



REPUBLIKA E SHqipërisë

**OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP
NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR ALBANIA
2020 - 2022**



Explanatory Note: Participation, Consultation and Co-Creation Process

One of the primary objectives of Albania's 2020-2022 Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan (AP) development process it is to improve the level of engagement with civil society, citizens, and other stakeholders in its development. Significantly advancing civic participation presents a substantial challenge.

To facilitate progression in stakeholder engagement towards the 2020-2022 Action Plan a close dialogue with the Lead Focal Point Institutions (LFPs) have been achieved in the entire process and also it was developed a dedicated framework with materials and tools which are produced in line with OGP Participation & Co-creation Standards.

This approach aimed to not only enable stakeholder participation and contributions, but facilitate accountability regarding the incorporation and consideration of stakeholder contributions and also to contribute in the entire mechanism. **Multi-stakeholder Forum on Open Government/ Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG play the role of the MSF) supports ongoing dialogue between government and Albania civil society on open government. Its mandate is to provide input and advice on the Government of Albania's commitments on open government, identify new areas of focus, and build the open government community across country.** The Multi-Stakeholder Forum/ Integrated Policy Management Group (IPMG play the role of the MSF) **is relevant, eligible and is composed of representative of the Government of Albania, representative from civil society and Development Partner's and is based on the EU requirement.**

Collaboration during COVID-19

Pursuing this objective during the COVID-19 Pandemic produced additional challenges as avenues for consultations were severely limited and largely confined to online modalities to ensure physical distancing. To facilitate adaptations to online only modalities the POC worked closely with the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS / AKSHI) to facilitate online feedback mechanisms and support timely and comprehensive upload of relevant materials. Additionally, the POC provided the LFPs with different package and guidance on facilitating online consultations and stakeholder dialogues based on OGP's recommendations and reference sources.

Efforts to Increase Collaboration in NAP 2020-2022 process

Both a broad outreach and targeted approach to stakeholder engagement was pursued to increase collaboration during the 2020-2022 AP development process.

Targeted Approach

To promote the active involvement of stakeholders with an interest in the policy areas of focus the LFPs utilized the list of registered civil society organizations (CSOs) compiled by the Agency for Support of Civil Society in order to identify and contact all CSOs whose focus is either directly or indirectly related to their policy area of focus. **This approach aimed to establish a personal and collaborative approach to stakeholder involvement and engagement to promote ownership by CSOs and accountability for the LFPs.** Such an approach followed in the entire process have been result in the building of relationships for the constructive dialogue between governance and civil society. Stakeholders/CSOs were personally contacted from LFPs via emails that were sometimes followed up with calls, and were invited to participate in consultations, provided with supplementary information, provided with tools to provide feedback and input and conclusions from consultations. To address instances where relevant CSOs may have not been included contacted stakeholders were requested to invite other stakeholders that made have an interest or relevant knowledge in the topic and the targeted CSO lists were expanded accordingly.

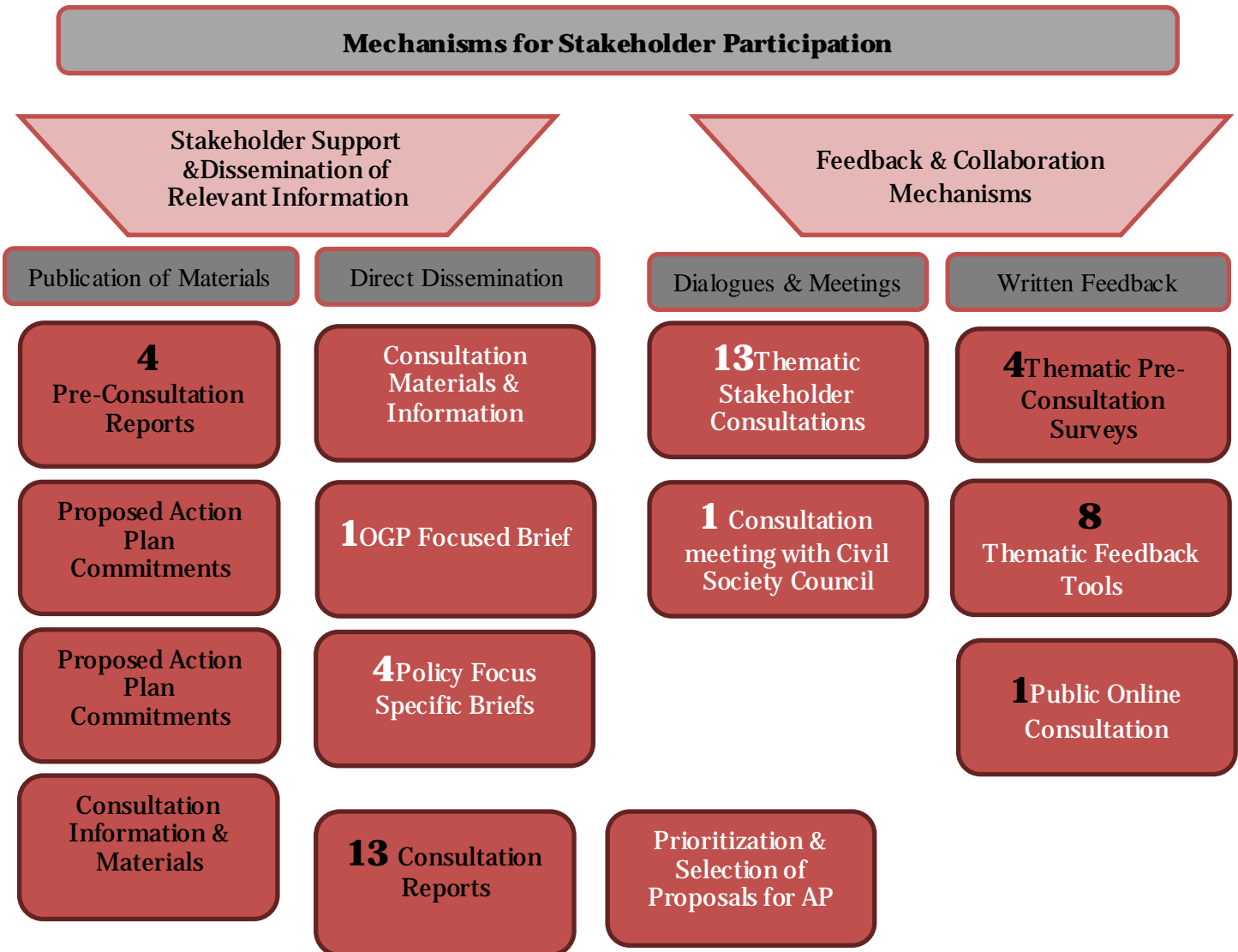
Broad Outreach Approach

To complement, a broad outreach approach was simultaneously pursued. All materials and feedback mechanisms were published online. Further, an online public consultation period enables all stakeholders to provide feedback and a consultation meeting with the National Council of Civil Society which have been enable more wider CSO community to provide inputs and feedback.

Mechanisms for Stakeholder Participation in OGP NAP 2020-2022

To facilitate improved stakeholder participation in the development of Albania's 2020-2022 OGP Action Plan the POC in collaboration with the LFPs and NAIS established a framework which have been provided opportunities to CSOs and stakeholders to propose their own ideas for government reform as well as to discuss, refine and elaborate on government proposed reforms. These advancements are summarized by the figure below.

Figure 1: Mechanisms for Participation in the Development of Albania's 2020-2022 OGP AP



Stakeholder Support

A structured approach to dissemination of information to stakeholders was a hallmark of the 2020-2022 AP development process. In order to engage civil society, citizens, and other stakeholders throughout the OGP process stakeholders were provided with information relating to all aspects of the OGP AP development process including: background information, how to contribute and how their feedback have been utilized. A summary of these materials is outlined below.

Consultation Materials

All materials utilized in the AP development process are made available online and/or provided directly to stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Government proposed AP commitments;
- Support materials and briefs;
- Pre-consultation reports;
- Consultation meeting information, presentations, minutes and operational conclusions;
- Consultation reports;
- Prioritization tools used for AP commitment selection.

Open Government Partnership Brief

This brief provides an overview of the OGP process for stakeholders. It looks to promote participation through by highlighting the independence of the IRM framework and the opportunities that the OGP process offers for stakeholders to partake in policy making and governance.

The brief covers:

- Overview of the OGP;
- Role of the IRM;
- OGP principles;
- Proposed policy areas of focus for the Albanian 2020-2022 AP;
- Why participation and co-creation is important for effective government reforms;
 - Principles of public participation;
 - Reasons for collaboration between government, citizens and civil society;
- Issues that OGP can help address (expanding beyond the four selected areas of focus for the Albanian 2020-2022 AP).

Policy Area Specific Stakeholder Briefs

This brief focuses specifically on a specific policy area (e.g. Digital Governance) being proposed in order to:

- Spur brainstorming and support stakeholders in the development their ideas;
- Equip stakeholders with sufficient information to engage on the topic with contributions that will be relevant to the OGP process.

- Hyperlinks and references are included to facilitate further research. These briefs are published on the OGP website.

Among other topics each of the four brief includes:

- OGP recommendations for the policy area of focus;
- Means of public and civic participation relevant to the policy focus;
- Potential thematic priorities to consider;
- Selection of potentially relevant OGP commitments in the policy area from other countries.

Feedback & Collaboration Mechanisms

To enable stakeholder participation the Albanian 2020-2022 OGP AP development process facilitated a variety of spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation that included collaborative/discussion based spaces and opportunities to provide written feedback and input.

Dialogues and Consultation Meetings for the preparation of the OGP NAP 2020-2022

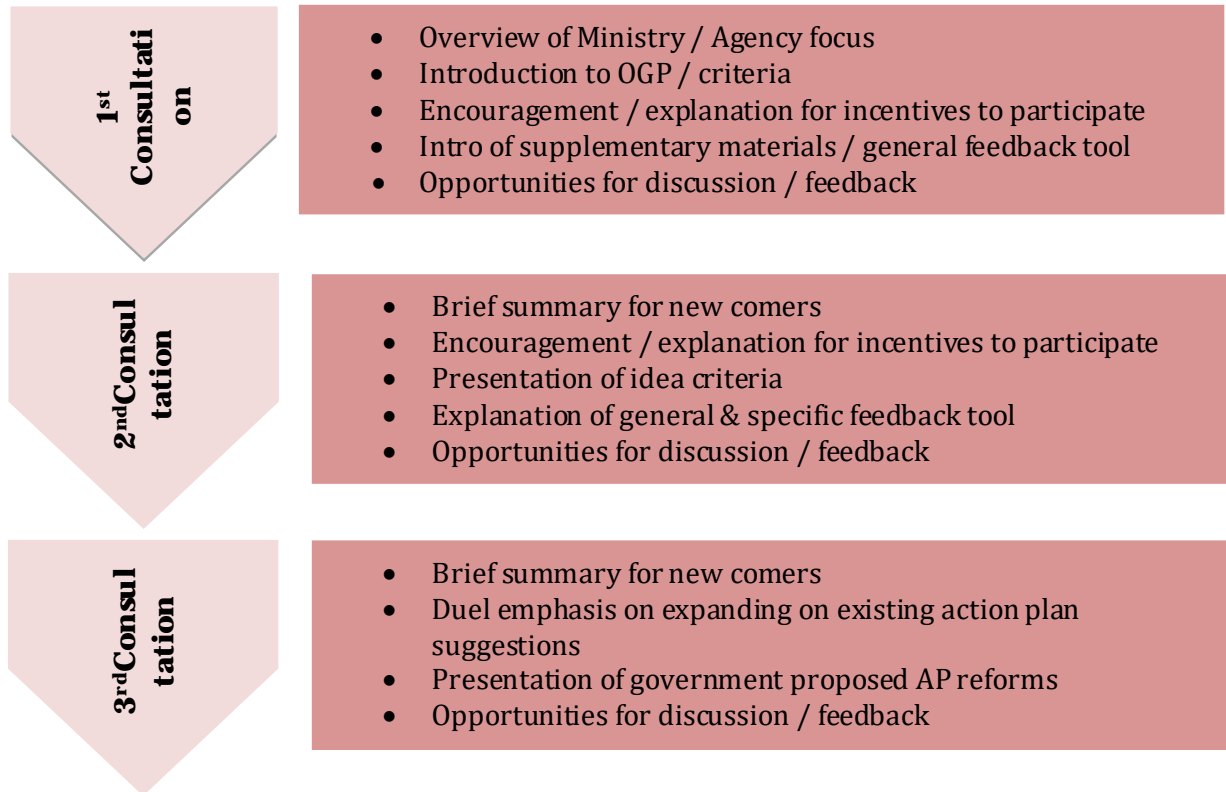
Thematic Stakeholder Consultations

To encourage informed participation based on the OGP Participation & Co-creation Standards have been coordinated and conducted 14 thematic stakeholder consultations. In all the consultative meetings with the CSOs have been presented brief informative presentations to facilitate stakeholder dialogue and contribution. The LFPs explained to the relevant details of their agency's work and suggested reform ideas and recommendations for the AP. The POC also presented in most consultations in order to outline the concept of OGP, outline methodology approach, and also presented relevant examples from other countries and the ways in which stakeholders can contribute.

The content of these presentations is provided tailored based on the weekly planning meeting, but broadly focuses on equipping stakeholders with the information and tools in order to utilize the expertise for developing and concluding ideas relevant to the OGP Action Plan. Finally, the POC presentations emphasized encouragement and promotion of discussion and contributions for more constructive and transparent dialogue.

- The POC coordinated the consultation process between LFPs and stakeholders for each of the four proposed policy areas
- The LFP of each policy area have been **conducted 4 stakeholder consultations in collaboration with the POC (each component conducted at least 3 dedicated consultative meetings with CSOs, all the evidences have been published in the OGP web)**.
- Stakeholders have been encouraged to provide comments, ideas and general feedback during consultations even through dedicated channels.
- All comments and discussions are recorded in the consultation reports and published on the OGP website.
- Comments and suggestions made during consultations have been incorporated into the development of the action plan.

Figure 2: General Structure of Thematic Stakeholder Consultation Meetings



POC Collaboration with LFPs

To facilitate continuous improvement in stakeholder engagement the POC worked closely with each of the LFPs individually to adapt the approach to stakeholder engagement to fit the particular context and any challenges specific to the policy area of focus.

Partnered Presentations for Stakeholder Consultations:

- POC coordinates with the LFP to facilitate presentations for the stakeholders.
- LFPs explained the relevant details of their work and suggested ideas and recommendations for the action plan.
- POC outlines the concept of OGP in each consultative meetings, also presented methodology approach, relevant examples from other countries and the ways in which stakeholders can contribute, etc.
- Focuses on equipping stakeholders with the information and tools to utilize their expertise towards developing ideas relevant to the OGP Action Plan.

Weekly Consultation Planning Meetings:

- POC conducted through different channels a periodic communication with the focal point of the LFP to address any issues in stakeholder engagement, flag potential areas of concern, discuss any adjustments in approach and develop the strategy for the next period

On-Call Support & Guidance:

- POC have ensure the continuously availability via email and phone for regular check-ins with the LFPs
- Communication is encouraged and has been facilitated by the feedback procedures established, thus, promoting more cooperation between the POC/ LFPs and Civil Society.

Consultation Reporting

To ensure each component meets the co-creation criteria of the IRM for each component pre/consultation reports have been produced, developed and published that assesses the engagement, participation and feedback from civil society. The reports detail the elements below, such as:

- Level of engagement;
- Detail stakeholder suggestions/comments/feedback/ideas;
- Identify potential topics of focus based on the feedback from civil society;
- Areas to improve stakeholder engagement and participation.

Report templates have been produced by POC and have been provided to facilitate consistency, ease of use, accountability and reinforce importance of engagement at each stage. Consultation guidance & accompanying report templates were provided to LFPs for the pre-consultation study and for the stakeholder consultative meetings.

- Reports delivered using structured template
- Focus on evidence/ emphasis on identifying areas for improvement regarding engagement and identification of areas where to improve engagement
- Each report have been published

Consultation Report Guidance have been produced which cover the elements as below:

- Will identify which stakeholders are engaged in the process;
- Will identify gaps in stakeholder engagement and participation that can be addressed ahead of the next stages;
- Will identify preliminary areas for focus and priority for the action;
- Outline stakeholder contributions in details.

Quality Check for Reports

- POC developed structured templates to provide feedback to the LFPs on their reports;
- Answers are flagged as incomplete, partial or complete with recommendations / adjustments outlined by the POC;

- Provides a formal and consistent means of on-going feedback to foster consistency in reporting as well as support improvements to stakeholder engagement and participation.

Figure 3: Consultation Report Template for Thematic Stakeholder Consultation Meetings

CONSULTATION REPORT TEMPLATE
Consultation Details
Policy Goal Focus
Lead Focal Point Institution
Date&Consultation Meeting Number
I. Objective of Consultation Meeting
What was the aim of this consultation? Please answer for all that apply
(i) Introduce stakeholders to the proposed policy goal
(ii) Introduce stakeholders to the OGP process
(iii) Explain the feedback tools for stakeholders
(iv) Brainstorm ideas with stakeholders
(v) Develop further details (milestones, etc.) for ideas
(vi) Gather feedback on proposed policy goals
(vii) Prioritize proposed policy goals
(viii) Other (provide details)
II. Methodology
What was the format of the meeting? How were stakeholders able to participate?
(i) Presentations
(ii) Discussion / Feedback from stakeholders
(iii) Questions and answers
(iv) Brainstorming
Stakeholder Selection
(i) How were stakeholders selected?
(ii) How were stakeholders contacted?
(iii) How many stakeholders were contacted?
(iv) Was the consultation announced publically? (via websites, social media, etc.)
(v) Were stakeholders reminded?
III. Results/ Findings
Stakeholder Contributions
(i) How many stakeholders attended?

(ii) Did stakeholders contribute?
(iii) Main issues identified by stakeholders
(iv) Main recommendations from stakeholders?
IV. Shortcomings Identified & Preparations for Next Consultation
(i) Limitations in stakeholder attendance
(ii) Limitations in stakeholder participation
(iii) What can be done to improve attendance?
(iv) What can be done to improve participation in the next meeting?

Figure 4: Stakeholder Feedback Template for Thematic Stakeholder Consultation Meetings

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK TEMPLATE			
Name:		Organization/ Affiliation:	Position:
<i>Issues Raised</i>			
<i>Feedback</i>			
<i>Ideas Suggested</i>			
<i>Other Comments</i>			

Consultation meeting with Civil Society Council

Following the thematic consultations a consultation meeting with the National Council for Civil Society have been conducted which have enable contributions and refinement of the draft action plan from a wider audience of CSOs.

Written Feedback

4 Pre-Consultation Survey have been conducted and published on the OGP web

The LFP, with technical support from the POC, have designed and conducted a pre-consultation survey to identify main issues on the policy area of focus, identify the priorities of stakeholders and identify areas to improve engagement ahead of the consultation period.

General Idea Proposal Tools for the co-creation process have been produced

Available as a word template and as a googleform (provided as a link to stakeholders and embedded within the OGP website) the general idea tool enables stakeholders to outline what they believe to be the most important issues relating to the proposed policy area and to provide some general ideas in broad terms that can be elaborated on in further consultations.

The tool asks participants the following:

- *What do you think are the most important issues the Albanian government should prioritize to improve digital governance/anti-corruption/access to justice/fiscal transparency (depending on the policy focus)?*
- *Please propose any ideas or solutions you may have to improvedigital governance/anti-corruption/access to justice/fiscal transparency efforts*
 - *Briefly describe the overall idea*
 - *What is the problem the idea will address*
 - *What is the main objective of the idea*

Specific Idea Proposal Tools

Available as a word template and as a googleform (provided as a link to stakeholders and embedded within the OGP website) the specific idea tool enables stakeholders to detail specific government reform ideas they may have to improve an issue relating to the proposed policy area.

The tool asks participants to consider the following as they provide details of their proposed idea (see figure 5):

- *“Please outline any ideas or solutions you may have for improving digital governance/anti-corruption/access to justice/fiscal transparency. Please include any and all information or details for this idea. When thinking of ideas keep in mind the following:*
 - **Problem:** *What is the social, economic, political, or environmental problem addressed by this commitment?*
 - **Objective:** *What are the objectives stated in the commitment? How does the commitment’s objective contribute to solving or improving the problem?*
 - **Solution:** *What activities does the commitment propose to achieve the objective? How would the activities contribute to the objective of the commitment?*
 - **Impact:** *If fully implemented as written, what potential effect would this approach have on the problem?*

Figure 5: Stakeholder Feedback Form for Specific Idea Proposals

Details of idea	
What is the problem the idea will address	
How will the idea address the problem	
Objective of idea / Potential impact	
Main beneficiaries (who benefits)	
How does it improve or promote:	Transparency & Access to Information?
	Public & Civic Participation

	Public Accountability
	Technology & Innovation
What are the main agencies who would implement the idea (Ministries/NGOs/etc.)	

Online Public Consultation

The draft action plan have been available on the online consultation OGP web where the wider public could provide feedback.

Inclusion & Incorporation of Stakeholder Feedback

All ideas submitted have been considered in a transparency and fair manner using the prioritization criteria previously established. Based on the assessments according to the criteria established idea proposals have been categorized into one of four groups:

Accepted	Accepted with Changes	Recommended for Future	Not Accepted
Proposals to be incorporated in the 2020-2022 Action Plan	Proposals to be admitted to the 2020-2022 Action Plan with changes	Proposals to be incorporated in future Action Plans	Inadmissible Proposals