

# Open Parliaments Fact Sheet

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Open parliament commitments are quickly growing in the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\)](#), with many parliaments co-creating their own commitments or action plans to further legislative openness.
- ✓ A majority of open parliament commitments focus on increasing transparency and participation within legislatures, but few commitments involve accountability measures.
- ✓ Moving forward, OGP members should aim to involve parliaments as the primary implementers of open parliament commitments and include more public oversight and accountability elements.

## WHY OPEN PARLIAMENTS?

An open parliament - one that encourages transparency, participation, and accountability throughout the legislative process - is an essential part of an open government. Ensuring access to legislative information and creating mechanisms for public participation are critical to building an open, trusting relationship with citizens. Parliaments can also lead by example by adopting open government principles within their own processes and practices. Legislative openness reforms are often strengthened by parliamentary engagement in the OGP process.

## STATUS QUO

- **Parliamentary leadership:** One in four OGP member countries formally engage parliament in the OGP process. Parliaments have co-created and implemented their own open parliament plans in seven OGP member countries, including [Paraguay](#), [Georgia](#), and [Indonesia](#).
- **Institutionalizing reforms:** Nearly 10 percent of all national OGP commitments have involved drafting, amending, and/or passing legislation to institutionalize open government reforms.
- **Parliamentary involvement creates ambition:** OGP commitments involving parliaments as implementers (passing legislation) tend to be more ambitious – meaning more likely to change the status quo – than other commitments.
- **Low focus on oversight:** Only about one in ten open parliament commitments involve public oversight and accountability.

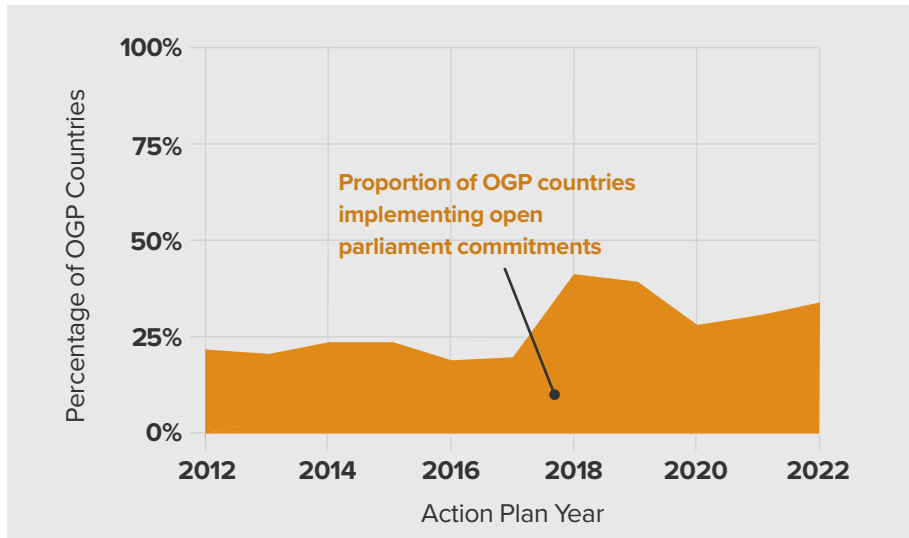
This fact sheet covers all commitments submitted as of April 21, 2023. As of this date, OGP consisted of 75 national and 105 local members.

Open  
Government  
Partnership

## COMMITMENT PROGRESS

The percentage of countries making open parliament commitments has started to increase again in recent action plan cycles (see figure below\*). Currently, 17 national and 3 local members are implementing open parliament commitments from their active action plans. Altogether, 52 members have made 168 total open parliament 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?

- Implementing OGP commitments through legislation
- Creating platforms to publish legislative information in an open format
- Improving asset disclosure and election finance transparency
- Increasing opportunity for public participation in legislative processes
- Using parliaments to provide oversight of action plan implementation

## WHERE TO NEXT

The following [recommendations](#) summarize key actions for OGP members to implement:

### Legislative Transparency

- Ensure all primary and secondary legislation is published online in an easily accessible format.
- Proactively publish information related to parliamentary operations, such as information on lawmakers, meeting agendas, bills, debates, and voting records.
- Adopt legislation that ensures the public access to information from the parliament, and identify individuals or offices responsible for responding to requests for information.

### Participation in Decision-Making

- Raise awareness of the potential mechanisms citizens can use to participate in parliamentary work.
- Adopt legislation that creates a framework for citizen involvement in the legislative process.
- Implement consultations and public hearings that give citizens opportunities to provide feedback and demonstrate their interests, both online and in-person.
- Strengthen communication between legislators and their constituents and give opportunities for citizens, especially vulnerable groups, to give input.

### Accountability of the Parliament

- Implement measures such as open budgeting and the publication of annual expenses at the parliamentary level.
- Require each legislator to publish information on their work periodically, such as a comparison between their campaign commitments and their record of legislative activities.
- Strengthen transparency during development of the national budget and create opportunities for citizens to monitor and review budgetary information.

## NOTABLE COMMITMENTS

### Recent Results

#### **Estonia - Improving Online Legislative Transparency (2018)**

In Estonia's 2018 action plan, the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) led a commitment to improve their practices of publishing legislative committee meetings online in a timely manner. As a result of the commitment, meeting minutes are now [available online](#) in an open format within an average of three days, and delays are no longer common. Because of these improvements, the online Citizens' Initiative platform now allows users to keep track of policy proposals sent to the Riigikogu in real time and receive email notifications when certain initiatives are voted on or [discussed](#).

#### **New Zealand - Making Legislation More Open and Accessible (2016, 2018)**

Prior to 2016, citizens were only able to freely access primary legislation online; information on secondary legislation (rules and regulations) was varied and incomplete. Through a series of commitments, New Zealand has worked to publish all primary and secondary laws on a single website. This initially included a review of all secondary legislation, and research on how citizens primarily access and use legislative information. From there, New Zealand committed to linking all secondary legislation on the pre-existing website for primary laws to make the information more accessible to the public.

### Commitments to Watch

#### **Sierra Leone - Citizen Participation in Parliament (2021)**

Through their 2021 action plan, Sierra Leone is committed to building stronger relationships between parliament and civil society organizations (CSOs) by providing an avenue for dialogue and collaboration. Specific milestones of this commitment include the Parliament of Sierra Leone holding a biannual forum with civil society, establishing a parliamentary-CSO joint oversight committee, and training parliamentarians on the roles and responsibilities of CSOs.

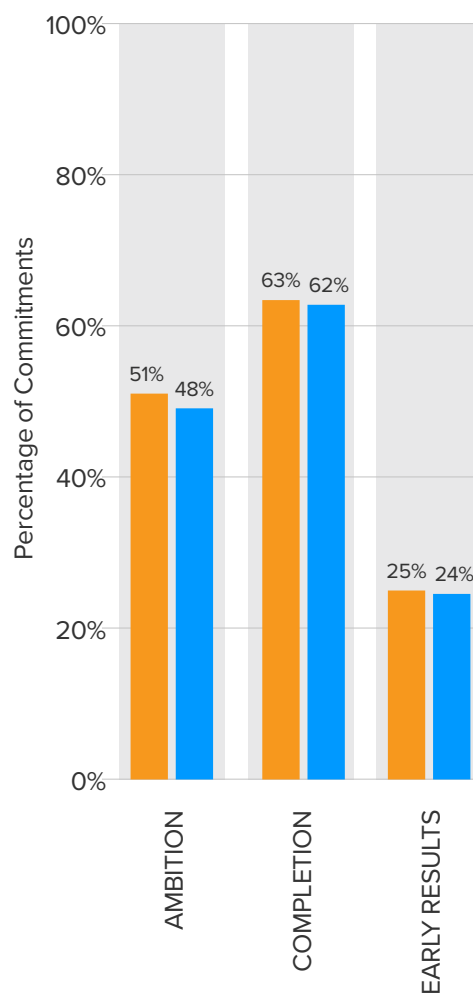
#### **Uruguay - Strengthening Parliamentary Openness (2022 - [Commitment 1](#), [Commitment 2](#))**

Uruguay's 2022 action plan includes two commitments being primarily implemented by their Chamber of Senators. The commitments aim to institutionalize open parliament policies in the Chamber by guaranteeing the effective participation of citizens, especially women, in parliamentary activities and by promoting an institutional policy of open data.

## IRM QUICK STATS

According to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), open parliament commitments tend to be a bit more ambitious than the average OGP commitment, but perform similarly in terms of completion and early results.

### Commitment Performance



 Open parliaments commitments

 All OGP commitments

*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.*