

AMERICAS

Political corruption has tremendous consequences worldwide. Transparency in political finance, political influence, and state administration can help reduce corruption and make democratic processes more legitimate, more pluralistic, and more representative. Open data on decision-making and decision makers can be a powerful tool to identify whose interests shape how governance decisions are made and implemented.

New data from 67 OGP countries, including 18 countries from the Americas, shows that there are significant gaps in data frameworks and data availability across a variety of areas related to countering political corruption. This module is part of the [Broken Links: Open Data to Advance Accountability and Combat Corruption](#) report¹ which offers an overview of data frameworks and data availability in OGP countries across eight policy topics using data from the [Global Data Barometer](#).² The goal of the report is to identify areas for improvement and generate recommendations for future OGP commitments.

This module focuses specifically on the state of data frameworks and availability in the 18 OGP countries assessed by the GDB across the Americas (see *Countries in this Analysis*). This regional analysis includes:

- A summary of GDB's assessment of the state of anti-corruption data in the region
- An overview of OGP commitments across policy areas assessed
- Highlights in featured policy areas with data from both GDB and OGP
- Examples of regional innovations

Countries in this Analysis

OGP Countries Assessed by GDB and Included in this Analysis

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Mexico
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- United States of America
- Uruguay

¹ You can find the report Open Data to Advance Accountability and Combat Corruption here: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

² View more details about the Global Data Barometer here: <https://globaldatabarometer.org/>.

Key Takeaways

- **Across most policy areas, a majority of countries publish data online in some form.**

However, like in other regions, few countries in the Americas publish beneficial ownership or lobbying data in any form.

- **Data quality remains an area for improvement.** Datasets often lack high-value elements, such as common identifiers that enable monitoring and oversight across datasets. Most data is also not published in open data formats, making it hard to use.

- **Using data to counter corruption has not been a major focus area of OGP action plans in the Americas.**

With the exception of public procurement, few countries in the region have made commitments in key areas such as lobbying and asset disclosure.

Jimmy Molina, a Colombian student and citizen auditor, reviewed government-issued data on investment projects and contractor information and found that only half of government resources had been allocated in a timely manner. His request for accountability around these projects resulted in government response and action to resolve the delays.



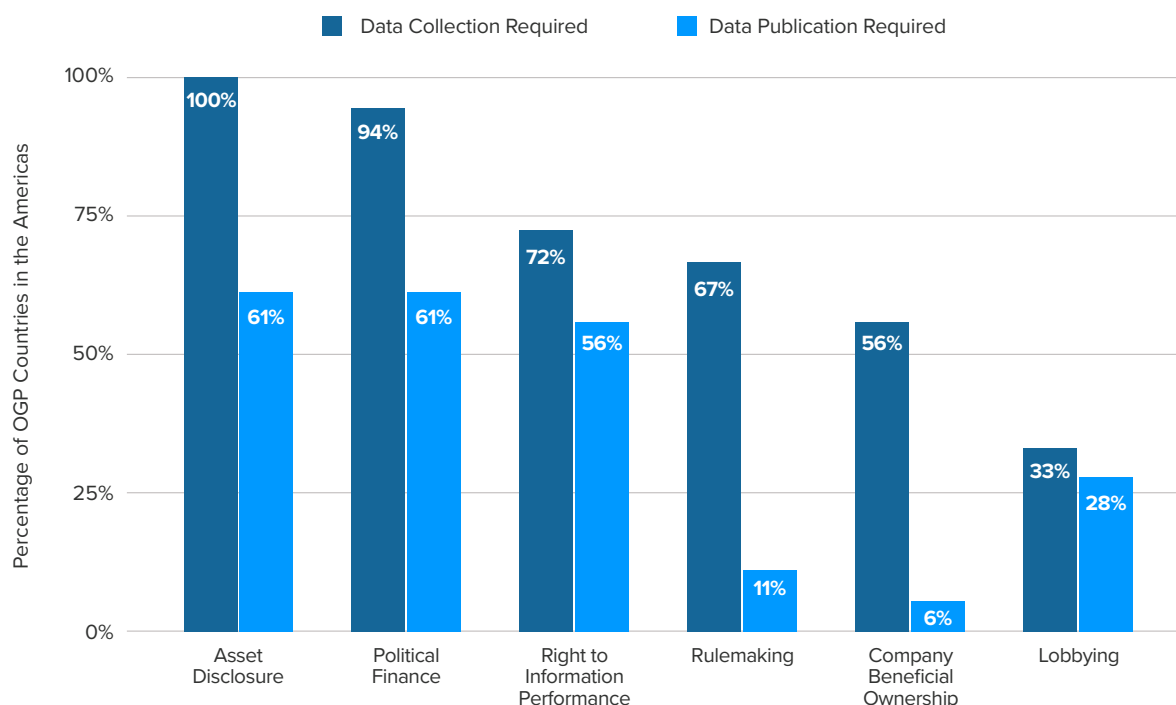
Overall State of Data to Combat Political Corruption

Legal Frameworks

A majority of countries in the Americas have laws requiring the collection of data across these policy areas, except for lobbying (see Figure 1).³ However, most countries do not legally require that data be made publicly available. For example, while about two-thirds of countries in the Americas have laws or regulations in place requiring the publication of asset disclosure and political finance data, only a handful of countries legally require publication of rulemaking and beneficial ownership data.

FIGURE 1: Gaps between required data collection and publication

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries in the Americas with data collection and disclosure requirements across policy areas. The sample includes the 18 OGP countries in the region assessed by the GDB.



*Note: This analysis only considers binding laws and policies that exist and are operational.*⁴

³ The Global Data Barometer assesses whether countries have set requirements to publish data through binding policy, regulations, or law. Legal frameworks governing public procurement and land tenure data have not been assessed by the GDB. However, information on the availability of procurement and land tenure data was collected (see *Data Availability and Usability*).

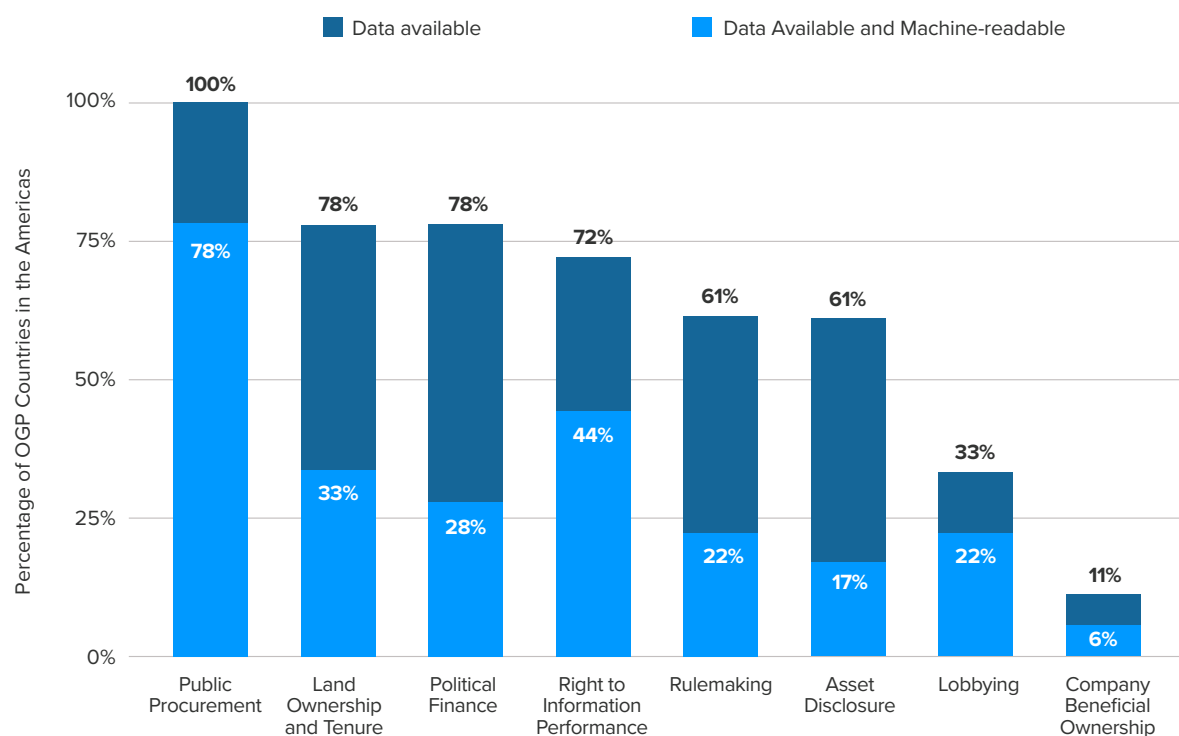
⁴ For more details see the *About Broken Links* section of the report: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

Data Availability and Usability

A majority of countries in the region publish data in each of the policy areas covered in this module, except for beneficial ownership and lobbying data (see Figure 2). Publishing this data in an open format remains an area for growth. In all areas except public procurement, less than half of countries publish data in a machine-readable format, which prevents users from being able to analyze the data for monitoring and accountability purposes.

FIGURE 2: Gaps between data availability and usability

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries in the Americas with available data and the percentage with machine-readable data. The sample includes the 18 OGP countries in the region assessed by the GDB.



Note: For this analysis, countries with “partial” disclosure are considered cases of “no” disclosure.⁵

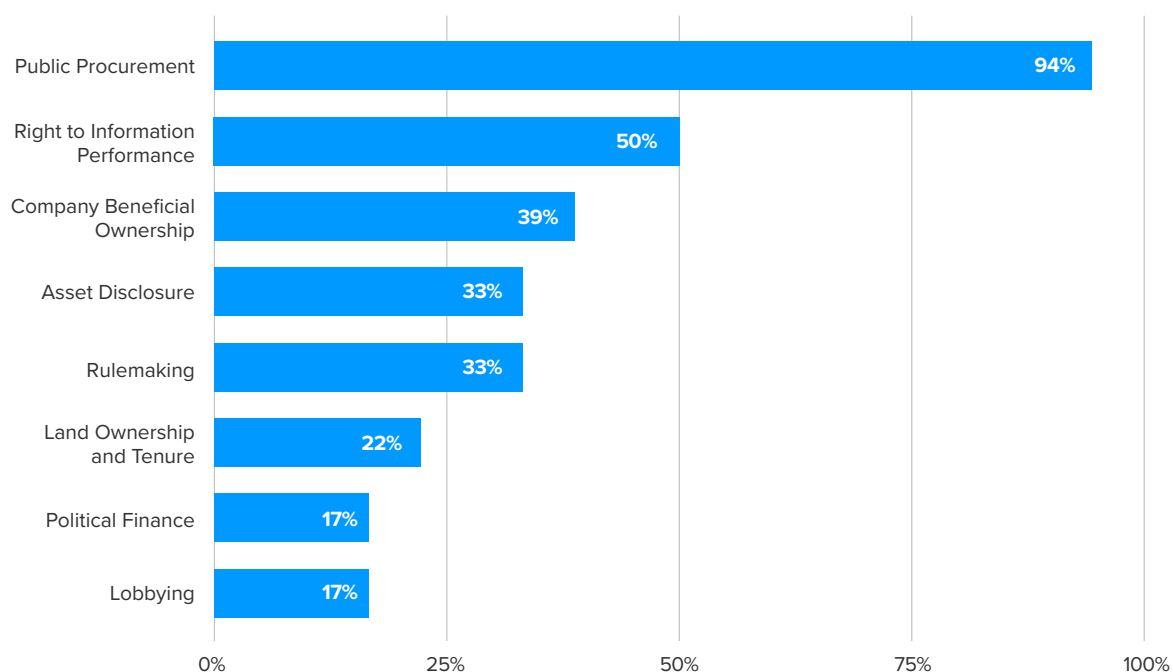
⁵ For more details see the *About Broken Links* section of the report: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

State of Progress Through OGP

Aside from many commitments related to public procurement, using data to counter political corruption has not historically been a major focus of OGP action plans in the Americas (see Figure 3). Few countries in the Americas have made commitments related to key areas such as asset disclosure, political finance, or lobbying.

FIGURE 3: Progress made through OGP commitments

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries in the Americas that have made at least one relevant OGP commitment across each policy area assessed. The sample includes all 18 OGP countries in the region.



Percentage of OGP Countries in the Americas with a relevant commitment

Featured Policy Areas

The following policy areas were selected for a more detailed analysis based on a variety of factors, including regional priorities, areas of momentum, and areas for growth.

Asset Disclosure

Asset disclosure requirements are an essential safeguard to prevent and detect cases of favoritism, conflicts of interest, and illicit enrichment of public officials. Opening data on asset disclosure allows the public to work alongside oversight institutions in monitoring those they have entrusted to serve in their interest.

Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **Most, but not all, countries require publication of asset disclosure data.** Given that it is part of OGP's eligibility requirements, all OGP countries in the Americas have an operational law requiring the collection of asset disclosures. However, seven countries do not legally require that asset disclosure information be published.
- **Interoperability remains an area of improvement for all countries.** Three countries in the Americas publish data that contains unique identifiers for each individual who is required to disclose. However, these identifiers are not used across datasets. For example, no country in the region uses common identifiers across asset disclosure and political finance datasets.
- **Asset disclosure data lacks usability across the region.** No country in the Americas publishes asset disclosure information that meets all five elements of open data. While most countries have freely available data, few countries have data that is timely and updated, openly licensed, machine-readable, or bulk downloadable.

State of Progress Through OGP

- **The Americas has seen few OGP commitments on asset disclosure.** Six OGP members in the Americas, including those at both the national and local levels, have made only 11 total commitments related to asset disclosure.⁶ No members in the region are currently implementing an asset disclosure commitment.
- **Commitments have typically focused on data collection.** Two commitments made in the Americas have focused on making asset disclosure data publicly available; the majority have aimed to improve or expand data collection processes.

Regional Innovations	
Chile	Chile's asset disclosure portal contains over 90,000 declarations from public officials that can be exported by users. ⁷
Mexico	Mexico's platform features bulk downloadable asset disclosure data from public servants at both the national and local levels. ⁸

⁶ As of June 2022, 18 national and 20 local OGP members from the Americas had submitted at least one action plan. See an updated list of OGP national and local members [here](#).

⁷ InfoProbidad, n.d., <https://www.infoprobidad.cl/#/inicio>.

⁸ Plataforma Digital Nacional, n.d., <https://www.plataformadigitalnacional.org/terminos>.



Members of a citizen council in Paraguay discuss community priorities and status on various investment projects. Public validation of government data is an important step to ensure data accuracy.

Company Beneficial Ownership

Publishing digital registers with beneficial ownership information helps shine a light on secretive legal structures that can be exploited to launder the proceeds of corruption and other corrupt activities.

Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **Most countries do not publish beneficial ownership data.** Two countries (Brazil and Ecuador) have government-published data available online.
- **Half of the countries require the collection of beneficial ownership information.** Ten countries in the Americas have an operational law requiring data collection. Ecuador is the only country with an operational law that requires beneficial ownership data to be made publicly available.
- **Beneficial ownership frameworks have key gaps.** In addition to not requiring the publication of beneficial ownership data, most frameworks do not require the collection of data in a central register, which is critical for enabling widespread use.

State of Progress Through OGP

- **Countries in the Americas have made relatively few OGP commitments on beneficial ownership transparency.** Seven OGP countries in the Americas have made a total of eight beneficial ownership commitments. No country in the region is currently implementing a beneficial ownership commitment in their 2020 or 2021 action plans.
- **Commitments focus on data collection but not publication.** Most commitments from the Americas have focused on collecting beneficial ownership information, with few commitments to establish public registries. Three commitments have mentioned publishing data according to open data principles.

Regional Innovations

Ecuador

Ecuador's [portal](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Superintendencia+de+Companias&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)⁹ allows users to search by name to see if a natural or legal person is related to any companies.

⁹ Superintendencia de Compañías, n.d., <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Superintendencia+de+Companias&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>.

Public Procurement

Opaque contracting processes show higher levels of corruption and inefficiency, decreased competition, and reduced opportunities for smaller companies. Alternatively, [open procurement processes](#), otherwise known as open contracting, produce greater competition, improved public service delivery, and significant cost savings for governments.¹⁰

Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **All countries in the Americas publish procurement data in some form.** All 18 countries in the region publish procurement data online that is free of charge and up to date.
- **High-value information and interoperability remain areas for improvement.** While most countries publish data on contract tender and award stages, only a small minority of countries in the Americas publish data on the planning and implementation stages of procurement. Only two countries (Chile and Panama) use common identifiers that can link procurement data with other anti-corruption datasets.
- **Most countries are publishing procurement data according to open data principles.** Procurement data in six countries (Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Paraguay) meets all five elements of open data (freely accessible, up to date, openly licensed, machine-readable, and bulk downloadable). Six other countries publish data that meets all but one element.

State of Progress Through OGP

- **Public procurement and open contracting have been popular areas of reform among OGP members in the Americas.** Twenty-three OGP members in the region, including those at both the national and local levels, have made over 80 commitments related to making procurement processes more open. At least 30 of these commitments have specifically mentioned open contracting principles.
- **Procurement reforms have shown strong early results.** Over one-third of procurement commitments in the Americas have achieved strong early results in opening governments, according to OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM).¹¹

Regional Innovations	
Canada	Public Services and Procurement Canada has available data ¹² that dates back to 2009 and adheres to the Open Contracting Data Standard . ¹³
Colombia	Colombia's SECOP platform ¹⁴ adheres to the Open Contracting Data Standard and also features a user-friendly dashboard that allows for further data exploration. ¹⁵

¹⁰ Open Government Partnership, "The Skeptic's Guide to Open Government," 2022, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/skeptics-guide-to-open-government-2022-edition/#toc_3.

¹¹ Learn more about how the Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses commitments [here](#).

¹² Government of Canada, "Contract History," n.d., <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/53753f06-8b28-42d7-89f7-04cd014323b0>.

¹³ Open Contracting Partnership, "Open Contracting Data Standard," n.d., <https://standard.open-contracting.org/latest/en/>.

¹⁴ Colombia Compra Eficiente, "SECOP," n.d., <https://www.colombiacompra.gov.co/secop/secop>.

¹⁵ Colombia Compra Eficiente, "Tablero de Contrataciones Abiertas," n.d., <https://colombiacompra.gov.co/indicadores/resultados-del-sistema-de-indicadores>.