OGP NATIONAL HANDBOOK

Rules + Guidance for Participants

Partne i

OGP National Handbook
Rules and Guidance for Participants

Version 5.0 (Formerly OGP POC

Manual) March 2022

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Table of Contents

Introduction....4

1. Roles and Responsibilities: Key Actors and Stakeholders in Open Government Partnership....5

The Multi-Stakeholder Forum or Platform....6
Responsibilities of the MSF/P....6
MSF/P Composition....7
Key Elements to Consider When Setting Up an MSF/P....7
Who Supports Country Stakeholders?....8

2. The Co-Creation Process....9

Key Moments in the Co-creation Process....9
Planning for the Process....10
Outreach....12
Action Plan Development....13
Feedback and Reasoned Response....15
Submission of Action Plans to OGP....16
Four-Year Rules Refresh....16

3. Action Plan Rules and Templates....17

Action Plan Timelines and Delivery Windows....17
Delays....18
Political transitions and elections....19
Action Plan and Commitment Template....19
Characteristics of a Good Action Plan....19
Action Plan Contents....21
The Commitment Template....22
Self-Assessment Template....24
Challenge Commitments....27

4. Implementation....27

Implementation Planning....28
Implementation Activities....28
Monitoring....28
Assessments....29

5. Accountability and Information Provision....29

National OGP Website....29
Document Repository....30
Designing an Online Repository....31

Using your current OGP website....31
Using Ready-made Tools....31
Open-source Repositories....31

6. Beyond the National Executive: Guidance on Participation of Other Branches and Levels of Government....32

Parliamentary Engagement....32
OGP Judiciary....33
OGP Local....33
Strategic Inclusion of Local Commitments within the National Action Plan....33
Minimum Requirements for Commitments by Local Governments in the action plan 34
Inclusion of Local Open Government Efforts as Additional Initiatives in the action plan 34
Knowledge and Learning....34

7....Minimum Participation Requirements and Acting Contrary to Process 35

3. Action Plan Rules and Templates

Action plans are at the core of a country's participation in OGP. They are the product of a co-creation process in which government and civil society develop ambitious commitments to foster transparency, accountability, and public participation. This chapter reflects lessons learned from OGP participating governments on producing high-quality action plans. In addition, the chapter includes templates that will ensure all the necessary information on commitments and the development process is included in the action plan.

Action Plan and Commitment Template

Characteristics of a Good Action Plan

Successful OGP action plans: focus on ambitious national open government priorities; are relevant to the values of transparency, accountability and public participation; and contain specific, time-bound and measurable commitments.

- **Ambitious:** OGP aims to promote ambitious open government reforms that stretch the government beyond its current state of practice, significantly improving the status quo by strengthening transparency, accountability, and public participation in government. Countries may choose to initiate new open government initiatives
  in their action plans or improve on existing, ongoing reforms. Countries are encouraged to show clear improvement from action plan to action plan.

- **Relevant:** Countries should ensure that each commitment included in the action plan clearly advances one or more of the following open government principles:

- Transparency: This includes publication of all government-held information (as opposed to only information on government activities); proactive or reactive releases of information; mechanisms to strengthen the right to information; and open access to government information.
- 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. Commitments on accountability should typically include an answerability element, i.e., that they are not purely internal systems of accountability but involve the public.
- Participation: Governments should seek to mobilize citizens to engage in a dialogue on government policies or programs; provide input or feedback; and make contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative, and effective governance.
- 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. E-government initiatives are welcome, but in order to be relevant to OGP, action plans should explain how these initiatives advance government transparency, accountability, and/or public participation.

- **SMART:** Individual commitments should conform to the following:
  - Specific: The commitment precisely describes the problem it is trying to solve, the activities it comprises, and the expected outcomes.
  - Measurable: It is possible to verify the fulfillment of the commitment. Where commitments have multiple sub-commitments, they are broken into clear, measurable milestones.
  - Answerable: The commitment clearly specifies the main implementing agency; the coordinating or supporting agencies where relevant; and, if necessary, other civil society, multilateral, or private sector partners who have a role in implementing the commitment.
  - Relevant: For each commitment, the action plan should explain its relevance to one or more of the open government principles outlined above.
  - Time-bound: Commitment clearly states the date when it will be completed, as well as dates for milestones, benchmarks, and any other deadline.

Action Plan Contents

The action plan should contain the following:

Content	Description	Guide Questions
1. Introduction	This section briefly explains the national and local context by discussing why open government efforts are important for the country. This section should also outline the governance reform priorities for the country and identify the major social, political, or economic issues that the country intends to address through its OGP action plan, along with a justification.	What is the long-term vision for open government in your context? What are the medium-term open government goals that the government wants to achieve? How does this action plan contribute to achieving the open government goals? What major social, political, or economic issues does the country intend to address through this action plan, and why?
2. Open government efforts to date	This section provides a brief narrative of key open government initiatives and accomplishments to date, particularly those that reflect collaboration with civil society and how they relate to the co-created commitments. This section should explain how the new action plan builds on previous OGP action plans (if relevant) and related efforts to strengthen open government reforms.	What are the achievements in open government to date (for example, recent open government reforms)? How has collaboration between government and civil society impacted these reforms? If a previous action plan exists, what open government reforms proposed in the previous action plans were achieved? Not achieved? Why? If a previous action plan exists, how does this new action plan build on what has been achieved in previous action plan(s) and other efforts to strengthen open government?
3. Action plan development process	This section describes the action plan development process, highlighting how government collaborated with civil society and other stakeholders to develop and finalize the action plan. It should also describe how the MSF/P, or the government where there is no established MSF/P, planned for co-creation, conducted outreach to increase participation of stakeholders, developed the commitments, and provided feedback to stakeholders who participated in the process. Please expressly note compliance with the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards, with particular attention to the	How did the country develop the co-creation timeline? Who was involved in the process? How were inputs from stakeholders taken into consideration? How were outreach activities conducted? How were awareness-raising activities maximized to enhance public participation? What kind of spaces have been used or created to enable the collaboration between government and civil society in co-creating the action plan? How was the action plan development process conducted? Describe what was done in sense-making, problem definition, solution identification, and commitment drafting? How was reasoned response provided? What were the processes undertaken to finalize the action plan?

	minimum participation requirements (see Section 2 and 7).	
4. Commitments	This section presents the commitments developed during the co-creation process. The commitment template will be used for each commitment included in the action plan.	(See relevant guide questions in the commitment template.)

Open Government Partnership