5 Ensuring Information Transparency

Key Takeaways

- All OGP national members are required to set up and maintain a national OGP website and an online repository, in line with Standard 2.

- All OGP members must meet the relevant minimum requirements for setting up an OGP website and an online repository, and are encouraged to consider other design and content choices for a more ambitious application of Standard 2.

- A national OGP website can be a standalone website or an OGP subsite/webpage on a government website where all information related to the country's OGP processes, outputs, and outcomes are published.

- An online repository is a centralized online website, webpage, platform, or folder where information and evidence related to the action plan (including process and implementation) are publicly stored, organized, updated, and disseminated.

- Information transparency provides an important basis for participation, monitoring, and accountability in the OGP process.

Information Transparency

Transparency and public accountability are core principles of OGP and are embedded not only in the [OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards](#), but are also reinforced by the IRM as OGP's accountability arm (see [Ensuring Accountability and Learning through the Independent Reporting Mechanism](#)).

A key element of transparency is facilitating easy and timely access to information about the OGP process and related activities, as well as the government's progress in fulfilling its commitments. Member countries need both a dedicated OGP website (Minimum Requirement 2.1) and an online document repository (Minimum Requirement 2.2). These platforms serve different but complementary purposes and work to fulfill the requirements in the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards and uphold the OGP principle of transparency.

OGP members should follow the principle of maximum transparency, whereby relevant information is published and disseminated proactively and in a timely manner, in the most relevant formats and through the most appropriate channels, to reach as much of the population as possible. This transparency serves several functions.

- Publicly available information helps raise awareness of OGP processes and opportunities for participation.
- Open access to information allows civil society and citizens to engage meaningfully in the co-creation and implementation of action plans.
- Transparent documentation enables stakeholders to track progress, identify challenges, and hold the government accountable for its open government commitments.

5.1   National OGP Website

A country's national OGP website can be a standalone website or an OGP subsite/web page on a government website where all information related to the country's OGP processes, outputs, and outcomes are published.

Standard 2

Providing open, accessible, and timely
information about activities and progress within
a member's participation in OGP.

Minimum Requirement 2.1

A public OGP website dedicated to the member's participation in OGP is maintained.

IRM Assessment

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

- Is there an accessible OGP website?
- Is the website maintained and contains at least the latest action plan?

See IRM Guidelines [here](#).

The following are the basic considerations that governments need to take into account for the published information to be useful and usable.

- **Language.** The government publishes key OGP information and documents in all administrative languages.

- **Accessibility.** The government should consider additional steps to make information accessible by those with visual or auditory impairment.

- **Openness.** The government, where relevant, makes available information and data related to process and commitment completion with the technical and legal characteristics necessary for it to be freely used, reused, and redistributed by anyone, anytime, anywhere.

Based on the experience of member countries, it is helpful if the website or page:

- Is searchable, so information can be easily located and retrieved;
- Contains information and documents in non-technical language that is as easy to understand;
- Has features that allow the public to comment on progress updates.

The country's latest action plan must be published on the website. Additionally, countries should also include information on the following.

- Lead agency and government POC for OGP and their contact information
- Participating government agencies and their contact information
- Information on the OGP process and opportunities for participation
- Meeting agendas and minutes of the MSF or equivalent space for dialogue
- A list of civil society organizations and other stakeholders that participate in the MSF or equivalent space for dialogue
- Potentially, if this design choice is made, the online repository mandated in Minimum Requirement 2.2 (see next section)
- Other relevant documents that pertain to the country's open government processes

5.2   Online Repository

A document repository, for OGP purposes, is a centralized online website, webpage, platform, or folder where information and evidence related to the action plan (including process and implementation) are publicly stored, organized, updated, and disseminated.

Standard 2

Providing open, accessible, and timely
information about activities and progress within
a member's participation in OGP.

Information Transparency

Minimum Requirement 2.2

A publicly available document repository on the OGP online site which provides access to documents related to the OGP process, including, at a minimum, information and evidence of the co-creation process and of the implementation of commitments is maintained and regularly updated (at least twice a year).

IRM Assessment

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

- Is there a repository available online?
- Is the repository updated at least twice a year?
- Is the information available on the repository related to the OGP co-creation process and implementation of commitments?

See IRM Guidelines [here](#).

The repository serves as a tool for accountability. It is meant to be a transparent and easy way for stakeholders to access up-to-date evidence related to the government's OGP activities. It highlights evidence of practical progress in implementing OGP processes and commitments, reinforcing mutual benefit for government and civil society stakeholders. It can be used to monitor the action plan development and implementation processes in the country or entity.

Key considerations for designing effective repositories include the following.

- Clearly defining and communicating the types of content the repository accepts to relevant ministries and agencies. This ensures a level of quality control over metadata, formatting, and, when necessary, the content itself.

- Assigning responsibility for tracking commitment progress and ensuring those involved understand how to collect and upload evidence throughout implementation.

- Making sure the platform meets national and international regulations on data architecture, security, privacy, accessibility, and record-keeping.

There are several ways to design and establish an online repository as required.

- As part of the **national OGP website**

  - In its most basic form, this could be a series of electronic folders, including at least one per commitment and one for the action plan development process. To enhance accessibility, the folder could be complemented with a spreadsheet that tracks the commitments and the completion evidence available or, as several OGP participants have done, an online tracking dashboard.

- By using **ready-made tools**

  - Two options for doing this are Google Drive or Dropbox. If this option is chosen, the government must ensure that this complies with domestic regulations, particularly those that have to do with privacy and security. In order to use one of these platforms as a repository, folders must be created for each of the commitments in the action plan, and one relating to action plan processes. The administrator would have to make sure that the settings allow for public access to the folders and upload information as it becomes available. As in the previous case, the folders could be complemented with a spreadsheet to track progress.

Information Transparency

- By using **open-source repositories**
  - Open-source repository platforms like E-prints, DSpace, and CONSUL are cost-effective and support various document formats. These systems also facilitate content aggregation for search engines.

In any case and regardless of the design choice, the repository must be:

- Available online without barriers to access. Anyone should be able to locate and access the repository where the information is hosted, and it should not require passwords or credentials to access.

- Linked to evidence, with information on development and implementation of the action plan. Information on the repository should serve as clear evidence of what happened during the action plan development and implementation processes.

- Updated regularly, at least twice a year, including at a minimum information and evidence of the co-creation process and the implementation of commitments.

This at-a-glance guide produced by the IRM offers a [quick overview of transparency requirements](#).