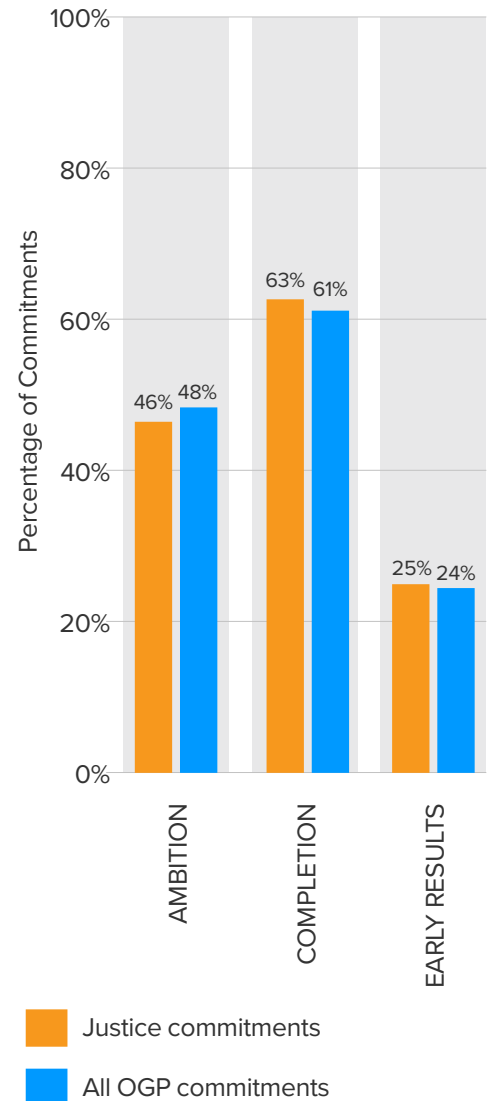
Contagem, Brazil - Improving Conflict Resolutions (2022)

Contagem committed to improving access to justice through the establishment of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. The city will propose a bill to establish the Chamber for Prevention and Administrative Resolution of Conflicts, which will be used to resolve conflicts involving public agencies and individuals more quickly and efficiently.

IRM QUICK STATS

According to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), justice commitments perform similarly to the global average on ambition, completion, and early results.

Commitment Performance



Ambition - Ambitious commitments are those that have substantial potential for results, according to the IRM.

Completion - Completed commitments indicate that the commitment was substantially or fully implemented within the action plan period.

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