**ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL OGP SENSITIZATION AND ACTION PLAN II DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP.**

1. **Introduction**

The AMAC OGP sensitization and action plan II development workshop was held to broaden the capacity of AMAC OGP steering committee members and to develop OGP at their local Action Plan II from the existing foundation of action plan I that ensures the continuity of strategies and activities that will be executed in the implementation of the AMAC OGP commitment. The workshop had facilitators from Open Contracting Partnership (OCP), OGP secretariat, FollowTaxes and participants from AMAC, DEAN Initiative, Africa Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD), Connected Development (CODE), BudgIt Nigeria, Action Aid Nigeria, Accountability Lab (AL) and the Media. The workshop was hosted by AMAC and funded by HEDA Resource Centre.

1. **Background**

AMAC joined the Open Governance Partnership on the 24th September, 2020. AMAC joined the OGP as the only local government in Nigeria to be part of the OGP and subsequently held its Action Plan in the year 2021. The benefits of OGP are that it builds citizens’ trust in government, it aids access to grants for the area council, in enables citizens’ participation, it attracts local and international partnership. AMAC’s involvement in OGP has made the Area council become more transparent, accountable and responsive to their own citizens with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of public policies and services. The four cardinal principles of OGP are transparency, accountability, citizen’s participation, technology, and innovation.

1. **Venue and Date**

The venue for the workshop was Ihiala hall, Denis hotel, wuse II, FCT, Abuja, from Tuesday 2nd to 3rd May, 2023.

1. **Participants**

The invited institutions which are listed below are mainly from AMAC, OGP secretariat and CSOs.

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| --- | --- |
| ORGANIZATION | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |
| AMAC | 17 |
| DEAN Initiative | 1 |
| OGP Secretariat | 2 |
| CODE | 1 |
| Center LSD | 1 |
| BudgIt | 1 |
| Accountability Lab | 1 |

1. **Workshop session and Discussion.**

**DAY 1: Tuesday, May 2nd**

**Activities of day One.**

The workshop started at 10:30am . The meeting was anchored by Mr Semiye Micheal, flagged off with the recitation of the second stanza of the National Anthem. There was a brief introduction of all participants present. Hon. Abiodun Essiet outlined the purpose of the meeting as follows:

1. To build the capacity of the newly drafted AMAC team members of the OGP steering committee, these members are drawn from department of procurement, works, budget, admin and store who are primarily responsible for Open Contracting at the area council.
2. To review the citizens’ survey from where AMAC and CSOs agreed on the thematic area from which the second Action Plan will be drawn from.
3. To develop an Action Plan II for the Area Council

The Chairman of AMAC represented by his Vice Chairman Hon. Nasir Usman gave the opening remark and declared the meeting officially opened.

**Goodwill Messages**

Miss Cecilia Ogwuche a representative from HEDA resource centre gave a goodwill message commending AMAC on their commitments to the OGP and also encouraged the council to engage with CSOs and other stake holders in the development and implementation of it’s OGP action plan. She concluded that the workshop is a significant step toward promoting open, transparent and accountable governance and an excellent example of how government and civil society can work in synergy to achieve common goals.

Another goodwill message given by Mr Uchenna Arisukwu applauded AMAC for their impact and involvement in OGP and also reference that AMAC had set a good example for other area councils locally and internationally.

**First Session**

Moving forward, Dr Saied Tafida gave brief presentation on the agenda Understanding OGP, which he titled Expanding and domestication procedure. A brief overview of his presentation are as follows:

1. **An Overview of the OGP Principles**

**Definition of OGP**

The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitment from national and sub-national government to promote open government,empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen new governance.

1. **OGP Principles**
* Transparency
* Accountability
* Citizens Participation
* Technology Innovation
* Monitoring and Evaluation
* Co-Creation

**Co-Creation OG and OGP:** This is a driving factor that ensures working together for transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and use of technology.

1. **Roles of Civil society in open government reform**

Civil society have a crucial role in open government reform in thematic area like agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation and policy evaluation. Some of the roles are: advocate, mobilizer, innovator, capacity builders, citizenship champion, evaluators, etc.

1. **Challenges in Implementation**

Some of the challenges in implementation of OGP

1. **Budget town hall not yielding results**
* Apathy and lack of trust in governance
* Impatience
* Promises and services delivery
1. **Holding back by agencies when interest is involved**
* MDAs becoming recalcitrant
* Data not published at all or in time or brought down
* Selected projects are left out.
1. **Our Roles as OGP Leaders**
* To inform the citizens - Cultural re-orientation and attitude formation
* Protection of social justice - To citizens right
* To monitor - Monitor the government, CSOs, and self.
* To offer solutions - Critical thinking and participation

**TEA BREAK**

There was a tea break in which participants had breakfast before they proceeded to the next agenda.

**Second Session**

The final session for day 1 was a presentation on Introduction to Open Contracting (OC) by Andidiong Okon. An overview of the presentation is as follow:

1. **What is Open Contracting?**

Open Contracting is about publishing and using open, accessible and timely information on government contracting to engage citizens, businesses and other relevant stakeholders in identifying and fixing problems.

1. **Who is OCP?**

OCP works with government, businesses, civil society to transform public procurement to deliver better goods, services and works for everyone.

1. **Why is it important?**
* Implementation

Technical assistance& capacity building for procurement reform projects.

* Learning

Research and monitoring & evaluation to document which activities and outputs are leading to impact.

* Advocacy

Supporting our partners with key messages and evidence to advocate for change.

**Third Session**

This session was anchored by Mr Semiye, where he made a presentation showing the AMAC OGP local action plan II survey data analyses which showed the percentage score representation of the selected focuses. The survey data is shown below:

Access to information (18%), Open contracting and public procurement had (21.6%), Digital governance had (18.9%), Inclusion had (18.9%), and Anti corruption and Integrity had (21.6%).

Since there was a tie between ‘Open contracting and public procurement’ and ‘Anti corruption and integrity’ as they both had 21.6% each, the implementation of the Anti corruption and Integrity in the Action Plan I, led to the selection of the focus topic “Open Contracting and public procurement” for the development of action II.

The AMAC OGP Local action plan II template was also reviewed and displayed to the participants. Some key topics where questions where asked on the action plan template are highlighted below:

* Duration
* Open government challenges, opportunities and strategic vision
* Engagement and coordination in the open government strategic vision and OGP
* Monitoring of the OGP plan

This was an interactive session that had participants discussing about making action plan II using action plan I. matters arose as it became evident that were misconception on what OGP implies, as well as lack of understanding of OGP. Some of the misconception were;

1. OGP being a project on its own that requires funding, and that the council do not have funds to execute it. This was clearly refuted, explaining that OGP is not a project but a continuous process, model or tool that should be used in governance to ensure transparency and accountability. It was also noted that OGP is not a project that differs from the project of the council.
2. Another misconception was that OGP was a funding platform for implementation of project. This was also debunked and clarified that OGP is not a funding platform! Rather it is all about getting citizens needs and relating it to the local government to fund the citizens need.

Finally an inquiry was made on what advantage the council benefits in it’s partnership with OGP where there is funding. In response to this Mr Semiye answered that, OGP attracts funding resources to the government. Citing that most grants that are not OGP implemented cannot be accessed by the council if they opportunity arises. Another benefit mention was that OGP had promoted AMAC locally and internationally as well as setting an example of transparent and accountable governance.

A conclusion was then arrived at that a sensitization should be organized for the council to have an understanding of what OGP stands for.

**Important Questions from Day 1**

**Question**: Is OGP to be owned by government side or it is introduced from a development perspective?

**Answer**:

**Question**: What is the advantage of AMAC in partnership with OGP, when there’s no funding involved?.

**Answer:** OGP isn’t a funding platform but rather a process that gives government ideas on how to execute their already proposed project. OGP attracts a funding resources to the government.

**Question**: Apart from procurement department, which other offices are involved in the implementation of contracts/ project?

**Answer**: Administrative dept., Works dept. And Store department are also involved.

**Question**: Can a citizen or individual get engage/involve in the implementation, audit, budget plan of the government?

**Answer**:

**Question**: Is there gender balance in granting contracts?

**Answer**: No, men gets more contracts than women

**Question**: How many woman apply and are granted contracts?

**Answer**: Low turnout of women bidding for contracts leads to poor percentage of women winning contracts

**DAY 2 Wednesday, May 3rd**

**Activities of Day Two.**

The activities of day 2 focused on the new administration area of commitment. This was presented on behalf of the chairman by Hon. Abiodun Essiet who is the OGP spokesperson for AMAC. The new members of the steering committee were recognized and introduced.

The workshop was anchored by Mr Semiye. A review of day 1 activities was done by Mr Taiye Ojo. Mrs Abiodun while introducing the agenda for the second day, urged that the AMAC and CSOs should be open minded and work in synergy to develop an action plan for implementation.

The next agenda was the workshop session 1 led by Mr Abayomi Akimbo. This was a very interactive session as he gave guidelines on what is expected as responses to questions asked in the OGP Local action plan template.

During the session, the following were established:

1. The first commitment for the Action Plan II is to improve fiscal openness within the procurement process with cognizance to citizens’ needs and participation.
2. The second commitment for the Action Plan II is to include gender responsiveness in procurement.
3. The third commitment for the Action Plan II is to modernize and improve procurement process in order to increase transparency and efficiency through digitization.
4. The theme for the commitment is Fiscal transparency.
5. The commitment description which is as follows: the commitment will ensure citizens’ participation and openness in procurement process as well as gender responsiveness and digitization of the procurement process.
6. The particular OGP challenges that the commitment addresses are low participation of citizens, inadequate level of transparency, gender unresponsiveness, and analog system of procurement process.
7. The timeline for the action plan is 3 years (lifespan of the current administration)
8. The rationale for the commitment is that by improving fiscal openness and citizens’ participation (getting priorities of citizens online and publishing them), modernizing of the procurement process and implementing gender inclusion and response, the level of transparency and accountability of the procurement will be greatly improved.
9. Planned activities activities are:
10. Create a platform for citizens’ participation both online (zoom meetings) and offline (town hall meeting, AMAC women in governance, dialogue).
11. Organize CSOs and government engagement meetings.
12. **Next Steps**

The next step are to:

1. Create a steering committee for the action plan II
2. Set up a working group that will be part of the implementation of the action plan.

The workshop session 2 which was centered on finalizing the AMAC action plan II was also led by Mr Abayomi Akinbo where he called for volunteers to work on the action plan and submit. Mr Kingsley and Mr Abayomi volunteered to develop a comprehensive document of the OGP action plan II on 24th of May 2023.

**Questions from Day 2**

**Question**: Does AMAC run a joint account with FCDA?

**Answer**: Yes, but AMAC has autonomy to access the account from their end.

**Question**: Who were those that suggested the citizens nominated projects that the Budget implies they work on?

**Answer**: During campaign, the council chairman gets to know the needs of the citizen.

**Question**: Is it possible to implement citizens nominated project?

**Answer**: Yes it is, if there are funds or donors to fund it

**Question**: Is it possible to allocate at least 5% to the citizens nominated project?

**Answer:** There was no definite answer

**Conclusion**

The closing remark was done by Mrs Abiodun, while Mr Semiye the Executive Director of DEAN Initiative thanked all the participants for attending in the workshop.