

OGP Local Roundtable

Driving Open Government Action and Ambition in Africa and the Middle East

Outcome Document

Open
Government
Partnership



Introduction



“The true promise of local open government lies in your sheer number worldwide. (...) Open local government is at the heart of OGP's future. You are close to the people, you include them directly in your decisions, and you make a difference in their daily lives.”

Aidan Eyakuze, OGP CEO

On 22 May 2025, the Open Government Partnership Support Unit held a high-level roundtable as part of the Africa and Middle East Regional Meeting, hosted in Nairobi, Kenya. The session brought together 21 high-level representatives from local governments, civil society organizations, and development partners from across the region. It served as a platform to share how open government is driving inclusion, accountability, and service improvement at the local level.

In a region facing intersecting challenges, from climate vulnerability to inequality and shrinking public space, local governments have the opportunity to deliver solutions and prosperity to their communities while rebuilding public trust. By embracing transparency, public participation, and accountability, local leaders are demonstrating that adopting these principles enhances their capacity to address local communities' challenges and improve people's lives. OGP provides a framework for local actors to co-create reforms with citizens, institutionalize practices, and implement open government reforms.

OGP Local currently counts with over 150 members globally, 36 of whom are from Africa and the Middle East. They represent a cohort leading by example, an expanding and dynamic network of governments committed to working not only for the people, but with them.

This outcome document showcases insights from the discussion, highlighting successful reforms, regional trends, and common challenges encountered by local reformers. It concludes with key takeaways and reflections on how to strengthen and scale open government efforts across Africa and the Middle East.

Progress in Open Government Reforms

OGP Local members across Africa and the Middle East region are driving open government reforms to better respond to citizens' needs and improve trust in public institutions. From public participation to anti-corruption measures and digital governance, these efforts are creating meaningful change on the ground. Participatory budgeting continues to be a prominent open government practice, improving transparency of public resources and ensuring budget priorities align with community needs.

In **Elgeyo Marakwet (Kenya)**, participatory budgeting has been implemented for over eight years across more than 1,300 villages, resulting in stronger project ownership, established communication channels between residents and local government, and a process where every project is now identified directly by the people in each village.



“We developed a webpage on the assembly's website to enhance transparency and accountability by incorporating all information on projects funded, from mineral resources to other projects, to boost access to information.”

Alhaji Boffour Ahmed Haruna,
Municipal Coordinator Director,
Tarkwa Nsuaem (Ghana)

In **Abuja (Nigeria)**, community consultations and needs assessments are having a direct impact on budget decisions. For example, the government prioritized clean water provision over its initial plan to invest in electricity infrastructure after listening to the people.

In **Yoff (Senegal)**, participatory budgeting, supported by in-person town hall meetings and WhatsApp groups with over 1,000 active participants, gives residents direct input in drafting the budget and deciding on both operating and investment expenditures. They propose, follow, and comment on public projects that enable school reconstruction, infrastructure rehabilitation, provision of sanitary equipment, and support for local economic development.

Local governments are extending this engagement to public procurement and budget expenditures, ensuring that they reflect community priorities and are delivered with transparency and accountability by actively involving citizens. Several OGP Local members are publishing detailed procurement data and involving citizens in procurement oversight.

In Kaduna (Nigeria), the government has launched an open infrastructure dashboard aligned with global open contracting standards and supported by civil society and private sector actors. In **Greater Karak (Jordan)**, city council meetings are livestreamed and municipal budgets are published online, demonstrating how transparency is being implemented into institutional routines. **Tarkwa-Nsuaem (Ghana)** publishes real-time information on projects funded from mineral resources, including those by the mining companies, through its webpage, and has engaged communities to improve transparency and accountability in water service delivery by collaborating with the private sector, improving access to information via media and social platforms, and enabling sensitization and enforcement of local bylaws.

Across the region, social exclusion continues to be a challenge, with up to half of the population being vulnerable to exclusion¹. This is due to structural barriers, conflict, and institutional gaps. Nevertheless, efforts to strengthen inclusion and gender equity are gaining momentum. **Oriental (Morocco)** has prioritized gender and inclusion as a major axis of its OGP action plan by improving the participation of women and vulnerable groups in regional development with sensitization campaigns, training sessions, and a regional gender leadership committee. **Tangier-Tétouan-Al-Hoceima (Morocco)** has adopted a regional strategy that promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities and supports women-led businesses across the region. Meanwhile, in **Plateau State (Nigeria)**, the establishment of a Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission has created formal structures to reflect women's perspectives in state policies and strategies and protect women's rights across the state. By early 2025, it had handled over 23 rights violations and repatriated nearly 100 trafficked children².

¹ “Cuesta, José; López-Nova, Borja; Niño-Zarazúa, Miguel. 2022. Social Exclusion: Concepts, Measurement, and a Global Estimate. Policy Research Working Papers;10097. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/bb2edc67-efb4-555b-b498-1eabbbe6192a>

² <https://punchng.com/how-we-rescued-100-victims-of-human-trafficking-in-plateau-gender-commission-chair/>



“To enhance gender mainstreaming, we established the Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission, which has become a critical mechanism in this regard. I can confidently say that the commission has made significant progress. We are also addressing gender-based violence, with numerous prosecutions currently underway and many cases already before the courts.”

Samuel Nanchang Jatau, Secretary to the Government of Plateau (Nigeria)

Africa's digital transformation is advancing rapidly³. In 2025, internet penetration stands at approximately 38–43% of the African population, representing over 550 million⁴ users out of a population exceeding 1.3 billion. While barriers still exist, digital accessibility and innovation are playing a transformative role in shaping citizen engagement and inclusion.

Nandi County (Kenya) launched a government-run call center and Data Desk to help citizens evaluate performance, develop budgets, and follow up on real-time service delivery. **Agadir (Morocco)** has two websites, available in several languages, including French, English, Amazigh, and Arabic, allowing residents to monitor the government's reforms closely and ensure transparency. It also gives access to fully digitized administrative services and procedures. **Dar Chaabane El Fehri (Tunisia)** began to implement digital participation supported by People Powered, a non-profit organization for participatory democracy.

Finally, local reforms are becoming increasingly institutionalized and coordinated within and across levels of government.

In Kenya, local governments have been formally integrated into the national multistakeholder forum and presidential council, creating long-term coordination between national and county governments. In **Kaduna and Plateau (Nigeria)**, regional OGP hubs are being developed to scale reforms and encourage collaboration through peer learning.

These examples demonstrate that OGP Local members in Africa and the Middle East are embracing open government as a standard for how local governments operate, respond to, and deliver services.



“We have set up a dedicated website. It is accessible to everyone. It allows the citizens of Agadir to closely follow this moral contract between the citizens and the political and administrative decision-makers of the city. It also enables citizens to assess whether the commitments have been fulfilled within the deadlines and according to the standards, and to impose penalties if the municipality has not honored these commitments.”

Mr. Lahcen Benmohamed, Director General of Services, Agadir (Morocco)

³ <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38507-doc-dts-english.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/505883/number-of-internet-users-in-african-countries/>

Trends in Open Government at the Local Level

Patterns of innovation and cross-border learning increasingly characterize open government reforms in the region. The Leaders' Roundtable highlighted five key trends: growing youth participation, rising investment in digital governance, alignment with climate resilience, a focus on public feedback, and expanding peer learning networks.



“This youth-designed mobile application will allow citizen to directly address the mayor.”

Seydina Issa Laye Sambe, Mayor of Yoff, the youngest mayor in all of Senegal

Across the region, youth represent a rapidly growing share of the population and a vital political force, making their engagement and inclusion essential to open governance. Local governments are embedding youth more systematically into reform design and implementation. In **Kaduna**, a 27-year-old civil society leader co-chairs the OGP process, signaling a generational shift in leadership. In **Yoff (Senegal)**, young residents designed the municipality's soon-to-launch mobile app for participatory governance and have been active in procurement oversight processes. These examples reflect a growing shift toward engaging youth in governance and public policy.

Meanwhile, the DEAN Initiative, represented by Semiye Michael, is supporting 20 youth participants from four African countries to engage in climate-focused participatory budgeting.

Digitization is becoming a foundational element of local transparency and accountability initiatives. **Greater Karak (Jordan)** plans to expand its e-participation tools beyond council livestreams. Similarly, **Tangier-Tétouan-Al Hoceima (Morocco)** has made digital governance a strategic pillar of its OGP Action Plan, and **Oriental (Morocco)** has prioritized digitization as a central axis of regional development.

Open government reforms are increasingly intersecting with climate and sustainability agendas in a region facing acute environmental challenges, where integrated solutions can address both sustainability and development needs. In **Sekondi-Takoradi (Ghana)**, 700 citizens, civil society actors, and government co-created a Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP) through surveys and workshops.

Plateau State (Nigeria) is integrating open data and digital infrastructure into its climate resilience planning, and they are also implementing a climate assembly. In Tunisia, **Dar Chaâbane El Fehri** co-developed a rainwater harvesting infrastructure with civil society in rural schools. These initiatives illustrate how local governments are relying on open government to address environmental threats and integrate sustainability into policy delivery.

Several local governments are learning that assumptions about public needs often differ from citizen priorities, prompting a shift toward more responsive governance models.

In **Nairobi, Nandi, Abuja, Greater Karak**, and across the region, citizen-led approaches are increasingly seen as both standard practice and essential to effective governance.



The integrated digital feedback loop is helping “redefine what government thinks is important versus what citizens actually want.”

Yulita Mitei, Vice Governor, Nandi (Kenya)

These localities are fostering greater engagement and strengthening trust between civil society and government. These findings point to a deeper emerging trend: the alignment of policy planning with lived experience through sustained civic dialogue and data use.

Decentralized collaboration between local governments is expanding, as leaders seek to build supportive ecosystems and share successful models. **Kaduna State (Nigeria)** has established a Northwest OGP network. **Plateau State (Nigeria)** is planning a similar hub for the North Central states, intending to replicate and sustain reforms. In Kenya, counties have demonstrated leadership by looking beyond their own borders to drive progress.

Kakamega and Machakos joined OGP Local after actively engaging in peer learning sessions with **Elgeyo Marakwet and Nandi**.



“The North Central states platform is established to address the challenges of the region using the OGP approach.”

Ahmed Mukhtar Mohammed, Commissioner, Planning and Budget, Kaduna State (Nigeria)

This kind of exchange reflects a growing model of locally-led scaling through community building, openness to collaboration, and cross-county exchange and mutual support, demonstrating leadership that looks beyond local borders to drive regional progress.

Challenges

OGP Local members across Africa and the Middle East continue to face structural and operational challenges. These range from institutional fragility and resource constraints to inclusion gaps and weakened civic ecosystems.

Despite progress in participatory budgeting and gender inclusion, some groups remain underrepresented in local decision-making.

Elgeyo Marakwet (Kenya) acknowledged that although many communities participate in budget formulation, some remain excluded, such as PWDs and other special groups. While **Yoff (Senegal)** has made strides in engaging youth and women, especially in procurement processes, its experience also reveals that formal participation does not always translate into influence.

Challenges persist in moving beyond symbolic inclusion to meaningful power-sharing. While local reforms have deepened in many areas, participants emphasized that lasting progress depends on stronger institutional frameworks, citizen trust, and sustainable financing.

A recurring challenge is the lack of alignment between action plans and local development budgets. Reforms are vulnerable to external funding cycles and limit their ability to scale. According to Rafik Majdoub, from **Dar Chaabane El Fehri (Tunisia)**, limited municipal budgets have slowed implementation despite community support.

Feedback loops with citizens are often weak or inconsistent. In **Greater Karak (Jordan)**, although council meetings are livestreamed and documents published, uptake remains limited due to low digital literacy and outreach. In Abuja, while physical and online platforms exist to collect citizen input, ensuring follow-up and responsiveness remains a challenge. “We have... established digital platforms for collecting community needs, but we must ensure they are inclusive and responsive,” said Abuja’s Chief of Staff Emeka Joseph Orji.



“There are still special groups who feel they are not fully involved in decision-making.”

Hon. Wisley Rotich, Governor,
Elgeyo Marakwet (Kenya)



“The commitments or the local action plans are not streamlined within the budget... There is [...] much dependency on development partners.”

Gitungo Wamere, Senior Program
Officer, Mzalendo Trust

The dependence of reform efforts on a few high-level champions, rather than being institutionalized, is a key vulnerability of the region. In **Kenya’s Local members**, reforms risk collapse after leadership transitions when they are not embedded within a strong institutional framework. To address this issue, county governments are working to integrate the OGP framework into permanent staff structures and planning. Similar concerns were raised by representatives from **Kaduna and Plateau States (Nigeria)**, where the Northwest and North Central regional OGP platforms are being designed to ensure continuity by supporting states with similar cultural and administrative contexts and reducing reliance on individual advocates. In **Abuja (Nigeria) and Yoff**, participants noted the difficulty of mobilizing a strong CSO base to sustain engagement and co-create meaningful open government reforms.

Support is still needed to build local civic cultures, especially in regions where formal organizing is limited. In **Ouellé (Côte d’Ivoire)**, the absence of civil society organizations hinders the open government process, and the government must encourage populations to form associations. Efforts such as community radio in Côte d’Ivoire and partnerships with associations like **Friends of the Nation (Ghana)** are helping to strengthen these ecosystems.

Overall, these challenges highlight the need for long-term investment in institutions, public infrastructure, and public trust. OGP Local members are advancing meaningful reforms; they must be supported by durable systems, sustainable financing, and inclusive partnerships that go beyond individual champions or short-term cycles.



“We need [...] to train these populations we work with and move beyond emotional exchanges and address the real development issues, the real challenges affecting people’s daily lives, especially those of the most vulnerable communities.”

Raphael Ya Komenan, Mayor, Ouellé (Côte d'Ivoire)

Looking forward

As local governments continue to expand open government reforms across Africa and the Middle East, the next chapter calls for greater institutionalization, deeper community engagement, and stronger regional coordination.

One of the strongest takeaways from the roundtable is the need to anchor open government practices in law, administration, and public culture. As emphasized by civil society leaders and local officials alike, sustainable reform requires that co-created action plans be owned by entire local governments and communities, not just individual champions. José M. Marín stressed that reforms “must survive political transitions” and be “anchored in the machinery of government.”

Peer learning and intergovernmental collaboration were repeatedly recognized as key accelerators of reform. **Nandi County’s (Kenya)** digital dashboard and call center, which were featured in learning sessions, have now become a reference point. In **Kakamega and Machakos (Kenya)**, participation in cross-county learning exchanges led to OGP membership and reform planning.

Participants proposed the creation of regional open government networks, such as those being explored in **Kaduna and Plateau States (Nigeria)**, to formalize peer support, coordinate action, and expand reform reach.

Looking forward, expanding the adoption of open government requires investment in tools and platforms, as well as in civil society capacity and civic ecosystems, especially in places where CSO networks are nascent or fragmented. In **Abuja (Nigeria)** and **Yoff (Senegal)**, efforts are underway to build stronger associations and community-based organizations capable of co-leading reforms. Aidan Eyakuze underlined the importance of civic partnership, reminding participants that “governments cannot do this alone.”



“OGP Local provides a space to exchange experiences and learn about each other’s tough lessons.”

Zukiswa Kota, OGP Civil Society Steering Committee Member

Several speakers emphasized that the next phase of open local government should prioritize linking transparency and participation to tangible improvements in service delivery and resilience, particularly in areas such as climate, infrastructure, and youth employment.

Nandi (Kenya), for example, is using its call center not just to collect complaints, but to inform priority setting and resource allocation. Friends of the Nation (Ghana) is working to ensure that transparency in extractive revenues is directly tied to water access and community welfare.

Finally, speakers called for regional dialogue and collaboration, grounded in mutual respect and collective purpose. The [Marrakech Declaration | Network of Open Local Governments Africa – Middle East Region](#), cited by both Rabie El Khamlichi, Zukiswa Kota, and Yulita Mitei, remains a guiding commitment for cross-border learning: “This cross-border cooperation serves as a key driver for sharing best practices,” affirmed El Khamlichi. And Evelyn Hernandez (Head of Members and Affiliate, CoST) insisted on these cross-local exchanges, “I can see opportunities for regional cooperation based on the experience of Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana and Kaduna State in Nigeria, both OGP locals”.

As the local open government community in the region grows, so does its responsibility to lead globally. As noted by Zukiswa Kota, these local actors “are on the frontlines of transformation,” often taking bold steps in contexts of fragility or limited resources. The momentum built in Nairobi is a signal that local governments are not only implementers of their reforms; they are shaping the future of open government across the region and beyond.



“We have already witnessed many innovations — some award-winning, others transforming lives — in Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria, Kenya, and across numerous other local governments. This is clear proof that anyone seeking inspiration needs to look no further than this very room.”

Ambassador Philip Thigo

Conclusion

The stories and commitments shared in Nairobi underscore a simple but powerful truth: open government at the local level is not only possible, it is already transforming lives. From youth-led digital platforms to climate-responsive action plans, from inclusive budgeting processes to regional peer learning, reformers across Africa and the Middle East are demonstrating that transparency, accountability, and participation are not abstract ideals — they are practical tools for delivering better services, rebuilding trust, and strengthening democracy from the ground up.

The journey ahead will demand persistence, collaboration, and courage. By institutionalizing open practices, investing in civic ecosystems, and linking reforms directly to people’s daily needs, local governments can ensure that the momentum we see today endures for generations to come. The path forward is clear: together, governments and citizens can continue to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and hopeful future — not only for the region, but as an inspiration for the global open government movement.

Roundtable Participant List

Mr. Lahcen Benmohamed, Director General of Services, Agadir, Morocco

Mme Saliha Hajji, Vice Président du Conseil de la Région de l'Oriental, Oriental, Morocco

Hon. Raphael Ya Komenan, Mayor, Ouellé, Côte d'Ivoire

Hon. Seydina Issa Laye Sambe, Mayor, Yoff, Senegal

Hon. Ahmed Mukhtar Mohammed, Commissioner, Planning and Budget Commission, Kaduna State, Nigeria

Mr. Samuel Nanchang Jatau, Secretary to the Government of the Plateau State, Nigeria

Hon. Moh'd Abdel-Hamid Moh'd Maaitah, Mayor, Greater Karak, Jordan

Rabie El Khamlichi, Directeur Général, Tangier – Tetouan

Emeka Joseph Orji, Chief of Staff, Abuja, Nigeria

Alhaji Boffour Ahmed Haruna, Municipal Coordinator Director, Tarkwa Nsuaem, Ghana

Hon. Wisley Rotich, Governor, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kenya

Dr. Yulita Mitej, Vice Governor, Nandi, Kenya

Mr. Semiye Michael, CEO/Founder, DEAN Initiative, Abuja, Nigeria

Mr. Solomon Ampofo, Program Coordinator, Friends of the Nation

Mr. Rafik Majdoub, Tunisian Association For a Better Future, Dar Chaabane El Fehri, Tunisia

Mr. Gitungo Wamere, Senior Program Officer, Mzalendo Trust, Kenya

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Mr. José M. Marín OGP Local Lead, OGP

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