

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 27 members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 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* report<sup>1</sup> which offers an overview of data frameworks and data availability in OGP countries across eight policy topics using data from the [Global Data Barometer \(GDB\)](#).<sup>2</sup> 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 27 OGP and OECD member countries assessed by the GDB (see *Countries in this analysis*). This regional analysis includes:

- A summary of GDB's assessment of the state of data to counter corruption 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

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

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

## Countries in this analysis

### OECD member countries assessed by GDB and included in this analysis

- ❖ Australia
- ❖ Canada
- ❖ Chile
- ❖ Colombia
- ❖ Costa Rica
- ❖ Czech Republic
- ❖ Denmark
- ❖ Estonia
- ❖ Finland
- ❖ France
- ❖ Germany
- ❖ Greece
- ❖ Ireland
- ❖ Israel
- ❖ Italy
- ❖ Latvia
- ❖ Lithuania
- ❖ Mexico
- ❖ Netherlands
- ❖ New Zealand
- ❖ Portugal
- ❖ Republic of Korea
- ❖ Slovak Republic
- ❖ Spain
- ❖ Sweden
- ❖ United Kingdom
- ❖ United States

### OECD member countries not assessed by GDB<sup>3</sup>

- ❖ Luxembourg
- ❖ Norway

## Key takeaways

- **Across all policy areas, a majority of countries publish data online in some form.** All OGP countries in the OECD publish asset disclosure and political finance data. Company beneficial ownership is the area with the lowest rate of availability, where just over half of countries publish some form of data.
- **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 an open format, making it hard to use.
- **Countries have undertaken reforms in key areas assessed in this report using their OGP action plans.** Many OGP countries in the OECD have committed to public procurement and beneficial ownership reforms, but more commitments are needed, particularly around asset disclosure and political finance.

<sup>3</sup> Due to inability to find researchers, 10 of the 77 OGP countries were not included in the Global Data Barometer's assessment.

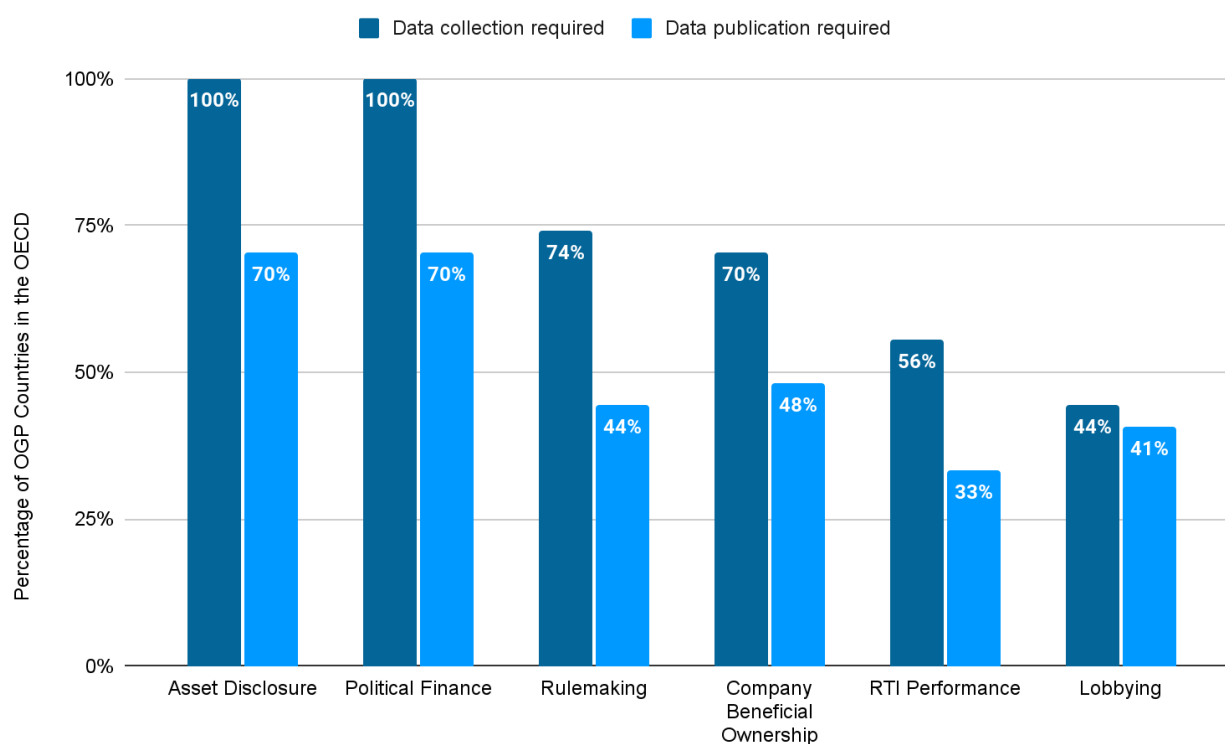
# Overall State of Data to Combat Corruption

## Legal Frameworks

While a majority of countries have laws requiring the collection of data across these policy areas, many countries do not legally require that data be made publicly available (see Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> On one end of the spectrum, just over two-thirds of OECD countries have laws or regulations requiring the publication of asset disclosure and political finance data. At the other end, less than half of countries legally require the collection and publication of lobbying data.

**Figure 1: Gaps between required data collection and publication**

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries that are members of the OECD with data collection and disclosure requirements across policy areas. The sample includes the 27 OGP countries in the OECD assessed by the Global Data Barometer.



Note: This analysis only considers binding laws and policies that exist and are operational.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 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*).

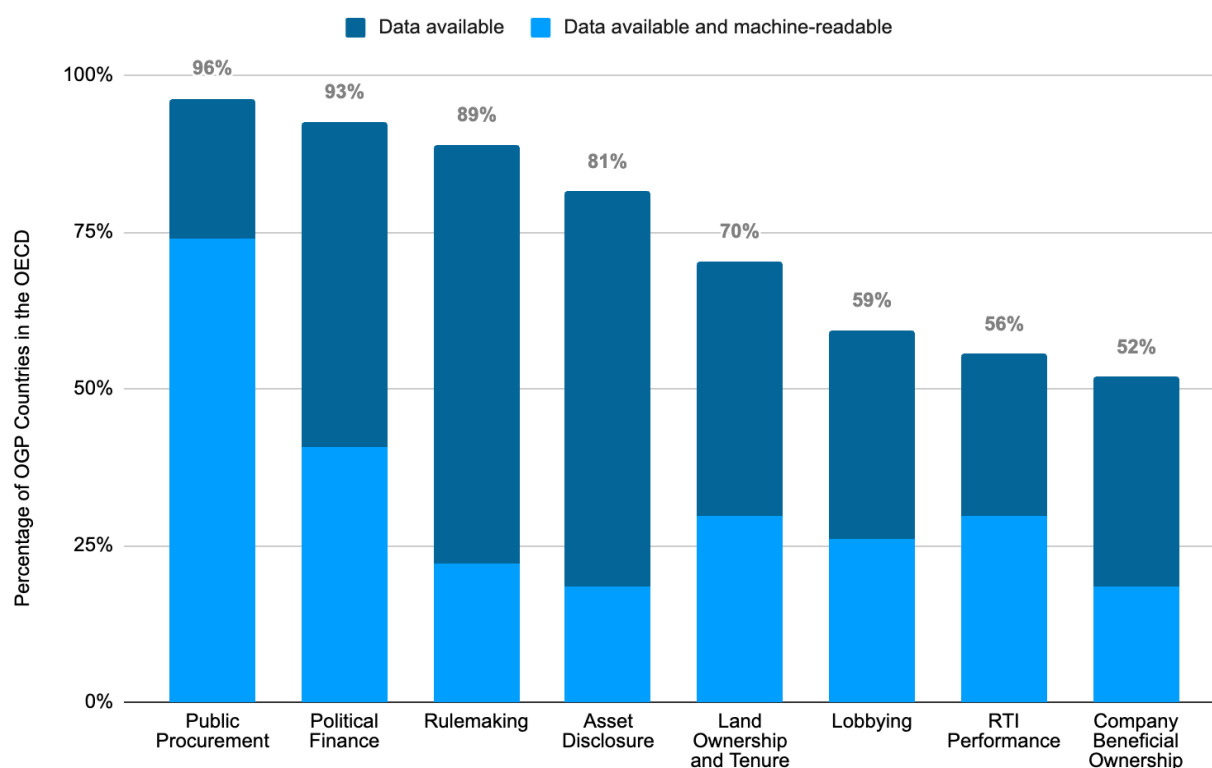
<sup>5</sup> For more details see the *About Broken Links* section of the report: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

## Data Availability and Usability

While most OECD member countries publish political finance and asset disclosure data, a significant percentage of countries lack publicly available data on other key anti-corruption priorities, such as lobbying and company beneficial ownership. Where countries do publish data, making this data available to the public in an open format remains a challenge. In most areas, around one-quarter of OECD countries publish data in a machine-readable format, which makes it difficult for users to analyze the data for monitoring and accountability purposes (see Figure 2).

### Figure 2: Gaps between data availability and usability

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries that are members of the OECD with available data and the percentage with machine-readable data. The sample includes the 27 OGP countries in the OECD assessed by the Global Data Barometer.



Note: For this analysis, countries with “partial” disclosure are considered cases of “no” disclosure.<sup>6</sup>

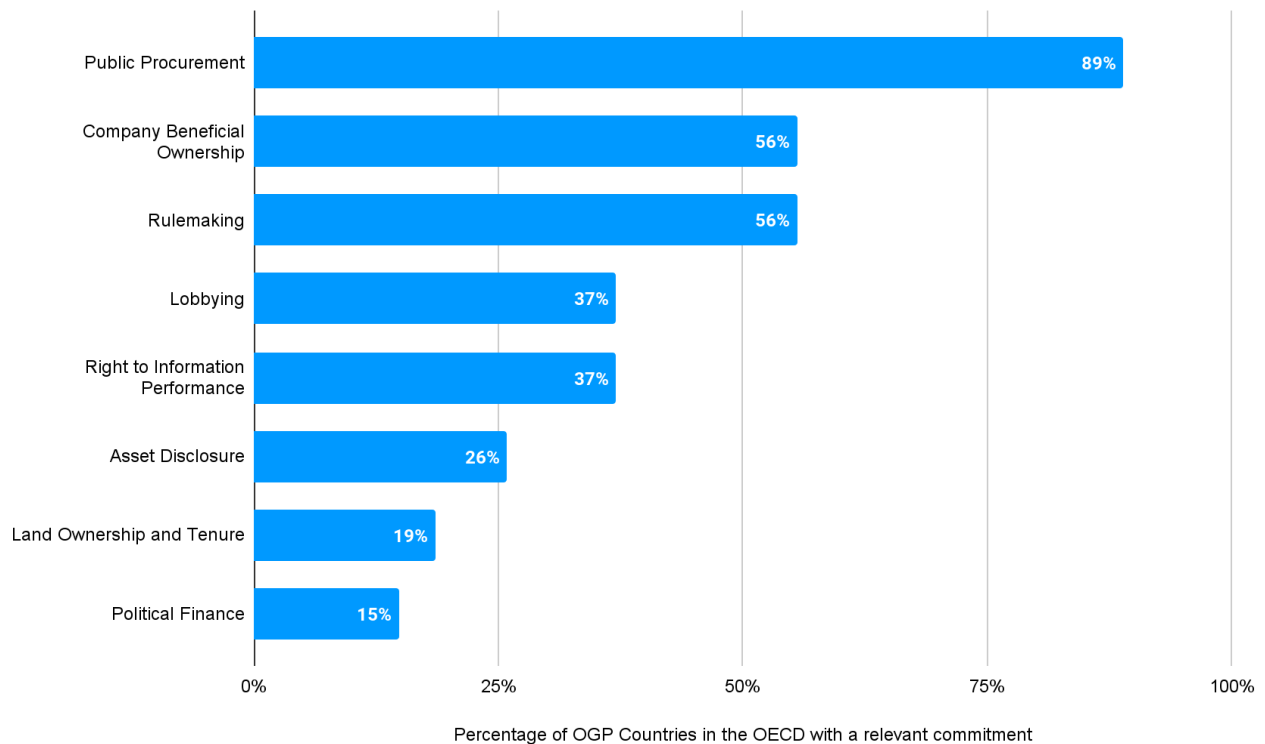
<sup>6</sup> For more details see the *About Broken Links* section of the report: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

# State of Progress Through OGP

While many OGP countries in the OECD have advanced open government reforms to counter corruption, many countries have not used OGP action plans to advance commitments in key areas assessed in this report (see Figure 3). Nearly all OGP countries in the OECD have made a commitment on public procurement, and over half have committed to greater transparency of rulemaking and beneficial ownership. Few OECD countries, however, have used their OGP action plans to address political finance or asset disclosure reforms.

### Figure 3: Progress made through OGP commitments

*This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries in the OECD that have made at least one relevant OGP commitment across each area assessed in this report. The sample includes all 29 OGP countries in the OECD.*





## 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.

### Lobbying

Lobbying is an essential part of a democracy. But, often, interest groups with more resources get to influence policy-making more effectively. Knowing who influences the law, who they represent, and how much they spend becomes fundamental to shaping their advocacy strategy and determining how they should engage leaders.

#### Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **Nearly half of countries have legal frameworks governing lobbying data.** Twelve of the 27 OECD member countries in OGP have an operational law requiring the collection of lobbying data. Of these countries, only three do not require the data to be published (Lithuania, Mexico, and the United Kingdom).
- **Existing lobbying data lacks high-value information.** Six of the 27 countries publish data on lobbyists' goals and the topics of their interactions with public officials, and only one country (United States) has available information on money spent by lobbyists. Five countries (Australia, Chile, Lithuania, Spain, and the United States) use unique identifiers for lobbyists, which is critical for linking lobbying data to other datasets.
- **Existing lobbying data is often hard to use.** Fifteen countries in the OECD have lobbying data freely available online. However, data is timely and updated in only eight countries. Three countries publish data that is openly licensed, machine-readable, and bulk downloadable (Canada, France, and the United States).

#### State of Progress Through OGP

- **Many OGP members in the OECD have made commitments to improve lobbying transparency.** Twelve members in the region, including those at both the national and local levels, have made 20 lobbying commitments.<sup>7</sup> Four members (Estonia, France, Ireland, and Spain) are currently implementing a commitment through their 2020 or 2021 action plans.
- **Lobbying commitments generally do not focus on open data.** Only four lobbying commitments made by OECD members reference open data principles. Other commitments focus on transparency in lobbying more generally and passing legislation to regulate lobbying.
- **Most commitments are fully implemented.** Ten of the twelve commitments assessed by OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) for completion have been substantially or fully implemented. Four commitments have achieved strong early results in opening government.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> As of June 2022, 27 national and 23 local OGP members from the OECD had submitted at least one action plan. See an updated list of OGP national and local members: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/our-members/>.

<sup>8</sup> Learn more about how the IRM assesses commitments: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm-guidance-overview/>.

## Regional Innovations

<b>Canada</b>	Canada publishes lobbying information <a href="#">as open data</a> and an accompanying data dictionary in both English and French. <sup>9</sup>
<b>Chile</b>	Chile's <a href="#">InfoLobby website</a> features downloadable datasets containing information on lobbying activities since 2014. <sup>10</sup>

## Political Finance

Knowing who gave to campaigns, politicians, and parties is essential to ensure that officials serve voters and not the highest bidders. Knowing that campaigns spend that money on legitimate expenses also ensures that everyone follows the same rules. Additionally, it can shed light on corporations' ideological and political stances, so consumers make informed decisions.

### Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **All countries legally require collection of political finance data, but many lack publication requirements.** All 27 OGP countries in the OECD have operational laws governing the collection of political finance information. However, eight countries do not require that the data be made public (Greece, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom).
- **Many political finance datasets lack high-value information.** Half of OGP countries in the OECD do not publish data that includes names of donors and donation amounts linked to donors. Only six countries use unique identifiers for each donor in their datasets, which helps ensure cleaner data and can link multiple donations to the same donor (Australia, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, and the United States).
- **Most countries publish updated information, but the data often lacks usability.** Twenty-three countries publish freely available political finance data online, and it is timely and updated in 18 of those countries. However, only two countries (Lithuania and the United States) publish data that is also openly licensed, machine-readable, and bulk downloadable.

### State of Progress Through OGP

- **Few OGP members in the OECD have committed to transparency of political finances.** Five countries in the region have made eight political finance commitments. Only one country (Netherlands) is implementing a commitment through their current action plan.
- **Commitments do not typically focus on open data.** Of the eight political finance commitments made by OGP members in the OECD, only two mention publishing information according to open data principles ([Costa Rica](#)<sup>11</sup> and [Latvia](#)<sup>12</sup>).

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, "Open Data," <https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/en/open-data/>

<sup>10</sup> Council for Transparency, "InfoLobby," <https://www.infolobby.cl/DatosAbiertos/Catalogos>

<sup>11</sup> Costa Rica, "Integrity and Anticorruption" (CR0063), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/costa-rica/commitments/cr0063/>.

<sup>12</sup> Latvia, "Open Data" (LV0041), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/latvia/commitments/lv0041/>.

## Regional Innovations

<b>Lithuania</b>	Lithuania's Central Electoral Commission has published <a href="#">searchable data</a> on political finances that goes back to 2016 and meets all open data principles. <sup>13</sup>
<b>United States</b>	Dating back to 1979, the United States publishes <a href="#">political finance data</a> that is bulk downloadable and contains information from both national and state levels. <sup>14</sup>

## Right to Information Performance

Right to information (RTI) laws give the public insight into how government decisions are made and implemented. Most OGP countries have right to information laws. Almost all of those laws require agencies to publish information on how they are being executed.

### Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **Many countries lack legal frameworks governing RTI performance data.** Fifteen of the 27 OGP countries in the OECD have an operational law that requires the collection of RTI performance data. Only nine countries legally require that the data be made publicly available.
- **Datasets typically lack high-value information.** Nine of the 15 countries who publish RTI performance data include details on the number of requests received and processed. However, only six countries publish data on appeals to RTI determinations (Germany, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Spain, and the United States) and five publish details about reasons for withholding certain information (Australia, Israel, Mexico, United Kingdom, and the United States).
- **RTI performance data is freely available, but not usable.** All 15 countries who publish RTI performance data make it freely accessible, but only eight upload data in a timely manner. Of these countries, five publish data that is also openly licensed, machine-readable, and bulk downloadable (France, New Zealand, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States).

### State of Progress Through OGP

- **Many countries have committed to publishing or improving RTI performance data.** Ten OECD countries have used their OGP action plans to improve access to RTI performance data. Three countries (Ireland, Netherlands, and Spain) are implementing a commitment in this area through their current action plans.
- **Some, but not all, commitments reference open data principles.** Five of the 12 commitments made by OECD countries in this area mention publishing information on RTI performance according to open data principles.

<sup>13</sup> Supreme Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, "Reports," <https://www.rinkejopuslapis.lt/ataskaitu-formavimas>.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Election Commission, "Campaign finance data," <https://www.fec.gov/data/>.



## Regional Innovations

<b>New Zealand</b>	New Zealand publishes <a href="#">RTI performance data</a> every six months that covers compliance of all agencies subject to the Official Information Act. <sup>15</sup>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	The United Kingdom's bulk downloadable <a href="#">datasets</a> provide information on request outcomes, reasons for rejection, and handling of appeals. <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, "Official Information Act statistics," <https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset/official-information/resource/106a9ff4-d017-470f-9220-adcf5db4095a>.

<sup>16</sup> UK Cabinet Office, "Freedom of Information statistics," <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics>.