

# Open Government Partnership: Brief for Stakeholders

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## What is the Open Government Partnership?

The Open Government Partnership (OGP)<sup>1</sup> is an international agreement by governments to create greater transparency, increase civic participation and use new technologies to make their governments more open, effective, and accountable to serve and empower their citizens.

The OGP began in 2011 as a unique partnership between government leaders and civil society advocates to combine the powerful forces of both government and civil society to promote accountable, responsive and inclusive governance.

Participating countries develop two-year National Action Plans without gaps between the end of the last action plan and the beginning of the new one. This means every country will be implementing a plan at all times, although individual commitments and milestones may vary in length. In order to achieve this, countries draft their new National Action Plan during the last six months of implementation of the previous plan.

Seventy-eight countries and a growing number of local governments—representing more than two billion people—along with thousands of civil society organizations are members of the OGP. **Participating governments work in collaboration with civil society to co-create action plans for government reforms to promote the OGP’s values of civic participation, transparency and public accountability.** To date the OGP process has been involved in the co-creation of over 4000 open government reforms.

## What are the principles of OGP?

Transparency	Accountability	Public participation	Technology and innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publication of all government-held information (as opposed to only information on government activities);</li><li>• Proactive or reactive releases of information; mechanisms to strengthen the right to information; and open access to government information.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• Commitments on accountability should typically include an outward-facing component (i.e., they are not solely accountable to internal systems, but also involve the public).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governments seek to engage citizens in a dialogue on public policies or programs, and request their input, feedback, and contributions, which lead to more responsive, innovative, and effective governance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governments embrace the importance of providing citizens with open access to technology, the role of new technologies in driving innovation, and the many benefits of increasing its capacity. Technology and innovation cannot be a stand-alone principle but must support/advance the previous three principles.</li></ul>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the OGP see <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/mission-and-strategy/>

## **Collaboration between government, civil society and stakeholders is central to the OGP process.**

- **Each participating government is obliged to co-ordinate and collaborate with civil society to jointly develop commitments on selected areas of focus for government reform**
- **Action plans are independently monitored by the OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism to ensure accountability and transparency and promote meaningful collaboration with civil society towards meaningful reform strategies**

**Action plans are at the core of participation in OGP. They are created by combining the forces of government and civil society, working together to define ambitious commitments across a range of issues.**

The Albanian government is now working towards the co-creation of the 2020-2022 Action Plan and will focus on the following four areas of reform:

1. **Access to Justice**
2. **Digital Governance**
3. **Fiscal Transparency**
4. **Anti-Corruption**

## **Why is Participation and Co-Creation Important?<sup>2</sup>**

**For the development and implementation of lasting open government reforms governments must collaborate with citizens, civil society, political and official champions and other stakeholders.**

### **Principles of public participation:**

- Those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process
- Promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision
- Promotion of sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers
- Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
- Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- Communicates to participants how their input affected the decision

### **Reasons for collaboration between government, citizens and civil society:**

1. Open government redefines the relationship between government and society, and citizens and civil society must be involved in that process
2. Open government mechanisms rely on the participation of citizens and civil society, who also have a critical role to play in identifying issues and priorities, incubating ideas, and contributing to policy

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the report "Open Government: The Global Context and Way Forward" by Involvement and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) <https://www.oecd.org/publications/open-government-9789264268104-en.htm>

Open government reforms are complex and inherently political, requiring collaboration between reformers across different parts of the governance system to have a chance of success.

### What are the issues that OGP can help address?

<b>Guarding Civic Space</b>	Ensuring the right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly is fundamental to OGP members and underpins their action plan commitments.
<b>Including All Voices</b>	OGP members are intentional, strategic, and ambitious in bringing women and underrepresented groups into the OGP process and in ensuring that reforms are inclusive of all people's needs.
<b>Protecting Natural Resources</b>	Governments often manage oil, gas, & mineral resources on behalf of citizens. OGP reforms can lead to greater extractives transparency - & fairer decisions - on natural resources distribution, revenue collection, & corruption.
<b>Improving Digital Governance</b>	Fake news, biased systems, hateful speech, & privacy violations continue to raise alarm. OGP members work - often together - to reduce these negative impacts & increase the ways technology can positively increase accountability and public participation
<b>Promoting Better Public Services</b>	Citizens depend on governments for healthcare, education & clean water. OGP can help improve these services through practical reforms ranging from opening data to directly engaging the public in decision making.
<b>Granting Access to Justice</b>	An accessible justice system helps citizens find fair solutions to issues ranging from land disputes to the denial of public service or the failure to act on behalf of victims of crime and violence. OGP members work to remedy past ills and protect human rights.
<b>Opening Up Budgets</b>	Transparency, public participation, and legislative oversight in the development of budgets creates better outcomes. OGP members work to promote openness as it is proven to better leverage taxpayer dollars.
<b>Obtaining the Right to Information</b>	OGP members are required to have laws that enable fair access to information. Through OGP, the effectiveness of these laws can be improved by removing additional barriers to information and creating platforms to report on fraud or corruption
<b>Fighting Corruption</b>	OGP members tackle corruption through prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, and sanction - with a popular focus on commitments to create and leverage registries that expose company ownership and enforce open contracting principles.