

Independent Reporting Mechanism

Action Plan Review:
Jamaica 2024–2026

Open
Government
Partnership



Independent
Reporting
Mechanism

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Section I. Overview

Jamaica’s second action plan aims for promising reforms on open data, access to information, climate change, and environmental impact assessments. Development of the plan did not meet the minimum requirements of the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards. This plan takes up the uncompleted reforms of the first plan and could be strengthened by incorporating milestones to address challenges that prevented implementation during the previous cycle.

Jamaica’s second OGP action plan consists of seven commitments. These address transparency through access to information and open data and apply open government principles to policy areas like climate and environment. Many of the commitments align with broader national and subnational policies and strategies. These include the Open Data Policy, Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan, and Sustainable Development Goal 16.

The plan’s most promising commitments focus on open data, access to information (ATI), environmental impact assessment (EIA) regulations, and climate change. They aim to issue new, binding regulations or overhaul existing practices. The open data commitment seeks to upgrade the existing portal, while the ATI and EIA commitments aim to develop new legislation. The EIA commitment also intends to improve and codify practices in the executive branch. The impetus for the commitments on open data and climate change come from relevant government strategies.

This action plan is nearly identical to the previous one—as 86% of the previous plan’s milestones were not accomplished.¹ The thrust of the commitments remains the same, though some milestones were adjusted to reflect a more realistic assessment of time and resources available to carry out activities. While previous commitments on open data, ATI, and EIA were assessed as having substantial potential for results, they were assessed in this review as having modest potential for results. The IRM review has not found adequate evidence that lessons learned or challenges from the previous versions of these commitments have been sufficiently addressed to mitigate roadblocks in their implementation. The main thrust of the IRM recommendations in the Results Report for the previous action plan concerned staffing constraints and lack of sufficient resource allocations blocking progress in many commitments.

Civil society reported that during the co-creation process the Government of Jamaica’s OGP team was very communicative and actively engaged.² The team facilitated participation by offering flexible arrangements, such as allowing participants to designate proxies³ However, some civil society representatives noted that the process was invite-only⁴ and that the commitments could have been more specific.⁵ Jamaica’s OGP team invited representatives from the public, private, and civil society sectors across each OGP NAP commitment area. In addition, the team shared the draft action plan broadly for public review and feedback during two-week

At a Glance

MEMBERSHIP

2016 **Joined OGP**

COMMITMENTS

7/7 **Open government lens**

0/7 **Substantial potential for results**

PROMISING COMMITMENTS

- Upgrading Open Data System
- Strengthening Access to Information
- Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
- Develop Climate Change Legislation

Met the minimum requirements during co-creation: No

periods in February and June 2024, through email outreach and publication on the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service website.⁶

¹ “Jamaica Results Report 2021-2023,” Open Government Partnership, accessed 9 June 2025, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/jamaica-results-report-2021-2023>.

² Dahvia Hylton (Policy and Research Lead of Jamaica Climate Change Youth Council), interview by IRM researcher, 6 February 2025.

³ Hylton, interview.

⁴ Hylton, interview.

⁵ Danielle Andrade (Attorney-at-Law), interview by IRM researcher, 18 February 2025.

⁶ Internal correspondence shared with the IRM, 21 November, 2025.

Section II. Promising Commitments

This section analyzes commitments with the most promise to achieve notable results, according to IRM assessment. Promising commitments address a policy area important to stakeholders or the national context. They must be verifiable, have an open government lens, and a modest or substantial potential for results. This review looks at challenges, opportunities, and recommendations to support implementation.

Table 1. Promising Commitments

Commitment 2 aims to regularly publish relevant datasets through the consolidation and upgrading of the country’s open data portal.
Commitment 3 promises to strengthen access to information through the amendment of the Access to Information Law.
Commitment 5 intends to increase avenues for the public’s participation in Environmental Impact Assessment processes.
Commitment 6 proposes to develop legislation on climate change and adopt a participatory approach to deciding on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Commitment 2: Upgrade and Strengthen the Open Data System

Implementer: Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

For a complete description, see Commitment 2 of [Jamaica 2024–2026 Action Plan](#).

Context and objectives

Commitment 2 aims to bolster the quality of open data practices across government agencies as part and parcel of the government’s open data policy implementation, which was approved by the cabinet in 2021.¹ The commitment intends to do so by consolidating and upgrading the country’s open data portal as well as increasing the involvement of civil society and public officials to make the portal more relevant and user-friendly.² More specifically, this entails the routine publishing of datasets collected from ministries.

Despite the addition of a few activities, this commitment largely continues the same reforms from the previous action plan. Most of the completed activities from the previous action plan consisted of “internal preparatory... [actions such as] ... procurement processes to hire the necessary consultants to carry out the planned activities without the activities actually commencing.”³ The corresponding open government lens for this commitment is transparency.

Potential for results: Modest

Despite ongoing efforts, the publication and re-use of open data persists as a challenge for Jamaica. As of March 2025, the national open data portal featured 32 datasets across 10 policy areas from 15 data producers.⁴ The greatest number of available data sets were related to economy, finance, infrastructure, and health. There is no functionality on the portal to allow users to request data or report examples of use-cases. The most recent datasets on the portal are dated from 2018.

Several international organizations or civil society organizations have recently assessed Jamaica’s open data infrastructure, framework, and practices. For instance, Jamaica scored 61% and ranked 60th out of 195 in the world according to the 2022 Open Data Inventory by Open Data Watch.⁵ This framework assesses the availability of a variety of social, economic, and environmental statistics as well as openness practices e.g., machine readability, non-proprietary format, metadata availability, download options, and data license/terms of use. Jamaica leads the Caribbean for 2022, which is the most recent year that it was published. The World Bank’s Statistical Performance Indicators framework—on which Jamaica achieved an overall score of 67.4 in 2023—similarly assesses pillars such as data services (e.g., quality of data releases and richness and openness of online access, etc.), topics covered, data sources (e.g., statistical offices, geospatial data, and administrative data, etc.), and data infrastructure (e.g., legislation and

governance).⁶ Jamaica also scored 31 on the 2022 Global Data Barometer survey compared to the 34 points of the global average at the time.⁷

The activities and milestones in this commitment are part and parcel of the national government's overarching open data policy, which has already been occurring outside of Jamaica's OGP participation. This commitment seeks to establish and concretize open data practices so that they are institutionalized beyond the implementation period where publication of government-held data becomes a regular occurrence. The open data policy has outlined an indicative, non-exhaustive list of the following indicators to measure the performance of the national open data portal: (1) number of new and returning visitors, (2) number of datasets, (3) number of downloads and unique views of datasets, (4) number of public authorities contributing data to the portal, (5) number of comments and other community activities, (6) traffic sources, (7) visitor bounce rate, (8) average time on site, (9) conversion rate, and (10) top pages.⁸

This commitment consists of a variety of milestones designed to achieve its overall objective. Milestones new to this iteration of the commitment include (1) conducting communication and sensitization activities on a quarterly basis with representatives from government agencies on the open data policy and (2) building open data capabilities for government and non-government stakeholders, including for the upgraded open data portal e.g., researchers, civil society, citizens, private sector, etc.⁹ These activities, as written, intend to increase the involvement of state institutions and officials in policy implementation as well as the data literacy of both government and non-government stakeholders.

The version of this commitment in the current action plan dropped the milestone for the launch of the new open data portal. Civil society indicated that this is because the development of the new portal was completed under the previous action plan but not launched because the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) did not receive sufficient updated data from ministries.¹⁰ This underscores the current commitment's emphasis on data collection from ministries and public bodies as seen in the dropping of another milestone focusing on technical elements of the portal such as "application of technology to automate aspects of the open data system."

Other milestones include elaboration of an implementation plan for the open data policy. The most recent publicly available workplan appears in open data policy, which was published in July 2021 and therefore contains outdated information.¹¹ The IRM encourages the OPM to indicate a specific workplan, delineating actions to be taken by a certain date and which public agency, or agencies, is responsible for doing so in the new version of this implementation plan. Furthermore, this commitment also foresees a more prominent role for civil society via expanded representation on the Open Data Committee.

Given the fact that this commitment largely replicates the corresponding commitment in the previous action plan, it is rated as having modest potential for results. More significant results would require evidence of increased (1) submission of datasets from public agencies to the OPM to be formatted for online publishing, (2) number of public authorities contributing data to the portal, (3) use of data by civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, private sector, academia, and others for participation in government decision-making and public debate, as well as third-party evaluations of public projects that there is data for.

Lessons learned from the previous iteration of this commitment include the adjustment of implementation timelines and milestones so that they more accurately reflect government capacity and availability of resources. Furthermore, the addition of quarterly sensitization and communication sessions with public agencies and stakeholders, both inside and outside of government, on open data capabilities and the future, upgraded portal reflects a more nuanced approach to this policy area than in the previous action plan.

Opportunities, challenges, and recommendations during implementation

Civil society has indicated that one of the biggest challenges precluding ministries from sharing datasets with OPM is that datasets were not done in a publication-ready format upon creation.¹² For example, many ministries maintain these records only on paper.¹³ As part and parcel of unleashing the potential of open data, OPM can aid ministries in standardizing better record management practices to enable easy digitalization and facilitated sharing.

Another major challenge in implementing this type of commitment is the lack of awareness across ministries of the importance of open data. The quarterly sensitization sessions under this commitment are designed to mitigate this. Sensitization is also an integral part of combatting another challenge (i.e., resource constraints) where the ministries themselves appear to be reluctant to dedicate the requisite financial and human resources necessary to carry out open data activities. One solution could be to allocate sufficient funding for open data activities in ministerial budget allocations so that concrete resources are tied to the implementation plan to ensure that these changes are actually implemented. To that end, the open data portfolio was previously located in the Ministry of Science, Energy, and Technology in the first action plan period and is now located in OGP at the center of government. This reshuffling may indicate top-level prioritization and the political buy-in necessary (to be evidenced by adequate resource allocation) to better implement open data reforms in the second action plan period.

To make the best use of limited capacity and resources, identification of priority datasets from civil society is key. According to a comprehensive survey of civil society conducted during the implementation period of the first NAP, the main sectoral focus for datasets include those related to the economy, education and research, health, labor, finance, law and justice, and social policies.¹⁴ OPM has additionally indicated that civil society has emphasized the reusability of data as a key feature.¹⁵ One way in which the ambition of this commitment could be increased is if the OPM considers prioritizing the publishing of gender-disaggregated data as well. Examples of high-value gender data include:

- **Crime and justice data**, such as information on the sex of victims and perpetrators, gender-based violence indicators on physical, sexual, and psychological abuses, and prison population demographics.
- **Economic data**, such as access to financial resources and land ownership.
- **Education data**, such as school enrollment and literacy rates.
- **Health data**, such as maternal and child mortality rates, food insecurity, and adult malnutrition.
- **Labor data**, such as employment, unpaid care work, and time allocation.
- **Living conditions data**, such as access to sanitation, electricity, and water.

Commitment 3: Strengthen Access to Information Law & Practices

Implementer: Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth, and Information (MOESYI).

For a complete description, see Commitment 3 of [Jamaica 2024–2026 Action Plan](#).

Context and objectives

This commitment seeks to improve both the legal framework and practice of information disclosure in Jamaica. The global Right to Information (RTI) Rating scores Jamaica's 2002 Access to Information (ATI) Act¹⁶ 88 out of 150 points.¹⁷ In 2008, a joint select committee was appointed to make recommendations to amend the act though they were not implemented.¹⁸ The previous OGP action plan also began ATI reforms at the behest of civil society¹⁹ but saw limited implementation. All of its milestones, except one, were rolled over into this commitment. The intended aims of the commitment corresponds with the open government lens of transparency and is eligible for the Open Gov Challenge.

Potential for results: Modest

The proposed milestones amount to a comprehensive and multi-pronged reform program consisting of (1) amending the ATI Act,²⁰ (2) prioritizing participatory mechanisms via the public submission function of the joint select committee, a parliamentary body, as well as the creation of the multi-stakeholder Access to Information Act Advisory Body, (3) developing a proposal for an online platform to make and track information requests, and (5) holding public education awareness programs and communication campaigns on the ATI system and the public's right to information. However, these milestones do not address the challenges limiting implementation under the previous action plan, earning the commitment modest potential for results.

Given key barriers to ATI rights, the commitment's focus touches on an important area for reform. According to the RTI Rating, the main issues with the 2002 ATI Act are the limited measures to

promote public officials' observance of the law as well as insufficient guarantees for the independence of the oversight body. It further notes overly broad exceptions to disclosure, confusion over state secrecy, and narrow application of the public interest override.²¹ Civil society also highlights the incontestability of a certificate of exemption. Once a minister issues a certificate of exemption for a piece of information, which lasts for 20 years, it is removed from the ambit of the appeals body and thus cannot be challenged at the ATI tribunal.²² In addition, most information seekers functionally need the assistance of an attorney to file an internal appeal. Additionally, the ATI unit can only sanction public bodies for non-compliance when a member of the public brings an appeal forward, as it lacks statutory enforcement authority.²³

Several elements of this commitment could particularly address these issues, if implemented as written. While the content of the ATI Act amendment is still to be defined, it is expected to align Jamaican proactive disclosure practices with international best practices.²⁴ The commitment also foresees revitalizing the ATI Act Advisory Body, embedding participatory methods in the implementation and monitoring of the act to ensure that it responds to the real needs of information seekers. In addition, training and capacity building of ATI officers across ministries, along with preparing and disseminating improved guidelines, could educate the relevant government stakeholders charged with responding to information requests on the application of exemptions in any particular case. Education and sensitization sessions may also help agencies adopt an “open-by-default” approach where public officials can interpret regulations in a way that favors information disclosure. This could decrease the number of information requests denied.

Development of a proposal for fully developing an online information requests platform later is also a positive step. While only preparatory work is expected during the implementation period, eventually creating a central portal could make ATI procedures become more user-friendly.²⁵ The current reactive disclosure regime, where information seekers need to submit requests via the corresponding government body's website, presupposes that the information seeker knows precisely which government body deals with which services. A central portal could thus remove this barrier and make it easier for users to request the information they seek.

Overall, this commitment aims to contribute both to the adoption and institutionalization of good ATI practices. A legislative amendment could produce binding changes in this policy area, albeit buttressed by continual capacity building and preparation of guidelines for ATI officers, aimed at both changing practices and making them more uniform across public agencies on a broad scale.

Opportunities, challenges, and recommendations during implementation

The Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information could consider carrying out a variety of actions in order to fulfill the potential of this commitment regarding participation in the process of developing the proposed amendment and its content, capacity building, and oversight:

- **Ensure a participatory approach to developing the proposed amendment** by gathering civil society priorities through early, frequent, and meaningful consultations.
- **Incorporate priority ATI issues in the amendment**, including:
 - Disbanding the certificate of exemptions or otherwise allowing the exemption of information to be challenged at the ATI Tribunal.
 - Internally reviewing exemption of classified information every five or ten years, for example, allowing new information to be released publicly.
 - Proactively publishing frequently requested information so that disclosures match public interest. For example, the US Department of Justice has developed an implementation checklist to sensitize agency employees on institutional procedures for enhancing the proactive disclosure of non-exempt information.²⁶ This could align with the open data policy by establishing an open-by-default provision as detailed in Commitment 2.
 - Accounting for social and technological changes since 2002, like open data reuse in big data, civic tech, artificial intelligence, and public innovation.
 - Providing for a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that collects data and statistics on number of requests, topics requested, average response time, and reasons for denial/refusal, which will allow implementing institutions to identify challenges, bottlenecks, and specific needs for information.

- **Dedicate adequate human and financial resources to train information officers**, and later all public officials, on record-keeping practices, the use of standardized data, the timely provision of information, and the appropriate use of exemptions.
- **Sustain the public communication campaign** beyond the implementation period, so that the public remains regularly informed about information rights. Address guidance on how to submit information requests and where to access proactively disclosed information.
- **Expand the Access to Information Act Advisory Committee** to include frequent users like journalists, industry representatives, and government information producers.
- **Make the appeals system more user-friendly**, including by equipping the ATI Tribunal with the requisite human and financial resources, and changing its appointment procedures so that it can function independently.

Commitment 5: Complete Environment Impact Assessment Regulations

Implementers: Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) and National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).

For a complete description, see Commitment 5 of [Jamaica 2024–2026 Action Plan](#).

Context and objectives

The commitment intends to make environment impact assessment (EIA) process more transparent and inclusive. This is a long-standing civil society priority, predating Jamaica’s OGP membership. Currently, agency-level guidelines²⁷ regulate the conduct of the EIA regime in Jamaica,²⁸ but are applied on an ad-hoc basis. This reinforces a prevailing perception of the EIA process being a ‘rubberstamp.’²⁹ The lack of transparency, consistency, and predictability is evident across various aspects of the EIA process.³⁰ The state of the environment in Jamaica is a salient national issue in light of the adverse effects of bauxite mining, for example.³¹

Following limited progress on this reform under the previous action plan, this commitment plans for nearly identical milestones.³² This commitment is relevant to the OGP values of transparency and civic participation and is also eligible for the Open Gov Challenge, as it entails developing an environmental strategy using open government principles.

Potential for results: Modest

If implemented as written, the commitment would hold stakeholder consultations soliciting civil society priorities to be included in proposed legislation on improving the EIA process. Given publicly documented shortcomings with the existing regulations, meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders could improve public participation in EIAs by enhancing transparency practices and improving access to justice through consistent application of the guidelines.

The current guidelines do not require preparation of an EIA for any type of project unless the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) specifically requests it. In practice, this process tends to be triggered for projects relating to sewage or those in a specific location.³³ The guidelines also do not address content, format, conflicts of interest, or public participation in the process. When an EIA is opened for public comment, the public can rarely obtain necessary information within the relevant timeframe, given reactive information disclosure practices. Finally, the guidelines do not provide for a third party right of appeal or direct citizen mechanism to object to a failure to adhere to the guidelines or NCRA Act. At present, the only legal recourse is the Supreme Court, which is both cumbersome and costly for claimants.³⁴

Following consultations, implementation of this commitment is expected to yield binding changes, elaborating on and codifying the EIA process of the 1991 Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act and National Environment and Planning Agency’s 2007 Guidelines. This commitment has modest potential for results because there is limited evidence to indicate sufficient incorporation of lessons learned or mitigation of challenges from its previous iteration, which primarily involved staffing constraints³⁵ and unspecified scope of the planned reforms.

Opportunities, challenges, and recommendations during implementation

Meaningful, early, and sustained consultations with civil society organizations specializing in environmental issues are key to fulfilling the potential of this commitment. The Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) could invite representatives of these organizations to open meetings to get a sense of their priorities for this issue area. The IRM recommends that the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC) considers the following policy options in order to fulfill the potential of this commitment:

- **Dedicate adequate human and financial resources** to hold robust consultations, pre-empting the challenges faced during the previous action plan cycle.
- **Ensure consultations are inclusive and accessible** through establishing mechanisms to ensure that the interests and needs of those disproportionately affected by climate change are not overlooked. Open wide access to public consultations to avoid any discretionary or arbitrary selection of participants. All records of meetings and exchanges within the participation process could also be made fully available and accessible online, as well as documentation of how public input is incorporated into the new EIA process. This material could include technical documents and evidence involved parties provide in plain language, with clear figures to maximize readability.
- **Strengthen the preparation, public participation, access to information, and access to justice** in EIA process:
 - For preparation, regulations could **include a classification of projects that must require an EIA** when they are located in or adjacent to environmentally sensitive or protected areas. This may also include the discretionary authority to require an EIA for projects that do not fall within the mandatory list, but which may have a significant impact on the environment, including provisions on conflicts of interest.
 - Consider procedures to **consult and reach out to vulnerable and impacted communities proactively** to seek out and address their concerns when designing and implementing environmental policies.
 - Publish all information relevant to the EIA process **proactively and timely**, such as terms of reference, application permit form, supporting documents for the proposed project, and relevant reports submitted to the authority. This could be supported by establishing a publicly accessible online EIA register.³⁶
 - **Specify instances where citizens can appeal** to an independent court or tribunal for alleged breaches of key procedural aspects of the EIA process.

Commitment 6: Carry out Development of Climate Change Legislation and Related Activities

Implementer: Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC).

For a complete description, see Commitment 6 of [Jamaica 2024–2026 Action Plan](#).

Context and objectives

Reflecting both civil society and government priorities, this commitment aims to improve the practices, policies, and norms that govern Jamaica's climate change regulations by incorporating public consultations in drafting and implementing the regulations. This commitment continues uncompleted reforms from the first action plan, with the notable addition of adopting a participatory approach to the preparation of Jamaica's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce national carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It is eligible to be an Open Gov Challenge commitment, as it involves developing climate legislation using the open government principle of civic participation.

The initial version of the Climate Change Policy Framework,³⁷ which defined Jamaica's goals, principles, and strategies to address the impacts and challenges of climate change, was adopted in 2015. The previous action plan's climate change commitment launched an updated framework in 2023,³⁸ aligned with the Paris Agreement provisions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).³⁹ Objective 1.1 of the updated framework was to develop legislation improving the governance framework for climate action, but not completed under the previous action plan, and hence carried over into this commitment.

Potential for results: Modest

The commitment plans to contract a consultant to prepare both the concept note for the draft legislation and, later, the drafting instructions for the legislation to be submitted to the cabinet and then to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. Part of this approach also involves conducting public and stakeholder consultations to define priorities in this issue area, both at the stage of the concept note development as well as drafting instructions for the intended legislation.

The purpose of this reform is to consolidate patchwork regulations across the legal framework and develop effective coordination mechanisms to promote policy coherence across public agencies. Currently, climate regulations vary in application, size, and scope; and thus, lack uniformity. In other words, as per actions outlined in Objective 1.1 of the 2023 Climate Change Policy Framework, this commitment would support the enactment of legislation to, among other things, “institutionalize the role and functions of the responsible authorities for coordinating action on climate change (e.g., Climate Change Division and Climate Change Advisory Board), establish emission reduction targets for key economic sectors, which will be reviewed every five years, and promote engagement of public participation in relation to climate action.”⁴⁰

One of the foreseen elements of the reform, as per the framework, involves promoting public engagement and participation in developing and implementing the adaptation and mitigation plan in the form of Jamaica’s updated NDCs. It additionally seeks to prioritize public awareness and education on climate change, which involves establishing “a platform for communication and utilizing mechanisms to allow for access to and sharing of climate-related information and data to facilitate the effective engagement to the public in decision-making.”⁴¹ This could result in increased publication of climate information and its use by civil society and the media.

This commitment’s intended legislation would represent a binding change for Jamaica and could mandate public participation in NDCs development. However, its sustainability would rely on dedicated budget lines for legislation development, capacity building, and awareness raising activities. As of July 2025, NDCs development was funded by a GIZ regional project,⁴² but the USAID program meant to fund legislation development had been suspended, putting initial steps on hold. As implementation of the previous iteration of this commitment was stalled by staffing constraints,⁴³ this commitment has been coded as having modest potential for results.

Opportunities, challenges, and recommendations during implementation

Key aspects of this commitment that need to be accomplished in order for it to fulfill open government principles include centering public participation early in the decision-making process. This can help build trust and increase effectiveness by allowing the public to shape priorities and contribute to monitoring efforts. The Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation could make specific efforts to proactively involve representatives from communities that are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as:

- **Dedicate budget lines** for legislation development, capacity building, and awareness raising. Following conclusion of the GIZ project, allocate necessary resources to public participation in NDCs development and its future five-yearly updates.
- **Ensure consultations are inclusive and accessible** by establishing mechanisms to ensure that the interests and needs of climate-vulnerable communities are not overlooked. Open wide access to public consultations to avoid any discretionary or arbitrary selection of participants. All records of meetings and exchanges within the participation process could also be made fully available and accessible online, as well as documentation of how public input is incorporated into the legislation and NDCs process. This material could include technical documents and evidence involved parties provide in plain language, with clear figures to maximize readability.

Other commitments

Other commitments that the IRM did not identify as promising commitments are discussed below. Commitments 1, 4, and 7 have modest potential for results. Like the other commitments, they take up uncompleted reforms of the first action plan. Implementers are encouraged to consider strategies for addressing the financial and human resource gaps that have blocked implementation to date.

Commitment 1 aims to develop a National Anti-Corruption Strategy and proposes embedding a two-step stakeholder consultation session into the development process. This consultation could provide the government with a structured framework for agencies and relevant stakeholders to take part in completing and implementing the strategy. However, the commitment lacks assurances for civil society’s binding role in the elaboration, execution, and evaluation of the strategy, which could undermine the quality of participation in the process.

Commitment 4 proposes creating a Legal Information Portal to simplify access to existing judicial information, as well as developing and carrying out a public education program on human rights and justice. As part of these efforts, the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs could consider measures that may more directly increase access to justice for Jamaican citizens or improve transparency by opening new data to the public, such as the criteria for legal aid eligibility.

Commitment 7 aims to raise awareness of youth programs and services through the creation of an online National Youth Programmatic Inventory, as well as to implement and monitor Jamaica’s National Youth Policy, which includes a component on maximizing youth participation in national and political decision-making.⁴⁴ The Ministry of Education and Youth could ensure that platforms for youth engagement in the decision-making process have the resources to last beyond the commitment period. It could also incorporate diverse youth participation in monitoring the National Youth Policy and release information on the National Youth Programmatic Inventory in an open data format.

¹ “The Government of Jamaica: Open Data Policy (2021),” Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology, accessed 3 March 2025, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AcDwwmNFAoPFJGlnJxshMPrmEifTOiWK/view?usp=sharing>.

² “Jamaica’s Open Data Catalog,” Jamaica Open Data, accessed 1 March 2025, <https://data.gov.jm>.

³ “IRM Results Report: Jamaica 2021–2023,” Open Government Partnership, accessed 9 June 2025, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/jamaica-results-report-2021-2023>.

⁴ “Jamaica Open Data,” Government of Jamaica, accessed 3 March 2025, <https://www.data.gov.jm/search/type/dataset>.

⁵ “Open Data Inventory,” Open Data Watch, accessed 3 March 2025, <https://odin.opendatawatch.com/Report/countryProfileUpdated/JAM?year=2022>.

⁶ “Statistical Performance Indicators,” World Bank, accessed 3 March 2025,

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/statistical-performance-indicators/explore-data>.

⁷ “Jamaica,” Global Data Barometer, accessed 3 March 2025, <https://globaldatabarometer.org/country/jamaica>.

⁸ “The Government of Jamaica: Open Data Policy (2021),” Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology, p. 59–60.

⁹ Gary Campbell (Director of Technology at the Office of the Prime Minister), interview by IRM researcher, 13 February 2025.

¹⁰ Matthew McNaughton (Principal of Slashroots Foundation) and Gavin Myers (Policy Lead at Slashroots Foundation), interview by IRM researcher, 15 August 2025.

¹¹ “The Government of Jamaica: Open Data Policy (2021),” Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology.

¹² McNaughton and Myers, interview.

¹³ McNaughton and Myers, interview.

¹⁴ “Open Government Demand Survey: Report of Findings 2023,” Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, unpublished document shared with IRM.

¹⁵ Campbell, interview.

¹⁶ “Access to Information Act 2002,” Government of Jamaica, accessed 29 June 2025,

<https://laws.moj.gov.jm/library/statute/the-access-to-information-act>.

¹⁷ “Jamaica,” Global Right to Information Rating, accessed 4 March 2025, <https://www.rti-rating.aorg/country-detail/?country=Jamaica>.

¹⁸ “Report of the Joint Select Committee to Consider and Report on the Operation of ‘The Access to Information Act, 2002’ Relative to the Review of the Legislation as Provided by the Act,” Jamaica House of Representatives, 27 March 2008, https://www.jparliament.gov.jm/attachments/637_Report%20of%20The%20JSC%20to%20Consider%20and%20Report%20on%20Operation%20of%20The%20Access%20to%20Information%20Act,%202002.pdf.

¹⁹ “The Government of Jamaica: Open Data Policy (2021),” Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology, p. 53–57.

²⁰ “Access to Information Act 2002,” Government of Jamaica.

²¹ “Jamaica,” Global Right to Information Rating.

²² Danielle Andrade (Attorney-at-Law), interview by IRM researcher, 18 February 2025.

²³ Andrade, interview.

²⁴ Damian Cox (Senior Director of the Access to Information Unit at the Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information), interview by IRM researcher, 5 February 2025.

²⁵ “The Protection and Promotion of Civic Space: Strengthening Alignment with International Standards and Guidance,” Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, accessed 4 March 2025,

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-protection-and-promotion-of-civic-space_d234e975-en.html, p. 117–118.

²⁶ “Office of Information Policy,” United States Department of Justice, accessed 10 March 2025,

<https://www.justice.gov/oip/implementation-checklist-oip-guidance-proactive-disclosures-non-exempt-agency-information>.

²⁷ See NEPA’s Guidelines for Conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (2007) and for Public Presentations (2007) in: “Submission on proposed Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations for Jamaica,” Jamaica Environment Trust, December 2011.

²⁸ Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie (Chief Executive Officer of Jamaica Environment Trust), interview by IRM researcher, 18 February 2025.

²⁹ “Submission on proposed Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations for Jamaica,” Jamaica Environment Trust.

³⁰ “Submission on proposed Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations for Jamaica,” Jamaica Environment Trust.

³¹ Susan Koenig, “Impact of bauxite mining on limestone ecosystems in Jamaica,” The Jamaica Gleaner, 24 April 2022, <https://epaper.jamaica-gleaner.com/article/282325388530634>.

³² “IRM Results Report: Jamaica 2021–2023,” Open Government Partnership.

³³ Andrea Donaldson (Senior Manager at the National Environment and Planning Agency), interview by IRM researcher, 12 February 2025.

³⁴ “Submission on proposed Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations for Jamaica,” Jamaica Environment Trust.

³⁵ “IRM Results Report: Jamaica 2021–2023,” Open Government Partnership.

³⁶ “Submission on proposed Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations for Jamaica,” Jamaica Environment Trust.

³⁷ “Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica,” Government of Jamaica, September 2015, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Jamaica-Climate-Change-Policy-fwL-2015.pdf>.

³⁸ “Updated Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica,” Government of Jamaica, March 2023, https://megjc.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Updated-Climate-Change-Policy-Framework_with-message-16032023.pdf.

³⁹ “Updated Climate Change Policy to be Aligned with New Realities,” Jamaica Information Service, accessed 20 December 2023, <https://jis.gov.jm/updated-climate-change-policy-to-be-aligned-with-new-realities>.

⁴⁰ “Updated Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica,” Government of Jamaica.

⁴¹ “Updated Climate Change Policy Framework for Jamaica,” Government of Jamaica.

⁴² “What are NDCs and how do they drive climate action?” United Nations Development Programme, 31 May 2023, <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/NDCs-nationally-determined-contributions-climate-change-what-you-need-to-know>.

⁴³ “IRM Results Report: Jamaica 2021–2023,” Open Government Partnership.

⁴⁴ “Revised National Youth Policy 2017–2030,” Ministry of Education, Youth, and Information, accessed 9 March 2025, <https://moey.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2017-2030-NYP-Popular-Version.pdf>, p. 40–41.

Section III. Methodology

This product is a concise, independent, technical review of the characteristics of the action plan and the strengths and challenges the IRM identifies to inform a stronger implementation process. The IRM highlights commitments that have the highest potential for results, represent a high priority for country stakeholders, acknowledged as a priority in the national open government context, or a combination of these factors.

The IRM products provided during a national action plan cycle include:

- **Co-Creation Brief:** A concise brief that highlights lessons from previous IRM reports to support a country’s OGP process, action plan design, and overall learning.
- **Action Plan Review:** A technical review of the characteristics of the action plan and the strengths and challenges the IRM identifies to inform a stronger implementation process.
- **Midterm Review:** A review for four-year action plans after a refresh at the midpoint. The review assesses new or significantly amended commitments in the refreshed action plan, compliance with OGP rules, and an informal update on implementation progress.
- **Results Report:** An overall implementation assessment that focuses on policy-level results and how changes happen. It also checks compliance with OGP rules and informs accountability and longer-term learning.

In the Action Plan Review, the IRM reviews commitments using three indicators:

1. Verifiability: The IRM determines whether a commitment is verifiable as written in the action plan. The indicator is assessed as:

- **Yes/No:** Are the stated objectives and proposed actions sufficiently clear and include objectively verifiable activities to assess implementation?
- Commitments that are not verifiable are considered not reviewable, and no further assessment is carried out.

2. Open Government Lens: The IRM determines if the commitment relates to the open government values of transparency, civic participation, and/or public accountability as defined by the Open Government Declaration and the OGP Articles of Governance. Based on a close reading of the commitment text, the indicator is assessed as:

- **Yes/No:** Does the commitment set out to make a policy area, institution, or decision-making process more transparent, participatory, or accountable to the public?

The following questions for each OGP value may be used as a reference to identify the specific open government lens in commitment analysis:

- **Transparency:** Will the government disclose more 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?
- **Civic Participation:** Will the government create or improve opportunities, processes, or mechanisms for the public to inform, influence or co-create policies, laws and/or decisions? Will the government create, enable, or improve participatory mechanisms for minorities, marginalized or underrepresented groups?

Will the government improve the enabling environment for civil society (which may include NGO laws, funding mechanisms, taxation, reporting requirements, et cetera)? Will the government improve legal, policy, institutional or practical conditions related to civic space such as freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly that would facilitate participation in the public sphere? Will the government take measures which counter mis- and disinformation, especially online, to ensure people have access to reliable and factual information (which may include digital and media literacy campaigns, fact-checking or fostering an independent news media ecosystem)?

- **Public Accountability:** Will the government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions? Will the government enable legal, policy, or institutional frameworks to foster accountability of public officials?

3. Potential for Results: The IRM analyzes the expected results and potential that would be verified in the IRM Results Report after implementation. Potential for results is an early indication of the commitment’s possibility to yield meaningful results based on its articulation in the action plan in contrast with the state of play in the respective policy area. The indicator is assessed as:

- **Unclear:** The commitment is aimed at continuing ongoing practices in line with existing legislation, requirements, or policies without indication of the added value or enhanced open government approach in contrast with existing practice.
- **Modest:** A positive but standalone initiative or change to processes, practices, or policies. The commitment does not generate binding or institutionalized changes across government or institutions that govern a policy area. Examples are tools (e.g., websites) or data release, training, or pilot projects.
- **Substantial:** A possible game changer for practices, policies, or institutions that govern a policy area, public sector, or the relationship between citizens and state. The commitment generates binding and institutionalized changes across government.

This review focuses its analysis on promising commitments. Promising commitments are verifiable, have an open government lens, and at least a modest potential for results. Promising commitments may also be a priority for national stakeholders or for the particular context. The IRM may cluster commitments with a common policy objective or that contribute to the same reform or policy issue. The potential for results of clustered commitments is reviewed as a whole.

This review was prepared by the IRM in collaboration with Hana Murr as the researcher and Andy McDevitt as the external expert reviewer. During the internal review process, the IRM verifies the accuracy of findings and collects further input through peer review, OGP Support Unit feedback as needed, interviews and validation with country stakeholders, an external expert review, and oversight by IRM’s International Experts Panel (IEP).¹ The IRM methodology, product quality, and review process are overseen by the IEP.²

¹ “International Experts Panel,” Open Government Partnership, accessed 15 July 2024, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/who-we-are/international-experts-panel>.

² For more information, see: “Overview – Independent Reporting Mechanism,” Open Government Partnership, accessed 15 July 2024, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm-guidance-overview>.

Annex I. Commitment Data¹

Commitment #1: Complete the National Anti-Corruption Strategy

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

Commitment #2: Upgrade and Strengthen the Open Data System in Jamaica

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

Commitment #3: Amend the Access to Information (ATI) Act and Strengthen the ATI System in Jamaica

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

Commitment #4: Increase Access to Information on and Public Awareness of the Justice System and Human Rights

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

Commitment #5: Complete Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

Commitment #6: Carry out Development of Climate Change Legislation and Related Activities

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

Commitment #7: Strengthen Youth Participation and Access to Services

- Verifiable: Yes
- Does it have an open government lens? Yes
- Potential for results: Modest

¹ Editorial note: Commitment short titles may have been edited for brevity. For the complete text of commitments, see: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/jamaica-action-plan-2024-2026/>

Annex II. Action Plan Co-Creation

The IRM uses the OGP Participation and Co-Creations Standards to assess countries’ participatory practices throughout the action plan cycle.¹ Countries are encouraged to aim for the full ambition of the standards and to meet the minimum requirements.²

Table 2. Compliance with Minimum Requirements

Minimum requirement	Met?
1.1 Space for dialogue: The Jamaica Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) comprises eight representatives each from government and civil society. The MSF met regularly and consists of several sector/commitment-specific working on e.g., on natural resources, environment, and climate change. ³	Yes
2.1 OGP website: The OGP Jamaica team operates a publicly accessible website that contains the latest action plan. ⁴ Technical complications with the website resulted in the loss of many documents from the co-creation process. ⁵ During the period that this website was down, civil society members of the MSF created a parallel website. ⁶	Yes
2.2 Repository: The OGP Jamaica team’s website includes an online repository, ⁷ but it does not feature information on both co-creation and implementation of this action plan. The civil society website includes basic information about OGP, the selection process on how to apply to serve on the MSF, and information on the co-creation timeline, but it lacks information about the plan’s implementation. ⁸	No
3.1 Advanced notice: The co-creation timeline and an overview of opportunities for stakeholders to participate was published on the OGP website created by civil society members of the MSF. ⁹ In addition, Jamaica’s OGP team emailed stakeholders invitations to participate in the co-creation process, along with the process timeline, two weeks prior to the start of the co-creation process. ¹⁰	Yes
3.2 Outreach: Several emails were sent to the closed mailing list of pre-selected stakeholders to provide information on OGP and opportunities to get involved. ¹¹ Civil society noted a missed opportunity for the OGP Jamaica team to leverage CSO’s networks to conduct outreach—either for publicizing the process or soliciting contributions. ¹² They also noted that the process precluded engaging stakeholders who had not previously been involved. ¹³ Outreach to the media was also notably absent.	Yes
3.3 Feedback mechanism: Feedback was gathered from the closed stakeholder group during interactive deliberations at invite-only meetings. ¹⁴	Yes
4.1 Reasoned response: Contributions from stakeholders were documented and the government reported back to stakeholders on how their contributions were considered. ¹⁵ While Jamaica’s OGP team shared the formal reasoned response document outside of the cocreation process, the evidence suggests stakeholders discussed the feedback received prior to the end of the co-creation process. ¹⁶	Yes
5.1 Open implementation: The IRM will assess whether meetings were held with civil society stakeholders to present implementation progress and enable civil society to provide comments at least twice a year.	Not applicable

The development of Jamaica’s second action plan did not meet all of the minimum requirements under the OGP Participation & Co-Creation Standards. Jamaica benefits from a very active OGP government team that routinely communicates with its counterparts.¹⁷ However, there remain many opportunities to make the process more open and transparent and to engage the wider public beyond a select, closed group of stakeholders. To meet the minimum requirements of the OGP Participation & Co-Creation Standards during the implementation period, the IRM particularly recommends the Ministry of Finance and Public Services to ensure that:

- **Jamaica Multi-Stakeholder Forum meets at least every six months** to present progress on implementation and enable civil society to provide comments. Meetings can also be opened to a wider group of relevant civil society organizations and members of the public, leveraging civil society members’ networks to involve new stakeholders in the OGP process.
- **OGP repository is updated at least twice a year** with information on the implementation progress of action plan’s commitments. The OGP Jamaica team can also re-publish missing documents on the co-creation process.

¹ “OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards,” Open Government Partnership, 2021, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation-co-creation-standards>.

² “IRM Guidelines for the Assessment of Minimum Requirements,” Independent Reporting Mechanism, 2022, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IRM-Guidelines-for-Assessment-of-Minimum-Requirements_20220531_EN.pdf.

³ Richard Lumsden (Open Government Partnership Jamaica Co-Chair & Ministry of Finance and the Public Service), correspondence with IRM researcher, 13 March 2025.

⁴ “Programmes,” Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, <https://www.mof.gov.jm/documents/programmes>.

⁵ Richard Lumsden (Open Government Partnership Jamaica Co-Chair & Ministry of Finance and the Public Service), interview by IRM researcher, 18 February 2025.

⁶ “What is the Open Government Partnership,” Open Government Partnership Jamaica, <https://www.opengovja.org/what-is-the-open-government-partnership>.

⁷ “Programmes,” Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

⁸ “How does the Open Government Partnership Work?” Open Government Partnership Jamaica, accessed 29 June 2025, <https://www.opengovja.org/how-does-the-open-government-partnership-work#multi-stakeholder>.

⁹ See Jamaica’s Commitments under the OGP in: “How does the Open Government Partnership Work?” Open Government Partnership Jamaica.

¹⁰ Internal correspondence shared with the IRM, 21 November, 2025.

¹¹ Lumsden, correspondence.

¹² Danielle Andrade (Attorney-at-Law), interview by IRM researcher, 18 February 2025.

¹³ Andrade, interview.

¹⁴ Lumsden, interview; Dahvia Hylton (Policy and Research Lead of Jamaica Climate Change Youth Council), interview by IRM researcher, 6 February 2025.

¹⁵ Lumsden, correspondence.

¹⁶ Internal correspondence shared with the IRM, 21 November, 2025.

¹⁷ Hylton, interview.