

## Open Government Partnership

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Hon. E M S B Ekanayake  
Secretary of the President  
Presidential Secretariat  
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Dear Mr. Ekanayake,

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together reformers committed to making their governments more transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizens. This Partnership now comprises 76 countries and 106 local governments working to implement open government commitments to promote greater transparency, accountability and citizen engagement in policy-making. In 2016, Sri Lanka became the first South Asian country to join the Partnership.

President Wickremesinghe's vision for "Empowered Sri Lanka" to improve quality of life for all citizens, establish a functioning democracy, and a commitment to building and enabling more transparent and effective institutions is strongly aligned with OGP's vision of transparent, participatory, inclusive and accountable governance.

At the heart of OGP is a strong domestic dialogue where government and civil society work together to identify reforms that can further progress through two-year or four-year action plans and a global platform for peer exchange to showcase innovation and enable adaptation. The scope of the reforms included in the actions is determined by national stakeholders, based on each country's needs and context, and the evaluations seek to provide recommendations for future iterations. OGP's global platform serves as an avenue for countries to receive technical and peer support from open government practitioners from around the world, get international recognition for successful reforms and reformers in government, and access financial and technical assistance from OGP's partners including the World Bank, UNDP, ADB, as well as bilateral development partners.

Sri Lanka's most recent OGP Action plan from 2019-2021, its second since it joined the Partnership, lapsed. Given your government's focus on open government issues, I encourage you to reopen a robust process to co-create Sri Lanka's next OGP action plan with civil society, including the many in the community who were energized by transparency, inclusive and responsive governance in the past year. Specifically, a new co-creation process and action plan would provide a prime opportunity to progress and highlight your government's important commitments to strengthen and establish a functioning democracy and empowered society.

We hope that, with your leadership, the OGP process in Sri Lanka will soon resume. Given the cross-cutting nature of the partnership and the range of policy areas covered in OGP national action plans, the Government of Sri Lanka needs to appoint a lead ministry that plays a vital role in ensuring

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coordination and oversight of the plan and ensuring that future plans are developed in line with national priorities, even as implementation is led by different line ministries and other public institutions. Previously, this was done by the Presidential Secretariat. It can be done by any agency with a cross-cutting planning mandate or a mandate on open government issues. Additionally, every government is required to designate an official Point of Contact for international and domestic coordination, a role previously held by Additional Secretary Chandima Wickramasinghe.

All OGP members also establish a regular multi-stakeholder forum, a group of both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders that meets on a regular basis to oversee and coordinate the OGP process and ensure follow through of the country's commitments. Resumption of the activities of Sri Lanka's OGP National steering committee which comprises of senior officials from across ministries and public institutions and civil society leaders, and headed by the Secretary to the President, or establishment of a new one under the leadership of the appointed ministry are options that are available at the moment. Quarterly meetings of the National OGP Steering Committee or the new committee are part of the requirements of membership, and serve as an important platform to jointly identify solutions to challenges faced in implementation and to identify future directions.

In 2021, the OGP Steering Committee approved new Participation and Co-creation Standards that all new countries will have to observe. All OGP participating governments are expected to co-create an Action Plan outlining a concrete set of open government reforms. As of December 31, 2022, the OGP Support Unit has not received a new action plan from the Government of Sri Lanka, and so was found to have acted contrary to the OGP process for the 2022-2024 cycle. Sri Lanka was also found to have acted contrary to the OGP process for failing to submit an action plan on time for the 2021-2023 cycle, and during implementation of its 2019-2021 action plan by failing to publish a repository or meet the minimum IAP2 'inform' requirement during implementation, as outlined in [this report](#). Therefore, this is the third consecutive cycle that Sri Lanka has acted contrary to process.

In line with OGP's Procedural Review [process](#), the Criteria & Standards (C&S) Subcommittee — the body in charge of upholding OGP's policies and procedures — will thus review Sri Lanka's participation in OGP during their meeting in February. Following the C&S Subcommittee's deliberations, you will be informed of their decision.

The OGP Steering Committee and Support Unit remains at your team's disposal to provide the necessary support to finalize and successfully deliver Sri Lanka's OGP action plan in the planned period. I look forward to Sri Lanka's continued participation in the OGP and look forward to your active engagement with the agenda domestically and globally. Let me also take this opportunity to request a videoconference in the coming weeks to discuss how we can most effectively support the important reforms being pursued by your government.

Yours sincerely,



Sanjay Pradhan  
Chief Executive Officer

