

OGP Strategy 2023-2028 | Emerging Strategic Directions

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About this Document

This document proposes emerging strategic directions for the Open Government Partnership for its 2023-2028 strategy, based on the lessons learned from ten years of evidence from OGP, and the community consultations carried out between May - August 2022. It is intended to be a discussion paper for the OGP Steering Committee (SC) Retreat to be held on October 13-14 and serve as the starting point for framing the community consultations in the next Phase. At its retreat, the OGP SC will validate the strategic directions and provide input on the options to take these forward. Based on their input, the proposed strategic directions and ways to operationalize them will be further refined and put to public consultation. Minutes of the SC meeting and next steps will be published on the OGP strategy webpage:

www.opengovpartnership.org/creating-ogps-future-together/

Executive Summary

This strategy process is the most exhaustive refresh for the Open Government Partnership since 2014 and a highly ambitious exercise. It seeks to incorporate a broad consultation with the open government community, findings from external consultations, evidence and lessons from the Independent Reporting Mechanism, analysis from OGP staff, and views from the OGP Steering Committee all amidst significant changes in global context.

The next stage of the strategy process is distilling these inputs into a set of strategic directions to guide the next five years of the partnership, which is what this document sets out to do. These strategic directions, once agreed, will in turn inform decisions about what activities should be prioritized in order for the partnership to achieve the highest possible impact over the next five years, within the resources available.

It has been reassuring that many of the participants in this strategy process have reiterated OGP's core strengths around government - civil society collaboration, real action independently monitored, innovation in different policy areas spreading around the world, and the building of a global open government community.

It is also clear that OGP has the potential to deliver more impact over the next five years, if as a partnership it can collectively focus on demonstrating in practice what a more transparent, participatory, inclusive and accountable government looks like in an era of increasing threats to democracy and civic space.

To be transformative, the ambition for OGP should be to spread open government norms far beyond the partnership, with innovative reforms and approaches incubated within OGP taking hold across governments at all levels and delivering tangible results in improving citizens lives and strengthening democracy.

To achieve that, it will take three major shifts in the next five years, all of which are underpinned by the strategies and activities summarized on page 11.

1. A more political partnership

Politics has always been integral to OGP's theory of change. It is when reform-minded leaders and ministers are in power that ambitious open government policies are more likely to

advance, and meaningful civil society engagement to take place. Geopolitical headwinds have meant those leaders are harder to find than when OGP was founded, but without high level political support it will not be possible to achieve many of OGP's goals.

This means in the next five years, building a broader base of political open government champions at all levels and branches of government that can represent the alternative to the trend of democratic decline and closed government in many parts of the world. This will require a rekindling of high-level political engagement across all OGP members, including the OGP Steering Committee stepping up and providing political leadership for the partnership, and not allowing OGP to join the list of international initiatives that have withered as political support wanes and interest is lost. Partnering more strongly with other global and regional initiatives and organizations to build this coalition together will be essential, including leveraging the many regional and global summits that now focus on democracy. The 2023 Global Summit in Estonia is an excellent opportunity to showcase this renewed political coalition for open government in action.

OGP will also need to act more proactively when political windows of opportunity open up to quickly ally with leaders who have the authorizing environment, and citizen backing, to take bold steps in a short period of time. In turn, these countries can provide inspiration and leadership for the whole partnership with credible, ambitious reforms and leadership that demonstrates the OGP model in action.

2. A more people-centered partnership

OGP has always aspired to be a partnership where diverse citizen voices influence policy, and those policies directly improve the lives of citizens. It is very positive that the coalition of leaders that makes up OGP today is vastly different from that of 2011. There are local leaders, parliamentarians, gender focused partners, youth organizations and many others who were not part of OGP's founding, and now have a major stake in the partnership. This is a huge testament to the growth of the open government community. However, it is insufficient to deliver more effective and sustainable solutions to citizens' everyday problems.

To do this we must invest more in the people - community, coalitions and leaders - that make bold change happen at the local, national and international level, and less on the process and mechanism of open government. Equipping them with the skills they need to go beyond the narrow OGP bubble and secure much wider support and engagement in government and civil society will help spread open government norms far beyond the OGP action plans. This includes targeted outreach to social movements in certain contexts where they are mobilizing on issues like corruption.

Citizen participation also needs to be a central component of what OGP members at the national and local level advance through their reforms. OGP Local can provide the space to demonstrate in practice how direct citizen participation can improve policies and results. Across the partnership, there should also be a collective continued effort to ensure that policies focused on transparency are complemented with participation and accountability elements.

3. A more inspiring partnership

OGP sits on a wealth of data, evidence and stories on how open government policies are co-created, implemented and deliver results for people that make a real difference. This is the main driver of OGP's theory of change on inspiration, innovation, peer learning and a global race to the top on a range of policy areas. In practice, though this has happened in too few policy areas and the real impact has been felt in too few countries. There is massive potential to expand this work so that OGP looks and feels like the home of inspiring content that truly influences, incentivizes and recognizes leaders in government and civil society across the partnership to take risks and innovate in their own context.

The rest of this paper outlines the strategic directions that can help to strengthen and broaden the partnership in these ways. At this stage, it will be helpful for the Steering Committee to keep in mind three overarching questions:

1. Do you think the strategic directions and ideas sufficiently respond to the OGP@10, OPM and consultation findings summarized in this document?
2. Do you think the strategic directions and ideas will add up to changing the culture of governments and in delivering different lived experiences for citizens?
3. Do you think the suggested activities under the strategic directions are things that OGP adds value to, or that others should be leading on?

Summary Table of Emerging Strategic Directions

This table provides a quick reference and top-level summary of the emerging strategic directions presented in further detail in Section 3.

Directions	OGP's current approach	Proposed shift and main goal
Action model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single action plan model for national members, supported by standardized rules and guidance • Piloting of new action plan models with OGP Local (2019) and Parliamentary Action Plans (2022) • Open government reforms outside action plans not captured, incentivized or recognized 	<p>Goal: Make the OGP action model more attractive, with less administrative burden to focus energy and resources on fostering ambition and innovation</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options of action models to choose from, based on capacity, momentum and high-level support. • Explicitly capturing, incentivizing and recognizing reforms beyond the action plan • Consider designing an action model for non-members
Advancing thematic ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal platform for and support to all countries and partners to advance their choice of policy areas/themes • Some focus thematic areas identified in the last 3Y plan to prioritize allocation of SU resources combined with annual chair priorities • Approach to fostering thematic ambition relies on encouragement and inspiration rather than setting expectations or challenges • Approaches and objectives for individual themes not always strategically tailored but more following the flow • Other OGP SU activities not consistently aligned with the focus themes 	<p>Goal: Contribute to significant, meaningful advances with visible results across the partnership on priority areas</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a more partnership-driven, rather than SU/SC driven approach to thematic priorities. • Continue to remain open for countries and partners to advance policy areas/themes of their choice, and pursue ambition on a few partnership-wide strategic focus areas • Set expectations for progress on focus areas from members through clear expectation setting. Approaches could vary from mandatory requirements to challenge-based approaches • Define success and needed approaches for each priority theme individually. • Align other SU/SC activities to support focus areas (e.g., leadership building, priorities in windows of opportunity, research, etc.)
Investing in leadership, inspiration and innovation to build a stronger and broader collective of open government reformers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer exchanges focused on building technical skill and knowhow and political buy-in • Nascent efforts on leadership building with pilot 2021 OGLC program - very well received and now extended to three new cohorts in 2022 • Wealth of stories, knowledge, data, and recommendations at OGP's disposal but potential still remains largely untapped. 'Self service' is not easy at this time. • Largely one way curation of content by the SU- although often done with partners - rather than community curation of content (OpenStories is a first step towards this) 	<p>Goal: Invest in building a long-term pipeline of leaders within and beyond OGP who can provide leadership and infuse open government approaches in different spheres of the public sector.</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bigger emphasis on building individual and collective leadership, adaptive, coalition building and foundational open government skills by expanding/refining OGLC, and over time working with schools of government and others to offer open government curricula. • OGP awards, recognition and other incentives more systematically geared towards incentivising and recognizing leadership • Investing in upgrading OGP's content development, curation and dissemination practices, with much bigger emphasis on it being community-driven rather than solely reliant on SU activities, resulting in a constant stream of high quality inspiring content.

Citizen participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Core open government value that is emphasized in action plan commitments, recommendations and communications. Central pillar of our narrative of democracy in action and trust building. ● Some good innovation and results from OGP members but not well mined and disseminated ● Not a standalone thematic priority or focus area, but prioritized across policy areas in OGP recommendations since 2016 (with particular emphasis on public services) 	<p>Goal: Invest in approaches that contribute to changing the culture of governments as it relates to being open and responsive to citizens. In this, define the clear role and value add OGP can bring.</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embed citizen participation clearly across all OGP strategies (leadership, action, thematic ambition, OGP Local etc.) and develop a standalone strategy for what OGP can do better/differently ● Bigger emphasis on learning, inspiration, building high-level political support ● Go beyond action plan commitments to also advance mainstreaming or institutionalizing of citizen participation across government.
Approach to windows of political opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Windows of opportunities factored into Support Unit selection of focus countries and country support services ● No systematic approach that connects a larger partnership-wide effort in responding to opportunities ● Lack of clarity on OGP role in connecting to social movements that might bring about change ● Focus has been on getting countries/local members to recommit to OGP and pursue ambitious commitments in their action plans 	<p>Goal: Ally with and empower reformers to embed open government across new policies and programs when political opportunities emerge.</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopt a partnership-driven, rather than SU driven approach to responding to windows of opportunity ● Invest in skills and capabilities of open government reforms to connect with social movements; invest in leadership capacities and skills of new reformers ● Provide an intensive, short burst of support in the early days, with a clear exit plan ● Not limit support to action plan process or commitments
OGP Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three-pillared strategy (approved in 2019): a) OGP Local, b) National-Local collaboration, c) Knowledge and learning platform ● Two major new intakes since 2019, with a current cohort of 106 but continued growth at this rate unsustainable at current resourcing. To date efforts on the remaining two pillars, still nascent. ● Integration of OGP Local across other OGP strategies in theory, but practice could improve 	<p>Goal: Make OGP Local the hotbed of innovation, ambition and results, harvest and share this back to the wider community and invest in building political leadership across levels of government.</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cap the OGP Local program at 100 (or similar number) with agile entry and exit to focus on champions and grow sustainably ● Selection of some countries for focused support based specifically on opportunities to strengthen national-local collaboration ● Integrate local more closely and systematically with other OGP strategies. Review and reconsider how OGP Local is reflected and served by OGP governance structures ● No radical shifts in approach overall
Global alliances, platforms, partnerships, events and political coalitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not explicitly recognized as a goal or objective in previous OGP strategies ● Approach is not systematic, relies on reactive or opportunistic response 	<p>Goal: Build a stronger ecosystem and movement for open government that goes beyond OGP and can deliver results.</p> <p>Shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit recognition of the importance of this role with better investment and more intentional approach on influencing, shaping and leveraging alliances, platforms, partnerships, events and political coalitions.

1. Context for Strategy 2023 - 2028

As OGP enters its second decade, it has grown in many ways that exceeded our founders' expectations. Our movement has shown pockets of results that the OGP community can be proud of, but authoritarian regimes and other forces are also pulling in the direction of closed governments. The successes are not yet adding up to changing the culture of governments nor in delivering better lives for citizens at scale.

There is a need and an opportunity for us to meet this moment, applying lessons learned in our first decade to ensure that the Partnership is fit for the future. Meeting this challenge will take a reinvigorated OGP that can help deliver on the promise of open government even beyond the scope of the Partnership itself. It is time to define new paths to impact that help us better realize the ambition of changing the culture of government and show that a different way of doing democracy is possible.

This section and section two below summarizes the lessons learned from the first decade of OGP and the major findings from the community consultations for developing the 2023-2028 strategy. Note, these are excerpts of longer reports that are linked in this document, and have been previously shared with the Steering Committee. The summaries are only intended to serve as easy references for Steering Committee members to draw linkages between what we knew heading into the process to develop the new strategy, what we are hearing through the consultations, and the potential partnership strategic directions presented in this document. **Readers familiar with these documents can [skip to section three](#).**

Starting Point: Lessons from the First Decade of OGP

In 2021, the [OGP Vital Signs report](#) provided an assessment of whether the OGP platform is working as intended—from action plan co-creation to results. The research validated the OGP model of co-creation and domestically owned action plans, but found several challenges remaining in achieving OGP's vision and mission. The major findings from the report are highlighted:

- **The OGP model of government-civil society co-creation works:** We found statistical evidence—for the first time—that engaging CSOs throughout the OGP process is a strong predictor of ambitious commitments, better implementation, and early results, even when controlling for other factors.
- **OGP processes are becoming more participatory.** More countries are establishing multi-stakeholder forums for dialogue. And in most countries, government officials no longer just inform or consult CSOs about the OGP process—they engage in back-and-forth dialogue.
- **Government offices leading OGP are becoming more stable.** Only about one in five countries experience a change in this office during the action plan cycle, compared to nearly half in the early days of OGP. This growing stability is associated with more early results.

- **However, major gaps in civil society involvement remain:** Government feedback to CSOs remains a challenge. When governments give feedback, they tend to have better action plans. Yet feedback is still not common. Fewer than half of OGP governments provide a reasoned response, i.e., an explanation of how public inputs were considered in the OGP process.
- **Institutional arrangements matter for OGP, and OGP lead institutions are seeing less turn over.** This paper found that a stable government office leading OGP is associated with stronger early results (i.e., changes in government practices during the action plan cycle). An increasing number of OGP countries have such an arrangement.
- **However, head of government involvement has declined.** Fewer heads of government are involved in the co-creation process. The lower the level of the government official involvement in co-creation processes may not necessarily imply that high-level political buy-in for the broader agenda has declined.
- **Action plans are becoming shorter but more diverse.** The number of open government issues covered by the average action plan has doubled compared to the early days of OGP. This suggests that action plans may be engaging a greater diversity of stakeholders.
- **However, action plan ambition is generally not improving.** This is concerning as the research found that ambition is the strongest predictor of real-world, early results. However, ambition varies widely depending on the policy area addressed by each commitment.
- **Rate of implementation has not changed, and income is the strongest predictor of action plan implementation.** Since the IRM began tracking this data, about two-thirds of all commitments are substantially or fully implemented by the end of the action plan period. The difference in the rate of implementation between the highest and lowest-income OGP countries is nearly 35%, even when controlling for other factors.
- **Advancing policy areas through OGP is associated with “real-world” improvements.** OGP countries that have made ambitious commitments across multiple action plans to disclose budgetary and beneficial ownership information have become more open than other OGP countries in these areas, based on third-party data.
- **Anti-corruption reforms show a strong return on investment.** Commitments related to anti-corruption topics consistently translate into early results. And these commitments are becoming more common, particularly ones related to beneficial ownership and open contracting.
- **Democratic freedoms pose an urgent challenge.** OGP countries continue to decline on third-party metrics related to civic space—particularly around the safety of activists and journalists—and few OGP commitments address these issues.

See the [full Vital Signs report](#) for detailed findings and supporting evidence.

In early 2022, the OGP funders-commissioned and Oxford Policy Management-led independent evaluation of OGP was published. This was an evaluation of the OGP’s core institutions, and the efforts of the OGP Support Unit (SU) in particular, with a focus on five national country members (Colombia, Kenya, Nigeria, Philippines and Ukraine) and two local government members (Elgeyo-Marakwet in Kenya and South Cotabato in the Philippines); and on three themes (Open Contracting, Beneficial Ownership Transparency and Civic Engagement). The findings of the evaluation, distilled into four issue areas, were as follows:

- **Relevance and resilience:** The evaluation looked into the relevance and resilience of the OGP platform in the face of internal and external shocks, and what may be done to increase resilience of the platform. Across the sampled locations, many government and civil society stakeholders articulate the strong relevance of the OGP platform in efforts towards more open government. However, with the rise of populist governments, closing civic space and broader democratic unraveling, the space for more open government is under threat. Such ‘external’ shocks threaten the resilience of open government reforms and OGP processes. The platform also faces on-going ‘internal’ shocks, such as when high ranking political OGP champions or committed civil servants leave office, which creates opportunities, but also risks. The evaluators highlighted three potential options for the way forward:
 - **Strengthening the open government movement through investing in people:** developing skills and capacities necessary for opening government, such as through nurturing leaders and ecosystems.
 - **Alignment of informal approaches to open government with OGP ways of working:** this approach focuses on de facto institutionalization of OGP through adherence to rules and processes over multiple action plan cycles, drawing on commitment from country level reformers without further formalization.
 - **Institutionalizing OGP:** The value of institutionalized approaches varies by context. It can provide a clear legal basis for maintaining OGP processes through political transitions, and a stronger basis for allocating public funds to open government reforms. It may also offer a stronger foundation for a whole of government approach to OGP, and a structured space for constructive dialogue between civil society and government. On the other hand, it does not provide a silver bullet - governments can and do break their own rules.
- **Engagement and inclusion of non-government stakeholders:** The evaluation explored engagement of civil society with the OGP platform across the different stages of action plan co-creation and implementation, and in different reforms and processes. It found a decrease in CSO engagement in the action plan implementation phase, but great potential for progress in this area. Discussion of ways forward highlights choices between:
 - **Processes which open government** – such as ‘broadening the base’ by enabling more diverse voices to engage with government processes, or by institutionalizing more inclusive ways of working within government and promoting broad responsiveness of government to civil society and citizens.
 - **Reforms which open government** – either through focusing (as a normative good) on reforms which respond to the priorities of marginalized groups, or by ensuring that reforms which are designed to open government (such as open

contracting and beneficial ownership) are properly informed by diverse perspectives.

- **Ambition and Implementation:** The evaluation explored what the OGP Support Unit in collaboration with country stakeholders and partners can do to enhance the effectiveness of their support to action plan implementation. The paper focused on the implementation phase, as much support and guidance to date has focused on co-creation. Four overarching ways forward were presented:
 - **Focusing on domestic mechanisms** such as strengthening MSF oversight of commitment implementation and promoting more civil society monitoring and engagement in the implementation stage.
 - **Using international drivers more in the implementation phase**, such as targeted use of OGP global events and communications to promote commitment implementation and leveraging the role of IRM in the implementation phase.
 - **Scaling up support to OGP priority themes**, concentrating on key areas of Support Unit added value, including brokering partnerships, and creating spaces for thought leadership and inspiration on priority policy themes.
 - **Support Unit assistance to strengthen domestic support for OGP thematic priorities**, focused on a small number of target commitments and countries/locals, through support such as expanding local partnerships, promoting domestic funding, and building reformer capacities and local civil society engagement
- **Connecting global and country engagement:** Finally, the evaluation explored the challenges of working across global, national and local levels. It found that some country actors feel left behind by the pace of change in the policy priorities promoted by OGP at global level. Conversely, opportunities exist for closer alignment between the levels. The evaluation also recognised the challenge of identifying policy themes which get traction at both international and domestic levels and pointed to substantial gains when this is done successfully, as is the case with beneficial ownership - where international and national engagements are helping to promote peer learning and a race to the top.
 - It suggested thinking in terms of ‘gears’ puts focus on the mechanisms to connect meaningfully across the levels. Central to this is OGP’s track record in building relationships, incentives and motivation for different actors, making maximum use of OGP’s access to, and creation of, global and regional spaces, as well as building on relationships with local and national actors to ensure that the platform responds to emerging priorities and opportunities in member countries.

Detailed findings of the OPM evaluation and practical implications for decision making can be found [here](#).

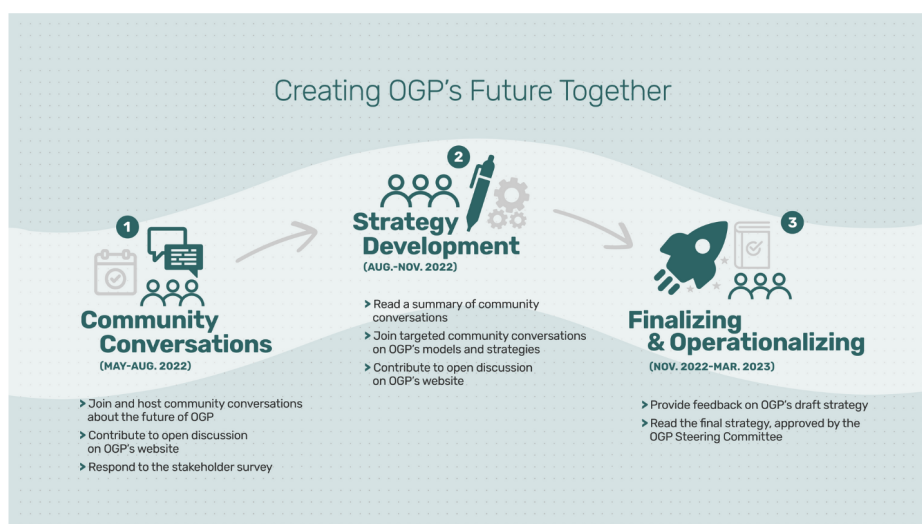
In addition to the above, the 2019 [IRM Refresh](#) and [OGP Local Strategy](#) development processes, and the 2021 [consultation on Refreshing OGP’s Participation and Co-creation](#)

[Standards](#), all provided insights into the ways in which OGP was delivering or falling short, with suggestions to make improvements. Most of these were taken into account in designing the updated strategies and standards that are in place today.

Collectively, these provided the starting point to shape the process and frame the community consultations for developing the 2023-2028 strategy.

2. 2023-2028 Strategy Development Process & Community Feedback

Ahead of Open Gov Week in May 2022, OGP launched the process to develop a new strategy for 2023-2028. The process will run through March 2023. There are three iterative phases. In the first phase, we examined the contributions of open government and OGP heading into the strategy period. In the second phase, we will explore the specific role OGP can play and the models and strategies it can use to make those contributions. And finally, in the third phase, we will develop the operating model needed to deliver the new strategy.



In the first phase, which concluded at the end of August, we received input through online and offline, synchronous and asynchronous channels, including a stakeholder survey, online and offline events, and a real-time online polling tool. Options were provided for any interested stakeholder to convene their own consultations within their country or local MSFs or networks that are not directly engaged with OGP. To date, between 800 - 1000 people have contributed to the process.

There are some clear trends and areas of convergence and divergence that have emerged through the consultations. These are detailed in the Phase One report that was published in late September. The executive summary is provided below.

- **Open government values and approaches are still vital, but OGP should have a more strategic focus in its second decade.** Heading into the consultations, there have been several debates at recent OGP fora on whether open government still has the resonance and appeal it did when OGP launched in 2011. The consultations show that indeed the enabling environment for open government has worsened in recent years - significantly

so, in many places - and there are real concerns around the priorities of political leaders and funders potentially shifting away towards other areas. However, what is also clear from the consultations is that the response to these trends requires a doubling down on the effort to advance transparent, accountable, participatory, and inclusive government, through smarter, more focused and strategic approaches, and renewed investment in the reformers leading the fight. That said, the consultations show that for open government and OGP to remain relevant, we need to move away from one-off, tokenistic approaches or pilots that wither away over time and mainstream more meaningful proactive disclosure, participation, and accountability across government. Participants also overwhelmingly emphasized the need for OGP to invest in deepening and expanding its work on citizen participation.

- **One way OGP can address democratic backsliding is by showcasing better ‘democracy-in-practice’:** Unsurprisingly, democracy and open government are seen as inextricably intertwined across the partnership, even as there are wide-ranging views on how closely OGP’s narrative should be linked to democracy. The impact of deteriorating enabling conditions for open government reforms to be advanced, take root, and be sustained has come through consistently. Consultations point to OGP showing the positive way forward: what better democracy can look like in practice through a renewed and much bigger emphasis on citizen participation in decision-making processes that impact people’s lives, and fostering dialogue at all levels to rebuild trust. There are some calls for OGP to become more stringent in its eligibility and membership requirements to maintain its credibility. Others point to the challenges of such an approach’s effectiveness given the current climate and emphasize the need to identify and support positive entry points and reformers, wherever they exist
- **OGP should remain a broad platform but focus on key policy areas:** One of the challenges OGP faced going into this process was one of its resources - both that of the partnership and the Support Unit and Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) - being distributed thinly across too many priorities and policy areas. Here, the consultations have shown that OGP should continue to remain a broad platform that members and partners can use to advance their goals, but within that identify a few areas of strategic focus that the membership is incentivised to take action on in the period of the new strategy and where the Support Unit can dedicate more of its energy. How OGP would identify these areas and the particular incentives and support members would need to deliver will need to be looked into as this process continues. In the conversations to date, the policy areas that have been mentioned most frequently as areas where OGP should make a contribution include: democracy, anti-corruption, digital governance, climate change, and public services, in addition to the cross-cutting focus on citizen participation.
- **OGP can increase impact by broadening and supporting the coalition of open government reformers.** With the headwinds open government reformers are facing, consultations point to the following as areas where OGP may need to further invest to build a stronger global coalition for open government and deliver greater impact:

- **Strengthen and grow the community of reformers.** Consultations have clearly pointed out that OGP should not expand for expansion's sake, particularly where there is no genuine appetite for open government reforms. However, in order to push back on the forces pulling for closed governments, there is a recognition that the open movement will need to grow and get stronger. There are calls to do so by: a) investing in and recognizing the leadership and other skills and capabilities of open government reformers, b) growing the community of reformers at national, regional and local levels, including from non-eligible and near-eligible countries by diffusing open government practices and principles in partnership with others; c) strengthening ties with other global and regional platforms/initiatives/fora to offer a domestic action element for pledges and commitments; and d) supporting the community to mobilize and engage with citizens and movements. Investing in a much broader spectrum of political support - mayors, members of parliament, ministers (OGP minister and others) and Heads of State and Government - will build support for our agenda while also making us less vulnerable to political changes.
- **Double down on the investments in OGP Local.** Across conversations, the potential of OGP Local as an accelerator of progress came up frequently. This was both within the context of the decline of political leadership at the national level and the potential for deepening reforms that directly impact citizens' lives given the mandates of subnational governments.
- **Seize windows of political opportunity.** Consultations have pointed to the need for OGP to be able to respond more rapidly and effectively as a partnership when political windows of opportunity emerge. While OGP's current approach on selecting and servicing focus countries does take this into account, there are concerns that the partnership as a collective does not act often nor fast enough, or that reforms that take place in such scenarios remain disconnected from OGP, or the level and intensity of support and who this is directed to falls short.
- **Strengthen incentives for stronger open government performance.** What is clear is that in order to get different results, OGP will need to rethink the incentives it provides to members and individual reformers. The following have emerged as some areas of consideration:
 - **Identify political incentives and value propositions that work.** The need for better understanding how OGP can secure political support for this agenda in the current climate, and developing options for positioning and value propositions, evidence and storytelling needed to appeal to priorities and interests of political leaders in diverse contexts came through consistently. This was accompanied by incentivising progress for all reformers through awards and other forms of recognition.
 - **Establish norms, benchmarks, standards or maturity models:** Contributions from across conversations point to the potential for OGP to take a more intentional role in advancing open government norms through benchmarking, standard-setting or establishing maturity models and combining that with positive incentives (awards, recognition, visibility, access to leadership and skill development, enhanced support) and disincentives (stricter eligibility and participation criteria, and setting

expectations of progress over time). Both representatives of civil society and the public service indicated the value of being able to point to such norms, benchmarks, standards, or maturity models in understanding and advocating for what progress from status quo entails.

- **Reassess the incentives set by OGP's rules and standards:** Consultations have pointed to some of the unintended consequences, gaps in design, or incentives and disincentives set by OGP's current action plan model, and the accompanying rules and standard. These include: inclusion of smaller and more inconsequential commitments rather than broader ambitious reforms that may be implemented over longer time frames; failures to recognize open government reforms or innovation taking place outside of OGP action plans; running into problems with low- and high-capacity environments; challenges in aligning with other government processes and timelines; challenges posed for civil society by needing to legitimize a 'whole of government exercise' in certain context, rather than being able to work with genuine reformers in the system; lack of entry points for catalyzing and recognized advances in open government in near and non-eligible countries/locals. There are calls to move from the current one-size-fits-all approach to potentially a menu of different options, with added flexibility in some areas, stricter requirements in others, and improved guidance and support across all.

The detailed Phase 1 report is available at: bit.ly/phase-1-report

The goal as we enter into the second phase of the strategy development process is to build on what we know and have heard, to identify pathways that enable OGP to have greater impact in its second decade, and make it fit for purpose to meet current and future challenges.

3. Emerging Strategic Directions for the Partnership

Boiling down the depth, breadth and nuance of everything that we heard through the consultations is no insignificant challenge. At this stage, based on what we have heard so far, **the following areas are emerging as promising potential strategic directions of travel for OGP in the next five years.** For each, there is a section on the rationale for pursuing the direction, some early thinking of options in pursuing the direction, and strategic questions for SC consideration

1. Moving from a one-size-fits all to a menu of options model of action

Rationale: Phase one consultations have clearly emphasized that one of OGP's unique value propositions is its model of co-creation, action, and accountability. Action plans in OGP are intended to be "the product of a co-creation process in which government and civil society define ambitious commitments to foster transparency, accountability, and inclusion". While there is a great appreciation for the action side of OGP and a clear message to keep it as a critically important part of OGP, consultations also point to a desire to make (further) changes to the current action plan model and

process - and offer upgraded guidance and services - to make it fit for purpose for a wider range of situations.

Some of the limitations of the current model that are mentioned include:

- smaller and more inconsequential commitments rather than broader ambitious reforms that may be implemented over longer time frames
- failures to recognize open government reforms or innovation taking place outside the OGP action plan
- running into problems of securing credible, ambitious plans that can be implemented both with low- and high-capacity environments
- challenges in aligning with other government processes and timelines
- challenges for civil society legitimizing a 'whole of government exercise' in certain contexts, rather than being able to work with genuine reformers
- a lack of entry points for catalyzing and recognized advances on open government in near- and non-eligible countries/locals

Meeting the different needs in different contexts, that also change over time, presents significant challenges for continuing to maintain a one-size-fits all approach. In recent years, the OGP Steering Committee already approved a series of changes to the current action plan model to make it more flexible, adaptable and effective to members. Some of these changes aimed to help OGP processes align better with government budget cycles, create more windows of action plan delivery to increase submission rates, and provide more flexible durations of action plans to encourage longer term and ambitious reforms to be included as commitments.

It is still early to see if these changes bring the anticipated results, or if more is needed to address the limitations mentioned. The current approach - even with the changes made - is at its core still an incremental approach that aims at bringing an increasing number of state actors and reformers into the process and enabling them to make progress over time. OGP's experience and the consultations highlighted a few specific needs that might need other approaches. For example: a) for moments of political transition or when support for open government is narrow; b) when there is an express desire to work on a few focused, more transformative reforms at a time; c) if a member is ready to move to making open government the default operating norm.

To incentivize open government energy and ambition, both inside and outside OGP, a few ideas are presented for consideration. It is important to note that for any reform or plan to be considered an open government reform or plan and be recognized by OGP it needs to meet two criteria: a) it must address one or more of the open government values (transparency, participation, accountability) and b) it must be shaped and delivered using OGP's approach of co-creation, action and accountability.

Options for consideration: OGP could consider different options for such a shift. For example, this could include options for:

- **Explicitly capturing and recognizing action taking place outside the OGP process and plan:** OGP should make an explicit effort to get better at

capturing, recognizing, and sharing inspiring open government action happening outside the OGP process and plans. This would entail country stakeholders capturing and reporting on promising open government efforts being made outside the OGP process or plan, along with OGP recognizing noteworthy and ambitious open government reforms (whether through action plans or outside) through awards, summits, [OpenStories](#) or other mechanisms. This could include recognizing major national policies with embedded transparency-participation elements, co-created with citizens.

- **Consider improvements to rules as well as guidance and services:** Both for the current model as well as any future models that might emerge from the strategy process it would be good to carefully look at the rules (and the monitoring) to ensure they are fit for purpose. More importantly, a fresh look at the provided OGP guidance and services might help ensure that OGP processes foster energy and ambition, rather than create unnecessary bureaucratic burdens. The ambition here should be to make the platform more attractive and easier to use, rather than lowering the bar of participation.
- **Consider alternative approaches to complement the current action plan model:**
 - For members with low capacity, low political support or political support limited to a sectoral pocket, aspiring members or members that want to thematically focus and go deep, it might be interesting to have a more **narrow/focused action plan** that does not expect members to develop a broad action plan across government. For example, countries that are only able to commit to a small group of specific actions. They would be expected to develop a **smaller action plan or set of commitments with targeted co-creation**, they would receive targeted Support Unit support and follow a different assessment approach.

This could work for countries struggling to commit to the whole OGP process (e.g., capacity challenges) or for countries that are near eligible that want to use the OGP approach to become eligible and test the OGP approach without yet committing to the whole model. It could also provide civil society the opportunity to work with genuine reformers in contexts of significant decline in civic space where participating in a whole-of-government action plan process may not be desirable. Additionally, it could serve as a way to encourage countries to concentrate resources towards few but impactful commitments or reforms that could be focused on a single or a set of themes or sectors. Part of this is already possible under the current model, but in this way it could be incentivised and supported better.

- For members where there is a strong open government momentum across (all levels of) government, it might be interesting to look beyond the current model towards **open government strategies**. Findings of the OECD Open Government Reviews and Scans over the past number of

years show that initiatives that aim to foster the open government principles are mostly designed and implemented in a scattered and isolated manner, without building the critical mass needed to create a full-fledged and shared government vision of openness and / or links to broader national policy objectives. Holistic and integrated open government strategies can address this challenge while also ensuring the necessary high level political support. They do this by providing an umbrella policy framework that aligns all national strategies and initiatives that are linked to openness under a coherent medium- to long-term narrative. Flavors of what that could look like:

- **Development of longer-term open government strategies:** This could work in settings where there is enough support to move to a whole of government approach in which open government becomes the norm across the executive. This could be either mainstreamed within government planning and implementation processes or conducted as part of the domestic OGP process or dialogue.
- **Designing an open government approach to tackle three to five-big societal challenges.** Again, this could be either mainstreamed within government planning and implementation processes or conducted as part of the domestic OGP process and within the current action plan model.
- A variation to this could be an approach of **supporting a vibrant open government ecosystem and community across all levels and branches of government** (i.e.. Open State), each making their own open government reforms and action (plans). This would not necessarily need to result in a single action plan, but coordination and peer support could bring synergies and complementary action.

Note: the options above are presented for illustrative purposes only and not meant to preempt future options. Fleshing these out, refining and tweaking them, anchoring them on existing contexts and needs and subjecting them to stress tests will be needed.

In pursuing a “menu of options” model of action, OGP would need to consider exactly how it can maintain its emphasis on co-creation and accountability across any options provided; how it can prevent the risk of members picking “the lowest hanging fruits”, open washing or inadvertently creating groupings of countries along economic or political lines; whether members can pursue more than one option at a given time; and how OGP can (continue to) encourage raising the bar or floor on a range of crucial open government norms across its membership and track progress in doing so. There would also need to be consideration of the changes to ongoing communication and support requirements as governments and MSFs decide on the appropriate framework for their participation.

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- Is this the right direction of travel - from one-size-fits-all to a menu-of-options - for catalyzing action?
- How best can OGP enhance the likelihood of fostering ambition and innovation through a broader range of action (plan) models? Should OGP have options to offer to non-members?
- How can we best guard against open washing within a more flexible framework for action plans and membership?

2. Advancing ambition across the partnership on strategic thematic areas

Rationale: Phase one consultations clearly point to the community's broad agreement that OGP should uphold one of its central design principles - of a country-owned framework and process of determining priorities - and remain open to action across a broad spectrum of policy areas, acknowledging that members will have different priorities and maturity levels depending on their context. Secondly, the consultations also highlighted the uneven progress on different thematic policy areas. Some have advanced substantially over the years and the baseline has moved on key open government topics like, for example, access to information, open data or procurement. Others have shown less progress. Thirdly, ambition levels of OGP action plans have not gone up substantially over the last decade.

One of OGP's founding design choices was recognizing that countries may have different starting points but can use OGP to strive towards making continuous improvements, and use that to create a race-to-the top. However, it has become evident that this has not borne materially significant results on raising the bar, or raising the floor across the partnership.

Consultations suggest that if OGP does not update its expectations, improve its platform, change its approaches or manage to incentivize more ambition, there is a risk of (relative) stagnation or backsliding, that the positive reputation and brand associated with OGP will be diluted, and that reformers will likely see OGP as a less relevant platform to change the culture of government or address critical policy areas.

Suggested improvements to advance thematic ambition: Consultations and experience point to several options OGP could consider in taking a more intentional role in advancing open government norms. Suggestions here include:

- **While remaining open to action across a broad spectrum of policy areas, as a partnership prioritize a subset of paramount and promising themes for the next five years for advancing ambition on.** These could include the themes flowing from the consultation - anti-corruption, tackling climate change, public participation, digital governance - themes relevant to addressing democratic backsliding. It could also include others that have shown promising results in

terms of growth, ambition or early results in OGP - such as fiscal openness and justice. There could also be variation in regional emphasis within the selected themes and a cross-cutting emphasis on inclusion across them all.

- **Since each of these themes will have different starting points, challenges and supporting ecosystems, OGP's objectives and approaches would need to be tailored for each.** For example, for climate - signaled as a priority theme in consultations and where open government approaches are well known but not matched in terms of action by members - an initial objective might be defined as having ten members show the potential of open government for climate through innovative citizen engagement actions that are captured and shared widely to inspire others to follow. On open contracting and procurement - a more mature field - success might be defined as getting all members to advance to the next level in their respective contexts, with an emphasis on peer exchange and advancing adoption and implementation of existing open contracting norms and standards, possibly also through adding some additional thematic requirements for eligibility. Whilst in a relatively new area like tackling misinformation and disinformation, OGP will need to work with a set of partners and countries interested in addressing the issue to further define and develop open government approaches, and establish norms or standards that can over time become universal, and later identify ways to encourage uptake and implementation.
- **Refine and streamline approaches to support ambition, collectively delivered by the partnership.** Over the years, OGP has experimented with many approaches for supporting thematic ambition. These include thematic coalitions, publications like the Open Gov Guide (an in-depth guide written by expert organizations, on the steps that governments can and are taking, on different open government topics, based on their starting point), peer exchanges, norms and standards, technical (implementation) support, thematic grants, awards, and using global platforms to spur domestic action. Going forward these would be refined and streamlined based on what is prioritized in the new strategy. Additionally other areas emerging in the new strategy e.g., leadership and capacity development, acting on windows of political opportunity or creating new models of action inside and outside OGP will also need to complement the areas identified for thematic ambition.
 - For instance, OGP's coalition on justice has been an excellent peer learning space across a variety of entry points, but going forward, action may be strengthened by identifying specific topics for collective action, including through competitive elements, and/or contributing to the establishment of standards on open justice.

In order to encourage partnership-wide action, OGP could:

- **Launch campaigns and/or collective challenge-based approaches** with concrete targets for collective achievement as a partnership, as was done in the case of *Break the Roles* campaign. It could be done on a single topic or by

asking members - for example - to advance on three areas from a list of ten stretches, with built-in incentives.

- **Explore norms and standards - from voluntary to mandatory - to advance thematic ambition.** Options to do so could include:
 - **Promoting benchmarks, maturity models or standards:** OGP could more visibly promote existing third-party benchmarks, maturity models or standards. The aim here could be to provide a clearer picture of what ambition can look like at different starting points, with illustrative examples and approaches that can be applied to diverse contexts. This could build on the Open Gov Guide work. Existing data on where members are on beneficial ownership transparency for instance would be conducive to such an approach (e.g., requires data collection, publishes data, publishes structured data, covers trusts, etc.) For areas where no existing benchmarks, maturity models or standards exist, the partnership could be challenged to (select and convene expert stakeholders) to develop these. This could include standards around what climate or justice data must be publicly available.
 - **Coalition-driven approaches for establishing or advancing norms or standards:** This could build on the approach used for beneficial ownership (through the Beneficial Ownership Leadership Group, and other associated efforts). This would rely on a model of partnership between thematic partners, OGP members and the OGP SC/SU to build new coalitions or strengthen existing ones with the aim of encouraging countries to sign up to and commit to implement standards. Where there are no existing standards, the coalitions could work to establish or promote norms, or work towards the development of standards. The strength lies here in peer exchange and peer pressure.
 - **Prescribing requirements and raising the bar for maintaining membership status:** OGP could consider strengthening criteria for entry and maintaining membership status in OGP through expanding the scope of what is covered by the eligibility criteria - for example, adding criteria on justice, gender or open procurement. It could also do so by establishing time-bound expectations for improvement on existing eligibility criteria or other open government metrics. For example, having an access to information law could be the lowest expectation, with proactive transparency approaches becoming the more advanced expectation. There would have to be (visible) consequences for not meeting requirements.
 - **Rankings and indicators:** This could entail OGP developing rankings or indicators for select or a range of open government topics to enable comparisons between members. Use data to incentivize progress and help members identify and address their gaps through ambitious commitments.

The ideal way forward to advance thematic ambition will be a combination of the ideas presented above. Three principles underpinning the right balance will be:

- **Prioritizing incentives above disincentives.** Existing disincentives have been largely ineffective in influencing behavior (e.g., procedural review), there are community concerns about too many rules and requirements in OGP already, and there is general agreement that incentives have been underutilized (e.g., no real sense of competition or collective goals for most thematic areas, but not all).
- **Setting expectations rather than only aspirations:** The community consultations clearly point to strong demand for expectations of OGP members around advancing key open government norms. As a result, soft approaches alone — like awards, campaigns, and coalitions — will not be enough. Even if the consequences are minimal, setting expectations for member progress in tackling key policy areas ideally must be part of the way forward.
- **Balancing a global vs. country-driven reform process:** Setting those expectations requires moving away from a purely country-driven reform process. However, the clear consensus is that the co-creation process is a critical component of the OGP model, so a delicate balance is required. Just as the recent EITI evaluation recommends that EITI adapt the rigid, global EITI Standard model to enable context-specific reforms, so too should OGP consider moving from the anything-goes-approach to one that incentivizes action on global norms.

In pursuing any of these options, or some combination thereof, OGP would need to consider how the focus policy areas will be identified; the political and other incentives that would need to be created to generate uptake; how it can mitigate the risk of distorting country ownership and domestic accountability; and, how it will account for different starting points and different economic and political realities? It would also need to consider its own role vis-a-vis that of partners or similar initiatives and take into account how it can optimize the collective resources of the partnership and the Support Unit.

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- Is this the right direction of travel for advancing ambitious progress on key open government reform areas?
- How can we best balance our approach of country-owned processes to define priorities and commitments with setting partnership-wide expectations for members to make progress on key, globally relevant, open government policies?
- What are the types of incentives or disincentives that can prove effective in getting traction, based on your context/experiences?

- Is there an appetite to explore norms, maturity models or standards - from voluntary to mandatory - to advance thematic ambition? Which suggested option is most promising across the SC?

3. Investing in leadership, inspiration and innovation to build a stronger and broader collective of open government reformers

Rationale: Consultations point to strong support for investing in the ability of reformers to deliver by building their commitment, knowledge, skills and leadership capabilities. Open gov (approaches) are often not known or attractive enough for public officials or politicians to adopt. This is even more pertinent in the difficult political environment that reformers in many contexts need to navigate. Furthermore, the consultations show that skills needed to embed co-creation and open government as the default of how government works need to be further developed in the public service, across contexts.

While peer exchange and learning – focusing on sharing knowledge and knowhow, and technical assistance through partners – have for long been part of the OGP offering, efforts to do so in a systematic way that builds a broader range of skills and capabilities are nascent. In 2021, OGP launched the Open Government Leadership Collaborative, a pilot cohort of 22 government leaders across regions. This pilot sought to build individual and collective leadership capacity of reform leaders and received very positive feedback, based on which it is being expanded to three regional cohorts in 2022. Consultations also point to the need for OGP to invest much more in unlocking its assets – the examples and stories, the data, the evidence, the innovation and the network – and making them much easier to access and use for a range of audiences and through a range of formats.

Options for consideration to make this shift include the following. Note these are not mutually exclusive approaches.

- **Investing in the individual and collective capacity of reformers:** To spread open government as a norm, investing in people is a key driver to achieve scale and deliver ambition action.
 - **An initial focus could be on scaling the Open Government Leadership Collaborative** at a more regular frequency, aimed at developing leadership (leading self, others and for impact) and technical (e.g., co-creation, thematic, designing participation approaches, connecting to movements) skills for core community leaders. This is a branded program that OGP will (primarily) design and directly deliver as OGP and will include a certification scheme (for quality control and recognition). The audience would be emerging leaders, senior bureaucrats, civil society leaders, (junior) ministers, reformers in other sectors, with potential to inspire or move open government reforms forward. Approaches could be tailored to sub-audiences. A key priority will be to purposefully select

regional-thematic cohorts of potentially influential leaders and partners that can advance ambitious reforms. A key aim here would be to build and support cohorts of leaders that can drive change in their contexts.

- **To go to scale over time, it could involve more wholesale approaches such as designing and offering open government curricula to build skills and knowledge** at scale through efforts such as partnerships with schools of government, public policy and political academies. The emphasis would be to grow the community, exposing new actors to open government thinking and approach, equipping future leaders that may not have otherwise been aware of/skilled in open government approaches, and creating networks of alumni that have participated in open government and OGP courses and bring those skills and knowledge into their domain of work. The curriculum would focus on core open government approaches, knowledge, value propositions, experiences, as well as skills needed to deliver (e.g., coalition building, participatory approaches). This could build on work done by Spain and others on incorporating open government skills and practices in their core civil service curricula and also be used to encourage other countries to adopt similar approaches. OGP could also consider certification as an incentive. Considerations include also offering these as public goods (e.g., massive open online courses or MOOCs) or offering paid courses. The ultimate aim here would be to ensure the diffusion of open government skills across government and beyond.
- Across both, this would aim to contribute to **cultivating a stronger movement for open government by investing in the capacity of open government reformers to engage new supporters, connect with social movements and build an open government movement**. This would include building necessary leadership, motivations, and capacities of open government reformers to engage others, consequently supporting the organic development of a larger and more diverse open government movement, with more reach, influence and collective power.
- Additionally, **OGP could invest in creating better opportunities for peer-to-peer learning** and mentoring/coaching/twinning programs for community-driven or led approaches to this work. Importantly, OGP will need to invest in supporting and leveraging these emerging communities for results.
- **Recognizing and inspiring reformers through rewards and challenges:**
Building on a strong existing basis and a rich experience, the idea would be to be more deliberate about all the opportunities and experience we have to recognize reformers. This could involve:
 - A consistent annual awards program focused on reforms and reformers to incentivize and recognize progress.

- Using throughout the year existing comms products and/or peer learning platforms to create a range of visibility opportunities to showcase innovations, success and leaders - established and rising. For example, faces of open gov, reformer of the month, podcast feature, contributing to [OpenStories](#).
 - More deliberately offering/brokering speaking opportunities at OGP and partner events, including for emerging (youth) leaders.
 - Offering opportunities to take part in our leadership training programs (e.g., OGLC) and more deliberately curating a pipeline for leadership opportunities in OGP and the wider open gov community (e.g., SC, SU, International Experts Panel (IEP), Ambassadors).
- **Co-creating, curating and disseminating content for inspiration with and for the community:** Building on existing efforts, people and skills, create a much stronger ‘conveyor belt’ of practical and inspirational content with and for the wider community that meets their diverse needs and is easy to access. The material can be used for a wide range of activities and services across the partnership. Needs include inspiring decision makers, recognizing reforms and reformers, facilitating advocacy and design of commitments, shaping curriculums, feeding OGP communication, helping to prepare for meetings and outreach efforts, measuring and communicating success and failure. The materials will find its way back to the community via a range of products that could include an online compendium of examples, stories and innovations (e.g., [OpenStories](#)), newsletters, podcasts, case studies, publications (e.g., skeptic guide, Open Gov Guide, handbooks), curriculums, websites, speeches. The key here is to be more deliberate, more consistent, more strategic and produce with different audiences in mind. And to do it at a bigger scale (of impact).

Note: The third idea is both a standalone option and a backbone needed for achieving some of the other strategic directions. A second backbone needed for success across the strategic directions is to institutionalize the management and servicing of OGP’s extensive network of reformers (e.g., (former) SC, ambassadors, envoys, key CSO leaders, political champions, (former) POCs, OGLC participants). In pursuing any of these and other options, OGP would need to consider the resources available to pilot and grow this work, the proportion of available resources that are allocated to fulfilling this role, what is done by OGP versus what is done by others, and how these options are designed such that they still maintain focus on catalyzing action directly or indirectly even as the primary focus is on building skills and capabilities.

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- Is this the right direction of travel for OGP? How could OGP measure impact and returns-on-investment in this area of work?
- Given the potentially limitless demand for building and investing in capabilities and skills, on which capabilities and skills - and which target group - should OGP focus its energy and resources? And how could OGP incentivise leaders to pass on their skills and capabilities to

other reformers and help build a new generation of leaders? Are there other options to scale?

- What types of content and tools (e.g., research, stories and examples, data, value propositions) do you need from OGP to help your efforts?
- What would better incentivize change in your context (e.g., skills, knowledge, recognition, awards, media exposure)?

4. Rethinking OGP's approach to and investments in citizen participation

Rationale: Across consultations, deepening and expanding work on citizen participation has surfaced as the most important contribution area for OGP. Participation is a core OGP value, a precondition for open government, an important contributor to co-creation and an area that OGP has advocated for since its inception.

Consultations and research have highlighted the positive results of numerous layers of *civil society engagement in OGP*, even as there is room for improvement. However, the emphasis has been on not enough progress having been made on realizing meaningful, inclusive *citizen participation through OGP* and that, in some places, participation is being constrained by closing civic space. Most OGP policy recommendations include measures on strengthening participation and there are many scattered good and innovative examples throughout the partnership's history, for example, around citizen budgeting, oversight of procurement, feedback loops around services, citizens' assemblies, and on institutionalizing citizen engagement. Yet, clearly expectations are not met and successful exercises in citizen participation are not often enough being translated into more systemic changes in how people influence and engage in the decisions that affect them including institutional reforms that enable consistent citizen participation at scale. This is likely, in part, due to OGP having not invested in citizen participation to the same level as other topics, but there is a need to identify what level and focus of investment is needed to make a systemic impact.

There is clearly a demand for people to be able to turn to OGP to understand what innovations and good practice can look like in a diverse range of contexts and for OGP to play a more substantial role with the open government community in working out how to unlock the transformative potential of citizen participation.

Considerations: Consultations point to citizen participation needing to be a core focus for OGP in the future, however they have not clearly identified a specific role for OGP to play. Defining a clear role and value add for the partnership that would complement what already exists and put us on a path to more impact on the topic will be a critical first step. There are some potential avenues for strengthening OGP's contribution in this area below but, importantly, these are not mutually exclusive options and this is an area which needs to be further developed with the Steering Committee, throughout Phase two of the strategy process and potentially into year one of the Strategy.

- **Developing a specific OGP “citizen participation strategy”:** OGP’s Strategy could recognize the increased focus on citizen participation and the initial investment could be in the development of a specific strategy to go deeper on what enables countries to open up and sustain inclusive and engaged participation in government (this would be an example of the “mini theories of change” suggested in the OPM Evaluation) and incentivize countries to advance such reforms. This could focus on advancing mainstreaming/institutionalizing citizen engagement across government, or on specific high value sectors where participation is critical (e.g., climate, service delivery, procurement monitoring), as noted below and could explore other areas of OGP’s added value. This may end up with some standalone activity and integrating a focus across OGP, as below.
- **Explicitly prioritizing a focus on citizen participation across OGP strategies:** This could involve a specific focus on the mindsets, capabilities and practices of engaging with citizens in the leadership development work of OGP, a priority thematic focus supporting a coalition to raise political ambition for example on institutionalizing participation, a specific focus within OGP Local, a storytelling and communications focus on examples and a strengthened focus on quality of participation in accountability processes within OGP.
- **OGP facilitating inspiration, recognition and learning** across the open government community to drive commitment and innovation on citizen participation. This approach would recognize that changing the conditions for more meaningful and inclusive citizen participation is not a technical but a highly adaptive and political exercise. OGP’s role could be to walk alongside, connect, and support reformers who were committed to trying to achieve systemic change in participation and to reflect on and share their efforts. The aim would be to bolster the commitment and resolve of reformers and enable them and the broader community to learn about what it takes to create changes at scale in citizen participation and apply those lessons in their own contexts.
- **Building political understanding and support** for involving citizens in decision-making: A common barrier to meaningful citizen participation is a lack of political understanding or ownership of citizen participation processes. This is an issue that has been highlighted by officials and civil society as an area where OGP could help to unlock reforms. OGP’s role could be to help give ministers and senior officials greater exposure to citizen participation reforms, as well as recognition and reward for their role in realizing meaningful citizen participation in decision-making.
- **Supporting institutional capacity and cultural change in government:** Another common barrier to meaningful citizen participation is that governments do not have institutional capacity or cultures that are conducive to involving citizens in decision-making. This is an area that some OGP members have attempted a variety of reforms, including creating toolkits and

guidelines (e.g., Australia, Estonia, Morocco, New Zealand); establishing hubs and centers of good practice (e.g., France, Italy); developing common tools, methods and platforms (e.g., Estonia, Finland); initiating training programmes (e.g., Ireland, Spain); building engagement competencies into role descriptions; introducing citizen participation requirements into law (e.g., Ghana); and requiring citizen participation reports to accompany new legislation to Parliament (e.g., Slovak Republic). OGP's role could be to help identify the most effective steps towards institutional change, facilitating peer exchange and building the leadership capacity of those implementing institutional reforms, and integrating citizen participation into wider open government curricula (e.g., via OGLC).

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- How important is strengthening citizen participation to achieving open government?
- What level of priority and investment should OGP be making in citizen participation (vis-a-vis other topics for example)?
- What role(s) is OGP best placed to play in enabling stronger citizen participation?

5. Acting on political windows of opportunity

Rationale: Consultations have unsurprisingly surfaced that advancing open government has become an uphill task in the current environment of democratic backsliding and decline of civic space, and the lack of a significant mass of high level political leaders supporting and driving the agenda. The OGP Steering Committee, Support Unit and wider partnership have a critical role to play in the thinking through the types of political engagement that will have the most impact.

OGP's own experience - and external evaluations - have reinforced the need for political support as one of the most important drivers of change to co-create and implement ambitious reforms. Naturally, with 77 countries involved in OGP at national and/or local level political interest will fluctuate meaning OGP needs to be strategic and agile in more quickly identifying windows of opportunity and acting upon them. These might include an election where reform minded politicians take office, a change of Head of Government or Minister responsible for the open government agenda, an external crisis or shock that resets the policy-making environment or opportunities created by social movements and pressure from civil society.

The consultations have reinforced this view that OGP must have the ability to move more quickly, including not being tied down by the action plan model and rules. While OGP Support Unit's current approach on selecting and servicing focus countries does take this into account alongside other factors like the strength of the ecosystem and funder interest, there are concerns that the partnership as a collective does not act often nor fast enough, or that reforms that take place in such scenarios remain disconnected from OGP, or the level and intensity of support and who this is directed to falls short. This does not mean that OGP should only focus on these political windows of opportunity. Other strategic approaches in this document cover the types

of activities that should be prioritized at other moments in the “windows of opportunity lifecycle (before, during, and after a window emerges)”, for example, building a leadership pipeline, strengthening civil society and preventing backsliding.

Elements of a renewed partnership-wide approach could include a combination of the following:

- **Rapid response approaches:** Designing rapid response approaches to engaging countries /local members where a new government, minister or other significant change of context (e.g., a political crisis) opens up opportunities for progress. This could include options to create a time-bound rapid response unit or team, in partnership with others, possessing requisite knowledge and skills to provide or broker support.
- **Proactive outreach and support to social movements driving the change (if, any):** This could include building the skills of reformers from government and civil society to connect to social movement leaders and include them in the co-creation of a reform agenda; training for social movement leaders on engaging with open government approaches and working with governments (if and where such skills are lacking); and proactively identifying and sharing knowledge and resources on the specific open government opportunities in that particular context. An example of where some of this work was attempted was after the Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine, where anti-corruption protests connected with civil society to push for reforms in the new government. In the case of Guatemala, however, anti-corruption protests did not connect with OGP actors and an opportunity to advance ambitious reforms in OGP was missed.
- **Deliberate approach to political transitions** Building on experience to date to develop a more deliberate approach to welcoming new political leaders/governments to OGP, having tailor made value propositions, and peer-to-peer conversations (e.g., with SC ministers).
- **Peer and partner support:** Dedicated peer support on difficult reforms in these windows and partnering between the Steering Committee, donors and others to provide support.
- **Recognition and incentives:** Aligning incentives through OGP recognition programs, events and communications to support reformers from these countries on their journeys, and provide visibility and encouragement. This asks for recognition and incentive approaches to include forward looking options (e.g., recognition of promise/potential and not just past achievements).
- **Political outreach:** Ensure Steering Committee leadership outreach to political leaders in these windows to encourage and support. Some have also suggested informal outreach by the broader ecosystem of stakeholders to opposition parties prior to elections where transitions are expected.

- **Mobilizing support together with partners:** Work with multilateral, bilateral and thematic partners to engage in the windows of opportunity to provide rapid support financially, technically and politically to both government and civil society. For example, this might include OGP joining existing coordination mechanisms of international partners supporting a major reform effort or OGP taking on a mobilization role to pull together relevant partners to engage a new government.

Across these options, the Support Unit will need to consider the limits of its role as a direct actor in the OGP process versus a supporter/enabler of other actors. OGP would also need to consider how the Steering Committee and members lend political and diplomatic support in such situations. Finally, the Support Unit will need to consider how it will approach the question of sustainability or exiting from periods of intensive support.

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- How can the open government community become better at responding to political windows of opportunity (e.g., post elections, responding to a crisis) when progress can be made rapidly?
- How proactive should the Steering Committee and Support Unit be in acting on political windows of opportunity? How can we ensure that approaches create sustained capacities and don't amount to "parachuting" from the outside?
- What roles can you envisage the Steering Committee and Support Unit most effectively playing in acting on political windows of opportunity?

6. Doubling down on OGP Local

Rationale: Consultations with stakeholders operating at all levels of governance have surfaced that OGP is still in very nascent stages of tapping the potential of OGP Local, and that the rationale for expanding OGP Local laid out in the 2019 OGP Local strategy still holds. OGP Local is seen as a prime opportunity to grow and strengthen the open government movement and increase and demonstrate the impact of open government reforms in people's lives. Consultations point to the need and opportunity to further enhance the support available to Locals (technical, political and leadership capability development for both government and civil society) and to improve national-local collaboration on open government including exploring stronger cooperation of OGP Local with other local government-related initiatives (global, regional, national). There is also a strong suggestion that better connecting OGP Local within other areas of OGP work, especially when it comes to inspiration and innovation, learning, and stories and value propositions, could be mutually beneficial.

Open government at the local level is also not surprisingly seen as an important potential accelerator for deepening democratic participation and public services reform. There is a call to look at thematic work with a hyper-local lens. Finally, consultations pointed to the lost potential for OGP in terms of loss of access to additional sources of leadership, innovation and broadening of the community with the

current OGP Local eligibility rules that do not allow for motivated jurisdictions from non-member countries or agglomerations of local entities to become members.

Considerations in evaluating potential options:

In 2019 OGP undertook a comprehensive process to develop a new strategy for OGP Local which sought to redesign OGP's strategy for promoting open government at the local by: 1) creating a pathway for significantly expanding OGP Local membership from the pioneer cohort of twenty; 2) investing in fostering greater national-local collaboration, 3) building a stronger platform for knowledge, learning and innovation open to all, including non members. Since the launch of that strategy, 76 new jurisdictions have joined OGP Local supported by a new set of rules, onboarding processes, monitoring and evaluation guidelines, and a new data management system to enable electronic filing of action plans and assessments. So far there have been 58 action plans, with over 178 commitments (note: OGP Local action plans are restricted to having 5 commitments at a time). OGP Local has launched local "Circles of Action" - thematic communities of practice, led or co-led by Local members, as part of the effort to build a stronger platform for learning (e.g., OGP Local Circle on Climate Action).

There is clearly a lot of work to be done in better capturing and sharing the innovations and results coming out of OGP Local. It is also early to mine comprehensive lessons learned and further pivots needed from this new approach, even as efforts to do so are currently underway in the OGP Support Unit. Ideas for strengthening the impact of OGP Local include the following:

- **Strengthening the OGP Local membership track, focusing on attracting and investing in open government champions:** This could include redesigning the membership track, capping it at 100 (or any other set figure) members at any given time, and with more agile rules for entry and exit to attract and retain potentially high performing jurisdictions. This would create the pathway for motivated Locals to join with relative ease, while minimizing Support Unit and partner efforts and resources expended on inactive members, redirecting those to where there is energy and ambition. It would also create a pathway for growth that is not exponential or unsustainable. Another option here would be to keep growing the cohort, without any caps, but this would be entirely contingent on being able to mobilize significant new resources.
- **Advancing Open States by strengthening national-local collaboration:**
 - In the next phase of implementing the OGP Local strategy, one option could be to **identify a set of countries with a strong and vibrant open government community and potential for more intense national-local collaboration and align support and incentives to enable progress.** This could entail: better coordination of national and local strategies, awards that focus on national-local cooperation, dedicated guidance and incentives, spotlighting and showcasing reforms and reformers through various OGP communications channels and events, and building communities of practice around multi-level governance. This work could

primarily be advanced through domestic leadership from partners and could be supported by global partners working on decentralization (e.g., PEA, OECD, CoE). Examples of countries that might be ready for this more intense approach include Ukraine, Nigeria, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Kenya and Indonesia.

- Another option could be to **build strategic alliances with local or regional associations**: Local or other sub-national associations of government play an important role in the institutionalization of public policy within their countries. Often they are the only providers of capacity strengthening support and become a point of reference, especially for smaller administrative units. The idea here is to develop a partnership model for local associations which agglomerate subnational governments - or relevant autonomous institutes (e.g., INAI, Mexico) - to promote open government and shepherd the development of open government commitments/plans/strategies. These new partners would be advocates and gate keepers for an OGP-like co-creation process at the country level. Local associations would be trained in co-creation principles and would adapt action plan-making to their local needs. Partners would also develop and implement a capacity building plan for local jurisdictions on open government principles and approaches in cooperation with OGP Support Unit, OGP Local members and partners. OGP can provide tools, knowledge resources, training opportunities, peer learning events, and use OGP communication channels to showcase good examples. This could potentially serve as another way to expand local open government efforts, both in contexts that are conducive to national-local collaboration and those that are not.
- **Investing in local leadership, inspiration and innovation as part of the OGP wide effort**: OGP Local is a source of open government energy and innovation that can in turn inspire action and ambition both at the local and national level. The ideas described in *strategic direction three (Invest in leadership, inspiration and innovation to build a stronger and broader collective of open government reformers)* provide a prime opportunity to unleash the potential of OGP Local further and creating further integration of OGP Local and local open government issues across partnership-wide efforts to build a stronger platform for learning and knowledge sharing. This can include ensuring that areas of thematic ambition and supporting activities include topics that relevant to the local level, building and nurturing additional “Local Circles” for action and communities of practice in line with hyper-local needs and partnership-wide thematic priorities, and better representation of, or leadership from, stakeholders from the local level in OGP-wide coalitions (where relevant).

Many of the ideas to grow - or double down on the investments in - OGP Local are known, even if they need further refinement, but the real challenge remains one of growing sustainably and finding resources to do so. Another set of issues relate to how best OGP Local can be reflected in OGP’s governance spaces and in OGP’s

efforts to strengthen global alliances and political coalitions. This will form part of the scope of the [Governance Review](#). One idea here which is currently under consideration for the incoming Co-Chair agenda is to establish an OGP Local Assembly, a high-level network of local open government champions. Such an assembly could construct and share an inspiring narrative, provide collective political support and as ambassadors of open government could accelerate adoption of open government approaches within the partnership, and beyond.

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- What is the best way to sustainably keep growing OGP Local?
- Is there an appetite now to engage Locals from non-member countries?
- How can our community of local reformers best be integrated into our thinking throughout the OGP strategic directions?
- For governance review: how can OGP Local perspectives be better reflected in OGP's governance spaces?

7. Strengthening alliances, platforms, partnerships, events and political coalitions in support of open government

Rationale: Consultations have shown the appreciation for the role OGP has played in catalyzing and growing the community of reformers advancing open government at the global and national levels. This includes bringing people together around a common agenda, influencing other organizations, platforms and fora or processes at regional or national levels, and providing a mechanism for commitments and pledges made elsewhere to be grounded and implemented through the OGP national and local processes. OGP has played this role since its inception, but it has never been explicitly recognized in previous OGP strategies. There is scope for a more intentional and strategic approach to these areas of work, including, working better with partners and other regional and global platforms.

At the same time, consultations have pointed to a number of risks for the open government community: the waning of political leadership and support, and prioritization of other issues; the steady decline of civic space- a precondition for the OGP model to succeed; declining energy around OGP in places where it is not delivering; recent shifts in priorities of traditional funders of this agenda away from open government (as a term, new trends often have a clear open government dimension, e.g., localisation, democracy).

Options for considerations: In thinking through how OGP can more effectively strengthen the ecosystem and create stronger global and national coalitions for open government, it can consider the following options:

- **Creating stronger partnerships with key allies:** This includes how OGP can more effectively partner with organizations that are allied but also strengthen funder relationships and identify new ones to mobilize resources and implementation support for the field. Key allies are critical to help deliver on

OGP's ambition, including international organizations (e.g., EU, WB, IMF, OECD), funder community and technical implementation partners (e.g., GIZ, Expertise France) at global, regional, and national levels.

- **Influencing other agendas/platforms/initiatives:** A more systematic effort to influencing other select and tightly aligned global agendas and platforms (e.g., G7, S4D, IACC), but also sectorally focused platforms (e.g., COP), offering a domestic action element for pledges and commitments made in other fora but also influencing the embeddedness of open government principles in their own strategies and operations (e.g., OECD, AFD).

It could also include a more systematic approach to influencing regional or national agendas that are closely aligned (recognizing and incentivising action beyond the action plans, investing in the capacity of open government reformers to connect to new allies and processes as outlined in the first and third emerging strategic directions would to some extent enable the latter)

- **Strategically positioning OGP summits and events politically:** Using OGP events more strategically to build political support and buy-in (for example in the choice of host and theme), strengthen the community and demonstrate relevance of open government for global pressing challenges. The Estonia Global Summit will be a key upcoming opportunity to take this approach.
- **Identifying and investing in securing a stronger political coalition for open government:** Political support from OGP members is one of the key ingredients to unlocking progress at the local, national, and international level, which means the partnership should invest more in understanding how to make our agenda more relevant politically. This includes the evidence and stories to appeal to political leaders of different backgrounds and with different priorities, and links to the windows of opportunity approach by demonstrating OGP's role as a key supporter of reformers around the world. It also needs more relationship-building with individuals, with the leadership of the partnership in the Steering Committee and Support Unit dedicating more time to maintaining personal connections. It could also entail investing in a much broader spectrum of political support - mayors, members of parliament, ministers (OGP minister and others) and HoS/G - will in turn build support for our agenda while also making us less vulnerable to political changes.

Questions for Steering Committee deliberation:

- Strengthening the global movement/ecosystem/coalition for open government has been an implicit objective for OGP and is not explicitly mentioned in previous OGP strategies as a goal/aim for the partnership. Should this be a more explicit objective in the forthcoming strategy?
- How can OGP better leverage all its components (members, Action Network, SC, partners, SU etc.) in pursuing the above options?

4. Enabling Conditions for a New Strategy to Succeed

To effectively achieve any combination of the above strategic directions, the consultations have also underscored the importance of ensuring three fundamental enabling conditions are in place:

- 1. Securing visible and genuine (high-level) political leadership:** Across consultations many have pointed out that the original appeal of OGP was the combination of (high level) political leadership, backed by co-creation of action by government and civil society. Across the majority of contexts, the political leadership has been waning, making it increasingly difficult to pursue ambitious reforms through OGP processes and plans, with a further risk of making OGP a less attractive platform for reformers to pursue their agendas over time. An additional manifestation of this challenge has been the difficulties in getting strong pipelines of leadership for the OGP Steering Committee juxtaposed with raised expectations of political leadership from the Steering Committee. While ideas such as those outlined in the strategic direction on investing in leadership and on strengthening global alliances and coalitions outline potential pathways for cultivating longer-term leadership, the challenge of lending political weight and heft to the new strategy in its introduction and implementation remains.

Questions for Steering Committee consideration:

- How can we secure credible political support - the “new global political coalition” - for this agenda?
- How can the Steering Committee mandate/roles be further enhanced in support of securing more visible high-level political support? What would be needed to enable this?

- 2. Protecting civic space:** A resounding concern facing the partnership is the decline of civic space across a majority of countries, including OGP members, which threatens the very premise upon which the OGP model is anchored - an equal partnership between government and civil society. For a while now, this threat has been recognized and surfaced in virtually all OGP settings. However, with the exception of a handful of countries taking action, progress through OGP action plans has been limited.

More nascent efforts include taking a coalition-based approach through the Democratic Freedoms Learning Network. Some of the proposed strategic directions outlined above offer some new ways for OGP to address this issue. This includes:

- supporting “windows of opportunity” within countries to take actions on protecting civil space;
- launching a global campaign or challenge across the partnership to make a reform in advance of the Estonia Summit next year, raising the bar on expectation;

- empowering the Democratic Freedoms Learning Network to support and advance action on civic space and build a political coalition in support of civic space;
- investing in the future pipeline of leaders who can lead on this issue;
- more visibly showing member status on civic space indicators; and
- exploring raising of requirements to gain eligibility and maintain membership.

Ultimately, OGP cannot address the issue of closing civic space alone, but given its existential imperative for the partnership, questions remain on what more can be done.

Questions for Steering Committee consideration:

- In addition to the ideas outlined above, what else could OGP do to credibly and feasibly move the needle on reversing the decline of civic space?
- What could OGP do to further equip open government reformers and civil society activists to successfully make the case for protecting and expanding civic space?
- Would an OGP campaign on civic space with clearly defined action expectations for the partnership help to build pressure for action?

3. Mobilizing resources for open government work: Both governments and civil society have highlighted the challenges in securing financial resources for their work. To implement ambitious strategic directions OGP - not just the Support Unit or the IRM, but the community writ large needs additional resources - but we are seeing the opposite. Bilateral funding has been badly hit due to COVID, the Russian war on Ukraine and political decisions to cut aid. Several foundations are undertaking new strategies where the place of open government as a priority theme is uncertain. Resourcing is also a particular challenge for civil society in upper middle income and high income countries, where access to development assistance is not an option. On the other hand, access to implementation support can be a challenge for governments in developing countries. Some ideas here include:

- Developing stronger partnerships and systematic coordination with bilateral and multilateral funders at HQ and national or regional levels
- Establishing a global civil society fund linked to participation in the OGP process
- Fundraising for regional or sub-regional initiatives that also create resources for the member country stakeholders (e.g., the EU-funded Eastern Partnership programme or the AFD-funded PAGOF programme for West Africa)
- Fundraising for strategic thematic coalitions and initiatives.
- Engaging nationally based funders and technical assistance providers to support OGP co-creation and implementation in member countries, in support of government and civil society (e.g., embassies, multilateral offices, INGOs).

Questions for Steering Committee consideration:

- What specific ways can OGP make the case for open government to bilateral, multilateral and foundation funders? How can the Steering Committee support these efforts?
- Are there any untapped or previously unexplored sources of resources we should consider? What may be the tradeoffs and risks involved?
- Should the OGP Support Unit explore setting up funds for community resource mobilization and allocation?
- Would there be support for countries to top up their country contributions for resourcing civil society?

5. Fiscal Scenarios

The implementation of this new strategy will in part depend on the core OGP functions (Support Unit and IRM) being sustainably funded. In the first 11 years of the partnership there has been steady and moderate growth in the budget, which has been made possible through sustained multi-year funding from the founding donors, new donors joining and re-committing and annual contributions. As noted elsewhere, there are now particular headwinds to fundraising for open government work, including a downturn in bilateral aid spending from some of OGP's biggest historical funders and a shift in strategy from some of the private foundations who have supported this field. Despite those headwinds, a baseline of approximately \$10M in annual income is achievable based on current funders and country contributions. This compares to a 2022 approved budget of just under \$13M. As such, all fiscal scenarios apart from the "major cuts" scenario below will require new funding.

The following are different fiscal scenarios that are worth considering at this stage of the strategy development process. Each of these scenarios is based on a budget figure for 2025 - the midpoint of the new strategy - including rises to factor in inflation, which is experiencing a major global spike and is inherently unpredictable over the five-year timeframe of this strategy.

1. Major cuts

Reducing the OGP budget to \$9M by the midpoint of this strategy period would entail a significant reduction in programs and staffing, and would be unlikely to meet the expectations set by the new strategy in terms of results. It would be within our current funding baseline and would not require additional fundraising from new donors, although more modest results could mean existing funders losing interest.

2. Moderate cuts

Making moderate cuts to an \$11M budget by 2025 would require small cuts to programmes and staffing costs, and modest additional fundraising.

3. Sustaining current programming and staffing levels

Our current budget will rise to \$14M by 2025 taking into account inflation, and would require us to make choices internally on what to stop doing in order to support new strategic directions. This budget would require OGP to find several major new funders, secure

higher-level funding from current funders, and increase income from country contributions.

4. Moderate growth

A growth budget to \$20M by 2025 would support a significant increase in OGP programs and staffing, allowing us to add new activities to implement the new strategic directions in addition to current work. It would require a massive fundraising effort to almost double our current baseline, with increased support from current funders, several new funders, an increase in country contributions and potential donations from wealthy individuals and corporations.

Conclusion

To maintain our current capacity and programming ability OGP will need to engage in significant fundraising efforts with the help of the Steering Committee and the Board. A fundraising campaign in advance of the next global summit will likely be necessary, targeting existing funders, potential new funders and country contributions. It also means that implementation of activities associated with the strategic directions will need to be prioritized based on the budget situation.

6. Governance Review

As part of the Steering Committee Governance Review, we kindly request all Steering Committee members to complete the following survey by October 5th: www.surveymonkey.com/r/SK35SDG

The survey results, together with the outputs from the October Steering Committee retreat discussions, will support an analysis and options to be prepared by an external consultant contracted to support the Governance Review component of the strategy.

The 2023-28 OGP strategy development process includes an Operationalization Phase that looks at how to enable and operationalize the strategic direction set for OGP before it is finalized and adopted. This phase includes defining the operating model and priorities for resourcing, implementation, organizational, and governance development.

Based on the lessons learned over the past decade and the emerging strategic directions for the partnership, a Governance Review (GR) will be undertaken to reflect on the Steering Committee's mandate, governance structure, and ways of working with the Support Unit and other governance bodies to shape options for these to remain fit for purpose and support the new strategy.

Scope of the Governance Review

The main objective of the Governance Review is to ensure the Steering Committee mandate, ways of working, and the OGP governance model remain fit for purpose to meet the needs of the new strategy and reflect the maturity of the organization. The Governance Review will focus on: i) the role and structure of the Steering Committee as the main governance and strategic leadership body of OGP, ii) how its roles and responsibilities relate to those of the Support Unit, the Board of Directors, and the International Experts Panel (IEP), and iii) how the Steering Committee, Support Unit, the Board of Directors, and the IEP work together.

The roles and structures of the Board of Directors, and the IEP will not be part of the Governance Review as they have recently undergone their own review processes in 2018-19 and 2020-21, respectively. The Board role is also to a large extent anchored in legal obligations, focused on providing oversight for the OGP Secretariat, which houses the Support Unit and IRM. Additionally, the Governance Review will not include a review of the Rules of the Game governing the OGP process (e.g., action plan requirements, timelines), eligibility to join OGP, or the accountability mechanisms established to ensure that members uphold OGP values and principles as these will be covered by the overall strategy process, as needed, based on the inputs received from the consultations and evidence to date.

The Articles of Governance (AOG) will be updated following the adoption of the new strategy in 2023 to reflect any changes to OGP's governance structures, role of the Steering Committee, and any other governance implications resulting from the broader strategy.

Roles for the Governance Review:

- **Steering Committee:** i) provide strategic input and brainstorm ideas in capacity as experts; and ii) approve any changes resulting from the Governance Review in its governance role
- **Governance & Leadership Subcommittee:** Shape and approve Governance Review design (e.g., objectives, scope, timeline and approach) and support its implementation.
- **Chair of the Board of Directors (Maria Baron):** provide input into ways of working between the Steering Committee and Board; provide fiduciary oversight to ensure any changes from the Governance Review are sustainable within OGP's budget and staffing structure, and provide input regarding the working relationship between the Steering Committee and Board of Directors.
- **Support Unit/IRM leadership:** provide input on ways of working between Steering Committee-Support Unit/ Steering Committee-IEP; inform strategic directions and work plan implications based on operational experience and feasibility, and ensure the strategy and work plan are feasible and duly implemented after phase three.
- **External consultant:** conduct interviews, surveys, and other activities to gather input from current and former Steering Committee members and Support Unit leadership to inform options for a reframed Steering Committee role and governance model.

Current OGP Governance Structure

OGP has a bifurcated governance model consisting of a Steering Committee responsible for the strategic leadership of the partnership, and a Board of Directors with legal and fiduciary oversight.

OGP is overseen by a 22-member Steering Committee made up of eleven governments and eleven civil society representatives. Steering Committee members serve for a term of three years and are eligible to serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms, as elected by each constituency: government representatives are elected by the national OGP members; civil society representatives are elected by a selection committee made up of civil society and Support Unit representatives.

The leadership of the Steering Committee is made up of four co-chairs who provide strategic guidance and support to advance OGP’s overarching priorities. Co-Chairs serve two-year terms beginning on October 1 of the year in which they are elected: the first year as Incoming, and the second as Leads. The Lead Co-Chairs (one government and one civil society) develop and implement a strategic agenda to lead on a set of focus areas during their tenure to help achieve the partnership’s main goals. The Incoming Co-Chairs (one government and one civil society) play a support and advisory role before formally assuming the role of Lead Chairs. Chairs are elected by the 22 members of the Steering Committee.

The governments and civil society leaders that have served as OGP Chairs are:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. USA [Founder; not formal co-chair (2011)] | 5. Mexico & Suneeta Kaimal, NRGI (2014-2015) | 10. Argentina & Robin Hodess, B Team (2019-2020) |
| 2. Brazil & Warren Krafchik, IBP (2011-2012) | 6. South Africa & Alejandro González, GESOC (2015-2016) | 11. South Korea & Maria Baron, Directorio Legislativo (2020-2021) |
| 3. UK & Warren Krafchik, IBP [extended] (2012-2013) | 7. France & Manish Bapna, WRI (2016-2017) | 12. Italy & Aidan Eyakuze, Twaweza (2021-2022) |
| 4. Indonesia & Rakesh Rajani, Twaweza (2013-2014) | 8. Georgia & Mukelani Dimba, IST (2017-2018) | 13. Estonia & Anabel Cruz, ICD (2022-2023) |
| | 9. Canada & Nathaniel Heller, R4D (2018-2019) | |

The Steering Committee is divided into three subcommittees, each with equal representation of government and civil society:

- **Governance and Leadership (GL):** Executive decision-making body made up of the four Co-Chairs. Main responsibilities include providing strategic guidance, building political support for OGP, and mobilizing and convening the rest of the Steering Committee.
- **Criteria and Standards (C&S):** Oversees mechanisms to safeguard OGP values and processes, reviews countries’ participation in OGP, and provides strategic input for developing and updating policies and procedures.
- **Thematic Leadership (TLS):** Provides strategic input for advancing priority topics and scaling up thematic ambition across OGP, supports global advocacy efforts, and informs strategic engagements with other international platforms.

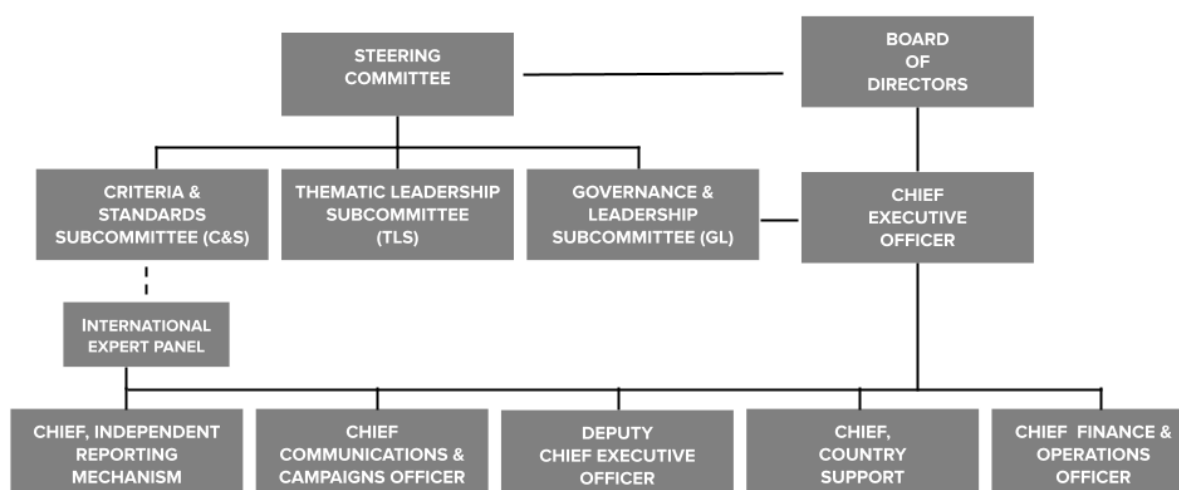
The **Steering Committee** meets at least twice a year, one at ‘working-level’ (represented by the government OGP point of contact) and one at ministerial level (represented by the Minister in charge of the OGP portfolio in the country). Meetings may take place virtually and/or in person. Additional issue-specific, or opt-in briefings, are also held throughout the year, as needed. Subcommittees meet every four to six weeks. Steering Committee governments may invite their colleagues from foreign

ministries when relevant items are on a meeting’s agenda. Learn more about the Steering Committee composition [here](#).

To complement the Steering Committee’s strategic oversight role, the **Board of Directors** is responsible for the fiduciary and legal oversight of OGP, which includes reviewing and approving OGP budgets. The Board draws its members from the Steering Committee, and both governance bodies keep each other informed of their activities. Learn more about the Board of Directors [here](#).

OGP is led by the Chief Executive Officer Sanjay Pradhan, who is responsible for defining OGP’s vision and strategy. The **Support Unit** is OGP’s permanent secretariat that works closely with the Steering Committee to advance the goals of the partnership. The Support Unit is designed to support OGP’s national and local members, as well as the broader partnership. The Support Unit also maintains institutional memory, manages OGP’s external communications, and ensures the continuity of organizational relationships with OGP’s partners. Learn more about the Support Unit staff [here](#).

The **International Experts Panel (IEP)** is an advisory body made up of five regional and thematic experts. The IEP oversees the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) to safeguard its independence and provides quality assurance over the IRM methodology, review process, conflict of interest, and IRM products. The IEP plays an important advisory role in setting the vision for the IRM and promoting its findings. IEP members are nominated through an open process and appointed by the OGP Steering Committee. Learn more about the IEP [here](#).



Overview of Responsibilities

Steering Committee

- Provides political leadership for the partnership
- Sets strategic directions, in collaboration with the Support Unit/IRM
- Recruits and orients new Steering Committee members
- Ensures high-level participation in OGP at national and international levels
- Contributes funds and helps with fundraising
- Connects OGP to key constituencies and partners
- Promotes OGP and its accomplishments on the international stage

Support Unit/IRM

- Originates and executes OGP Support Unit and IRM programs to support participating countries, including cross-country learning

- Builds relationships with key constituencies and partners
- Develops, manages, and promotes OGP's brand and accomplishments
- Supports and facilitates the work of the Steering Committee
- Collects and reports data needed for effective oversight and performance assessment (M+E)
- Ensures compliance with OGP's policies and all legal, fiscal, and ethical rules

Board of Directors

- Provides legal and fiduciary oversight, to assure that policies and practices are in place regarding the Secretariat's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- Hire, supervise, and review the CEO, with guidance from and in consultation with the Steering Committee
- Reviews and approves budget in consultation and coordination with the Steering Committee
- Reviews and approves OGP's financial and investment policies, including internal controls

Questions for Steering Committee discussion:

- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the current Steering Committee role/governance model?
- Reflecting on the question above and the emerging strategic directions,
 - a. What changes may be needed to ensure the Steering Committee role / governance model remain fit for purpose and meet the needs of the new strategy?
 - b. What should the Steering Committee continue to do more of/ less of/do differently? What should the Steering Committee handover to the Support Unit, Board, or IEP?
- What conditions are needed to enable these changes? (e.g., revised composition, structure, subcommittees, size, etc.)? What support could help maximize the Steering Committee's role?

Annex

Background Documents

Lessons Learned from 10 Years of OGP	
OGP@10 Report	The ‘OGP at Ten’ report highlights key achievements since OGP’s launch in 2011 and tells the story of our community and challenges ahead.
Vital Signs (exec summary + link to full report)	The OGP Vital Signs report reviews ten years of OGP data to assess whether the OGP platform is working as intended—from action plan co-creation to results.
OPM Evaluation (Exec summary + links to issue papers)	An independent evaluation of OGP done by Oxford Policy Management (OPM), which explores the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of OGP and provides new insights to improve performance.
Previous OGP Strategies	
3-Year Implementation Plan (2020 - 2022 strategy)	OGP’s current strategy, launched in 2020 and running to the end of 2022.
2016 Strategic Refresh (2017 - 2020 strategy)	OGP’s strategy from 2017 - 2020, incorporating learnings from a 2016 strategic review and refresh.
Other Reference Materials	
Phase One Report (2023 - 2028 strategy)	Overview of the first phase of OGP’s strategy development process, including insights from hundreds of contributions, early analysis, and next steps.
Ecosystem analysis on key themes (2023 - 2028 strategy)	<i>Forthcoming; will be sent before the retreat</i>
Common OGP Acronyms:	A non-exhaustive list of common acronyms used in OGP.