

Independent Reporting Mechanism

Seychelles
Co-Creation Brief 2022

Open
Government
Partnership



Independent
Reporting
Mechanism

Introduction

This brief from the OGP’s Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) serves to support the co-creation process and design of the second action plan and to strengthen the quality, ambition, and feasibility of commitments. It provides an overview of the opportunities and challenges for open government in the country’s context and presents recommendations. This brief does not constitute an evaluation of a particular action plan and its purpose is to inform the planning process for co-creation based on collective and country-specific IRM findings.

The Co-Creation Brief draws on the results and recommendations in [Seychelles’ previous IRM reports](#). The brief also draws on other sources, such as the [OGP National Handbook](#) and the [OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards](#) to ensure that recommendations provided are up-to-date in the light of developments since those IRM reports were written, and to enrich the recommendations by drawing on comparative international experience in the design and implementation of OGP Action Plan commitments, as well as other context-relevant practice in open government. The Co-Creation Brief has been reviewed by IRM senior staff for consistency, accuracy, and with a view to maximizing the context-relevance and actionability of the recommendations. Where appropriate, the briefs are reviewed by external reviewers or members of the IRM International Experts Panel (IEP).

The IRM drafted this Co-Creation Brief in April 2022.

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Section I: Action Plan Co-Creation Process

In 2022, Seychelles will co-create its second OGP action plan. Seychelles' development of the previous [2019-2021 action plan](#) provided the opportunity to become accustomed to OGP processes. However, the absence of a platform to oversee implementation progress, compounded by a change in government and the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in limited levels of completion. Seychelles should use the minimum requirements outlined in the updated OGP [Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#) to formalize its OGP structures and processes. Seychelles will no longer be considered to be acting [contrary to process](#) if an action plan is developed and submitted following the minimum requirements in 2022. Specifically, to establish an inclusive and ongoing dialogue around open government reforms, the IRM recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Finance designate an inclusive forum or space for stakeholders to oversee Seychelles' OGP process.
2. The multi-stakeholder forum or Ministry of Finance conduct awareness raising and broad consultations to encourage civil society participation in the co-creation process.
3. The multi-stakeholder forum or government document and respond to stakeholders on how their contributions influenced the action plan's content.
4. The multi-stakeholder forum or government develop an OGP website and repository to ensure transparency and accountability of Seychelles' OGP processes.
5. The multi-stakeholder forum or government establish inclusive mechanisms to oversee and guide commitment progress throughout the implementation period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Ministry of Finance designate an inclusive forum or space for stakeholders to oversee Seychelles' OGP process.

The Seychelles made use of an existing multi-stakeholder forum (MSF), primarily composed of government representatives to [develop the first OGP action plan](#). For the second co-creation process, the IRM recommends that the Ministry of Finance (MoF) [establish a formal MSF](#) or more flexible space to specifically oversee OGP processes. Whether formal or informal, the platform should facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaboration between government, civil society and other non-governmental stakeholders. To meet the minimum requirements for Standard 1 under the updated [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#), the platform should meet regularly, at least every six months, and the basic rules on participation should be made public. If the MoF chooses to establish a formal MSF, the IRM recommends collaborating with civil society to develop a fair and transparent process to select members. Members are encouraged to collaboratively develop and publish governing documents on the MFS' mandate, composition, and structure.

Recommendation 2: The multi-stakeholder forum or Ministry of Finance conduct awareness raising and broad consultations to encourage civil society participation in the co-creation process.

Strengthening civil society's understanding and participation presents the greatest opportunity to solidify Seychelles' open government movement. The MoF should use outreach

activities as an opportunity to communicate how OGP processes present a non-partisan space for civil society to advance their policy aims. The MoF is encouraged to communicate a clear [value proposition for open government](#) to inspire potential government and civil society partners. The MoF or MSF is encouraged to strive for the full ambition for Standard 3 under the [Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#) and consider opportunities to make use of [online consultation tools](#). However, at a minimum all member countries are expected to:

- Publish the co-creation timeline and opportunities for stakeholders to participate at least two weeks in advance on the OGP website/page.
- Conduct outreach to stakeholders beyond the multi-stakeholder forum to raise awareness of OGP and opportunities to get involved.
- Develop a mechanism to gather inputs from a range of stakeholders during an appropriate period of time for the chosen mechanism.

Recommendation 3: The multi-stakeholder forum or government document and respond to stakeholders on how their contributions influenced the action plan's content.

During [development of the first action plan](#), Seychelles' drafting committee shared its decisions informally through meetings and email. The MSF or MoF is encouraged to publicly respond to feedback received during the consultation process to facilitate ongoing dialogue and transparency. [At a minimum](#) under Standard 4, all countries are expected to document and report back or publish written feedback to stakeholders on how their contributions were considered before finalization of the action plan. Possible approaches to ensure documented and ongoing dialogue include:

- The government or MSF could respond to civil society input during meetings of the OGP multi-stakeholder forum and then publish minutes from the meetings.
- The government or MSF could publish a summary of input received and how input was considered on the OGP website, as done by [Canada](#).
- The government or MSF could publish a report on input received with an explanation of why suggestions were or were not incorporated into the action plan, as done by [Morocco](#).

Recommendation 4: The multi-stakeholder forum or government develop an OGP website and repository to ensure transparency and accountability of Seychelles' OGP processes.

The Seychelles currently does not maintain an OGP website or repository and is therefore [acting contrary to OGP process](#). The OGP [Standards](#) encourage members to practice maximum transparency to enable participation and accountability throughout the OGP process. In particular, countries must maintain an up-to-date OGP website that either functions as, or is accompanied by, a repository. Under the standards' minimum requirements, the MSF or government must demonstrate that:

- The OGP website/page contains the latest action plan
- They published a co-creation timeline with, and information on, opportunities for stakeholders to participate published at least two weeks in advance on the OGP website/page
- They published basic rules on participation in the MSF
- The repository includes at least one piece of evidence of co-creation and one piece of evidence of implementation from the past six months
- They documented input received from stakeholders on the action plan

Seychelles could establish an OGP website/page that is run by the government, MSF, or a partner. The website/page could be within a government website, stand alone, or make use of a free platform such as [Trello](#) or [Facebook](#). If the website does not also function as a repository with evidence of co-creation and implementation, then it could be linked to a [Google Drive](#) or [DropBox](#) that serves this purpose. Examples of comprehensive OGP websites include [Morocco](#), [Tunisia](#), and [Jordan](#).

Recommendation 5: The multi-stakeholder forum or government establish inclusive mechanisms to oversee and guide commitment progress throughout the implementation period.

Seychelles' first action plan saw [limited levels of completion](#), in part, due to the absence of a platform to oversee implementation progress. Government turnover following the October 2020 elections further disrupted implementation of open government reforms. The MSF or government should therefore establish sustainable [mechanisms](#) to manage commitment progress throughout the implementation period. To meet OGP's [minimum requirements](#), the multi-stakeholder forum or government should hold at least two meetings every year with civil society to present results on the implementation of the action plan and collect comments.

The multi-stakeholder forum could oversee implementation or establish other mechanisms such as:

- a multi-stakeholder implementation committee comprised of responsible agencies and CSO partners that meets regularly to oversee progress of the entire action plan, as in [Morocco](#).
- multi-stakeholder working groups organized by thematic area or commitment that meet regularly to oversee progress of commitments, as in Ghana.
- each responsible government agency could sign a memorandum of understanding with a CSO establishing their partnership to oversee implementation.

Section II: Action Plan Design

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMITMENTS

Seychelles' second action plan offers the opportunity for the country to break new ground by committing to greater public accountability and participation in the fisheries sector. The government and civil society could also reformulate and continue efforts to expand access to information and fiscal openness. Finally, stakeholders could consider using the OGP process to harmonize and strengthen public officials' asset declaration.

AREA 1. Public Accountability and Participation in Fisheries Policy Making

Seychelles became a global trailblazer when it released the first [Fisheries Transparency Initiative \(FITI\) report](#) under its [first OGP action plan](#). The IRM recommends that Seychelles continue the momentum with a commitment that translates newly public information into greater public accountability and participation in fisheries policy making. This objective requires building a strong ecosystem of changemakers in institutions such as Seychelles' [FITI National Multistakeholder Group](#), Seychelles Fishing Authority, parliament, Information Commission, Ministry of Finance, media, civil society, fishing associations, and private sector.

One possible next step would be for the Financial Intelligence Unit to make public Seychelles' [beneficial ownership register](#), which includes the fisheries sector, as recommended in the [2020 FiTI report](#). [Several OGP member countries](#) began with single-sector beneficial ownership registries that were then expanded cross-sector, including Nigeria's [2017](#) and [2019](#) and Kenya's [2016](#) and [2020](#) commitments. An ambitious commitment would include activities that enable the government and public to make use of this data toward a specific policy objective, such as strengthening sustainable fisheries management or ensuring that Seychellois are the primary beneficiaries of their natural resources. For more information, see OGP's [Beneficial Ownership](#) and [Extractives Industries](#) Fact Sheets.

AREA 2. Asset Transparency

Seychelles' second OGP action plan is an opportunity to clarify and strengthen the asset and interest declaration system for public officials. A commitment that makes public some information on public officials' assets and interests would respond to [civil society priorities](#) and could strengthen Seychelles' [OGP eligibility score](#), currently two out of four possible points for asset transparency. The Anti-Corruption Commission could partner with civil society, such as Transparency Initiative Seychelles, to undertake activities that:

- **Review and amend the legal framework for asset disclosure** to harmonize and expand laws around who is obligated to disclose what types of assets held domestically and abroad.
- **Strengthen the institutional framework** to ensure independent oversight, compliance and investigation of disclosures and irregularities.
- **Develop [whistleblower protections](#)** to protect civil servants and citizens who raise corruption concerns.
- **Discuss steps to expand the scope and mechanisms for public disclosure of asset declaration information**, perhaps beginning with individuals most politically exposed or aggregate data.

For more recommendations see Transparency International's Policy Paper on [Assets and Interests in OGP Action Plans](#). For a recent example, Seychelles can look to Côte d'Ivoire's 2020 [commitment](#) to mandate asset disclosure, develop an online portal for submission, and publish aggregated statistics. The OGP Support Unit is available to review draft commitments and to connect reformers in Seychelles with those undertaking similar reforms.

AREA 3. Access to Information

The Information Commission strengthened implementation of the 2018 Access to Information Law by training and providing a best practice guide to Information Officers under the [first action plan](#). However, there remains opportunity to strengthen government records, proactive information disclosure, and citizens' knowledge and ability to submit information requests. The IRM recommends that the Information Commission and Department of Information strategically evaluate the availability of financial and human resources when considering a commitment that could prioritize, for example, one of the following:

- **Reviving efforts to review the state of archives and strengthen archival procedures**, as undertaken by [Morocco](#) in 2018.
- **Addressing the culture of secrecy through clear guidance and recognition of best practices for public officials** in responding to requests, as [Tunisia](#) committed to in 2018.

- **Strengthening government bodies' proactive information and data disclosure** on institutional webpages and through the National Bureau of Statistics, as seen as part of [Kenya's](#) 2020 commitment.
- **Establish a consolidated platform** for citizens to learn about their right to information, submit and track information requests, and seek redress for denied requests, such as [Morocco's Transparency Portal](#).

Several OGP member countries in the Africa and MENA region are currently implementing access to information commitments (such as [Ghana](#), [Morocco](#), [Senegal](#), [Tunisia](#)), providing opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. For more recommendations and examples see OGP's Right to Information [Fact Sheet](#) and [Policy Paper](#).

AREA 4. Fiscal Openness

Despite completion of a commitment under the [previous action plan](#), the MoF's public budget consultations are largely limited to informal meetings with the largest CSO. Given the [national importance](#) of anti-corruption efforts to both citizens and the government, the MoF could consider reformulating its commitment to institutionalize [public participation and accountability in budget processes](#). It could draw from examples of other OGP members to co-create a commitment focused on one of the following:

- **Establish public consultation mechanisms**, such as an online platform and meetings, to receive and respond to input from a range of stakeholders during planning, execution, and oversight of the budget, as included in [Nigeria's](#) 2019 commitment.
- **The Auditor General could work with civil society to establish mechanisms for public participation in audit processes**, as undertaken by the [Philippines](#), [Georgia](#), and [Colombia](#).
- **Provide accessible budget information to the public**, such as through a website with visualized information or a simplified citizens' budget, as exemplified by [South Africa's Vulekamali portal](#) and [Côte d'Ivoire's Citizens' Budget](#).
- **Partner with the National Assembly and Auditor General to publish information on expenditures and performance** such as budget performance assessments, government entities' outcomes and performance indicators, and audit reports. For example, [Lithuania](#) created a one-stop portal for information on revenues and expenditures across levels of government.