



# Building Transparent Infrastructure

Open Government Reforms  
to Guide Accountable  
Infrastructure Projects

*Executive Summary*

**June 2026**



Open  
Government  
Partnership



# The Challenge

---

Infrastructure investment is among the largest categories of public spending globally, yet it is also among the most governance-challenged. An estimated [USD 106 trillion](#) in cumulative investment is needed across transport, energy, digital, and extractive infrastructure by 2040. But this financing gap is only part of the problem. The IMF [estimates](#) that approximately 30 percent of public infrastructure investment is lost to inefficiency, poor project selection, and corruption.

With spending on infrastructure reaching unprecedented levels, especially across the Global South, how these investments are governed will shape development outcomes, democratic institutions, and fiscal sustainability for decades.

Common governance failures include:

- Opaque project selection with limited independent appraisal;
- Non-competitive contracting and procurement irregularities;
- Concealed beneficial ownership information, which enables corruption;
- Inadequate public consultation and exclusion of affected groups;
- Weak parliamentary and audit oversight, especially of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and off-budget financing; and
- Poorly designed or absent grievance mechanisms.

# The Open Government Opportunity

---

Open government reforms that are grounded in transparency, participation, and accountability offer practical, evidence-based tools to address these challenges. This guide draws on case studies and reform experience from OGP member countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and Europe to show what works.

These reforms are not a checklist. They function as a system: transparency without accountability rarely changes outcomes; participation without information access is ineffective; oversight without enforcement is simply advisory. Implemented together across the infrastructure lifecycle, they can measurably improve how projects are selected, contracted, delivered, and evaluated.

# Recommendations for Policy-Makers

---

Governments seeking to strengthen infrastructure governance through OGP should prioritize the following.

- **Embed transparency at the selection stage:** Require independent appraisal, publish project pipelines, and disclose financing terms before contracts are signed.
- **Adopt open data standards:** Use the [Open Contracting Data Standard](#) (OCDS) and [Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standards](#) (OC4IDS) to create a single, auditable record from project identification through to delivery and audit.

- **Integrate beneficial ownership data into the procurement process:** Make beneficial ownership disclosure a condition of contract awards across all contract types, including PPPs and subcontractors.
- **Invest in early, meaningful participation:** Require structured community engagement before feasibility studies are finalized and treat [Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#) (FPIC) as an ongoing process, not an approval.
- **Strengthen audit institution access rights:** Ensure Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) can access all forms of infrastructure financing, including PPP contracts and state-owned enterprise (SOE) borrowing.
- **Design grievance mechanisms from the start:** Establish accessible, independent complaint systems at the project design phase, not after construction begins.
- **Use OGP commitments to build reform momentum:** Multi-year, public commitments create accountability across political cycles for long-horizon infrastructure projects.

## Cross-Cutting Findings

The following reforms have the greatest potential for success when implemented together.

- **Open data standards (OCDS/OC4IDS):** Links project selection, procurement, contracts, and oversight into a single auditable trail.
- **Beneficial ownership disclosure:** Transforms procurement transparency from a record into an anti-corruption tool.
- **Civil society monitoring:** Complements formal institutional oversight, or substitutes for it in low-capacity environments.
- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration and oversight:** Distributes and reinforces accountability, and creates channels for early problem identification.

## Six Thematic Reform Areas across the Infrastructure Lifecycle

The guide addresses six thematic areas spanning the full project lifecycle, from selection and financing to grievance resolution, along with case studies highlighting strong reforms.

### 1. Transparency in Project Selection and Financing

Some of the most consequential infrastructure decisions are made before contracting begins, and are often least scrutinized. Key reforms include:

- mandatory independent appraisal of major projects before financing is committed;
- public project pipelines using open data standards;
- full disclosure of PPP contracts and contingent liabilities; and
- publication of environmental and social impact assessments before approval.

## 2. Open Contracting and Procurement

Procurement is infrastructure's highest-risk stage. Open, competitive contracting reduces costs and improves quality. Key reforms include:

- open tendering as the default;
- full publication of contracts, amendments, and cost overruns;
- digital procurement platforms;
- adoption of the OCDS and OC4IDS; and
- mandatory disclosure of beneficial ownership at the bidding stage.

## 3. Beneficial Ownership and Integrity

Anonymously owned companies are the common mechanism underlying many infrastructure corruption cases. Key reforms include:

- public beneficial ownership registers meeting international standards;
- mandatory beneficial ownership disclosure as a procurement condition for all bidders, joint ventures, and subcontractors;
- integration of beneficial ownership databases with procurement and politically exposed persons (PEP) systems;
- asset declarations for officials with infrastructure responsibilities; and
- whistleblower protections.

## 4. Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement

Infrastructure projects that exclude affected communities generate conflict, delay, and cost overruns. Key reforms include:

- structured early-stage public consultation before project approval;
- FPIC frameworks for projects affecting indigenous peoples;
- institutionalized civil society monitoring through multi-stakeholder oversight;
- gender-responsive engagement and impact assessments;
- mandatory environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA) disclosure; and
- extending participation requirements to digital infrastructure.

## 5. Parliamentary and Audit Oversight

Parliamentary scrutiny and independent audit are the accountability backstop for infrastructure investment, but are weakest where risks are highest. Key reforms include:

- mandatory parliamentary review of major financing agreements before commitment;
- audit institution access rights covering PPPs, SOE borrowing, and bilateral agreements;
- standardized public reporting on cost overruns and implementation deviations;
- civil society participation in audits; and
- extending oversight to cover decommissioning and stranded asset risk.

## 6. Grievance Mechanisms and Remedy

Every infrastructure project generates grievances. Effective response systems determine whether those grievances are resolved or escalate. Key reforms include:

- project-level grievance mechanisms established at the design stage, not after construction begins;
- contractor obligations to maintain accessible grievance systems for workers and communities;
- public reporting of complaints and resolution rates; and
- protections for whistleblowers and community reporters.

# The OGP Advantage

---

OGP provides a structured, internationally visible platform for governments to commit to specific, time-bound infrastructure reforms, with independent monitoring through the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) and a global peer learning network.

Ten years of data [show](#) that OGP members [outperform](#) non-members on [beneficial ownership transparency](#), fiscal transparency, and [open contracting](#). When governments co-create commitments with civil society, implementation rates and reform ambition are significantly higher.

[OGP's 2026 Action Framework](#) creates new opportunities to make infrastructure governance a priority challenge area, aligning OGP reform work with EU Global Gateway principles and other major infrastructure initiatives.

*This publication was funded by the European Union.*

*Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Open Government Partnership, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*



Funded by  
the European Union

