

Open Government Partnership Networking Mechanism

What it is and what it can do for you

What does the OGP Networking Mechanism do?

The OGP Networking Mechanism connects OGP governments with providers of open government expertise in specific issue areas to help governments develop innovative, cutting-edge open government commitments.

The OGP Networking Mechanism is a facilitator and agent of introduction to both peer governments and third-party providers of expertise (non-government and private). It is non an implementing entity or a project manager for governments. Its value-added is in providing quick and useful introductions to potential providers of assistance to governments and ensuring that the resultant dialogue is fruitful and efficient, leveraging its role as a broker towards supporting effective OGP commitments development.

Who is the Networking Mechanism:

The Networking Mechanism is governed by a steering committee currently comprising Global Integrity and the World Bank Institute. It is currently chaired by Global Integrity, which also serves as the primary point of contact.

How does the Networking Mechanism work:

When an OGP government approaches the Networking Mechanism for potential assistance and introductions, a dedicated Case Manager will be assigned to work with the government throughout the networking process. The Case Manager, in conjunction with the Networking mechanism steering committee, will eventually make introductions to governmental and third-party experts that might be able to usefully assist the requesting government in developing or refining their OGP commitments, including implementation plans for mature commitments. In practice, we expect that dialogue to “ping pong” back and forth between various governments and third-party providers as the requesting government explores various options and identifies the most useful assistance.

The Case Manager will ultimately help to guide the government towards a final selection of providers of assistance (whether government, non-governmental, private sector, or hybrid) and help to insure that clear terms of engagement and expectations are shared by all sides, likely in the form of a written agreement.

How do I contact the Networking Mechanism?

(1) Contact Global Integrity's Managing Director, Nathaniel Heller, via Nathaniel.Heller@globalintegrity.org or +1-202-449-8120; and/or (2) use the forthcoming OGP website, which will include a simple web form for expressing interest in a preliminary networking discussion.

Examples of the Networking Mechanism in practice

Example 1: Country X aspires to be at the vanguard of reform when it comes to transparent management of its natural resources, in particular its extractive resources. Already an EITI member, the government is savvy around issues of extractive transparency but approaches the NM for assistance in thinking through specific sub-national transparency reforms in key regions of the country that are mineral-rich. The Networking Mechanism Case Manager connects the government with both the Revenue Watch Institute as well as two local-level NGOs in neighboring countries that have worked with their respective local and national governments to develop and implement best practices at the sub-national level for promoting extractives transparency. The Case Manager also connects a tech company with a local NGO that is interested in using geo-referencing software to help Country X map its natural resource concessions in tandem with other local NGOs. Following intensive virtual and in-person consultations with RWI, the tech company, and the local NGOs, the government crafts a cutting-edge set of sub-national transparency reforms that it commits to in March 2012.

Example 2: Country Y approaches the Networking Mechanism with a vague request for assistance in implementing “open government data“. When the Networking Mechanism Case Manager explores the government's interest further, it is clear that there is little appreciation for both the possibilities and limits of open government data; in addition, the government has not identified the types of data it might make publicly available, nor has it identified a theory of change that suggests why the public availability of this information would have a material impact on an OGP commitment area.

Rather than introduce the government to a technical provider to develop a web or mobile solution to opening up government data, the NM Case Manager instead connects the government to experts at Civic Commons who have deep experience in understanding the strategy and objectives behind open government data. That 90-minute conversation helps the government to significantly refine its proposed commitments and request for technical assistance, and when it returns to the Networking Mechanism four months later it has a solid plan of action in hand. The Case Manager then makes introductions to potential providers of technical expertise on a data visualization platform specifically targeted at public service-related government expenditures.



46 Countries
46 Commitments
September 20, 2011

United States
Brazil
Albania
Azerbaijan
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Croatia
Czech Republic
Dominican Republic
El Salvador
Estonia
Georgia
Ghana
Guatemala
Honduras
Indonesia
Israel
Italy
Jordan
Kenya
Republic of Korea

Latvia
Liberia
Lithuania
Macedonia
Malta
Mexico
Moldova
Mongolia
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Peru
Philippines
Romania
Slovak Republic
South Africa
Spain
Sweden
Tanzania
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
Uruguay

The Open Government Partnership

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global effort to make governments better. Citizens want more transparent, effective and accountable government – with institutions that empower people and are responsive to their aspirations. But this work is never easy.

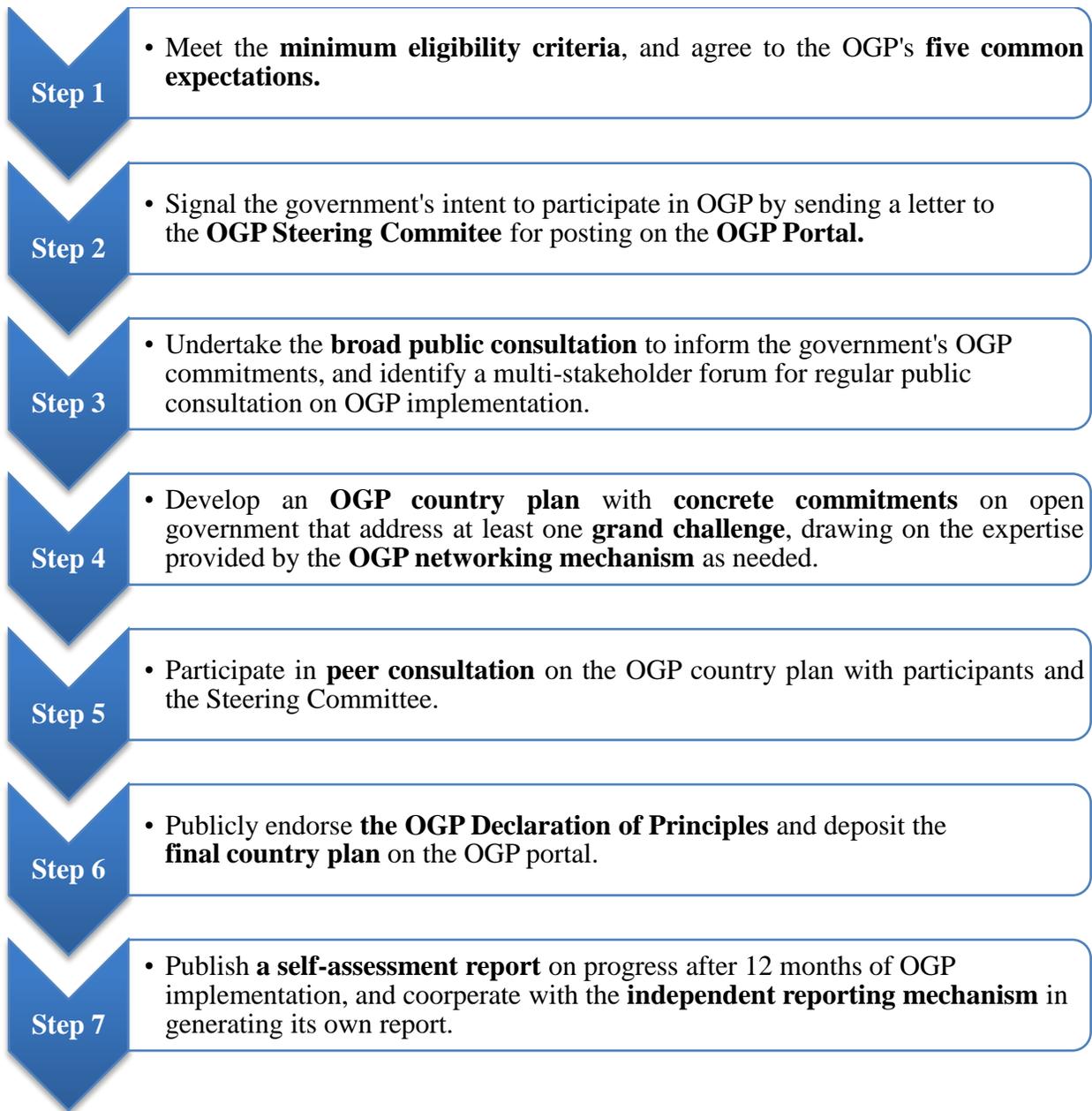
It takes political leadership. It takes technical knowledge. It takes sustained effort and investment. It takes collaboration between government and civil society.

The Open Government Partnership is a new multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, OGP is overseen by a steering committee of governments and civil society organizations.

To become a member of OGP, participating countries must embrace an Open Government Declaration: deliver a concrete action plan, developed with public consultation and feedback: and commit to independent reporting on their progress going forward.

The Open Government Partnership will formally launch in September 2011, when the governments on the steering committee will embrace the Open Government Declaration and announce their country action planes. We invite you to stand with us in September and signal your intent to join OGP and deliver your own commitments when we meet again in Brazil in March 2012.

Roadmap to Participation in the Open Government Partnership (OGP)



I OGP Minimum Eligibility Criteria

In order to participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government in four key areas, as measured by objective indicators and validated by independent experts. These four areas and indicators are:

1. Fiscal Transparency

The timely publication of essential budget documents forms the basic building blocks of budget accountability and an open budget system.

Measurement: Two points awarded for publication of each of two essential documents (Executive's Budget Proposal and Audit Report) for open budgets, using a sub-set indicators from the 2010 Open Budget Index, conducted by the International Budget Partnership, which covers 94 countries.

2. Access to Information

An access to information law that guarantees the public's right to information and access to government data is essential to the spirit and practice of open government.

Measurement: 4 points awarded to countries with access to information laws in place, 3 points if a country has a constitutional provision guaranteeing access to information, and 1 point if a country has a draft access to information law under consideration, taken from a 2010 survey by Right2Info.org (a collaboration of the Open Society Institute Justice Initiative and Access Info Europe) that covers 197 countries.

3. Disclosures Related to Elected or Senior Public Officials

Rules that require public disclosure of income and assets for elected and senior public officials are essential to anti-corruption and open, accountable government.

Measurement: 4 points awarded to countries with a law requiring disclosures for politicians and senior public officials to the public, 3 points awarded to countries with either a law requiring disclosures for politicians OR senior public officials to the public, and 2 points awarded for a law requiring non-public disclosures for elected or senior officials, based on a 2009 World Bank-commissioned survey on disclosure by elected officials entitled "Disclosure by Politicians," by Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, which covers 175 countries, a 2009 World Bank study on income and asset disclosure by senior officials entitled "Income and asset disclosure in World Bank client countries," by Richard Messick, World Bank Senior

Public Sector Specialist, which covers 149 countries and OECD Governance at a Glance 2009, covering 28 countries.

4. Citizen Engagement

Open Government requires openness to citizen participation and engagement in policymaking and governance, including basic protections for civil liberties.

Measurement: Using the 2010 EIU Democracy Index's Civil Liberties sub-indicator where 10 is the highest and 0 is the lowest score, 4 points for countries scoring above 7.5, 3 points for countries scoring above 5, 2 points for countries scoring above 2.5, and 0 points otherwise. The 2010 Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index covers 167 countries.

Countries can earn a total of 16 points for their performance against these minimum standards of open government. As the Open Budget Index covers only 94 countries, some countries are only measured on three criteria (and can earn up to 12 points). In order to participate in OGP, countries must score at least 75% of the total possible points available to them (e.g. 12 out of 16, or 9 out of 12).

An independent group of experts will oversee the minimum criteria for participation to ensure that all OGP participating countries remain in good standing and that the performance measures are up to date. This independent expert group will be charged with informing the Steering Committee if a country is suspected of falling below the minimum eligibility criteria at any point.

II OGP Common Expectations

All OGP participating governments must agree to meet five common expectations:

1. Endorse a high-level Declaration of Principles on Open Government;
2. Make concrete commitments as part of a country action plan that stretches the country beyond current practice;
3. Develop country action plans through a multi-stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society;
4. Commit to a self-assessment and independent reporting on the country's progress;
5. Contribute to the advancement of open government in other countries through sharing of best practices, expertise, technical assistance, technologies and resources, as appropriate.

III OGP Steering Committee

The OGP is overseen by a multi-stakeholder International Steering Committee, comprised of governments (Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States) and leading civil society representatives [Africa Center for Open Governance (Kenya), Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos (Brazil), Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad (Mexico), International Budget Project (Intl), MKSS (India), National Security Archive (US), Revenue Watch Institute (Intl), Transparency and Accountability Initiative (Intl), Twaweza (Tanzania)].

In 2011, The United States and Brazil co-chair the OGP International Steering Committee. The U.S. will host the first annual OGP meeting. Brazil will host in 2012.

IV Public Consultation on OGP Commitment Development

OGP participants commit to developing their country action plans through a multi-stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society. Taking account of relevant national laws and policies, OGP participants agree to develop their country commitments according to the following principles:

1. Countries will make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation
2. Countries will consult widely with the national community, including civil society and the private sector; seek out a diverse range of views and; make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online
3. Countries will undertake OGP awareness raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation
4. Countries will consult the population with sufficient forewarning and through a variety of mechanisms—including online and through in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage
5. Countries will identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one

Countries will report on their consultation efforts as part of the self-assessment, and the independent reporting mechanism will also examine the application of these principles in practice.

V OGP Country Action Plan

Governments will develop OGP country action plans that elaborate concrete commitments. Governments should begin their OGP country action plans by sharing existing efforts related to their chosen grand challenge(s), including specific open government strategies and ongoing programs. Action Plans should then set out governments' OGP commitments, which stretch government practice beyond its current baseline with respect to the relevant grand challenge. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete on-going reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area. OGP recognizes that all countries will be starting from different baselines. Countries are charged with selecting the grand challenges and related concrete commitments that most relate to their unique country contexts. No action plan or specific commitments will be forced on any country.

VI Grand Challenges

OGP commitments will be structured around a set of five “grand challenges” that governments face. In year one, countries will choose at least one of these grand challenges and develop concrete commitments around open government to address it. Countries are welcome and encouraged to tackle more than one challenge in year one.

The five OGP grand challenges are:

1. **Improving Public Services**—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications and any other relevant service areas, by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation
2. **Increasing Public Integrity**—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom
3. **More Effectively Managing Public Resources**—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources and foreign assistance
4. **Creating Safer Communities**—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats
5. **Increasing Corporate Accountability**—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement

VII Concrete Commitments

While the nature of concrete commitments under any grand challenge area should be flexible and allow for each country's unique circumstances, all OGP commitments should reflect four core open government principles.

Transparency: information on government activities and decisions is open, comprehensive, timely, freely available to the public and meets basic open data standards (e.g. raw data, machine readability)

Citizen Participation: governments seek to mobilize citizens to engage in public debate, provide input, and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative and effective governance.

Accountability: there are rules, regulations and mechanisms in place that call upon government actors to justify their actions, act upon criticisms or requirements made of them, and accept responsibility for failure to perform with respect to laws or commitments.

Technology and Innovation: governments embrace the importance of providing citizens with open access to technology, the role of new technologies in driving innovation, and the importance of increasing the capacity of citizens to use technology.

Countries may focus their commitments at the national, local and/or sub-national level—wherever they believe their open government efforts will have the greatest impact.

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multi-year process, governments should attach timeframes and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what will be accomplished in year one and beyond, wherever possible.

VIII Peer Consultation

It is important to ensure that countries' OGP commitments achieve a sufficient and comparable level of ambition that builds upon existing efforts and stretches governments beyond their current baseline. To encourage the sharing of best practice and innovation and maintain high standards, all OGP countries will participate in working level sessions with other participating countries and the OGP Steering Committee during the commitment development phase.

Through these presentations and discussions, governments with initially less ambitious proposals will be able to identify gaps and address them early on. These peer consultation sessions will also

enable participants to identify the need for additional feedback from relevant technical experts on specific commitment areas, which the OGP networking mechanism can help facilitate.

IX OGP Declaration of Principles

All OGP governments will endorse a voluntary and non-binding declaration that expresses shared beliefs about the role of openness and citizen engagement in fostering accountability, promoting innovation and growth and improving performance. Governments are able to endorse the declaration once they have developed a country action plan elaborating new concrete commitments around open government, and deposited it on the OGP portal.

X Self-Assessment Report

All governments will publish a progress report approximately three months after the end of the 12-month OGP implementation cycle. This report should assess government performance in living up to its OGP commitments, according to the substance and timelines elaborated in its country action plan. This report should be made publicly available in the local language (s) and in English and deposited on the OGP portal.

XI Independent Reporting Mechanism

As a complement to the self-assessment, an independent assessment report will be written by well-respected local governance experts from each OGP participating country. These experts will fill out a common OGP independent report questionnaire, based on a combination of interviews with local OGP stakeholders as well as desk-based analysis. This report will be shared with a small international expert committee (appointed by the OGP Steering Committee) for peer review to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied. The draft report will then be shared with the relevant OGP government for comment. After receiving comments on the draft report from the government, the local expert will then finalize the independent report for publication on the OGP portal. OGP governments will also have the chance to issue a formal public response to the independent report on the OGP portal once it is published. The independent report will be made publicly available in the local language (s) and in English, and will be published approximately 3 months after the end of the 12-month OGP implementation cycle.

XII OGP Networking Mechanism

The OGP networking mechanism helps participating governments identify and connect with the networks, expertise, resources and technology they need to develop and implement their OGP commitments. In particular, many new efforts to engage and empower citizens involve the creative use of new technologies (e.g. internet, mobile phone) or new platforms (e.g. SMS, moderated online chats, etc.). The networking mechanism has engaged a stable of private sector and non-profit entities that are ready and willing to share their ideas, technologies and platforms with OGP governments to help engage citizens and improve government efficiency and responsiveness. This mechanism is available to all OGP participating countries, and contact information will be provided to participants once they signal their intent to join to the OGP Steering Committee.

XIII OGP Portal

The OGP portal is the initiative's online presence. It is the primary repository for all OGP country action plans as well as the declaration of principles. It provides basic information about OGP's mission, governance and approach, and helps cultivate an interactive community of open government practitioners that are eager to share and document their experience and best practice.