



Independent Reporting Mechanism

Report on Local Action Plans

2021-2022



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As part of the [OGP Local Engagement Strategy](#) approved by the OGP Steering Committee, the IRM has [committed to produce](#) an analysis of the overall performance of OGP local members every two years. This is the IRM's second biennial report on local members. The first report, published in 2021, is available [here](#). The IRM will cover commitments beyond this report's time-period in its third biennial report, which will be published 2025.

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Executive Summary

This report draws out innovations and obstacles faced by local open government reformers over the past two years. With the OGP Local Strategy approved in May 2019, the new local program has differences from the national program, ranging from how members participate in the partnership to how they are held accountable. The IRM gathered findings from 72 commitments implemented by 29 local governments during 2021–2022, mostly in Latin America, Europe, and Africa. Some of these findings may not be fully generalizable to all local governments, particularly in Asia and the Pacific.

The OGP Local platform provides local governments with a space to co-create and implement open government reforms. This report found that local members used co-creation practices and commitments to address the needs of underrepresented communities, while centering on opportunities for public participation. The report also explores key questions on achieving open government results and building collaboration between government and civil society:



I. What does co-creation look like at the local level?

Local members used diverse mechanisms to consult stakeholders on developing action plans, such as drawing on existing local deliberative forums or virtual consultation platforms. During implementation, the local members continued to experiment with channels for engagement – for instance, some local multistakeholder forums established follow-up committees for each commitment with government and civil society members, who reported on implementation progress at monthly meetings.



II. What have local reforms achieved?

Over half of 2021 action plans contain at least one commitment focused on strengthening inclusion of marginalized groups. Commitments supported vulnerable communities in accessing services, incorporated the perspectives of women and youth in policy development, and included people with disabilities in designing public spaces. Public services, fiscal openness, and green transitions are also common areas for reform, emerging from more than 30 percent of the action plans.



III. What are the factors that shape reforms?

Building alliances and ensuring political feasibility in the design and implementation of local action plans has often been critical to success. This has been achieved by directly involving senior officials and civil society throughout the design and implementation of commitments. Some local members also supported reforms by aligning action plans with national and local government agendas. However, unforeseen political events significantly slowed a number OGP processes.





To continue strengthening open government results, the IRM recommends that local reformers:



Adopt more accountability-focused commitments, to further local governments' ability to build trust. These can provide channels for the public to call upon the government to respond to complaints and justify their decisions.



Include a broad spectrum of participants in the co-creation process, to develop commitments that best reflect issues of diversity, such as disability, gender, youth, indigenous, or LGBTQIA+ rights.



Continue to engage civil society throughout implementation to build momentum for reforms. This can help keep commitments on-track, align reforms with community needs, and build support for changes, like new legislation.



Plan ahead for resource allocation and institutional and technical support for commitments. Some local members have sought to fill resource-gaps during implementation through resource mobilization committees or annual budgeting processes.



Secure political support and build alliances for reform by involving senior officials early in the design and implementation process, building on existing government priorities, and learning from local governments undertaking similar reforms.



Consider building connections national and local OGP processes. This can support learning across different levels of government, between local OGP members, and between national and local civil society. It can also help with policy coherence and resource allocation.



Leverage the diverse network of local and national OGP members for peer learning, capacity building, and exchange of tools for reform.





CHAPTER I: Action Plan Co-Creation

This section explores local jurisdictions' approaches to build collaboration between government, civil society, and the public on open government reforms.

In 2018, Quintana Roo (Mexico) began holding “Glosa,” unique forums for exchanges between government and civil society. These motivated the state to become an OGP local member, as civil society saw an opportunity to implement commitments discussed at the forums. While Glosa provided a solid starting point for the state’s action plan, the wider public did not have the opportunity to suggest new themes or commitments during the co-creation process.¹

As illustrated, the OGP Local Program’s flexibility enabled members to adapt co-creation to their individual contexts. Some jurisdictions concentrated OGP leadership in a local executive body, while others shared leadership among different government bodies. Co-creation exercises sought to include diverse voices, especially marginalized groups like women, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and youth. These exercises included online voting, qualitative feedback sessions, thematic meetings, and engagement with neighborhood groups. During implementation, local jurisdictions continued to engage nongovernmental partners by providing spaces for ongoing dialogue.

Nevertheless, there were challenges. Many local members did not provide advanced notice to the public on how to participate in co-creation exercises or inform the public of how their input shaped commitments. This sometimes limited public influence over the commitments. There remains ample opportunity for members to strengthen meaningful participation in open government reforms.



1. Who is leading local open government work?

Local jurisdictions' open government work is led by local executives, single departments, multiple departments with shared responsibility, or even multiple levels of municipal and regional government. In Colombia, Bogotá's model of inter-institutional coordination offers a useful blueprint for such cooperation (See **Box 1**).²

Analysis shows that local governments benefit from developing strategies to organize their open government

work effectively. Success relies on strong coordination, leveraging sectoral expertise, and ensuring buy-in at different levels of government. Members can consider trade-offs between different leadership models depending on their capacity, thematic expertise, and resources. Ultimately, the right institutional setup can better serve open government goals.



Box 1: Sharing Leadership in Bogotá

In Colombia, Bogotá's open government agenda is led by the General Secretariat, the Secretariat of Government, the Secretariat of Planning, and the District Institute for Community Action and Participation. These four entities develop strategies and issue guidelines on transparency, participation, collaboration, and user experience according to their competencies. The remaining district institutions implement the open government model in accordance with the principles, actions, and objectives established by the coordinating bodies, within the framework of the District Development Plan.³



Consider trade-offs between leadership models depending on existing capacity, thematic expertise, and resources.





LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP (CITY HALL, MAYOR, GOVERNOR)



BANSKÁ BYSTRICA
Slovak Republic



KHONI
Georgia



AKHALTSIKHE
Georgia



EL KEF
Tunisia



REGUEB
Tunisia

Example

The Khoni City Hall leads on OGP. The mayor issued an ordinance forming a government-civil society working group to coordinate action plan development and implementation.

Opportunities

- Strong political backing to ensure better delivery of commitments and boost their ambition

Risks

- Susceptible to unforeseen political events, like snap elections, government restructuring, and changes in political priorities



SPECIALIZED GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT



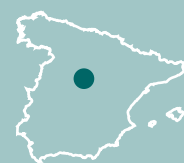
BUENOS AIRES
Argentina



MENDOZA
Argentina



PEÑALOLÉN
Chile



MADRID
Spain



ONTARIO
Canada ⁴

Example

The Undersecretary for Open Government and Accountability in Buenos Aires uses its whole-of-government perspective to coordinate open government work.

Opportunities

- Deeper understanding of open government processes
- Mandated to promote open government principles across sectoral departments

Risks

- Siloing, whereby OGP is seen as the domain of one department, or even one individual (especially when it does not have coordinating power)
- Limited buy-in across government



SHARED LEADERSHIP (MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS OR MULTIPLE LEVELS OF MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT)



CÓRDOBA PROVINCE
Argentina



ROSARIO
Argentina



MAKUENI
Kenya



GWANGJU
Republic of Korea



BOGOTÁ
Colombia



MEXICO STATE
Mexico



TALNEPANTLA DE BAZ
Mexico ⁵

Example

Coordination of Mexico State's action plan is shared between state level departments (the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, and the Institute for Access to Public Information and Data Protection) and the municipality of Tlalnepantla de Baz.

Opportunities

- Action plans are rooted in relevant sectoral expertise
- Buy-in from different levels of local government

Risks

- Engagement can vary across different departments and levels of government, requiring strong coordination (e.g., through internal steering groups or formal cooperation agreements)



2. What does co-creation look like at the local level?

Largely, local members met the four minimum co-creation requirements of the OGP Local Program (see **Box 2**). This was the case for almost all of the 19 local members that participated in inception assessments.⁶ Quebec (Canada) was the only exception, as not all members of its Open Government Committee (the province's multistakeholder forum) were aware of formally endorsing the action plan.⁷ The national level of OGP has more rules on the space for dialogue, transparency of the process, and quality of participation during the co-creation and implementation stages. Comparative flexibility in rules for local members contributed to a broad range of co-creation approaches.

Some governments used citizen prioritization exercises to develop their local action plans, while others engaged specialists to support the process. In Rosario (Argentina), the co-creation process began

with a series of talks by specialists on innovation, citizen participation, and participatory democracy.⁸ On the other hand, Peñalolén (Chile) began its process with citizen dialogues to prioritize open government themes. The municipality developed these themes into 11 commitments, and the public voted online to select the three final commitments.⁹ Meanwhile, Ontario (Canada) provided a range of participation channels, including an online survey where citizens could rank proposed commitments, and virtual community feedback sessions. (For online co-creation practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, see **Box 3**). In addition, six independent nongovernmental stakeholders oversaw the consultation process, seeking to maximize public involvement.¹⁰ These practices can help ensure that commitments are both ambitious and feasible in their design.

Box 2: OGP Local: Co-creation Minimum Requirements¹¹

The OGP Local Handbook requires local members to meet minimum participation requirements during co-creation:

Forum: The local government, with the support of non-governmental stakeholders, must have a space for participation in the development of and the review of the action plan.

Regularity: The local government, with the support of non-governmental stakeholders, must hold at least one meeting with civil society and non-governmental stakeholders during the co-creation of the action plan and two meetings per year on implementation of the action plan.

Multi-stakeholder: The local government, with the support of non-governmental stakeholders, must include both governmental and non-governmental representatives in the space for co-creation.

Endorsement: Non-governmental stakeholders must endorse the final action plan. The government must submit, as part of the action plan, the list of names of the non-governmental stakeholders who endorse the final action plan.



Regardless of the co-creation approach adopted, it is important to ensure proactive communication on decisions, activities, and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders.



Other co-creation processes used existing consultation mechanisms. This helps align the action plan with existing citizen priorities and avoid consultation fatigue. Although this can curb new stakeholders' involvement and influence commitment themes, it can also help with time and budget constraints. In Bogotá (Colombia), the action plan arose out of six strategic challenges previously prioritized through consultations with citizens and government institutions. To refine the commitments,

the public offered more than 900 suggestions on the Bogotá Abierta virtual platform.¹² Similarly, the city of Madrid (Spain) engaged existing deliberative councils, rather than establishing a dedicated multistakeholder forum.¹³ One of the councils endorsed commitments proposed by the city, which were then shared on the Decide Madrid platform for public comments, eliciting 2,000 responses. The city government presented the results to the forums¹⁴ for discussion and final approval.¹⁵

Box 3: COVID-19 and Co-Creation Online

Adaptation to an online co-creation process carried both challenges and benefits. The COVID-19 pandemic led Buenos Aires' (Argentina) third action plan to be developed virtually. Compared to previous co-creation processes' community sessions, the quality of online discussions suffered, with participants finding it harder to actively engage. However, virtual engagement reached more people.¹⁶ Similarly in Santa Catarina (Brazil), running the co-creation process virtually made it difficult to build trust and achieve diverse participation – particularly as this was the state's first experience developing an OGP action plan.¹⁷ Moving forward, a combination of virtual and in-person public involvement is sometimes preferable for accessibility. Where a hybrid approach is adopted, messaging must be consistent both in-person and online to avoid misunderstanding or distrust.¹⁸

With the backdrop of COVID-19, several co-creation processes produced OGP strategic visions framed around pandemic recovery. In Georgia, this included improving public service delivery in response to the pandemic for Ozurgeti¹⁹ and Khoni.²⁰ Gwangju (Republic of Korea) committed to develop green economic growth in the post-COVID-19 era.²¹ Madrid (Spain) sought to recover the dynamism of the city through citizen participation.²² Overall, some members have focused on advancing digital transformation and using open data in response to the pandemic.



“The pandemic showed us the important role that local governments have. It is there where the most direct solutions to the urgent problems of the population are produced.”

— María Cecilia Jiménez,
Peñalolén, Chile

<https://youtu.be/QZup11yjqKc?list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=44>



In advance of these consultations, most local governments shared information on opportunities for the public to engage, although sometimes only a few days' notice was provided. Short notice makes it harder for stakeholders to attend co-creation events and come prepared. In Georgia for example, Khoni and Ozurgeti only provided 2–3 days.

Members can also improve on informing participants how their input influenced the action plan. Only a few governments provided written responses to participants. For instance, Gwangju (Republic of Korea) sent feedback to stakeholders through meeting minutes and social network services.²³ For others, a lack of follow up risked participants disengaging from OGP efforts. Like a number of other jurisdictions,²⁴ Quebec OGP committee members could not tell how their discussions concretely translated into the action plan. Instead of perceiving

themselves as decision makers, they saw their role as experts who inform the government.²⁵

The flexible co-creation requirements for OGP local members allow for greater dynamism and innovation in developing action plans. This can enable governments to align their action plans with citizen priorities. However, there is a risk of neglecting good practices like providing advanced notice and proactive feedback for meaningful citizen participation. Local governments should balance innovation and accountability to maximize the benefits of co-creation. Different stakeholders bring diverse perspectives on policy problems and strategic solutions, so it can be valuable to include civil society from the very beginning. Regardless, it is important to ensure proactive communication on decisions, activities, and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders.



“It is important to be there to take our gender and youth perspective to the processes of co-creation.”

— Silvia Corbalan,
Córdoba, Argentina

WATCH NOW ▶

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4iLk_a_-GQ&list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=25s



Discussing engagement options with government agencies or local CSOs working with underrepresented groups can be a useful place to start.



3. How have local governments included diverse voices in co-creation?

The local members assessed engaged historically underrepresented groups in the OGP process by cooperating with civil society organizations or agencies with ties to those communities. Analysis shows that including diverse voices allows co-creation of commitments that reflect issues of interest to people with disabilities, women, youth, and LGBTQIA+ and rural communities. The more directly impacted communities are included, the better commitments address their needs.²⁶

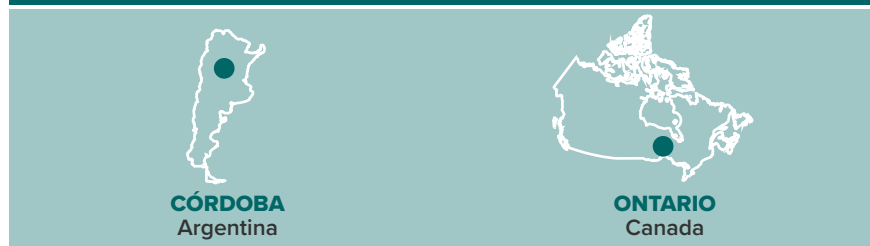
From the outset, local governments can consider how to engage a broad spectrum of people, in particular representatives of underrepresented groups. Discussing options with government agencies or local CSOs working with underrepresented groups can be a useful place to start. Similarly, open government or thematic experts can help design and facilitate the co-creation process. Gender and disability advocates can analyze a draft action plan to identify how commitments can best benefit people of different genders and abilities.²⁷

ENGAGING CSOS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF VULNERABLE GROUPS



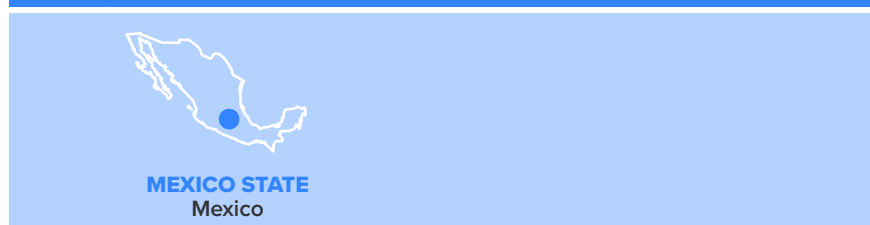
<p>Example</p> <p>El Kef’s open government forum included a women’s association, a disabilities organization, and a youth organization.²⁸</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs can be a conduit to express the challenges faced by the vulnerable groups they represent. 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May limit direct engagement with vulnerable individuals living with these challenges.
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CHANNELING OUTREACH THROUGH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WITH A REMIT TO ENGAGE UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS



<p>Example</p> <p>The Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, and the Anti-Racism Directorate helped identify additional participants.²⁹</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized government agencies may have pre-existing networks and resources to conduct broader outreach. 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hinders outreach to groups that are harder to reach, especially where there is a degree of mistrust in government.
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BUILDING ON EXISTING OUTREACH EFFORTS



<p>Example</p> <p>The existing structures of the mobile “Caravans for Everyday Justice” were used in order to broaden the reach to remote communities and marginalized populations in Mexico State.³⁰</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combats the sense of consultation fatigue. 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits outreach to those targeted by pre-existing outreach efforts.
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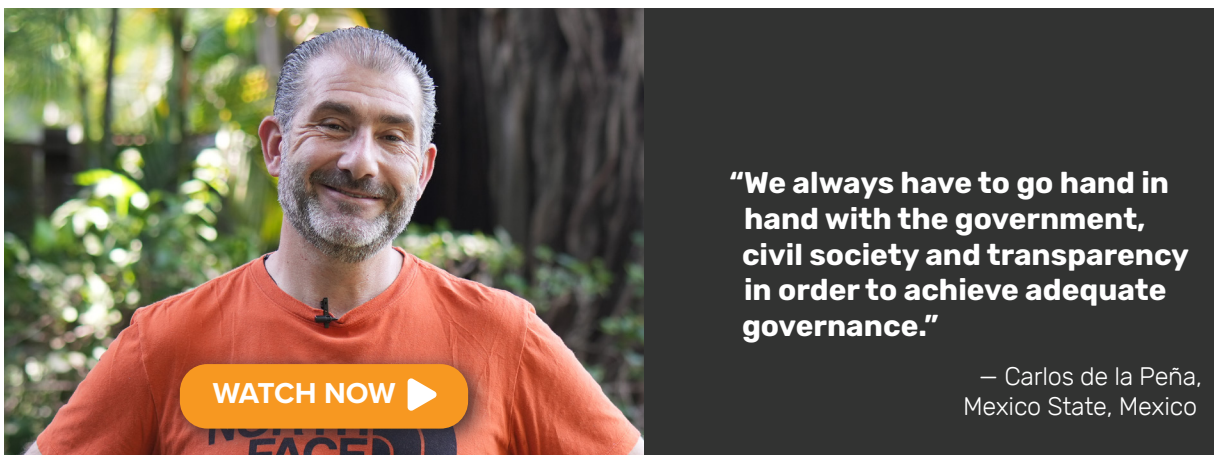
4. How have local governments engaged civil society during action plan implementation?

Local governments are engaging civil society through a more diverse range of mechanisms during implementation, compared to previous cohorts.³¹ Findings from across OGP show that civil society engagement often decreases after the co-creation period.³² However, ensuring ongoing and collaborative monitoring is critical for maintaining implementation momentum, adapting to new circumstances, and ensuring accountability.

A number of local governments are using existing deliberative or monitoring mechanisms. In Regueb (Tunisia), the Participatory Investment Program, a deliberative space that includes governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders, actively participates in the implementation and monitoring of commitments.³³ In Mexico State (Mexico), government and civil society monitor commitments through the existing Local Technical Secretariat.³⁴ The Secretariat is made up of representatives of the access to information body (INFOEM), the executive branch of the state government,³⁵ civil society, as well as the bodies responsible for commitment implementation.³⁶ INFOEM was central in galvanizing municipal-level support for one of the commitments.³⁷

Several local members demonstrated innovative approaches to civil society engagement during implementation. In Bogotá (Colombia),³⁸ Rosario (Argentina),³⁹ and El Kef (Tunisia), the multistakeholder forum established follow-up committees for each commitment, with government and civil society members. In El Kef, civil society members were selected as counterparts for each commitment, and with municipal officials, they reported on commitment progress at monthly multistakeholder forum meetings.⁴⁰

Others have developed online channels to share information on commitment implementation with the public. The Santa Catarina (Brazil) government's project management portal publishes progress on commitments. In Argentina, Mendoza and Córdoba Province share this information on their open data portals.⁴¹ Mendoza planned to publish its progress reports every four months to ensure regular monitoring, and follow up with an annual workshop and bimonthly meetings between the municipality and CSOs.



<https://youtu.be/pMrPBxm7aTQ?list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=43>



5. Lessons for locals on co-creation

- **Consider existing capacity, thematic expertise, and resources when allocating responsibility for open government reforms.** Shared responsibility among local government departments or levels of government can ground action plans in relevant sectoral expertise and lead to wider impact. On the other hand, a specialized local government body can provide the required technical expertise to implement the action plan.
- **Offer opportunities for the public to propose and prioritize commitments** to galvanize public support for the action plan. Using existing deliberative spaces or previously gathered public input can align local action plans with citizen priorities and help avoid consultation fatigue. Meanwhile, creating new spaces can allow for fresh ideas and participants. Build trust and engagement by providing advance notice of these opportunities and informing the public on how their input shaped commitments.
- **Engage experts** throughout the action plan cycle to ensure that reforms balance ambition and feasibility. Experts should complement an inclusive co-creation process that has broad participation.
- **Take proactive measures to include a broad spectrum of participants** throughout the action plan cycle. Engage CSOs, community groups, and government agencies that represent marginalized communities. This can lead to commitments that better reflect issues of diversity, such as disability, indigenous, gender, youth, or LGBTQIA+ rights.
- **Maintain coordination and accountability mechanisms to keep implementation space** across departments (e.g., internal steering groups and regular progress reporting). Ongoing and collaborative monitoring facilitates momentum and course correction when circumstances change.

Endnotes

- ¹ Cynthia Dehesa (Ciudadanas y Ciudadanos por la Transparencia), interview by IRM, 2 May 2023.
- ² OGP, “Action plan – Bogotá, Colombia, 2021 – 2023” (26 Aug. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-Bogotá-colombia-2021-2023/>.
- ³ Id.
- ⁴ The Directorate of Open Government and Participation in Mendoza; the Directorate of Control and Open Government and the Department of Citizen Participation in Peñalolén; the Directorates for General Transparency and Quality and for Citizen Participation in Madrid; and the Ontario Digital Service within the Ontario Ministry of Finance
- ⁵ The Ministry of Women and the Córdoba Youth Agency in Córdoba; the Secretariat of Gender and Human Rights and the Secretariat of Environment and Public Space in Rosario; the Departments of Participatory Development, Youth and Public Service, and Water and Sanitation in Makueni; the Innovation & Communication Planning Division and Energy Industry Division in Gwangju; the General Secretariat, the Secretariat of Government, the Secretariat of Planning, and the District Institute for Community Action and Participation in Bogotá; and Mexico State’s Access to Information agency (INFOEM)
- ⁶ For accountability and learning, each local member is expected to select a local monitoring body, which must produce an inception assessment. These assessments appraise the co-creation process as well as the design quality of the commitments at their inception. By May 2023, inception assessments had been submitted for Abuja (Nigeria), Akhaltsikhe (Georgia), Banská Bystrica (Slovak Republic), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Córdoba Province (Argentina), El Kef (Tunisia), Gwangju (Republic of Korea), Khoni (Georgia), Madrid (Spain), Mendoza (Argentina), Mexico State (Mexico), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), Ozurgeti (Georgia), Peñalolén (Chile), Quebec (Canada), Quintana Roo (Mexico), Rosario (Argentina), Santa Catarina (Brazil), and Tlalnepantla de Baz (Mexico).
- ⁷ OGP, “Inception Report – Action plan – Québec, Canada, 2021 – 2023” (12 Dec. 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/inception-report-action-plan-quebec-canada-2021-2023/>.
- ⁸ OGP, “Inception Report – Action plan – Rosario, Argentina, 2021 – 2023” (30 Mar. 2023), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/inception-report-action-plan-rosario-argentina-2021-2023/>.
- ⁹ OGP, “Action plan – Peñalolén, Chile, 2021 – 2024” (26 Nov. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-penalolen-chile-2021-2024/>.
- ¹⁰ OGP, “Action plan – Ontario, Canada, 2021 – 2022” (8 Sep. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-ontario-canada-2021-2022/>.
- ¹¹ OGP, OGP Local Handbook (7 Jan. 2021) Section 3.3.1 Requirements, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ogp-local-handbook/#3.3.1>.
- ¹² OGP, “Action plan – Bogotá, Colombia, 2021 – 2023” (26 Aug. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-bogota-colombia-2021-2023/>.
- ¹³ The existing councils included: City Social Council (CSC), responsible for reporting, studying and proposing in matters of municipal strategic planning, local economic development, and major urban projects; the Sectoral Council of Associations and other Citizen Entities (CSAYOEC), which advises the City Council on its competencies in the area of associations; and Sectoral Council for the Elderly (CSPM), dedicated to consulting and advising municipal organizations related to promoting the welfare and improving the quality of life of the elderly in the City (see OGP, “Inception Report – Action plan – Madrid, Spain, 2022 – 2023” (8 May 2023), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/inception-report-action-plan-madrid-spain-2022-2023/>).
- ¹⁴ Specifically, the City’s Social Council and the Sectoral Council of Associations
- ¹⁵ Maria Pia Junquera Temprano (City of Madrid), interview by IRM, 31 May 2023.
- ¹⁶ Camila Lescano (Project Manager for the City of Buenos Aires) and Tamara Laznik (open government point of contact for the City of Buenos Aires), interview by IRM, 2 May 2023.
- ¹⁷ Deis Cristina (Social Observatory of Brazil), interview by IRM, 5 May 2023.
- ¹⁸ Miriam Salerno, Andrea Lubin, and Pamala Lebeaux, “Virtual Public Involvement: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic,” NCHRP Web-Only Document 349 (Transportation Research Board, Oct. 2022), <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/26827/chapter/2#2>.
- ¹⁹ OGP, “Action plan – Ozurgeti, Georgia, 2021 – 2021” (6 Aug. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-ozurgeti-georgia-2021-2021/>.
- ²⁰ OGP, “Action plan – Khoni, Georgia, 2023 – 2025” (9 Jan. 2023), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-khoni-georgia-2023-2025/>.
- ²¹ OGP, “Action plan – Gwangju, Republic of Korea, 2021 – 2022” (6 Aug. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-gwangju-south-korea-2021-2022/>.
- ²² OGP, “Action plan – Madrid, Spain, 2022 – 2023” (24 Oct. 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-madrid-spain-2022-2023/>.
- ²³ OGP, “Inception Report – Action Plan – Gwangju, Republic of Korea, 2021 – 2022” (19 Dec. 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/inception-report-action-plan-gwangju-republic-of-korea-2021-2022/>.
- ²⁴ For instance, Abuja (Nigeria), Akhaltsikhe (Georgia), El Kef (Tunisia), Khoni (Georgia), Mexico State (Mexico), and Santa Catarina (Brazil).
- ²⁵ OGP, “Inception Report – Action plan – Québec, Canada, 2021 – 2023.”



- ²⁶ For more on the resulting commitments on including marginalized groups, see Section 2.1.1.
- ²⁷ For more details, see OGP, “Actions for a More Inclusive Open Government Partnership” (accessed Jul. 2023), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/actions-for-a-more-inclusive-open-government-partnership/>.
- ²⁸ OGP, “Inception Report – Action plan – El Kef, Tunisia, 2021 – 2023” (11 Apr. 2023), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/inception-report-action-plan-el-kef-tunisia-2021-2023/>.
- ²⁹ OGP, “Action plan – Ontario, Canada, 2021 – 2022.” Similarly, in Córdoba, outreach was carried out through various communication channels, with the support of the Córdoba Youth Agency and the Ministry of Women to encourage the participation of related sectors (OGP, “Action plan – Córdoba (Province), Argentina, 2021 – 2023” (6 Aug. 2021), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/action-plan-Córdoba-province-argentina-2021-2023/>).
- ³⁰ OGP, “Inception Report – Action plan – Mexico State, Mexico, 2021 – 2022” (19 Dec. 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/inception-report-action-plan-mexico-state-mexico-2021-2022/>.
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- ³⁵ Secretariat of the Comptroller’s Office
- ³⁶ Namely, the Electoral Institute of the State of Mexico and the Judicial Power of the State of Mexico
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CHAPTER II: Local Reforms

This section explores how local open government commitments have led to real-world changes.

In Georgia, the municipality of Khoni's public spaces were not all equally accessible for persons with disabilities. Through an OGP commitment, the mayor passed a decree mandating that both the Municipal Council on Persons with Disabilities and the Gender Equality Council are consulted on urban infrastructure projects. In parallel, the municipality began accessibility upgrades to the Khoni Central Park.¹

This commitment illustrates local action plans' common focus on strengthening inclusion of traditionally marginalized groups.² Over half the action plans include at least one such commitment. Policy areas that directly respond to local communities' needs are popular in local action plans. Public services, fiscal openness, and green transitions appeared in more than 30 percent of the action plans (see Figure 1).³ Generally speaking, a focus on service delivery tended to appear in local government action plans in Africa, inclusion was strong in Latin America and Africa, and open data (including fiscal data) was featured in Europe.

These local action plans often respond to a lack of trust in government, a common challenge identified by open government strategic visions.⁴ Almost half of their commitments use the open government mechanism of public participation, but few advance public accountability.⁵ This was also the case for previous local action plans.⁶ Consequently, few commitments establish specific mechanisms that allow citizens to hold government actors accountable, call upon them to justify their actions, lodge complaints, report wrongdoing, or achieve redress.





“The central boulevard has been totally changed after consulting the council of the people with disabilities.”

— Tamar Ugulova,
Khoni, Georgia

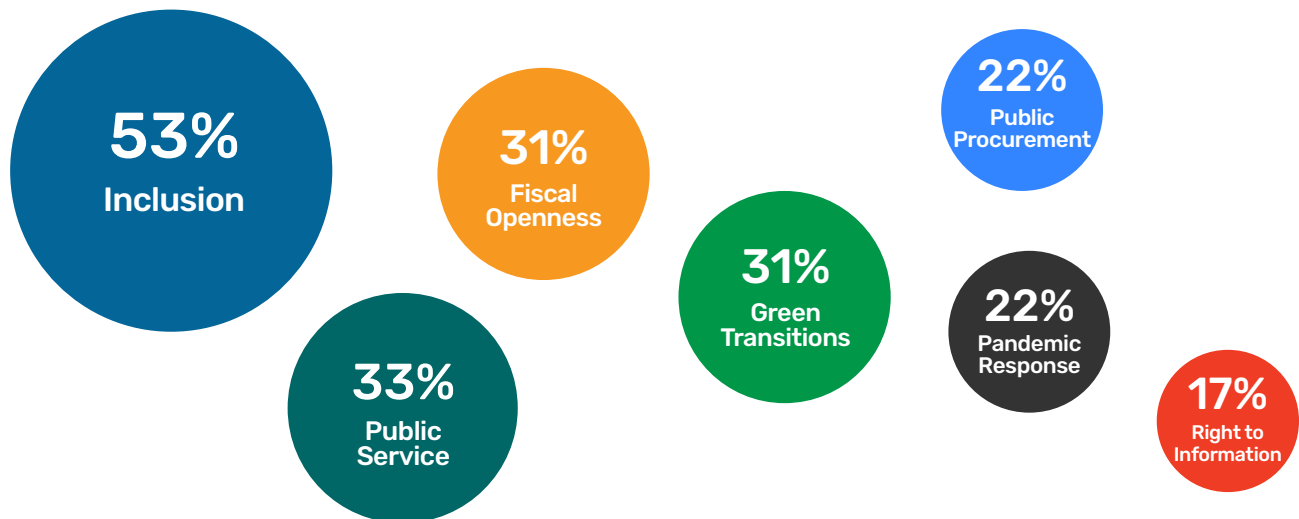
WATCH NOW ▶

<https://youtu.be/LokXVsYWpak?list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=34>

1. What kind of reforms come from local action plans?

Many action plans have initiated reforms to include underrepresented groups, as well as increase public services, fiscal openness, and green transitions. Some have also started laying groundwork for local open government culture. Each of these reform areas are explored below.

Principle thematic areas in local action plans



This figure summarizes the most popular policy areas or approaches from the 36 action plans submitted by OGP Local members between July 1, 2021 and October 1, 2021. It shows the percent local members with at least one 2021 commitment relevant to each thematic area. Source: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/whats-in-the-2021-local-action-plans/>



1.1. Inclusion of underrepresented groups

Local governments bring decision-making closer to the public. OGP offers a means to empower individuals to identify and address challenges they face. In some cases, it also enables the public to participate in decisions around resources provided by the national government.⁷ Compared to national members, local members were

better able to use the OGP platform as an avenue for inclusion of vulnerable groups, with at least one related commitment in more than half of 2021 action plans.⁸ For an example of how indigenous nations, the Afro-descendant community, and women were incorporated in Quintana Roo's long-term government planning process, see **Box 4**.

Box 4: Developing an Inclusive Long-Term Planning System for Quintana Roo

Despite its small size, Quintana Roo generates 7% of Mexico's national GDP, mainly through tourism. However, rapid growth and the absence of a planning framework have contributed to corruption risks. An OGP commitment paved the way for Quintana Roo residents to participate in reforming the State Planning Law. The new law is the basis for developing a 25-year Long Term Strategic Plan for the state. It entails co-creation of the plan by citizens, state and municipal governments, local parliament, judicial bodies, and autonomous bodies and institutions. The law guarantees the involvement of members of indigenous nations and the Afro-descendant community that have been historically excluded from decision-making. The law also calls for a feminist approach to reduce gender inequality. The reform has already impacted Quintana Roo's planning approach. At the municipal level, 55 residents are participating in local planning committees to discuss and work on new planning regulations within each municipality. Itinerant roundtables were also established in 11 municipalities, with more than 11,000 people providing input on the Strategic Plan.⁹ Quintana Roo shows how a state can engage municipalities to incorporate underrepresented groups into long-term strategic planning.



"We are working on a gender action plan."

— Nassar Fakh Lanjri,
Tetouan, Morocco

WATCH NOW ▶

<https://youtu.be/LokXVsYWpak?list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=60>



These reforms aim to engage traditionally marginalized groups such as women, the LGBTQIA+ community, indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and youth. Important commitment elements include institutionalizing participation of these groups, developing longer-term strategies, raising awareness, and adopting intersectional approaches for greater impact. Factors that led to the success of inclusion reforms include strong political will, support from civil society organizations, and effective coordination between regional and national actors. Challenges to inclusion are a lack of specific procedures for implementation, political changes, and allocation of resources. Considering the trend toward more inclusion-related commitments, and their importance in promoting inclusivity and addressing the needs of marginalized groups, careful attention is required to overcome these challenges and ensure successful implementation.

Persons with Disabilities



The mayor mandated engagement by the Municipal Council on Persons with Disabilities and the Gender Equality Council in all future urban development projects, to ensure they are adapted to the needs of these communities.

Women



The regional council led development of a regional strategy to mainstream gender and social inclusion in policymaking, followed by a series of workshops and awareness-raising campaigns.¹⁰

Youth



The state government issued a decree and co-created a protocol for including young people on issues of public safety, labor, anticorruption, the environment, education, violence against women, sports, and social development. This opened new ways for young people to participate, including channels to identify and report social problems (such as the lack of food resources), and opportunities to join social programs or volunteering.¹¹

Intersectional Approach



The province committed to incorporate a gender- and youth-centered perspective into Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 policy formulation across the different levels of government.¹²

The municipality studied the pandemic's impact on vulnerable groups as the basis for an action plan to address service delivery gaps. The study evolved from exclusively focusing on women to include others, such as children and people with chronic diseases. The commitment influenced longer-term reform priorities and was reflected in the agenda of the municipality's Council on Gender Equalities and a new, dedicated budget line for assisting vulnerable groups.¹³



1.2. Fiscal openness

Fiscal openness was a popular topic in 2021 local action plans – as it was in the first cohort of local action plans (2018–2021).¹⁴ Strengthening transparency, participation, and accountability in budget processes is proven to lower corruption, increase revenue, and improve government services.¹⁵ Evidence shows that public participation in budget processes also helps governments be more informed and responsive to the communities' needs.¹⁶

Nearly one-third of local members made a commitment related to fiscal openness, with particular popularity in Africa. However, few of these commitments aim to strengthen public accountability around budget revenue and spending. One set of local commitments aims to increase budget transparency. For effective transparency reforms, comprehensive data needs to be published in an open, shareable format. A second set of commitments has tried to directly involve citizens in the budget cycle (two-thirds of open budget commitments include participatory elements).¹⁷ These reforms can help the public use published information in decision-making. Governments can support efficacy by relaying how citizen input ultimately influences budget choices. For an approach to participatory budgeting in Abuja (Nigeria), see **Box 5**.

Quintana Roo (Mexico)



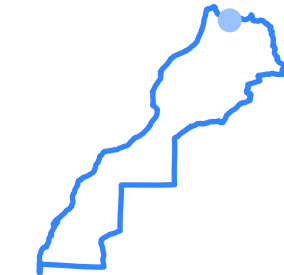
The government co-created a transparency platform for the state's public programs' budget cycle. The platform included cross-cutting gender and anticorruption annexes.¹⁸ Since launching the platform in July 2022,¹⁹ the government has held hackathons and collected feedback from youth on user experience.²⁰

Santa Catarina (Brazil)



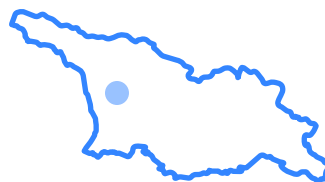
The government published a Procurement Transparency Protocol and is developing a new public procurement portal. It has also trained public officials in procurement risk management and signed agreements with universities to improve government administration and social oversight.²¹

Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima (Morocco)



The city committed to publish public spending data. However, because of its PDF format, few people used the data. Additionally, the data was not always comprehensive or accurate, as government agencies' submissions were voluntary.²²

Ozurgeti (Georgia)



The municipality held a series of public meetings with nongovernment actors. These meetings shaped a priority budget document for 2022–2025, a medium-term action plan, and a citizens' handbook.²³



Box 5: Participatory Budgeting in Abuja

Under a 2021 OGP commitment, residents of Abuja, Nigeria identified priority projects for funding by the Municipal Council. The Abuja Municipal Area Council started by publishing a project calendar for the full budgeting cycle. From across Abuja's 12 wards, 12 council members and 36 community champions were trained on participatory budgeting. Three townhall meetings, attended by representatives of all 12 wards and vulnerable community groups, resulted in 36 proposals (three from each ward) for consideration for government funding. Council members assessed the proposals based on their significance and feasibility. In total, 12 projects (one from each ward) received a budget allocation of 20 million NGN (approximately USD 43,000). Projects included improving access to clean water and constructing better road infrastructure.²⁴ By the end of the implementation period, two projects had begun implementation, and 10 were delayed due to local elections.²⁵



“We had to move from one community to the other, organizing focus group discussions that reflect - What do you need?”

– Semiye Michael,
Abuja, Nigeria

<https://youtu.be/XO4k8CzwcU?list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=27>



To maximize impact and build trust, data needs to be provided in an open, shareable format and the ways in which citizen feedback ultimately influences budget choices must be made visible.





Deputy Governor of Nandi County, Dr. Yulita Cheruiyot celebrates the launch of the Nandi Open Data Desk. Photo by Open Institute.

1.3. Public service delivery

Delivering public services is a core responsibility of local governments. Indeed, one-third of the 2021 local action plans aimed to strengthen public service delivery.²⁶ Commitments promoted the participation of users in the improvement and oversight of education,²⁷ health,²⁸ infrastructure,²⁹ and water and sanitation.³⁰ For governments such as Quintana Roo (Mexico),³¹ Ozurgeti (Georgia),³² and Tirana (Albania),³³ public service delivery was an overarching strategic objective of the action plan.

Citizen engagement is particularly effective when front-line staff directly deliver services, such as healthcare. Other services, such as those delivered through public infrastructure, benefit when reform engages civil society.³⁴ Spreading awareness of opportunities for the public to provide input on government services remains vital. Likewise, it is important that governments let the public know how their input shaped government policies and practices.

For example, in Nandi (Kenya), the county government launched a 24-hour, toll-free hotline to raise public awareness on county services, run strategic campaigns (including COVID-19 mitigation), and receive citizen

complaints. In rural parts of Nandi, residents have difficulty traveling to their local government offices. The hotline began to break down this boundary between government and the public. In the wake of COVID-19, the call center received over 5,000 calls and informed residents on important services the county provides, such as assistance registering for the national health insurance fund, business permits and rates, and artificial insemination of cattle.³⁵ This commitment created a more collaborative relationship between government and CSOs and provided a channel for citizens to voice their grievances and demand accountability from their government.³⁶

In terms of digital tools, Santa Catarina (Brazil) opened opportunities for online participation in evaluating public services.³⁷ A new council will be open to any interested citizen and will gather feedback on all public services in the state, with at least one session per year per local service. With 32 different services in total, the most critical and most used services will be prioritized. The council will be virtual, to reach the maximum number of people. Due to technical difficulties with the platform software, it was not yet operational by May 2023.³⁸




It is vital that governments inform the public of opportunities to provide input and oversight. It is equally important that the government inform the public how their input was addressed.



1.4. Green transition

National and local governments are increasingly looking to reduce and adapt to the impact of carbon emissions on the climate. This includes “greening” the private and public sectors in a way that is fair and inclusive.³⁹ The public has an important role to play by helping to establish priorities, balance tradeoffs, and identify transitional support for vulnerable workers, households, and communities. Engaging the public can maintain green projects over time.⁴⁰ Public participation in climate change policymaking can be a standalone initiative or mainstreamed into standard planning and budgeting processes.⁴¹

Nearly one-third of local members with 2021 action plans made a commitment related to green transitions.⁴² Some commitments involved citizens and other stakeholders in local climate-change policy (see Box 6), and others focused specifically on the co-creation of plans to develop and maintain green spaces. This can create sustainable employment while reducing pollution and protecting from flooding, drought, and heat waves. For instance, reformers in Bogotá planned to develop a strategy to promote citizen participation in the generation, management, adaptation, and care of public space in 20 areas of the city.⁴³



Box 6: Greening Khmelnytskyi

Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine demonstrates how the public can shape local climate change policy. Residents participated from the earliest stage of data collection to the final approval of the Green City Action Plan – adopting the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) Green Cities approach.⁴⁴ The plan’s green vision includes objectives, actions, and investments. In June 2022, the EBRD resumed support for the plan, which had paused due to Russia’s full-scale invasion. The plan’s scope was expanded to include a needs assessment for internally displaced people living in the city since the invasion.⁴⁵ The need for safe and reliable transit for displaced and other vulnerable people was identified as a priority. Consequently, the plan prioritized improving the trolleybus fleet, with the aim to also improve air quality. The city began modernizing the trolleybus fleet in Spring of 2023.⁴⁶



To increase the success of green transition initiatives, evidence suggests that consultation processes must account for local realities like literacy, digital access, and political context.⁴⁷



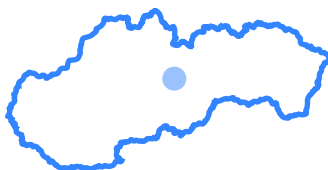
Locals situated green commitments within broader environmental policy efforts. Gwangju’s (Republic of Korea) open government strategic vision contributes to the government’s policy goal to create a city safe from climate disasters and to address the economic recession caused by COVID-19 through green economic growth. In February 2021, prior to the action plan, Gwangju launched the Carbon-Neutral City Promotion Committee, a public-private governance body that will contribute to the 2045 carbon-neutral city goal.⁴⁸ Its OGP commitments aimed to engage

local residents in evaluating climate policy through the Committee, and promote awareness of energy consumption information.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Mendoza (Argentina) is using its action plan to develop a model for local government that integrates economic development, social inclusion, and environmental conservation.⁵⁰ A commitment planned to promote a Climate Change Laboratory to co-design and test collaborative responses to environmental challenges among municipal officials, universities, the private sector, and civil society organizations.⁵¹

1.5. Open government culture

There is also a small, but notable, emphasis among local members to “lay the groundwork” for open government reforms. Such reforms include developing open government strategies or instilling open government culture and principles. However, these commitments’ milestones often lack detailed scope, and there was little evidence of their implementation. These commitments suggest that some local members are using their action plans to develop a shared vision for open government among key stakeholders. They may be driven by insufficient public awareness or interest in open government issues. This was addressed by open government strategic visions in Abuja (Nigeria),⁵² Northern Ireland (United Kingdom),⁵³ Nandi (Kenya),⁵⁴ and Mendoza (Argentina).⁵⁵

Banská Bystrica (Slovak Republic)



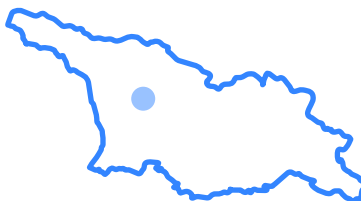
Co-create the first draft of an open government strategy,⁵⁶ and strengthen the Municipal Authority’s staff’s capacity to implement open government in spatial and environmental planning.⁵⁷

Santa Catarina (Brazil)



Develop learning materials on open government practices, training, and knowledge exchanges in the state’s municipalities.⁵⁸

Khoni (Georgia)



Organize a regional open governance forum to kick-start regional networking, promote open government values, and identify collaboration opportunities.⁵⁹

Northern Ireland (United Kingdom)



Develop a more strategic approach to open government and transparency by establishing a strategic vision.⁶⁰



2. Lessons for locals on commitments

- **For inclusion-related commitments, consider institutionalizing long-term opportunities for participation.** Formally mandating and implementing underrepresented groups' participation in local government through government decrees, policies, or action plans may boost ambition and ensure greater completion rates of OGP commitments.
- **For fiscal openness commitments, identify what data will be most relevant for public oversight and provide it in an open, shareable format.** Measures to open up this data also need to be accompanied by participation mechanisms to ensure that governments are informed about, and responsive to, citizens' needs and priorities.
- **For public service delivery commitments, promote citizen engagement to improve access and ensure services respond to citizen needs, especially for services that are delivered directly to citizens.** Beyond providing opportunities for citizen input, create feedback channels for oversight and public accountability.
- **For green transition commitments, engage the public in identifying priorities and balancing tradeoffs.** This can help build support and ensure reforms are sustained over time. To maximize success, these efforts should account for local realities in terms of literacy, digital access, and political context.
- **Adopt more accountability-focused commitments, to further local governments' ability to build trust.** These can provide channels for the public can call upon the government to respond to complaints or grievances and justify their actions and decisions.

Endnotes

- ¹ OGP, “End of Commitment Report – Mainstreaming the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in urban development policies and projects” (12 Jan. 2023), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/end-of-commitment-report-mainstreaming-the-needs-of-persons-with-disabilities-pwds-in-urban-development-policies-and-projects/>.
- ² Commitments that affect traditionally marginalized populations are defined broadly to include many historically oppressed groups including persons with disabilities, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, older individuals, youth, members of minority groups, indigenous people, internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers, and those of lower socioeconomic status.
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- ⁴ For example, see the open government strategic visions of Abuja, Banská Bystrica, Córdoba, El Kef, Regueb, Peñalolén, and Bogotá.
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CHAPTER III: Drivers and Obstacles of Local Reforms

This report concludes with a review of common factors that facilitated or hindered open government reforms. Experience from the 2021 local cohort indicates that successful implementation includes:

- Commitments designed with concrete activities that directly open government to the public.
- Commitments that introduce new laws or policies are accompanied by concrete implementation plans.
- Support from political leadership and coalitions across government and nongovernmental partners.
- Strategic consideration of the political context, budget cycles, and upcoming elections in design and implementation plans.
- Sufficient understanding of open government and relevant technological tools among implementing government staff.
- Financial and human resources to see the commitment to completion.
- Mutually beneficial alignment with the broader local and national government priorities and processes.



1. What key factors affect commitment implementation and results?

1.1. Designing relevant commitments with concrete implementation mechanisms

Across OGP, well designed commitments and strategic visions (see **Box 6**) are more likely to lead to change. The majority of commitments in the 29 local action plans analyzed in this report have clear relevance to open government. They aim to strengthen transparency, civic participation, or—less often—governmental accountability. As they are implemented, these commitments directly open government to the public.

As with previous rounds of OGP action plans, there remain isolated examples of commitments with no public-facing element. These commitments often aim to improve internal government processes or provide e-services to the public. While these are important reforms, they could go further to increase public access to government information, participation in government decision-making, or governmental accountability.

For example, Mexico State (Mexico) is seeking to create a single internal electronic file for each citizen to streamline procedures and services, simplify administrative processes, and allow for better interoperability between public institutions;¹ however, this includes no external-facing element. Córdoba Province (Argentina) aims to develop a guide to support municipalities' technical teams in prioritizing SDGs and to

set SDG-related goals according to each municipality's characteristics.² Ukrainian commitments focus on delivering electronic services in Khmelnytskyi and Ternopil. These efforts could be strengthened by actively involving the public in improving service delivery.

In addition, commitments that introduce new laws and policies should include a concrete implementation plan. Roughly one-third of commitments analyzed intended to introduce new regulations, policies, or requirements. Concrete implementation mechanisms assign clear roles and responsibilities, paving the way for ambitious and binding reforms.

Otherwise, long-term sustainability can be weakened. For example, Ozurgeti (Georgia) planned to develop a citizen's guide to the budget and a study on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted vulnerable groups, but did not specify any follow-up mechanisms to apply the guide or implement the study findings.³ It also committed to develop a Corruption Risk Assessment methodology, but did not outline long-term application of the methodology.⁴ By the end of the implementation period, there was no evidence that citizen feedback influenced the municipal budget and the report on corruption risks was not approved.⁵

Box 6: How do strategic visions contribute to local action plans?

Each local action plan is guided by a strategic vision. Strategic visions help local governments articulate problems, opportunities, and long-term goals. They also provide space to clarify how open government reforms will contribute to broader policy goals. Ideally, strategic visions offer a whole-of-government perspective to open government and focus on priorities and ambitious reforms relevant to the OGP values of transparency, public accountability, and civic participation. This overall framework helps ensure commitments contribute to a holistic reform agenda. Strategic visions are a new element of local action plans. Thus far, strategic visions have largely aligned with commitments' thematic areas. The strategic planning process may help local governments align commitments with open government and broader policy goals.



1.2. Building alliances

Politics matters when it comes to implementing open government reforms. Commitments that created real-world change often benefited from the support of local political leaders and alliances across government and nongovernment partners. Reformers also strategically considered commitments' political feasibility in planning for design and implementation.

Local governments have taken a variety of steps to build alliances. Some open government champions involved senior officials starting at early stages in the design and implementation process. Others grounded action plans in existing government priorities. Many learned from other local governments who have undertaken similar reforms. Civil society support is an important ingredient to advance reforms. Seeking opportunities where commitments and nongovernment partners' interests align can help build this support. Civil society coalitions can be particularly vital to push for legislative changes. Reformers can also consider whether other community groups, levels of government, or the private sector would strengthen the coalition.

Quintana Roo (Mexico) offers examples of senior political buy-in contributing to successful implementation of ambitious commitments. The State Governor was included in initial meetings to co-create a protocol for including youth in political decision making. The knowledge he gained from these meetings enabled him to clearly delegate to his Secretaries.⁶ University and civil society organizations also shared good practices from national (Chiapas and Mexico City) and international examples (Argentina). Youth collectives engaged the media to help provide widespread press coverage.⁷

Similarly, in another commitment, the Quintana Roo Planning Under Secretary had a permanent seat at the table during the co-creation process to draft the state's new Planning Law. This meant that the drafting process accounted for political realities and technical requirements.⁸ Coordinated participation across a range of stakeholder groups ensured approval of the law. Lobbying by 53 civil society institutions and chambers of commerce of the state legislature led to quick, unanimous approval of the law, despite overlap with an election period.⁹



“We have to invest in our articulation capacity as a state taking the issue of open government to the municipalities of Santa Catarina.”

— Carolina Kichler,
Santa Catarina, Brazil

<https://youtu.be/6jyblfu4KWQ?list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&t=117>



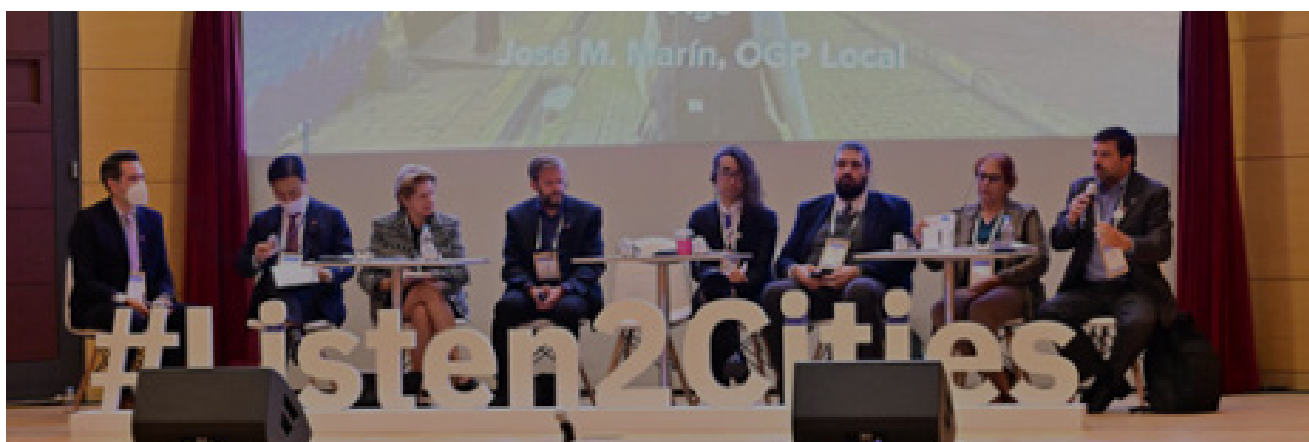
Securing political buy-in, building alliances, and ensuring political feasibility in the design and implementation of commitments is critical to success.



Santa Catarina (Brazil) also illustrates strategic political planning and coalition building to support successful implementation. Like other local members, Santa Catarina used the existing government agenda as the starting point for action plan discussions, but also invited civil society feedback. Despite a complicated political environment, as the governor faced two impeachment processes, this approach pragmatically aligned commitments with both government department and CSO priorities.¹⁰ This approach to co-creation built the alliances necessary for implementation.

During implementation, Santa Catarina's OGP coordinators used existing networks to develop a vibrant community

of reformers. Beyond the commitments, this community began to shift the state's open government culture. As elections approached in 2022, CSOs trained candidates, encouraging the creation of an Open Government Parliamentary Front in 2023. Local reformers also fostered new connections with Brazil's wider OGP community. As a result, in 2023, Santa Catarina planned to partner on open government reforms with the Comptroller General, which is responsible for the national OGP process, and the municipalities of São Paulo, Osasco, and Contagem. Together, these new partners plan to implement the OECD recommendation to develop an integrated Brazilian open government policy¹¹ (see Section 3.2.2 for further examples of joining OGP local and national processes).



In October 2022, the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) held its 7th World Congress in Daejeon (Republic of Korea). Photo by UCLG.

1.3. Navigating uncertain political waters

Political instability at the national level can stall open government progress for local jurisdictions. However, in some cases these processes have proved resilient.

After dissolving Tunisia's parliament, the president dissolved all 350 elected municipal councils by decree and assigned temporary management to the centrally-appointed municipal secretaries general in March 2023.¹² This has been an obstacle to the El Kef and Regueb municipalities' ability to advance their open government agendas. However, the open government process has continued in El Kef, with ongoing preparation of a second action plan.¹³

In Georgia, the national government drafted a so-called "Russian style" bill where civil society organizations could be classified as "foreign agents." This created deep political polarization and fostered mistrust between CSOs and municipal representatives.¹⁴ The draft law was withdrawn by the government in March 2023 in the face of mass protests.¹⁵ Commitment implementation slowed as the political fallout negatively impacted multistakeholder collaboration under OGP, particularly in Ozurgeti.

In Northern Ireland, the OGP process has slowed considerably in the absence of a functioning executive due to political tensions following the departure of the UK



from the European Union.¹⁶ The OGP processes faltered in Gwangju (Republic of Korea) and Ontario (Canada) due to political changes, while in Khmelnytskyi and Ternopil due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In response, Ukrainian reformers adapted efforts to continue aspects of their open government plans.

The OGP Local Program was designed to allow members to align OGP processes with political or administrative cycles to minimize disruption. As a result, while most local members chose two- to three-year implementation

periods, two planned for a one-year action plan. Shorter cycles often aligned action plans with election timelines. In some cases, implementation delays still occurred due to planned elections or political transitions. In Georgia, October 2021 elections in the cities of Akhaltsikhe¹⁷ and Ozurgeti¹⁸ delayed implementation. In Abuja, the election tribunal¹⁹ and lengthy transition between February 2022 elections and the June 2022 inauguration of new council members also inhibited implementation. To help navigate the transition, reformers created a steering committee with local council and local civil society members.²⁰



Ozurgeti State Drama Theater. Photo by Georgia Travel.

1.4. Overcoming capacity constraints and technical challenges

Technical challenges and misconceptions of “open government” impeded reform.

In some cases, action plans' implementation hinged on increasing government employees' situational awareness. In Akhaltsikhe (Georgia), the Mayor's Office reported that many public servants lacked knowledge of corruption risks and that stigma impeded open discussions on managing these risks.²¹ Likewise, a low level of understanding open data slowed progress on relevant reforms. The absence of activities to develop staff skills and capabilities hindered implementing open data practices. This was exacerbated by a lack of clear roles and responsibilities for implementers.²² Banská Bystrica (Slovak Republic) also faced a lack of internal capacity or a system for effective cross-departmental work. However, the city made efforts to strengthen the

skills, capabilities, and attitudes of municipal staff to support implementation of open government activities.²³

Building technological capabilities was also essential to some action plans' success, as technical challenges hindered certain commitments' completion. In Buenos Aires (Argentina), the launch of an online course for CSOs to use open data was postponed due to issues with the digital platform.²⁴ Santa Catarina (Brazil) also faced challenges in rolling out a new platform for the ombudsman and access to information. A feasibility analysis on implementing the platform, especially considering lessons from other states, would have been helpful. To continue the effort, Santa Catarina established a commission to analyze technological tools and methods used in other states, including technical visits to Ceará, Espírito Santo, and Paraná.²⁵



1.5. Securing the necessary resources for commitment implementation

Local governments took different approaches to pin down the necessary resources for impactful reforms. Open government reformers aligned commitments with government budgets or donor priorities. Some members assembled dedicated resource mobilization committees to address funding gaps during implementation. Others advocated for allocated funding during annual local government budgeting processes.²⁶

Securing financial resources is particularly challenging at the local level. A review of 2018–2021 action plans found that limited resources or capacity negatively affected almost half of the local governments' ability to sustain open government infrastructure, particularly online platforms and portals.²⁷ Reliance on external donor funding and assistance was recognized as a significant sustainability challenge in a number of local jurisdictions, including Ozurgeti (Georgia), and Nandi and Makueni (Kenya).

The estimated budget for implementing 2021 commitments varied significantly across local governments and commitments. Just under half of commitments analyzed included the estimated required budget for implementation.²⁸ The level of estimated financial resources ranged from as little as USD 400 for mainstreaming the needs of persons with disabilities in urban development policies in Khoni (Georgia) to USD 120 million for improving the executive branch's public procurement process in Santa Catarina (Brazil). Gwangju (Republic of Korea), Nandi (Kenya),

and Khmelnytskyi (Ukraine) initially estimated the largest budgets for commitment implementation.

In Mexico, there are anecdotal examples of resource allocation positively affecting implementation. Of Quintana Roo's three commitments, the one that was fully budgeted had the most successful results; the commitment went beyond its initial plan by co-creating a protocol for including youth in political decision-making.²⁹ Likewise, Mexico State's introduction of the "Caravanas por la Justicia Cotidiana" (Caravans for Everyday Justice) program was aided by the fact that the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights had the necessary financial, human, and technological resources.³⁰ Similarly, the Electoral Institute of the State of Mexico had the technological and communication capabilities to support more informed voting and transparency in the electoral process through the Decide IEEM platform.³¹

Several members demonstrated strategies for filling resource gaps during the implementation period. In Peñalolén (Chile), the costs of open government commitments are considered annually within the municipal budget.³² Nandi's (Kenya) Multistakeholder Forum includes an implementation group tasked with ensuring that necessary expertise, knowledge, and finances are available to support implementation. A resource mobilization committee identifies resource deficits and develops funding proposals.³³



While developing OGP action plans, local governments can consider how they add value to existing government priorities and plans, whether general local development plans or specific thematic plans.



2. How do local action plans fit into broader government policy priorities?

2.1. Aligning with government development plans

A number of local action plans deliberately align with existing government development plans. This alignment is intended to garner political support, advance existing policy priorities, or ensure that reforms account for previously identified citizen priorities.

In some cases, this is seen to mutually strengthen momentum on OGP commitments and broader policy priorities. Bogotá (Colombia)³⁴ and Buenos Aires (Argentina) synced their OGP plans with priorities from the government agenda and development plan. The Buenos Aires government analyzed previous action plans and found that commitments not linked to departments' agendas had a lower level of compliance.³⁵

On a larger scale, Quintana Roo (Mexico), is using its action plan to develop toward an open state (executive, parliament, and judiciary). The OGP plan is linked to the State Development Plan 2016–2022, which includes a program to initiate a state policy on open government.

It also aligns with its commitments under the Citizen Dialogue Platform on Open Government and Sustainable Development. In addition, an OGP commitment that co-created a new state planning law was a first step toward co-creation of a State Sustainable Development Plan for the next 25 years (see [Box 4](#)).³⁶

Some local governments linked action plans to more narrowly defined thematic priorities. This has enabled the open government agenda to permeate parts of local government that may not initially see the relevance to their core mission. These areas include green transitions (see Section 2.1.4), access to justice,³⁷ anticorruption,³⁸ and digital transformation. To illustrate, in Canada, the three strategic challenges in Québec's action plan and commitments align with three of the six ambitions in the province's Digital Transformation strategy.³⁹ Ontario's action plan draws on the four pillars of its Digital and Data Strategy to focus on the challenges of trustworthy use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).⁴⁰



“On the aspect of open contracting as policy from national government, that was already the direction that has been given.”

— Yulita Mitei,
Nandi, Kenya

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jyblfu4KWQ&list=PLMDgGB-pYxdH8Yb4y93Ln9GiOWx9zJ3bq&index=10>



2.2. Connecting National and Local OGP Processes

Beyond including individual local commitments in national action plans as most member countries have done, at least ten (13% of member countries) have begun wider efforts to connect their national and local OGP processes. These efforts often span multiple action plan cycles. Incremental steps can include piloting subnational local government programs, expanding to new local governments over time, and providing strategic support. This approach can mainstream open government processes at the local level and build a national-local community of practice. High levels of decentralization and institutional resources dedicated to open government efforts have contributed to these efforts.

Nigeria's national OGP Secretariat is supporting states to replicate the national OGP structure at the state level and develop action plans. By 2023, along with Abuja, 25 out of 36 states were co-creating their own action plans. Challenges remain to ensure that states that sign up to the OGP process follow through with concrete action and engage civil society.⁴¹

Since 2015, 30 of 32 federal entities⁴² in Mexico have co-created local open government strategies, with support from the Federal Institute for Access to Public Information and Data Protection (INA), including Quintana Roo and Mexico State. To support local-national integration, Mexico devoted a commitment in its 2019–2022 national action plan to developing its new Local Open State Strategy. This strategy includes helping states develop their own open government commitments.⁴³

A commitment in Argentina's 2019–2022 national action plan established a federal open government program, co-created by local governments.⁴⁴ The plan promoted open government mechanisms across 9 provinces and 35 municipalities—including Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Mendoza, and Rosario—through 50 local projects that received training and technical support during their implementation.⁴⁵

Kenya used a commitment in the 2018–2021 national action plan to identify lead contacts from selected local governments to join the national OGP process. This engagement led to Makueni, Nairobi, and Nandi counties' ascension to the OGP Local Program. It also facilitated Makueni's leadership in open government initiatives, such as public participation and open contracting prior to joining OGP Local. The commitment also engaged other county governments like Vihiga in open government activities.⁴⁶

Colombia's last action plan included seven local commitments, with one from Bogotá.⁴⁷ Spain included space for each autonomous community in its multistakeholder forum and started a community of practice with the Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias, resulting in 53 local commitments in its 2020–2024 action plan, including from Madrid.⁴⁸

Close and effective coordination with national OGP actors was key for the OGP process in Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima. Commitments reflected existing government initiatives at the national level. This allowed the Regional Council to align their work plans and budget with the action plan implementation and benefit from ministerial technical assistance. Collaborating with the Moroccan network of open territorial communities and the African Network of Open Local Governments further catalyzed the success of the action plan.⁴⁹

While planning an OGP action plan, locals can consider how to best link it to the national process, other local processes, or peers in other countries. This could be through formal joint planning sessions, or more informal exchanges to share experiences and lessons. Nongovernment stakeholders can also consider developing links with civil society counterparts nationally and internationally.



Tying an action plan to existing priorities and national processes can help ensure political support and resources for implementation.



3. Lessons for locals on implementation

- **Secure political support, build alliances, and ensure political feasibility of commitments.** This can be achieved by involving senior officials early in the design and implementation process, building on existing government priorities, and learning from local governments undertaking similar reforms.
- **Continue to engage civil society throughout implementation to build momentum for reforms.** This can help keep commitments on-track, align reforms with community needs, and build support for changes, like new legislation.
- **Plan ahead for resource allocation and institutional and technical support for commitment implementation.** Some local members have sought to fill resource-gaps during implementation through resource mobilization committees or annual budgeting processes.
- **Consult the experiences of local members pursuing similar reforms to help identify and address resource and technological needs early in the process.**
- **During action plan design, consider how commitments add value to existing government priorities and plans, whether general local development plans or specific thematic plans.** Identify opportunities for the open government approach to contribute to new parts of local government.
- **Consider building connections between national and local OGP processes to mainstream open government at the local level, especially in countries with high levels of decentralization.** This can support learning across different levels of government, between local OGP members, and between national and local civil society. It can also help with policy coherence and efficient resource allocation, while catering to local governments' political priorities.
- **Leverage the diverse network of local and national OGP members for peer learning, capacity building, and exchange of tools for reform.**

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ANNEX 1: Methodology

This report analyzes co-creation and implementation by the first group of locals participating as part of the new OGP Local Program from 2020 to 2022.

Beginning in 2021, 36 local governments undertook action plans. This report focuses on the 29 which planned commitments to be completed by the end of 2022 (72 commitments). The majority of the local action plans assessed by this report are being implemented over two- or three-year periods. A small number of action plans (three in total) cover a longer time span of four or five years. Two of the action plans covered only one year.¹ These action plans are being delivered across a range of local government contexts at different levels (towns, cities, counties, provinces, regions, and states).

By region, these action plans include 35 commitments from 12 local governments in the Americas; 25 commitments from 10 local governments in Europe and the Eastern Partnership; 10 commitments from 7 local governments in Africa and the Middle East; and 2 commitments from one local government in Asia and the Pacific. Given this sample, some of the report's findings and recommendations may not be fully generalizable to all local governments, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. For action plan timeframes and commitments, see Annex II.

This report primarily draws its analysis from the following data sources:

- **Action plans and strategic visions:** The IRM analyzed the text of 29 local action plans and strategic visions to identify the degree of alignment between the local governments' open government commitments and their broader policy priorities. The IRM also drew on the action plans to understand the institutional arrangements for delivering action plans in different jurisdictions. The OGP Analytics and Insights team categorized data on commitments' policy areas. For context, the report discusses trends in commitments' policy areas across all 36 local action plans submitted in 2021. For more information on the 2021 action plan commitments' policy areas and approaches, refer to "What's in the 2021 Local Action Plans?," available [here](#).
- **Stakeholder interviews:** To gather in-depth insight, the IRM interviewed and corresponded with key government and civil society reformers in Abuja (Nigeria), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Córdoba Province (Argentina), El Kef (Tunisia), Madrid (Spain), Makueni (Kenya), Nandi (Kenya), Ozurgeti (Georgia), Quintana Roo (Mexico), Santa Catarina (Brazil), and Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima (Morocco).
- **Local Monitoring Body Assessments:** For accountability and learning, each local member is expected to select a local monitoring body. This body is responsible to independently evaluate and assess the co-creation process and the results achieved from implementing the commitments. For more information about monitoring bodies, refer to "OGP Local Handbook," available [here](#). The monitoring bodies produced publicly accessible inception assessments, end-of-commitment assessments, and final learning exercises. The IRM used these assessments to gather examples for this report.
 - **Inception Assessments:** This report drew from the 18 assessments submitted by May 2023. The other 11 relevant local jurisdictions did not have assessments. These assessments appraise the co-creation process and the design of the commitments at their inception.
 - **End-of-Commitment Assessments:** This report drew on the 26 end-of-commitment assessments submitted for 10 local jurisdictions by May 2023. The other 19 local jurisdictions did not have assessments. These assessments appraise each commitment after completion. They provide a coding, narrative explanations, evidence on the commitments' efficacy in opening government, and lessons learned.



- **Final Learning Exercises:** This report drew on the five final learning exercises submitted by May 2023. The other five local jurisdictions with action plans scheduled to end in 2021 or 2022 had not yet submitted exercises. Following the end of the full action plan, the final learning exercises document what went well and what could be improved for the next action plan.

This report was prepared by IRM and overseen by IRM’s International Experts Panel. As part of the [OGP Local Engagement Strategy](#), approved by the OGP Steering Committee, the IRM has committed to analyze every two years the overall performance of OGP local members to provide insights into their performance. This is the IRM’s second biennial report on local members. The first report, published in 2021, is available [here](#). The IRM will cover commitments beyond this report’s time-period in its third biennial report, which will be published 2025. For more information about IRM, refer to the “About IRM” section of the OGP website available [here](#).

Endnotes

¹ Among the sample, there are two one-year action plans, twelve two-year action plans, twelve three-year action plans, one four-year action plan, and two five-year action plans.



ANNEX 2: Action Plan Timeframes

This annex lists the report's sample – 29 local members which planned commitments to be completed by the end of 2022 (72 commitments).

Local	Action Plan Years	Commitments Planned for Completion by 2022	
		Number of Commitments	Commitment Titles
Abuja, Nigeria	2021–2022	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve citizens' engagement and participation in the budget process
Akhaltzikhe, Georgia	2021	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of Corruption Risk Management in the Akhaltsikhe Municipality Improving open data management practices in Akhaltsikhe Municipality City Hall
Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic	2021–2022	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open government in spatial planning, strategic planning, and environmental management of the city Creation of the open government strategy for the city of Banská Bystrica
Bogotá, Colombia	2021–2023	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public space with collective intelligence
Buenos Aires, Argentina	2021–2023	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum for the articulation and coordination of access to public information and transparency of the three branches of the State Strengthen the reuse of open data and the community
Córdoba Province, Argentina	2021–2023	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Territorialize the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in four municipalities of the province with a meaningful open government perspective, emphasizing collaboration between actors. Partner municipalities and social organizations participating in the Local OGP Program in the incorporation of gender perspective and a youth approach in the process of territorialization of SDGs.
El Kef, Tunisia	2021–2023	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launching of a website that deals with women's concerns and interests The creation of digitalized citizen space
Gwangju, Republic of Korea	2021–2022	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Climate Change Management Policy with Citizens Building a Citizen-Friendly Energy Information Platform
Khmelnyskyi, Ukraine	2021–2025	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing businesses and residents with high-quality municipal services using digital technologies, rational management of community resources through open access to information. Development of digital competencies of the community residents and formation of their digital culture. Formation of the Green Course Action Plan, the development of the community's economy. Community's economy should be social and inclusive, climate neutral and ensuring growth.
Khoni, Georgia	2021	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to and delivery of municipal services, especially for the most marginalized communities Mainstreaming the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in urban development policies and projects Conduct an Open Government Regional Forum



Madrid, Spain	2022–2023	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Actions for a Healthy City Strategy
Makueni, Kenya	2021–2022	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish project monitoring and implementation data through Open Contracting Data Standards Portal • To develop public participation frameworks suitable for People Living with Disabilities (PWD) and Women participation and to operationalize them by the year 2022. • Enhancing Transparency, Integrity and Participation in the Water sector through capacity building of community water management groups in Makueni County
Mendoza, Argentina	2021–2023	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Mendoza commits to develop the Transparency Plan. • The City of Mendoza is committed to implement the Eyes on Alert Program. • The City of Mendoza commits to promote the Climate Change Laboratory.
Mexico State, Mexico	2021–2022	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening and expansion of the itinerant justice and access to justice programme “Caravanas por la Justicia Cotidiana” (Caravans for Everyday Justice). • Strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms as a means of access to everyday justice. • Strengthening the means of access to public transparency, open data and public interest data • Generate alliances with the municipalities of the State of Mexico to disseminate the use and benefits of access to information. • Open government culture • Strengthening democracy
Nandi, Kenya	2021–2022	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Participation and Civic Engagement • Open Contracting and Public Procurement
Northern Ireland, United Kingdom	2021–2022	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a Northern Ireland Open Government Strategy and redefine the co-creation process
Ontario, Canada	2021–2022	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide implementation of Ontario’s Alpha Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance through public consultation • People Focused Refinement of Ontario’s Artificial Intelligence and Algorithms Inventory through User Research
Ozurgeti, Georgia	2021	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equal access to public service for the vulnerable groups and improve response to their needs in Ozurgeti Municipality. • Improvement of Corruption Risk Management in the Ozurgeti Municipality • Improve Public Finance Management processes in Ozurgeti Municipality through inclusive and active participation
Palermo, Italy	2021–2022	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the ICARO platform and signing of the Protocol of Use for the free use of sensitive data • Public and published contracts • Green Palermo from A to Zen • Use of funds for participatory democracy (Regional Law 5/2014) • The shared management of common goods



Peñalolén, Chile	2021–2024	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of a friendly and inclusive administration for the people with disabilities
Québec, Canada	2021–2023	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote immediate and open access to scientific articles funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec. • Propose a simplified process for the micro procurement of information resources (IR)
Quintana Roo, Mexico	2021–2022	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To co-create a transparency platform on the budget cycle of public policies and programs at the state level, with visibility for budget programs and cross-cutting gender and anti-corruption annexes. • Co-create a citizen’s initiative to reform the State Planning Law with a long-term vision for Quintana Roo. • Co-create between youth and the state government a protocol for adding youth in the political life and decision-making of the State of Quintana Roo.
Regueb, Tunisia	2021–2023	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance participation in project planning and follow-up, and bring municipal services closer to citizens by creating an electronic platform for more effective and efficient municipal activities.
Rosario, Argentina	2021–2023	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Design of an Action Plan for the Implementation of Open Procurement Processes • Collaborative Creation of a Citizen Participation Monitor • Strengthening the Local Climate Action Plan
Santa Catarina, Brazil	2021–2022	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote principles and practices of open government and social control in municipalities of Santa Catarina, promoting shared learning and articulating governments and civil society initiatives at local and state levels. • Improve the process of public procurement and contracting at the Santa Catarina Executive Branch being guided by the principles and rules of transparency and open contracting, making it more effective and accessible to citizens and other stakeholders • Promote social participation to improve public services through the institution of a user’s council, creating a technological tool for public services evaluation, and the system improvement of ombudsman and access to information. • Restructure active transparency tools using user-centered design to improve quality, usability, and accessibility of public information, including the availability of open format files.
Tangier—Tetouan—Al-Hoceima, Morocco	2021–2023	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a MEL (Monitoring and Evaluation) platform for the Regional Development Plan (PDR)
Ternopil, Ukraine	2021–2023	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing residents with quality municipal services through digital technologies, expanding the list of services, reengineering urban services and implementing a single information system of city management. • Implementation of a pilot project on data disclosure for testing the standard of open data in infrastructure on the platform “Ukrainian Social Infrastructure” (platform “USI”) • Development of digital competencies of community residents in cooperation with the public sector



Tirana, Albania	2021–2023	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp Counselor • Participatory Decision Making through ‘Informal education’ approach
Tlalnepantla de Baz, Mexico	2021–2023	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate alliances with the municipalities of the State of Mexico to disseminate the use and benefits of access to information. • Strengthening the means of access to public transparency, open data and public interest data • Strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms as a means of access to everyday justice. • Strengthening and expansion of the itinerant justice and access to justice programme “Caravanas por la Justicia Cotidiana” (Caravans for Everyday Justice). • Strengthening democracy • Open government culture





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