



# 6

## Development of Action Plans and Commitments

### Key Takeaways

- National OGP members are required to develop an OGP action plan in accordance with OGP rules and requirements, and in line with Standards 3 and 4.
- OGP members can choose between two-year and four-year action plans. A four-year action plan has a mandatory refresh process.
- There are specific rules and requirements related to action plan timelines, submission procedures, deadlines and amendments. There are also specific requirements for the four-year action plan refresh.
- To develop strong action plans and commitments and seek an ambitious application of Standards 3 and 4, OGP members should focus on the four key moments of co-creation planning, stakeholder outreach and engagement, action plan formulation, and feedback and reasoned response.
- OGP provides guidance for key action plan content, including a commitment template for OGP members to use and adapt.



## Developing Action Plans

At the core of the OGP Action Framework are action plans and commitments. All OGP national members must develop and submit an action plan on time in accordance with OGP requirements (see [OGP Key National Membership Responsibilities](#)). Action plans contain a set of commitments aimed at achieving meaningful open government reforms. [Research](#) based on OGP data over the last ten years shows that a strong and inclusive co-creation process is linked to well-designed and more ambitious commitments.

### Good to Know

#### Co-Creation as a Cornerstone of the OGP Model



Collaboration between government, civil society, and other stakeholders (e.g., citizens, academics, the private sector) is at the heart of the OGP process and is referred to as co-creation. Participating governments must ensure that a diversity of voices can meaningfully participate and shape commitments. Co-creation underpins the OGP Action Framework, including the development of OGP action plans. The [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#) set out specific expectations for this process, such as setting up a forum for ongoing dialogue and providing documentation on an online repository.

This section explains how to apply the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards and their minimum requirements. It outlines the rules and requirements governing the action plan development and submission processes and provides guidance on navigating them. Additionally, it offers formal guidance on planning the co-creation of an action plan, its contents, and templates and resources.

## 6.1 Participation and Co-Creation Standards and their Minimum Requirements during the Development of Action Plans

During the development phase of an action plan, countries should strive to meet two specific OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards to ensure meaningful participation.

### Standard 3

Providing inclusive and informed opportunities for public participation during development of the action plan.

#### **Minimum Requirement 3.1**

The MSF where established, or the government where there is no MSF, publishes on the OGP website/webpage the co-creation timeline and overview of the opportunities for stakeholders to participate at least two weeks before the start of the action plan development process.

#### **Minimum Requirement 3.2**

The MSF where established, or the government where there is no MSF, conducts outreach activities with stakeholders to raise awareness of OGP and opportunities to get involved in the development of the action plan.

#### **Minimum Requirement 3.3**

The MSF where established, or the government where there is no MSF, develops a mechanism to gather inputs from a range of stakeholders during an appropriate period of time for the chosen mechanism.

#### **IRM Assessment**

The IRM will assess whether the country complies with the following key measures:

- 3.1: Was the co-creation timeline with information on opportunities to participate available?
- 3.1: Was the information made available two weeks before the start of the action plan development process?
- 3.2: Did the MSF or government conduct outreach activities with stakeholders to raise awareness of the OGP process?
- 3.3: Was there a mechanism in place to gather inputs from a range of stakeholders?
- 3.3: Was the mechanism in place for an appropriate period of time?

See IRM Guidelines [here](#).

### Standard 4

Providing a reasoned response and ensuring ongoing dialogue between government and non-governmental stakeholders during co-creation of the action plan.

#### Minimum Requirement 4.1

The MSF where established, or the government where there is no MSF, documents and reports back or publishes written feedback to stakeholders on how their contributions were considered during the development of the action plan.

#### IRM Assessment

The IRM will assess whether the country complies with two key measures:

- Were contributions from stakeholders documented?
- Did the MSF or government provide a reasoned response to stakeholders and did it happen during the development of the action plan?

See IRM Guidelines [here](#).

In order for public participation to be meaningful, OGP national members should purposefully design the co-creation process so that it allows any interested stakeholders (citizens, civil society organizations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to provide ideas and feedback, identify priorities, and propose commitments for the action plan.

At the same time, reasoned response to stakeholder input has shown to be highly correlated with ambition, completion, and early results. [Evidence](#) from more than 170 IRM reports shows that this is the best predictor of strong action plans. Providing a reasoned response as to why certain priorities, ideas, or activities were or were not included in the action plan can also help ensure accountability and mitigate potential disengagement or overcome resistance from those whose proposals were rejected. To learn more about the ambitious application of Standards 3 and 4, refer to the full webpage on the [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#).

Each Standard includes a set of recommendations and best practices in the “Approaches” section.

## 6.2 Action Plan Rules and Procedures

This section outlines key rules and procedures for developing, submitting, and managing OGP action plans. It covers timelines for alignment with national priorities, the submission process, handling delays, and the options available for amending plans. For countries with four-year action plans, a mandatory refresh at the two-year mark ensures continued relevance and effectiveness.

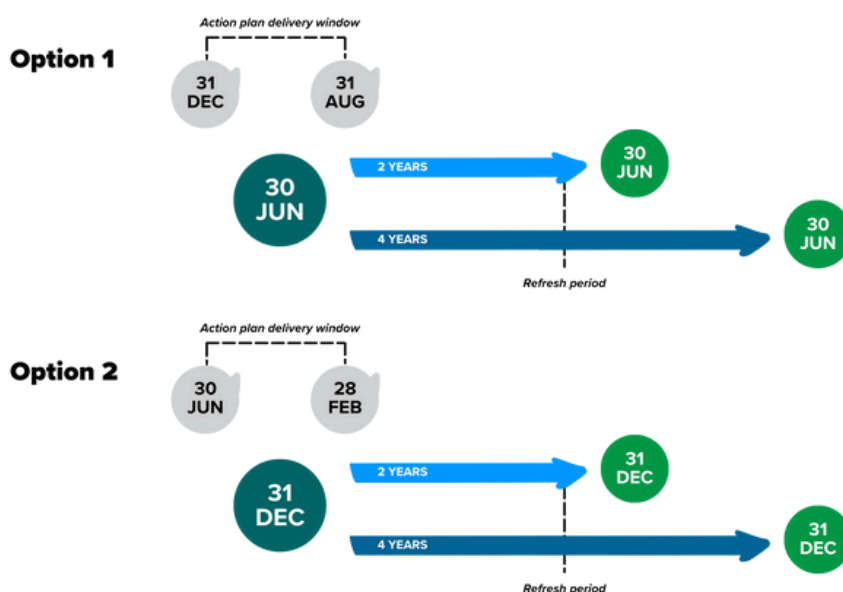
## Developing Action Plans

### 6.2.1 ACTION PLAN TIMELINES

Developing an action plan requires careful consideration of timelines to align with national priorities and the OGP process. OGP offers flexibility in choosing the length of the action plan and the timing of its implementation.

- **Action plan length.** Countries can decide to develop a two-year or a four-year action plan.
  - **Two-year action plan:** This option allows for a shorter commitment cycle, enabling governments to focus on reforms and potentially demonstrate faster results.
  - **Four-year action plan:** This option provides an extended timeframe for more ambitious or complex reforms that require a longer implementation period. However, it requires a mandatory refresh at the two-year mark to review progress and make any relevant amendments after two years of implementation (see [Amendments](#)).
- **Delivery windows.** Countries can submit their action plan during one of two delivery windows. The window they choose will determine when the action plan ends, which is a fixed date.
  - **End date of 30 June:** Countries may submit their new action plan to OGP at any point between 1 January and 31 August. The submitted action plan will officially conclude on 30 June, either two or four years later.
  - **End date of 31 December:** Countries may submit their new action plan to OGP at any point between 1 July and 28 February. The submitted action plan will officially conclude on 31 December, either two or four years later.

*Note: Submitting an action plan in January, February, July, or August could potentially align with either a 30 June or 31 December completion date. Therefore, when a country chooses one of those overlapping months to submit its plan, it must explicitly decide if the action plan will conclude on 30 June or 31 December.*
- **Timeline for submitting a consecutive action plan.** After concluding an action plan, a country must deliver its next action plan within one year, counted from the end date of the previous plan.
- **Extensions.** No extensions are allowed beyond these deadlines.
- **Co-creation of the consecutive action plan.** The Support Unit recommends that countries start co-creating their next action plan during the final months of implementation of the current action plan to ensure that continuity is maintained.



## Developing Action Plans

### 6.2.2 SUBMISSION TO OGP

Once the action plan is complete, it should be submitted to the OGP Support Unit. OGP members are welcome to share drafts of the action plan with the Support Unit ahead of submission for feedback.

- Action plans must be submitted via email to the relevant lead OGP staff member of each country. OGP staff will acknowledge receipt to officialize the submission of the action plan and publish it on the OGP Website.
- Action plans must be submitted to OGP in the country's administrative language and in English. It is recommended to submit both language versions at the same time. Submitting action plans in English allows the IRM to begin the research and assessment process.
- Once an action plan is submitted, it will be considered final—it is not possible to submit a draft action plan. The OGP Support Unit will publish it on the OGP website as the official version.
- For introducing amendments to the action plan, see [Amendments](#).
- As mentioned above, a country must deliver its next action plan to OGP within one year, counted from the end date of the previous plan.

### 6.2.3 DELAYS

The Support Unit maintains consistent deadlines to ensure a structured process across all participating countries.

- The Support Unit does not have the mandate to grant extensions on the submission of action plans.
- If a participating government does not deliver a new action plan within one year after the completion of their previous action plan, they will be officially late and considered to have acted contrary to process (see OGP [Membership Accountability Mechanisms](#)). The participating government will receive a letter from the Support Unit noting the delay, and it will be copied to the Criteria and Standards subcommittee to consider any additional actions or support as necessary. The letter will also be published on the respective OGP country page on the OGP website.
- Countries that acted contrary to process due to late delivery of their action plan must deliver it by 30 June or 31 December of the subsequent year in order to avoid acting contrary to process again, which would thereby subject them to a Procedural Review (see [OGP Membership Accountability Mechanisms](#)).



### Good to Know

#### Action Plan Delivery during Political Transitions



While OGP encourages timely action plan delivery, it recognizes that unexpected situations can occur. Political transitions and elections can pose a challenge for the timely delivery of action plans, particularly when it comes to securing high-level political support and providing for continuity in the development and implementation of commitments during these periods.

Countries can consider different strategies for delivering action plans during political transitions, each with its own implications. Based on past experiences, countries could consider: 1) submitting a regular action plan or 2) developing a limited action plan.

Find out more on Section 1.c of the guidance on [Co-Creation and the Development of Action Plans](#).

#### 6.2.4 AMENDMENTS

- Countries may modify or remove commitments or milestones within one year of the action plan's submission (either 30 June or 31 December, as determined by the delivery window and action plan end date). It is strongly recommended that these changes be made in agreement with the MSF.
- Countries may introduce new commitments during the action plan's implementation period, provided that all milestones are completed before the action plan's scheduled end date.
- IRM Action Plan Reviews assess the initial action plan submitted to the Support Unit. IRM Results Reports base their assessment on the most recent version of the action plan formally submitted to the Support Unit. For four-year action plans, the IRM will assess any new or significantly amended commitments at the midpoint in the Midterm Review.
- Whether it is a modification, adjustment, or removal within one year or the introduction of new commitments, an updated action plan must be submitted to the OGP Support Unit in English and the country's administrative language, detailing the changes made.
- This option applies equally to two and four-year action plans. It should be noted that four-year action plans require a mandatory refresh at the two-year mark, which also allows for a refresh of existing commitments (see [Four-Year Action Plans](#)).

### 6.2.5 FOUR-YEAR ACTION PLANS

Countries opting for a four-year action plan must conduct a mandatory refresh at the two-year mark. This process allows the country to review progress, assess the evolving context, and make adjustments for the action plan to remain relevant and effective for the remaining period. Updates may include modifying commitments, adding new ones, or addressing other contextual changes.

While other minimum requirements (1.1, 2.1, 2.2, and 5.1) continue to apply throughout the entire plan cycle, the minimum requirements 3.1 and 4.1 relate to the action plan refresh process and are assessed by the IRM.

### Standard 3

Providing inclusive and informed opportunities for public participation during the refresh of the action plan.

#### **Minimum Requirement 3.1**

The MSF where established, or the government where there is no MSF, publishes on the OGP website/webpage the action plan refresh timeline and overview of the opportunities for stakeholders to participate at least two weeks before the start of the action plan refresh process.

#### **IRM Assessment**

The IRM will assess whether the country complies with two key measures:

- Was the co-creation timeline with information on opportunities to participate available?
- Was the information made available two weeks before the start of the action plan development process?

See IRM Guidelines [here](#).



### Standard 4

Providing a reasoned response and ensuring ongoing dialogue between government and non-governmental stakeholders during the refresh of the action plan.

#### **Minimum Requirement 4.1**

The MSF where established, or the government where there is no MSF, documents and reports back or publishes written feedback to stakeholders on how their contributions were considered during the refresh of the action plan.

#### **IRM Assessment**

The IRM will assess whether the country complies with two key measures:

- Were contributions from stakeholders documented?
- Did the MSF or government provide a reasoned response to stakeholders and did it happen during the development of the action plan?

See IRM Guidelines [here](#).

Additionally, the [Memorandum on the Four-Year Action Plan Process](#) provides concrete guidelines for the refresh process, including specific timelines for submission of the refreshed action plan and key steps of the refresh process.

**Review of progress.** The MSF conducts a review of the action plan's implementation, identifying progress, gaps, challenges, bottlenecks, and changes in the contextual environment affecting its success.

**Outreach.** The MSF communicates the review results to the public and provides opportunities for feedback. Stakeholders can comment on the review, propose modifications to commitments, and suggest new commitments to address gaps or improve implementation.

**Revision.** Using the feedback collected, the MSF revises the action plan through consultation and dialogue with stakeholders and experts. Revisions may include modifying existing commitments (e.g. adding new activities or milestones) or adding new commitments to meet emerging needs.

**Feedback.** The MSF shares how stakeholder contributions were considered, publishing a reasoned response alongside the revised action plan. This establishes transparency in how suggestions were integrated or addressed.

**Submission.** The refreshed action plan must be submitted to the OGP Support Unit no later than six months after the two-year mark. It should detail the refresh process, including all changes and additions made.

## Developing Action Plans

Additional requirements:

- A timeline of the refresh steps, including participation opportunities, must be published at least two weeks before the review process begins.
- Results from public consultations should be shared with stakeholders, summarizing their contributions and how these informed the refresh process.

### IRM assessment of the refresh process and reviewed action plan

The IRM will provide a Midterm Review to members undertaking four-year action plans. It evaluates the refresh process and any refreshed or new commitments. It also provides a general update on implementation progress. For more information on the IRM assessment, consult the [IRM page](#).

For more information on the four-year refresh process, consult the [Memorandum on the Four-Year Action Plan Process](#).

## 6.3 Developing an Action Plan and Commitments

This section offers formal and practical guidance to apply the previously outlined OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards and rules and procedures to develop strong OGP action plans and commitments. It covers key moments in the process, including co-creation planning, stakeholder engagement, and feedback. It also details what to include in an action plan, drawing from best practices to ensure commitments are ambitious, relevant, and impactful. Finally, it explains the OGP commitment template, which helps structure commitments clearly and effectively within the action plan timeline.

### 6.3.1 KEY MOMENTS

In the development of action plans and commitments, co-creation consists of several key moments. These moments may overlap or flow into each other, but reflect distinct aspects of facilitating this meaningful collaboration and participation.

- **Planning for co-creation.** This involves establishing a clear roadmap by setting objectives, identifying stakeholders, allocating resources, and defining a timeline. The MSF or government leads this effort to align priorities and determine how the co-creation process will unfold. Key OGP requirements include publishing the co-creation timeline and maintaining a public OGP website to ensure transparency.
- **Stakeholder outreach and engagement.** The government or MSF engages diverse stakeholders to raise awareness about open government, OGP, and participation opportunities. Effective engagement is achieved through outreach activities and mechanisms to gather stakeholder input, which ensure inclusivity and the representation of diverse voices. The quality of dialogue shapes the overall process, while deliberative participation methods are key to creating space for meaningful engagement.
- **Action plan formulation.** This stage focuses on transforming stakeholder input into concrete commitments. The government and civil society work together to define challenges, propose solutions, and draft commitments using OGP's commitment template. Transparency and accountability measures, such as maintaining a public document repository and providing feedback, are essential during this phase.

## Developing Action Plans

- **Feedback and reasoned response.** The final moment before adopting/completing the action plan involves sharing feedback with stakeholders, explaining how their contributions were considered, and their impact on the final commitments. Providing clear feedback helps build trust and strengthens future collaboration.

Based on co-creation experiences from OGP members at both the national and local levels, OGP has compiled concrete guidance to assist members and stakeholders in their co-creation processes. For detailed guidance on each of these points, see the guidance on [Co-Creation and the Development of Action Plans](#).



### Planning for the Process

Key considerations before embarking on a co-creation process, planning to plan



### Stakeholder Outreach & Engagement

Stakeholders are information about OGP, the action plan process, and how they can participate. Information can also be gathered on what they want the action plan to tackle.



### Action Plan Formulation

Sense-making of inputs gathered, defining problems, working on solutions, moving from problems to solutions, and drafting the commitments



### Feedback

Participating stakeholders will be informed of the results of their contributions to and participation in the action plan development process.

## Good to Know

### Strategic Planning for Effective Co-Creation



Early planning for the different activities to be undertaken during the process of developing action plans is crucial so that the objectives of the process are clear, stakeholders and their roles are defined, available resources are identified, and the timeline to complete the process is laid out. Find out more on the guidance on [Co-Creation and the Development of Action Plans](#).

### 6.3.2 ACTION PLAN CONTENT

An action plan outlines the government's open government commitments and their development process. It provides context, reviews past efforts, details stakeholder collaboration, and defines key reforms. The breakdown below explains what to include and offers guiding questions to refine the content before presenting the commitments.

#### Introduction

*This section briefly explains the national and local context by discussing why open government efforts are important for the country. This section should also outline the governance reform priorities for the country and identify the major social, political, or economic issues that the country intends to address through its action plan, along with a justification.*

#### Guiding Questions

- What is the long-term vision for open government in your context?
- What are the medium-term open government goals that the government wants to achieve?
- How does this action plan contribute to achieving the open government goals?
- What major social, political, or economic issues does the country intend to address through this action plan, and why?

#### Open Government Efforts to Date

*This section provides a brief narrative of key open government initiatives and accomplishments to date, particularly those that reflect collaboration with civil society and how they relate to the commitments that were co-created. This section should explain how the new action plan builds on previous action plans (if relevant) and related efforts to strengthen open government reforms.*

#### Guiding Questions

- What are the achievements in open government to date (for example, recent open government reforms)?
- How has collaboration between government and civil society impacted these reforms?
- If a previous action plan exists, what open government reforms proposed in the previous action plans were achieved? Not achieved? Why?
- If a previous action plan exists, how does this new action plan build on what has been achieved in previous action plan(s) and other efforts to strengthen open government?

## Developing Action Plans

### Action Plan Development Process

*This section describes the process of developing an action plan, highlighting in particular how the government collaborated with civil society and other stakeholders to develop, formulate and finalize the action plan. It should also describe how the MSF (or government where there is no established MSF) planned for and structured the development process, conducted outreach to increase participation of stakeholders, developed and formulated the commitments, and provided feedback to stakeholders who participated in the process. Please expressly note compliance with the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards, with particular attention to the minimum participation requirements. See the [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#) as well as the guidance on [Co-Creation and the Development of Action Plans](#).*

#### Guiding Questions

- How did the country develop the timeline for developing an action plan? Who was involved in the process? How were inputs from stakeholders taken into consideration?
- How were outreach activities conducted? How were awareness-raising activities maximized to enhance public participation? What kind of spaces have been used or created to enable the collaboration between government and civil society in co-creating the action plan?
- How was the process of formulating an action plan conducted? Describe what was done in sense-making, problem definition, solution identification, and commitment drafting?
- How was the reasoned response provided? What were the processes undertaken to finalize the action plan?

### Commitments

*This section presents the concrete commitments that were co-created during the development process. The commitment template will be used for each commitment included in the action plan.*

#### Guiding Questions

- See relevant guiding questions in the commitment template, available for [download](#).

## Developing Action Plans

Based on OGP experience, successful OGP action plans do the following.

- **Promote ambitious reforms** that stretch government practice beyond their current baseline with respect to key areas of open government. Such commitments should promote binding and institutionalized changes across government that are possible game changers for practices, policies, or institutions that govern a policy area, public sector, or the relationship between citizens and state.

*The IRM assesses the ambition of commitments through its “Potential for Results” indicator (see [IRM Assessment of Minimum Requirements](#)).*

- **Align commitments with OGP principles** to establish relevance. Commitments should set out to make a policy area, institution, or decision-making process more transparent, participatory, or accountable to the public. Each commitment should advance at least one of the following.
  - **Transparency.** Commitments that enable proactive or reactive disclosure of government-held information, improve the legal or institutional frameworks to guarantee the right to information, improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public, or improve the transparency of government decision-making processes or institutions.
  - **Citizen Participation.** Commitments that create or improve opportunities, processes, or mechanisms for the public to inform, influence, or co-create government policies, laws, and/or decisions. They can create, enable or improve participatory mechanisms for minorities, marginalized, or underrepresented groups or improve the enabling environment for civil society. They can include legal, policy, institutional, or practical conditions related to civic space, such as protections for freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. They can also be measures that counter misinformation and disinformation, especially online, to ensure people have access to reliable and factual information.
  - **Public Accountability.** Commitments that create or improve opportunities to hold government officials answerable for their actions. They enable legal, policy, or institutional frameworks to foster accountability of public officials. These mechanisms should involve public participation rather than being purely internal processes.

*The IRM assesses the relevance of commitments to open government principles through its “Open Government Lens” indicator (see the [IRM Procedures Manual](#) for more information on IRM indicators).*

- **Adopt commitments that are SMART.**
  - **Specific.** Clearly describes the problem being addressed, the proposed activities, and the expected outcomes.
  - **Measurable.** Defines milestones and outcomes that can be tracked and verified. Commitments with multiple sub-components should include clear, measurable milestones.
  - **Answerable.** Identifies the primary implementing agency, coordinating or supporting agencies, and other stakeholders involved (e.g., civil society, private sector, or multilateral organizations).
  - **Relevant.** Explains how the commitment aligns with OGP principles of transparency, accountability, and public participation.
  - **Time-bound.** Sets deadlines for completion and includes milestones or benchmarks to track progress throughout the action plan timeline.

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*The IRM assesses whether the commitment's stated objectives and proposed actions are sufficiently clear and include objectively verifiable activities to assess implementation through its "Verifiability" indicator (see [IRM Assessment of Minimum Requirements](#)).*

- **Prioritize reforms.** Action plans comprising 5-15 high-quality commitments spread over multiple themes are more effective than those with a large number of less ambitious commitments.

### Good to Know

#### Open Government Resources



The [Open Gov Guide](#) offers a detailed repository of best practices, real-world examples, and strategic insights for shaping effective open government reforms. Similarly, the [OGP Data Dashboard](#) provides a searchable platform of thousands of commitments, enabling users to track progress, compare approaches, and identify emerging trends across the OGP membership.

### 6.3.3 COMMITMENT TEMPLATE

Every commitment included in the action plan should follow the OGP commitment template. This template includes a clear and comprehensive articulation of each action, fostering an understanding of how commitments collectively reinforce broader open government goals in the country.

The commitment template outlines a structured framework to articulate what the government aims to achieve within the action plan timeline.

- **Problem definition.** This section includes a detailed description of the problem the commitment is trying to address, including: who is affected, where it takes place, how they are affected, when they are most affected, when the problem started, and how long it has impacted those affected. It also includes the causes of the problem, including root causes, and may use analytical tools.
- **Commitment description.** This section includes a summary of what has been done so far to solve the problem, including the success of previous solutions. In addition, a description of the proposed solution, how it differs from previous efforts, and how it will solve the problem, either in its entirety or partially. Finally, it includes the desired results of implementing the commitment, including outputs, changes in knowledge, skills, capacities, behavior, systems and practices.
- **Commitment analysis.** This section asks how the proposed commitment will promote transparency, foster accountability, and improve participation.



## Developing Action Plans

- **Commitment planning.** This section considers milestones, expected outputs, and key stakeholders. Milestones showcase a series of actions or events that will lead to the achievement of the result the commitment would like to achieve. Expected outputs cover concrete, objectively verifiable results that are direct products of activities conducted. It also covers the expected completion date of the commitment, as well as the lead and supporting stakeholders involved in implementing the commitment.
- **Open Government Challenge relevance (optional).** Commitments can be designated as submissions for the Open Government Challenge if they meet the criteria to be eligible for the Challenge, like corresponding to one of the ten designated [Challenge areas](#). OGP makes the final decision on whether the commitment is accepted into the Challenge based on [four criteria](#). Note that challenge submissions are also possible outside of the action plan. See [Raising Ambition through the Open Gov Challenge](#) for more information.

A standardized commitment template is available for [download](#). This template is intended for more advanced stages of planning, rather than brainstorming, and is most effectively used when:

- Problems are well-defined and clearly understood;
- Potential solutions have been thoroughly discussed, evaluated, and prioritized; and
- There is a clear vision of what the commitment will look like, allowing for better planning of milestones, objectives, and the theory of change.

### Good to Know

#### Tips to Develop an Action Plan



In addition to the commitment template, the action plan must include an introduction, a description of government efforts to date, and an elaboration of the action plan development process. More information on action plan development is available in the guidance on [Co-Creation and the Development of Action Plans](#).