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Ensuring Accountability and Learning through the IRM

Key Takeaways

- The IRM is OGP's accountability arm and the main means of tracking progress in participating countries.
- The IRM provides independent, evidence-based, and objective reporting to hold OGP participating governments accountable and support their open government efforts.
- The IRM prepares four key reports for OGP national members: Co-Creation Briefs; Action Plan Reviews; Midterm Reviews for four-year action plans; and Results Reports.
- The IRM assesses countries' compliance with the minimum requirements for each of the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards.
- The IRM assesses whether a country is considered "acting contrary to OGP process" for two of the three triggers outlined in the [OGP Procedural Review Policy](#).



All OGP national members are required to develop and implement an action plan following the [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#), meeting its minimum requirements and demonstrating progress in implementing commitments (see [Key National Membership Responsibilities](#)). To ensure that members fulfill these responsibilities, the OGP action plan process includes built-in accountability measures. This is primarily achieved through OGP's [IRM](#), which tracks and assesses country performance throughout the action plan cycle, providing an evidence-based evaluation of progress and areas for improvement. This involves various reports that assess a country's adherence to minimum requirements, evaluate the design and implementation of reform commitments, and offer recommendations.

8.1 What is the IRM?

The IRM is OGP's accountability arm and the main means of tracking progress in participating countries. The IRM provides independent, evidence-based, and objective reporting to hold OGP participating governments accountable and support their open government efforts. This is done through reports, services and timely recommendations during key moments in the action plan cycle.

The IRM works with, but independently from, the OGP Support Unit. To maintain independence, the IRM reports to the [International Experts Panel](#) (IEP). The IEP guarantees the independence and quality of the IRM through governance and advisory of the IRM as a whole and quality assurance of the IRM process. IEP members are renowned experts in transparency, participation, and accountability who play the principal role of guiding development and implementation of the IRM research method and ensuring the highest quality of reports. More information on the current IEP and summaries from quality assurance sessions can be found [here](#).

Good to Know

How POCs are Crucial to the IRM Process



Among the key responsibilities of national POCs is to engage with the IRM, facilitate coordination with the implementing agencies of commitments, and lead the pre-publication review of two core reports: the Action Plan Review and the Results Report. More information on the responsibilities of POCs is available in [Key Responsibilities of an OGP Point of Contact](#).

8.2 How the IRM Works

The IRM assesses countries' open government progress and processes. To assess countries' progress on open government reforms, the IRM assesses individual commitments in countries' action plans. The IRM also assesses whether countries' OGP processes align with OGP rules and standards (see [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#)).

The IRM produces the following reports for countries participating in OGP: a Co-Creation Brief, an Action Plan Review, a Midterm Review, and a Results Report. Before Action Plan Reviews and Results Reports are published, they are open for pre-publication review and public commenting periods. More information on the full process pathway is available [here](#).

Co-Creation Brief

- **Timeline.** Delivered on an “as-needed” basis before the action plan co-creation process begins. The IRM requires an advance notice of at least two months before producing this report.
- **Purpose.** The Brief offers recommendations for the co-creation process to ensure compliance with minimum requirements and improve its inclusivity and effectiveness, using previous national IRM reports and best practices from other OGP members. It also offers potential areas for opportunity in the design of commitments by drawing on comparative international experiences and other context-relevant practices in the field of open government. This brief does not constitute an evaluation of a particular action plan. It is shared at the beginning of the co-creation process. Find more about the brief and its template [here](#).

Action Plan Review

- **Timeline.** Research and production begins immediately upon delivery of the new action plan.
- **Purpose.** This report provides a quick, independent, and evidence-based overview of the strengths and challenges of the action plan, to inform implementation of commitments. It analyzes the co-creation process as well as compliance with the minimum requirements. Particular attention is given to promising commitments that the IRM selects for in-depth analysis. Promising commitments are selected based on their relevance, verifiability, potential for results, and stakeholder priorities. It is shared after the action plan is published. Find more about the report and its template [here](#).

Midterm Review (Four-Year Action Plans)

- **Timeline.** This assessment occurs once a refreshed action plan is submitted, or 6 months after the halfway point of the four-year action plan if no refreshed action plan is submitted.
- **Purpose.** The Midterm Review assesses refreshed commitments and the refresh process. It also provides a general update on implementation progress and processes at the two-year mark.

Results Report

- **Timeline.** Research and production begins in the final months of the implementation period.
- **Purpose.** The Results Report offers an overall commitment implementation assessment that focuses on policy-level results and how changes happen. It also checks compliance with OGP standards and criteria and informs accountability and longer-term learning. Particular attention is given to commitments that have achieved early results in opening government. It is shared after the implementation period is over. Find more about the report and its template [here](#).

In addition to the above, the IRM also produces Open Government Journeys and Local Reports.

- In the **Open Government Journeys** series, the IRM explores the challenges, major achievements, and the future of open government, providing lessons for all reformers looking to apply open government principles to real-world challenges.
- In the **Local Report**, the IRM looks at the commitments implemented as part of the OGP Local process and collaboration between local government and civil society. The Local Report identifies lessons learned, success stories, and innovative approaches to local open government across OGP.

For all OGP members, each country's IRM reports are available in the "Resources" section of each country's webpage on the [OGP website](#). All IRM reports are also available on the OGP website [Resources](#) page.

The IRM collaborates with Support Unit colleagues to provide services to member countries, which aim to distill and communicate IRM findings and recommendations at key moments in members' OGP processes. IRM services may include discussion on report findings, workshops on commitment design, or a discussion on how the IRM assesses OGP rules and standards.

Good to Know

Shaping Reports through Feedback and Collaboration



The IRM's report production process includes multiple stages of feedback. Key national OGP actors, such as the national POC and members of the MSF, are given the opportunity to provide direct feedback during a 21-day pre-publication review period. Additionally, the IRM shares the report for a 14-day public comment period when anyone is welcome to submit comments. This collaborative approach ensures that the final report accurately reflects the country's open government progress.

8.3 IRM Assessment of Minimum Requirements

The [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#) outline five standards regarding the expectation for government and civil society engagement during the OGP cycle. Each standard has clear and measurable minimum requirements that all OGP national members must meet during the development, refresh, and/or implementation of an action plan. The IRM assesses countries' compliance with the minimum requirements for each Standard.

The IRM determines whether a country meets the minimum requirements, or not. To conduct this assessment, the IRM will consider the following aspects.

- All minimum requirements must be met at the appropriate time in the action plan cycle.
- Governments must provide evidence to prove compliance, but the IRM will review documentation submitted by both government and civil society. The IRM will conduct online desk research and review information available in country repositories and websites. See [Ensuring Information Transparency](#) for information on the transparency requirements outlined in the Standards.
- The IRM will conduct interviews to collect views from different stakeholders involved in the OGP process.

The IRM assesses two of the three triggers for a country to be considered acting contrary to process, as outlined in the [OGP Procedural Review Policy](#). First, a country must meet all the minimum requirements established in the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards. Second, a country is considered acting contrary to process if it fails to make progress on any of the commitments in an action plan. The IRM notifies the Support Unit when it has determined that a country is not acting according to process according to these triggers.

More information on the key measures and evidence the IRM will consider to assess each minimum requirement can be found in the [IRM Guidelines for the Assessment of Minimum Requirements](#).