

AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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 13 countries from Africa and the Middle East, 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 \(GDB\)](#).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 13 OGP countries assessed by the GDB across Africa and the Middle East (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

- Burkina Faso
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Jordan
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Tunisia

OGP Countries Not Assessed by GDB³

- Cabo Verde
- Seychelles

¹ You can find the report *Broken Links 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/>.

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

Key Takeaways

- **Making data available in any form is the region's main area for improvement.** Public procurement is the only area assessed where most countries in the region publish data. Less than one-quarter of countries have available data across all other policy areas.
- **Requirements for data collection and publication are lacking across many policy areas.** While most countries in Africa and the Middle East require collection of asset disclosure and political finance data, few countries require the data to be published. Like in other regions, few requirements exist for lobbying data collection and publication.
- **Countries have undertaken reforms in certain policy areas in their OGP action plans.** Many countries in Africa and the Middle East have committed to public procurement and asset disclosure reforms, but more commitments are needed, particularly around lobbying and political finance.

Zuki Kota, from the Public Service Accountability Monitor, is one of the creators of Vulekamali, which is a budget data portal created by the South African National Treasury in partnership with civil society organizations. The online platform allows people to track how money is spent and it has useful resources for learning about the budget and the budget process. Photo by OGP.



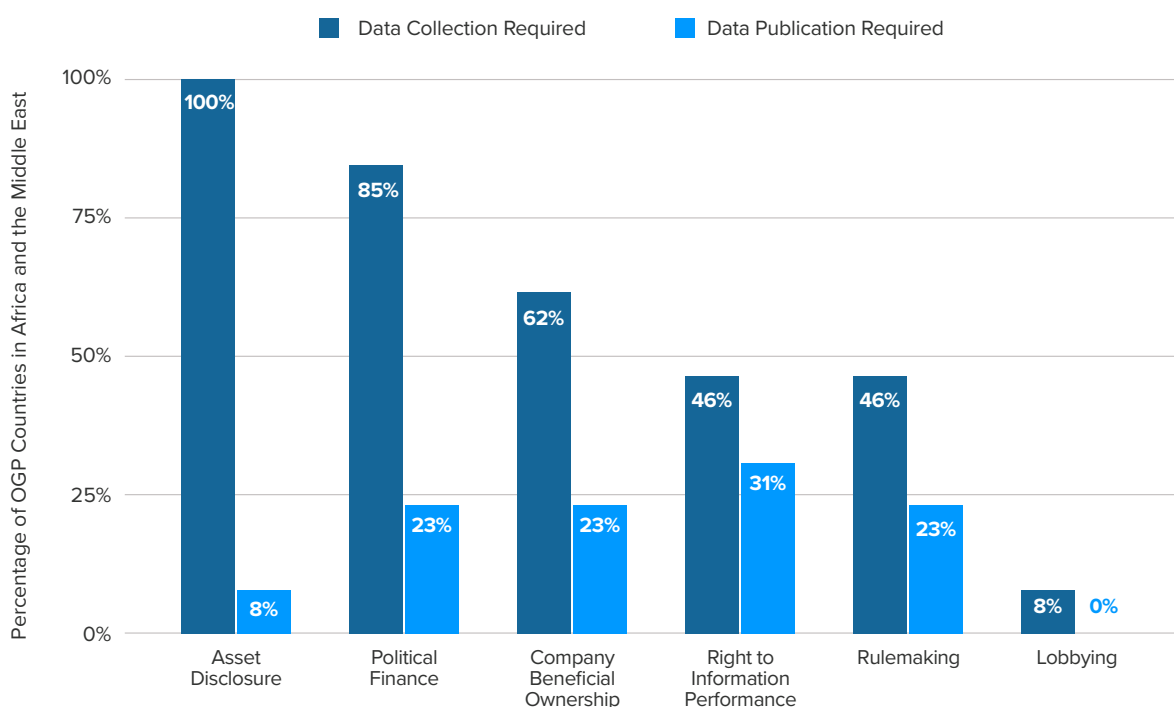
Overall State of Data to Combat Corruption

Legal Frameworks

Across all policy areas, a gap exists between the percentage of countries requiring data collection and the percentage requiring data publication (see Figure 1).⁴ While most countries require collection of asset disclosure and political finance data, only a small number of countries require publication of data in these areas. Requirements for both data collection and publication are especially low for right to information performance, rulemaking, and lobbying data.

FIGURE 1: Gaps between required data collection and publication

This figure shows the number of OGP countries in Africa and the Middle East with data collection and disclosure requirements across policy areas. The sample includes the 13 OGP countries in the region assessed by the GDB.



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

⁴ 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*).

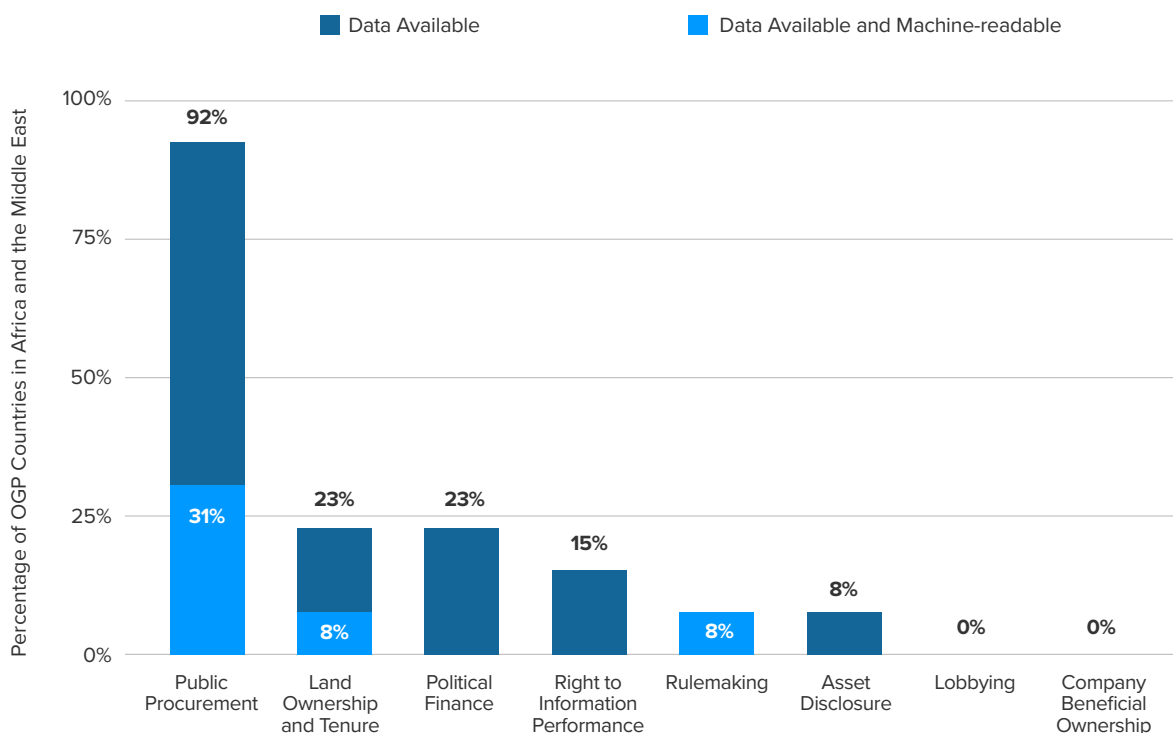
⁵ For more details see the *About Broken Links* section of the report: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

Data Availability and Usability

Few countries in the region publish key anti-corruption data as assessed in this report. Where data is available, it is only rarely in an open format when published (see Figure 2). Public procurement is the main exception, where nearly all countries in Africa and the Middle East publish data, and over a quarter of countries publish data that is machine-readable.

FIGURE 2: Gaps between data availability and usability

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries in Africa and the Middle East with available data and the percentage with machine-readable data. The sample includes the 13 OGP countries in the region assessed by the GDB.



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

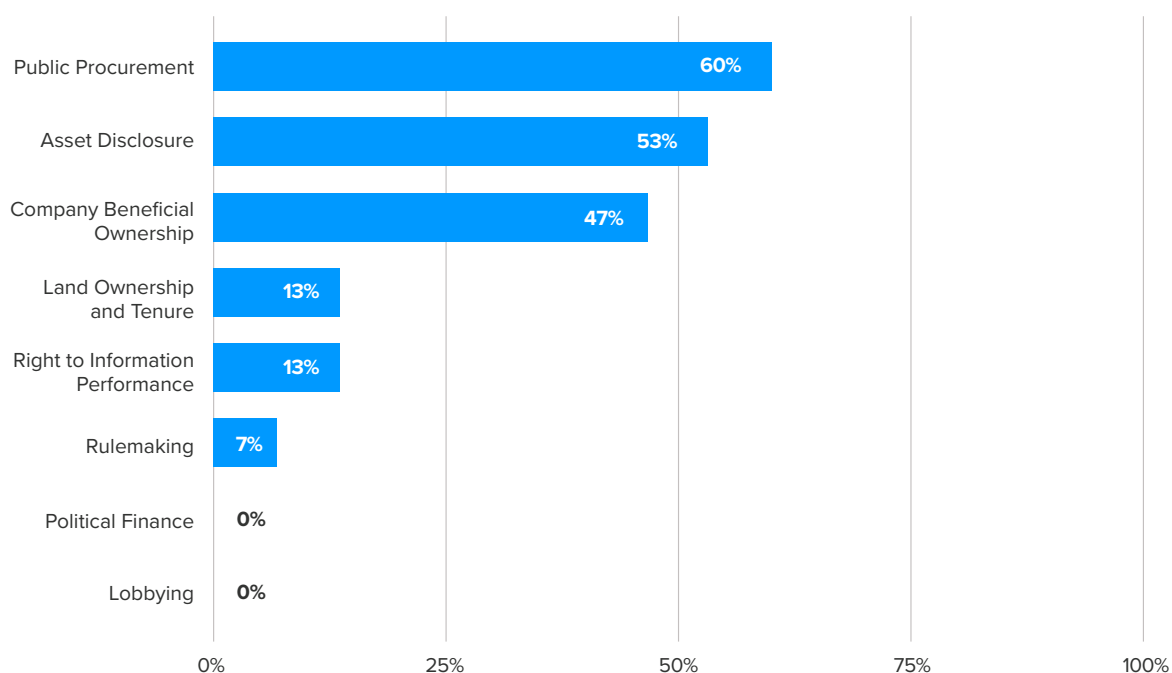
⁶ For more details see the *About Broken Links* section of the report: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/broken-links/>.

State of Progress Through OGP

OGP countries in Africa and the Middle East have advanced reforms in certain policy areas, such as beneficial ownership transparency, while lacking commitments in others, like lobbying (see Figure 3). Over half of the countries in the region have made a commitment related to asset disclosure, but none have addressed lobbying or political finance.

FIGURE 3: Progress made through OGP commitments

This figure shows the percentage of OGP countries in Africa and the Middle East that have made at least one relevant OGP commitment across each policy area assessed in this report. The sample includes all 15 OGP countries in the region.



Percentage of OGP Countries in Africa and the Middle East 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.

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

- **A significant number of countries have beneficial ownership laws.** Eight OGP countries in the region have an operational law that requires the collection of beneficial ownership data. Three countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria) have operational laws requiring the publication of beneficial ownership information and data.
- **Data is not publicly available throughout most of the region.** While many countries have laws mandating the collection and/or publication of beneficial ownership information, Nigeria is the only country that has beneficial ownership data freely available online.

State of Progress Through OGP

- **Beneficial ownership transparency is a growing area of reform.** Seven countries in the region have made a total of 19 commitments on beneficial ownership transparency.⁷ Five of these countries are currently implementing a commitment through their 2020 or 2021 action plans.
- **Many beneficial ownership commitments in the region involve open data.** Eleven of the nineteen commitments reference publishing beneficial ownership information according to open data principles. Many countries in Africa and the Middle East, such as Ghana and Nigeria, have committed to publishing data according to the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative's](#) (EITI) standards.⁸

Regional Innovations

Nigeria

Beneficial ownership information for the extractive industry [is available](#) according to EITI standards.⁹

⁷ As of June 2022, 15 national and 12 local OGP members from Africa and the Middle East had submitted at least one action plan. See an updated list of OGP national and local members <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/our-members/>.

⁸ Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, "A Year in Review," 2022, <https://eiti.org>.

⁹ Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, "Beneficial Ownership Portal," n.d., https://bo.neiti.gov.ng/og_search.



Garmondeh Banwon is a member of the Jogbahn community in Grand Bassa County, Liberia. The community continues to fight to understand their land rights and protect their community land. As part of its Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments, Liberia's government agreed to publish concessions information online, as well as to pass a formal Land Rights Act. This information shows what land belongs to whom—and flags where concessions and villages overlap. By showing that competing information, communities can use it to show that their land is theirs—and that they have the rights to the resources.

Land Ownership and Tenure

Knowing who owns land and under what system of land ownership is essential, as land is both a major target of corruption and a commonly used vehicle for money laundering. Politicians may also pass policies that are favorable to particular landholders, such as direct subsidies.

Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **Few countries in the region publish land tenure data in any form.** No countries make the data available in a machine-readable format, for bulk download, or licensed for reuse.
- **The scope of land tenure data is very limited.** In general, countries do not publish information about the type of tenure held over particular pieces of land, including state land, open access land, and communally held land. No country in the region publishes information on indigenous peoples' land tenure or the gender of tenure holders.

State of Progress Through OGP

- **Most members have made a commitment related to land rights.** In Africa and the Middle East, eight national and three local OGP members have made a total of 23 commitments related to land rights. Two countries are currently implementing a land rights commitment through their 2020 or 2021 action plans.
- **Many commitments involve opening data.** Ten land rights commitments reference open data principles. Seven of these were assessed as having high potential impact by OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM).¹⁰

¹⁰ Learn more about how the Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses commitments <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm-guidance-overview/>.

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.¹¹

Key Findings from the Global Data Barometer

- **Nearly all OGP countries in the region publish data on public procurement.** All OGP countries evaluated by the GDB in Africa and the Middle East, except for Burkina Faso, publish procurement data online. Two countries, however, do not publish the data free of charge (Ghana and Malawi).
- **The scope of published information is limited.** Most countries publish data with significant gaps in coverage. Countries tend to publish the most information on the award and tender stages, with only two countries also publishing data on contract implementation. A majority of countries do not publish critical information, such as the value of awards, names of companies awarded contracts, or contract start and end dates.
- **Data usability is an area for improvement across the region.** No country publishes procurement data that meets all five elements of open data (freely accessible, up to date, openly licensed, machine-readable, and bulk downloadable). Few countries publish data that is timely and updated. Three countries have openly licensed procurement data, and four countries publish machine-readable data, both essential elements for public monitoring and oversight.

State of Progress Through OGP

- **Many OGP members have committed to public procurement and open contracting reforms.** Eight countries and three localities in Africa and the Middle East have made a total of 28 commitments related to public procurement and open contracting. Sector-specific reforms have been common, such as open contracting in the extractives sector.
- **However, few commitments have led to strong results.** Only 2 of the 17 commitments assessed by the IRM have achieved strong early results in opening government, possibly because most of the commitments have not been fully implemented.

Regional Innovations

Jordan

Although not published until awards are finalized, Jordan [publishes](#) procurement data annually with contract values and supplier names.¹²

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's National Public Procurement Authority [publishes](#) data on government-awarded contracts that includes the names of suppliers, contract values, and expected contract completion dates.¹³

¹¹ Open Government Partnership, *The Skeptic's Guide to Open Government*, 2022, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/skeptics-guide-to-open-government-2022-edition/#toc_7.

¹² The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, n.d., <https://portal.jordan.gov.jo/wps/portal/OpenData?&lang=en&isFromLangChange=yes#/viewDataSet/633>.

¹³ National Public Procurement Authority, "Contract Awards," n.d., <https://nppa.gov.sl/contract-awards>.