

IRM Quality Assurance Framework

Summary of Session 7: Quality and consistency of Overviews and Executive Summaries in IRM reports

November 21, 2025

In attendance

- **IEP members:** Maha Jweied, Rocio Moreno, and Snježana Bokulić
- **IRM Staff:** Andreas Pavlou, Tinatin Ninua, Matthew Tramonti, and Mia Katan

Summary

The International Experts Panel (IEP) oversees the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) to safeguard its independence and to ensure consistent application of the IRM methodology and quality research standards in its products. In 2023, the IEP approved the Quality Assurance Framework, an essential tool for ensuring that the IRM assessments meet the highest standards of quality, due diligence, research, and controls to safeguard its objectivity, independence, and credibility.

The IEP held the seventh quality assurance session on November 21, 2025. During the 2-hour session, the IEP examined the quality and consistency of the Overview sections and Executive Summaries of IRM reports. The IEP reviewed 16 samples: eight Overview sections from Action Plan Reviews (APRs) and eight Executive Summaries from Results Reports (RRs). There were two samples taken from each region (Africa, Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Europe).

Discussion

Overall, the IEP found that these sections were well-written and consistent in quality. They noted that the structured format of the Overviews of RRs (with headings) and their focus on factual outcomes made them generally more coherent and useful than APR Executive Summaries. The headings (e.g., "Implementation in Context") provide a clear format, making these summaries more effective. They highlighted that some summaries are more descriptive than analytical and sometimes do not clearly explain the specific open government angle of commitments (e.g., "making the fishery sector more transparent").

For the APR Overviews, the IEP noted that the classification of "Promising" commitments is sometimes used inconsistently. In cases where commitments with "moderate" potential are considered "promising" because they are the most ambitious in a plan or are a priority policy area, this nuance could be clearer in the Overviews. They also noted some inconsistencies in the way data is presented in the "At a Glance" tables (e.g., "6 out of 10" commitments vs. percentages). Additionally, the "yes/no" answers on the minimum requirements of OGP's Participation and Co-creation Standards are not always explained in the text, leaving readers unclear on why a requirement was missed. Lastly, in the RR, some Key Observations are overly generic (e.g., "robust commitments lead to better results") and lack the country-specific analysis needed to be actionable.

Action points for improving the recommendations of assessments of minimum requirements

- For the “At a Glance” tables, use fractions (e.g., "5 out of 17") to avoid misleading percentages.
- Clarify the connection between a commitment's policy area and its open government value. For example, if a commitment has improved health services, the IRM should clearly state the open government component (i.e., it has made health services more participatory or transparent).
- For the Key Observations, ensure that the messaging considers the political nuance and circumstances of the country under review.

Moving forward

The IRM will adopt the IEP's suggestions from this quality assurance session in its guidance and training to researchers and external reviewers. IRM staff will also take these action points into account when reviewing and editing RRs and APRs. The IRM is planning to change its reporting based on changes to the OGP action plan framework. The IRM will also take into account the IEP's feedback from this session as it adapts its reporting to the changes to the OGP action plan framework in 2026.