

Digital Innovation in OGP

Regional Focus: Africa and the Middle East

OVERVIEW

Digital tools and social media have empowered people to use technology to hold governments to account and to exercise their civic rights. OGP members—including in Africa and the Middle East—are increasingly using their action plans to make technology more transparent, accountable and inclusive. They are also innovating solutions to pressing issues, including better service delivery, modern procurement systems, and open spending.

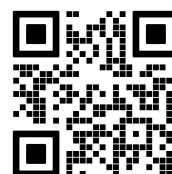
Recommendations

The following recommendations represent a few examples of relevant policies:

- **Digital inclusion:** Make digital citizen engagement inclusive, especially for marginalized communities. Consider gender-specific challenges and barriers to internet access.
- **Digital transformation:** Strengthen digital tools to include adequate feedback and redress mechanisms, such as for monitoring of public service delivery.
- **Open data:** Publish government information in open data formats for increased access, use, and interoperability across various datasets.
- **Online civic space:** Tackle disinformation and misuse of social media platforms, protect against surveillance and censorship, and address online harassment.
- **Digital governance:** Open up automated decision-making systems, regulate online political advertising, and protect data rights, use, storage, and privacy.

RESOURCES

OGP's new flagship report, **Broken Links: Open Data to Advance Accountability and Combat Corruption** (EN, ES, FR), presents the state of open data to counter corruption in 67 OGP countries. The report includes region-specific findings for Africa and the Middle East and a Data Explorer to visualize the findings.



Data Protection in Africa: A Look at OGP Member Progress (EN) analyzes the context and major barriers to effective data protection in fourteen African OGP countries, focusing on common mechanisms in data protection legislation that advance transparency, participation, and accountability.



This fact sheet was produced by the OGP Analytics & Insights team in October 2022.

COMMITMENTS FROM AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Members in the region regularly commit to publishing open data as part of their OGP action plans. About three-quarters of action plans submitted to date include at least one commitment that references open data principles.

In all, fourteen members have made 99 open data commitments.¹ Most of these involve publishing anti-corruption data, such as spending, contracts, and information about extractive industries. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) has assessed nearly two-thirds of these commitments as ambitious, which is higher than commitments in other areas.

OGP's **Digital Governance fact sheet** contains information on digital commitments globally – including popular topics, commitment examples, recommendations, and performance numbers from the Independent Reporting Mechanism.



LESSONS FROM REFORMERS



Kaduna State, Nigeria

In 2017, the government empowered community members to track progress on major projects — such as construction of major schools, hospitals, and roads — through the State Eyes and Ears Project. The government discloses the location of publicly funded projects and citizens use a mobile app to upload photos and feedback on these projects.



Malawi

As part of the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST), Malawi established an SMS messaging service for citizens to share feedback and question decision-makers. CoST Malawi also worked with the government to require the publication of data from public infrastructure projects in a standardized format (the Infrastructure Data Standard).



Seychelles

In 2019, Seychelles became the first OGP country to make a commitment to advance open governance of the fisheries sector. Specifically, Seychelles committed to implement the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FITI), including establishing a multi-stakeholder group and publishing information on subsidies, overseas development assistance, licensing agreements, and fisheries resources.



South Africa

Working with civil society, the government launched *Vulekamali*, an online digital portal for national and provincial department budgetary information, budgets and actual expenditures. The government also hosts “Civic Information Drives” to explain the portal, as well as hackathons and “Data Quests” to encourage non-government actors to use the data to advance social change.

¹ Members with an open data commitment include Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Elgeyo Marakwet (Kenya), Ghana, Jordan, Kaduna State (Nigeria), Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Tunisia.

