

Open Government Partnership
1110 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
The United States of America

Dear co-chairs of the Open Government Partnership,

I write this letter in the name of the Government of Catalonia to request Catalonia's access to the OGP local plan. This request is backed by the Government Agreement 101/2020, of 4th August, in which the Government of Catalonia empowered me, as the Minister for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency of the Government of Catalonia, to request access to the Local OGP 2020 program.

Catalonia is located in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula and has the city of Barcelona as its capital. It is currently an Spanish Autonomous Community of 7.6 million inhabitants. This is not only the candidacy of the government of Catalonia, but of the whole country. The local world and the civil society were the ones responsible for drafting it and it has their explicit support, as a number of letters of support and the commitment of the Network of Transparent Governments of Catalonia show.

The government of Catalonia is fully committed to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and other international instruments linked to human rights and good governance. It also guarantees the fulfilment of the OGP values and it completely identifies with the Open Government Declaration of September 2011.

Catalonia's participation in the OGP Local Program will enable the consolidation of a common workspace for open government co-created by the Catalan public institutions and the organizations of civil society. This will allow them to use the energy and innovation of countless initiatives of the civil society in different areas (anti-corruption, digitalization, open data, citizen participation...) to create a stable space of collaboration between these civic organizations and the Catalan public administrations.

It will also help them to comply with the open government strategies of the Catalan public administrations, such as the Open Government Plan of the Government of Catalonia, in order to promote an OGP action plan that becomes an open government plan of Catalonia as a whole, with the participation and commitment of supra-local (Provincial Councils, associations of municipalities and public consortiums) and local administrations (city councils). Citizen involvement needs to be present in each one of the plan's working areas. For example, in the field of open data, emphasizing the role of citizens in data governance is essential.

The possibility to carry out, implement and evaluate an OGP local plan will imply working with innovative methodologies that will let us measure the impact of actions and improve the practical utility of the developed projects. The key concept that will need to group all working areas in a future OGP plan is the idea of Open Government as a mechanism to improve citizens' lives.

At the online work session of 6th July 2020, 30 representatives of local administrations and entities of the civil society deliberated about five potential working areas of a future OGP plan:

1. **Public integrity and anti-corruption, emphasizing citizen design and control** of the policies to fight against corruption.
2. **Gender perspective and women's rights**, as a crosscutting element in all areas of open government.
3. **Territorial governance and collaboration between administrations**, emphasizing the collaboration between the different levels of Catalan administrations.
4. Initiating a **Catalan Ecosystem of Participation** by aligning the participation processes offered by administrations on one side, and those of activists, social movements and civil society on the other side.
5. **Open Data Governance**, emphasizing the governance of data by the civil society and the citizen usage of these data.

The Government of Catalonia created the Secretariat of Transparency and Open Government in 2016 with the intention of promoting and bringing together the concept of open government, transparency policies, citizen participation and integrity. This Secretariat is part of the Ministry for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency, consisting of the DG of Transparency and Open Data and the DG of Citizen Participation and Electoral Processes. The Secretariat has consolidated a working team of 30 members with an extensive experience in [project development](#) and which counts with an annual budget of 3.2 million euros.

The strongest point in favour of the candidacy is the participation of the local world, expressed by the explicit commitment of the Network of Transparent Governments of Catalonia. The Network was created in 2015 to facilitate the enforcement of the Government's Law on Transparency in the more than 2200 entities that constitute Catalonia's local public administrations. The Network is constituted by the Government of Catalonia, the four Catalan Provincial Councils (Lleida, Girona, Tarragona and Barcelona), the Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia, the Catalan Association of Municipalities, the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, the Open Administration of Catalonia Consortium (AOC), the Localret Consortium and the Association of Local Government Secretaries, Controllers and Treasurers. The Network already has very active working committees in the areas of Technology, Citizen Participation and Transparency. During the Network's plenary session of 23th July 2020, the need to support the Catalan candidacy to the local OGP program and the commitment of all its members to get involved in Catalonia's future local OGP action plan was unanimously agreed upon.

Apart from the Network made up of secondary-level entities, several important city councils of Catalonia have expressed their support to Catalonia's OGP candidacy by means of creating a network of cities for Open Government.

Different non-governmental entities have also expressed their interest in actively taking part in a future OGP plan of Catalonia: the Barcelona Open Data Initiative, the Citizen Observatory against Corruption, the Laboratory of Journalism from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the Association of Archivists of Catalonia, the Association of Political Scientist and Sociologists of Catalonia, X-net and others.

Here is a recent example that we believe exemplifies very well the Catalan government's will of working in co-creation with non-governmental interest groups: The [Strategy](#) for the Fight against Corruption and the Strengthening of Public Integrity of the Administration of the Government of Catalonia. It was drafted in 2019 by contrasting a report full of international evidence, a citizen participation process and a dialogue with the civil society. With the approval of the 25 measures of the Strategy, the Space for Citizen Participation in Follow-up of the Anti-Corruption Strategy was created with the mission of carrying out a civic auditing of the Strategy's implementation. Hence, we

observe civil society's participation both in the design and the evaluation of the Strategy in a key subject as it is the fight against corruption.

Catalonia can therefore contribute with good practices that can be useful to other members of the OGP. We want to highlight three top projects of Open Government that might be used by other members:

- **Register of Catalonia's interest groups** with 3742 registered groups that facilitate the publication of the agendas of the meetings of high-ranking officials to all institutions, city councils and other public organizations bound by the Law on Transparency.
- **Decidim** ("We decide"), a digital platform of civic participation based on free software, promoted initially by the Barcelona City Council, used also by the Government of Catalonia and implemented in more than 100 Catalan municipalities. The Association Decidim, a democratic community constituted by citizens and public administrations, coordinates *Decidim*. Today *Decidim* is a global benchmark of citizen participation and several countries and international entities are introducing it very quickly.
- **Transparency Portal of the Network of Transparent Governments**, created by the Consortium AOC. It is a unique case in the world, since more than 1200 local entities and 90% of city councils use the same transparency portal model. Thanks to it, data is introduced in a jointly and automated way, achieving a very high degree of efficiency.

Catalonia is therefore very much inclined to take part in peer learning. At the Spanish level, we collaborate actively in the sectorial committee for the elaboration of the IV Plan of Open Government 2020-2024 promoted by the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Public Function, expressing our commitment to the subjects of transparency, integrity, participation and awareness. At the international level, we took part in the OGP Global summits celebrated in Paris, Georgia and Mexico and we participated in international networks such as the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) or the Open Data Charter, with which we have been recently working on the standardization of datasets related to Covid-19.

The pandemic has greatly affected Catalonia, reinforcing our commitment to an open government. We have worked hard to open data, and nowadays Catalonia is already a benchmark in opening the data on Covid-19. We have promoted and fostered civic collaboration to work with and to publish useful data in order to take decisions and generate confidence among the citizenship. We finally want to highlight our interest in the OGP campaign Open response + Open recovery to promote accountability, transparency and a collective answer to Covid-19.

We want to continue pointing towards the construction of stronger democracies in the future, including a solid coalition for democracy and openness and against the rise of authoritarianism. For what we are, for what we can provide and for what we can receive in exchange: the Catalan participation in OGP makes now more sense than ever.



Barcelona, 29th September 2020