

OGP National Action Plan Template and Guidelines

National action plans are at the core of a country's participation in OGP. Over 50 countries have created at least one OGP action plan and 8 countries have begun implementing their second OGP action plan. This document reflects the lessons learnt from the first two-years of OGP and provides updated guidance on specific issues related to producing a high quality action plan. In addition, we have provided a template that will ensure all the necessary information on commitments and the development process is included in the action plan.

1. ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

<p style="text-align: center;">1. Introduction (1-2 pages)</p> <p><i>Briefly explain the 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 grand challenges that the country intends to address through its OGP Action Plan along with a justification.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2. Open Government Efforts to Date (2 pages)</p> <p><i>Provide a brief narrative of key open government initiatives and accomplishments to date, particularly as they relate to the government's chosen grand challenges. This section should explain how the new action plan builds on previous OGP action plans and related efforts to strengthen open government reforms.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3. NAP Development Process (1 page)</p> <p><i>OGP participants commit to "co-create" their country action plans through a multi-stakeholder consultation process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society. In this section please describe the NAP elaboration process, including the consultation.</i></p> <p><i>Please consider that regarding the consultation process, the IRM evaluates the following activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Availability of timeline: Countries are to make the details of their public consultation process and timeline available (online at minimum) prior to the consultation</i><i>2. Adequate notice: Countries are to consult the population with sufficient forewarning. Many countries have chosen to share written drafts two weeks before the official start of consultation to allow stakeholders to organize themselves</i><i>3. Awareness raising: Countries are to undertake OGP awareness raising activities to enhance public participation in the consultation</i><i>4. Multiple channels: Countries are to consult through a variety of mechanisms—including online and through in-person meetings—to ensure the accessibility of opportunities for citizens to engage</i><i>5. Breadth of consultation: Countries are to consult widely with the national community,</i>

- including civil society and the private sector, and to seek out a diverse range of views and;*
6. *Documentation and feedback: Countries are to make a summary of the public consultation and all individual written comment submissions available online*
 7. *Consultation during implementation: Countries are to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one.*

4. Commitments (3-5 pages)

Each commitment as written must be specific, clear, and succinct. Each commitment should be no more than a few paragraphs or half a page in length. The level of ambition and relevance to OGP values should be clearly demonstrated. Experience has shown that action plans listing 5-15 high quality commitments are preferable to those with very large numbers of weaker commitments.

Please refer to the commitment template below.

Commitment Template:

Commitment Template				
Name and number of the Commitment				
Lead agency				
Other involved actors	Government			
	Civil Society, Private Sector			
Status quo or problem/issue to be addressed				
Main Objective				
OGP challenge addressed by the commitment				
Is it relevant to the advancement of:	Transparency	Accountability	Public participation	
Verifiable and measurable milestones to fulfill the commitment	New or ongoing commitment	Start Date:	End Date:	
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

2. GENERAL COMMENTS

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

2.1 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.

2.2 Relevant: Countries should ensure that each commitment included in the action plan is clearly advancing 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 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

2.3 SMART: Individual commitments should conform to the following principles (an example SMART commitment follows below):

- **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 (transparency, accountability, public participation and technology & innovation).

- Time-bound: Commitment clearly states the date when it will be completed, as well as dates for milestones, benchmarks and any other deadline.

3. GUIDELINES

3.1 Content

- Most action plans include commitments that tackle at least two of the five OGP grand challenges, which are: 1) Improving Public Services, 2) Increasing Public Integrity, 3) More Effectively Managing Public Resources, 4) Creating Safer Communities, and 5) Increasing Corporate Accountability. Action plans should explain the grand challenges they are designed to tackle in the Introduction section (see template)
- Governments are encouraged to work with multiple ministries and departments across the government to develop and implement their OGP commitments.

3.2 Length and structure

- Action plans should be clear, succinct, and action-oriented and approximately 8-12 pages in length.
- Action plans should be written in plain language with minimal use of jargon or technical terms.
- Experience has shown that the most successful action plans are not always the ones with large numbers of commitments. In other words quality – both in terms of ambition and strong implementation – is more important than quantity. Therefore we recommend that each action plan contain between 5 and 15 ambitious commitments, but ideally not more than that. Where multiple commitments address the same policy issue, they should be grouped as individual milestones under a single commitment.
- The expected length of each commitment is approximately half a page. A few paragraphs that clearly state the specific action or reform the government is going to undertake should suffice.

3.3 Duration

- All actions plans must cover a two-year period.
- Individual commitments can vary in length so they should contain more frequent milestones (indicators of progress) within the two-year action plan. At minimum one-year and two-year milestones for each commitment are required so that governments, civil society organizations, and the Independent Reporting Mechanism, have a common set of time-bound metrics to assess progress.
- Commitments that will take longer than two years to implement are welcome as long as they are clearly marked in the country's next action plan.

3.4 Official version

- The government should post the final action plan on the OGP website by June 15, 2014 and should begin implementation on or before July 1 2014. The action plan that is posted on the OGP website will be considered the active, official plan for the purposes of implementation and assessment by all stakeholders (government, civil society, OGP Support Unit, and Independent Reporting Mechanism). In order to update a plan or add "official" supplementary

guidance to the plan, countries must submit that information to the OGP Support Unit and post it on the OGP website. No supplementary documents can be considered by the Independent Reporting Mechanism unless they have been publicly posted on the OGP website. The date of uploading will become the effective start date for any updated plan, and no backdating of commitments will be possible.

- While action plans can be written in the country’s official language, governments are required to submit an English translation to the OGP Support Unit. Governments should indicate which language is the official version. If governments do not inform us otherwise, the OGP Support Unit will consider the English version to be the official version.

4. AN EXAMPLE OF A STRONG COMMITMENT USING THE SMART CRITERIA

S
Specific

The current right to information regime is deficient. It can be strengthened by increasing the scope of coverage and including provisions for proactively disclosure. The government commits to improving the legislative framework for the right of access to information. The government will reform the Right to Information Act with amendments resulting from open consultations with experts and the wider public.

M
Measurable

Specifically, the government will:

1. Create a committee consisting of government and civil society ATI experts to source and prioritize amendments.
2. Conduct open consultations to solicit broad-based expert & public feedback.
3. Amend the Right to Information act to:
 - a. Reduce exceptions and expand coverage to a greater number of agencies and department operations.
 - b. Legally mandate proactive publication of core classes of operational & financial information in a timely, comprehensive, and useable manner.
 - c. Require public authorities to systematically collect and publish data on the no. of requests, response rates, exceptions, and proactive disclosures.

A
Answerable

Progress of commitment delivery and impact will be measured by no. of consultations held, quality and no. of draft amendments submitted, no. of datasets proactively disclosed, no. of requests serviced, percentage reduction of exceptions.

R
Relevant

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will implement this commitment with support from the Office of the President and the Ministry of Justice.

T
Time-bound

Consultations to be held October – December 2013. Draft amendments will be submitted to parliament by April 2014.