

# Terms of Reference: Research Consultant – Open Government and Digital Public Infrastructure

## Background

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) was founded in 2011 and today includes 74 member countries, 152 local governments, and thousands of civil society organizations working together to ensure that democracy and governments deliver better outcomes for citizens.

In 2025, OGP launched a program in partnership with [Co-Develop](#) to integrate digital public infrastructure into its platform for co-created policy reform as a priority thematic area. The program aims to support OGP countries in their integration of the open government values of transparency, accountability, and citizen participation into the development and governance of DPI.

As governments digitize core public functions, open government values provide a framework for ensuring DPI delivers public benefits while minimizing risks. When governed by open government principles, well governed DPI can:

- Enhance transparency in digital system design, operation, and use, enabling citizens to understand and scrutinize them
- Establish accountability mechanisms with clear lines of responsibility, while creating pathways for redress and oversight
- Enable meaningful participation that allows citizens and stakeholders to actively shape the design, implementation, and oversight of digital services
- Strengthen safeguards against potential harms from surveillance, algorithmic bias, and exclusion
- Build public trust in digital infrastructure through inclusive, safe, equitable, and accountable governance

While digital governance reforms have become the fastest-growing topic within OGP, DPI specifically has not yet featured prominently in OGP discussions or member commitments. To support OGP members in developing and implementing DPI governance reforms, a chapter of the [Open Gov Guide](#), OGP's "how-to" manual for concrete recommendations and international standards and guidance will be developed.

**OGP is seeking a consultant to conduct foundational research on the intersection of open government and DPI, that will primarily be used in the development of the Open Gov Guide chapter(s).**

**Primary Objective:** To document and analyse the integration of open government principles in DPI initiatives across diverse contexts, providing evidence-based reform recommendations and examples that will inform OGP's guidance materials, peer learning activities, and direct support to members.

## Scope of Work

The consultant will conduct comprehensive desk research and/or interviews with partners, experts, and practitioners to produce the core information required by a chapter of the Open Gov Guide. This includes:

1. Identifying **key terms**, creating a glossary that defines core concepts including Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and DPI types (digital identity, payment systems, data exchange).
2. Analysing the **empirical foundation for open government approaches** to DPI, including:
  - A review of existing monitoring and evaluation work from academia, intergovernmental organizations, and research institutions specifically analyzing DPI through an open government lens
  - Analysis of measurable outcomes documented in the literature regarding impacts on service delivery, citizen trust, inclusion, and accountability
  - Links to and summaries of key research, evaluations, and evidence base materials for OGP's internal reference
3. Examining the existing normative landscape to produce **guidance and standards** for OGP and its partner countries, including:
  - Systematic review of global and domestic stakeholders' policy guidance documents, national or international principles, standards, and frameworks relevant to DPI governance, with a focus on open government perspectives
  - Recommendation of specific reform actions that OGP governments could take that ensure DPI is designed and implemented with open government values in mind. Recommendations should incorporate best practices in technical design choices and governance frameworks that enable openness in DPI, and be based on specific mechanisms, processes, and institutional arrangements that have proven effective.
  - Critical analysis of how well existing guidance incorporates OGP principles (transparency, accountability, civic participation), and identification of gaps, contradictions, or areas where OGP could provide complementary or unique guidance
4. Curating **practical examples** from OGP countries and beyond, in a series of short case studies (**a few paragraphs description max.**) demonstrating successful integration of open government principles in DPI initiatives. OGP staff will support case-study sourcing by providing contacts to DPI partners and national-level stakeholders where possible. Case studies should include:
  - Geographic and contextual diversity (different regions, governance models, and DPI types)
  - Stories from both OGP and non-OGP partner countries
  - Links to additional documentation and full case materials for internal reference.
5. Identifying and documenting available data for **benchmarking, indicators, and measurement frameworks** relevant to assessing openness in DPI initiatives across different contexts.
6. Conducting a comprehensive **mapping of existing and potential OGP partners** in the DPI space. This will include:
  - Thematic partners: organizations and initiatives working at the intersection of DPI and open government values (documenting their focus areas, geographic scope, and areas of expertise)
  - Donors: mapping of donor organizations and funding mechanisms supporting DPI governance reform and open government integration globally

## Concrete Deliverables:

1. Glossary and benchmarking data identification
2. Min. 10 page narrative report, including an analysis of the empirical foundation for open government in DPI, and recommended guidance and standards for OGP and its partner countries.
3. 5-8 short case studies with accompanying background material
4. Partner mapping

## Timeline:

- Project kick off, research design and methodology: February 2026
- Desk research, partner connections and interviews: February - April 2026
- Analysis and drafting: April - May 2026
- Review with OGP team, finalization: June 2026
- Conclusion of contract: June 30, 2026

## Qualifications & Requirements:

- Proven experience conducting comparative policy research in the digital transformation field and developing case studies across multiple regions and contexts, with ability to identify best practices and document measurable outcomes in digital transformation initiatives.
- Strong analytical and synthesis skills, with demonstrated ability to analyze existing policy guidance from multiple sources and translate findings into clear, practical, and adaptable recommendations for diverse audiences (policymakers, civil society, practitioners).
- Strong understanding of open government principles (transparency, accountability, and participation) and experience with the OGP community is preferred. Familiarity with key global actors in the DPI and digital governance space is an advantage.
- Expertise in, and deep knowledge of both technical and governance dimensions of DPI is preferred. This may include digital identity systems, payment systems, and data exchange platforms, as well as the institutional arrangements and mechanisms that enable openness, inclusion, and accountability.

Interested consultants should submit a **brief** proposal outlining their qualifications for this consultancy, proposed budget for between \$10,000 and \$15,000 (with proposed hourly/daily rate), and any supporting evidence of relevant DPI governance and safeguards expertise to [consultancy@opengovpartnership.org](mailto:consultancy@opengovpartnership.org) by **31 Jan. 2026**.