

Open  
Government  
Partnership



# OGP Participation & Co-Creation Standards



# 1. Introduction



Civic participation is a core component of open government, and an essential element of the national OGP cycle. The OGP Articles of Governance state that ‘OGP participants commit to developing their country action plans through a multi stakeholder process, with the active engagement of citizens and civil society’.

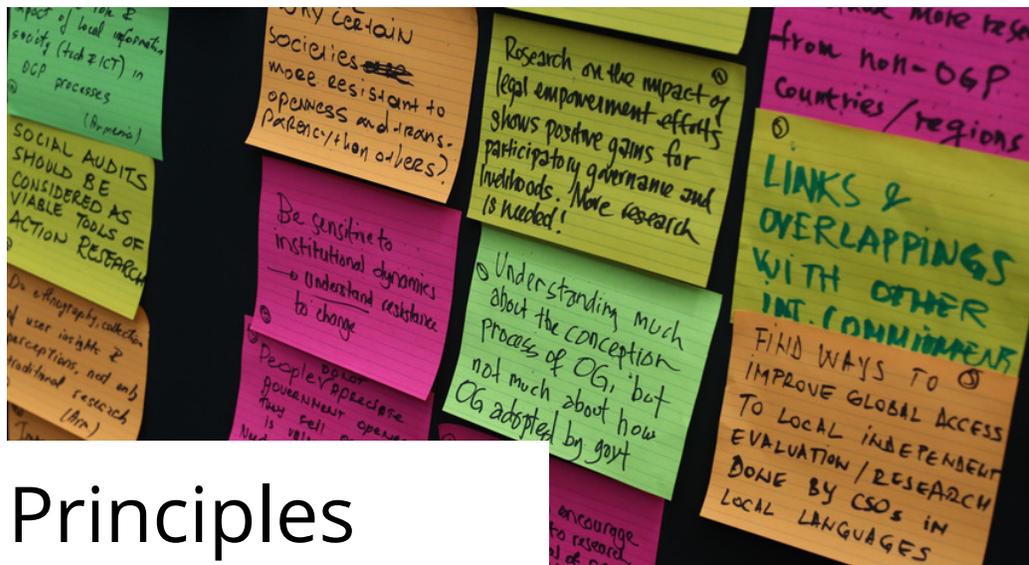
This requirement is not set because of a lofty principle, but to reflect the realities of making open government reforms work. Put simply, the collaboration of citizens, civil society, political and official champions and other stakeholders is essential to developing, securing and implementing lasting open government reforms.

These participation and co-creation standards are intended to support participation and co-creation at all stages of the OGP cycle. They are intended for use by governments, civil society and any other stakeholders to understand OGP’s basic expectations, the minimum of what is expected of a national OGP process, and the more ambitious standard that countries should be striving for. As such, they:

- Make OGP requirements more specific and easy to follow;
- Introduce a stronger focus on the quality of engagement; and,
- Provide guidance on the ongoing dialogue between government and civil society in all phases of the OGP cycle.

These standards are not intended as detailed guidelines on running an OGP process and should therefore be read and adopted alongside OGP’s supporting material. This includes the Points of Contact Manual, handbook on ‘Designing and Managing an OGP Multistakeholder Forum’ and additional guidance on the OGP Participation & Co-creation Standards to be published in 2017.





# Principles

The guidelines are based on evidence and experience built up over a number of decades across many country contexts of the essential components of strong participatory processes. They build on globally recognized principles of good engagement, such as the IAP2 Core Values:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



## Structure OGP Participation & Co-creation Standards

### Basic vs. advanced standards

The standards are divided into two overarching sections outlining basic requirements - the standard all countries are expected to meet - and advanced steps - the standard countries should strive for:

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**Basic requirements** - All OGP member countries are expected to meet the basic requirements outlined in the standards unless they can present a compelling reason for adopting an alternative approach that can be judged to be of a comparable or greater standard.
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**Advanced steps** - Countries are not obliged to meet the advanced steps, but will be supported and encouraged to do so.

Countries are expected to improve the quality of each cycle of the national OGP process, complying with more of the advanced steps outlined in these standards and moving from consult to collaborate on the IAP2 Spectrum.<sup>1</sup>

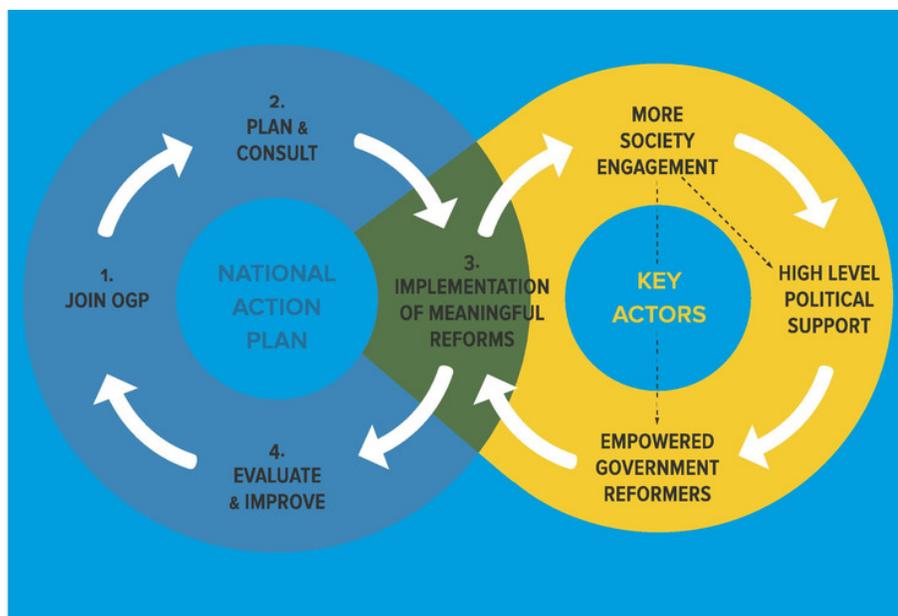
<sup>1</sup> The IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) Spectrum is available from: [http://www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/Foundations\\_Course/IAP2\\_P2\\_Spectrum.pdf](http://www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/Foundations_Course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum.pdf)



## Action plan cycle

The standards are in turn divided into three sections according to the stage of the OGP cycle:

- ➔ **Throughout the OGP cycle** - These standards outline what is expected of governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their national OGP process throughout the full action planning cycle.
- ➔ **When developing a National Action Plan** - These standards outline what is expected of governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their national OGP process during the development and publication of a National Action Plan.
- ➔ **When implementing, monitoring and reporting on a National Action Plan** - These standards outline what is expected of governments and other stakeholders involved in leading their national OGP process during the implementation, monitoring and reporting of a National Action Plan.





## Participation and co-creation components

Finally, the standards are further organized around three essential elements of a participation and co-creation process:

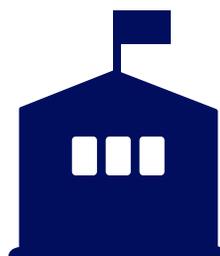


**Dissemination of information** - The public, civil society and other relevant stakeholders should be provided with timely information about all aspects of the national OGP process, including feedback on how their inputs are taken into account.

**Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation** - An inclusive and ongoing dialogue should be facilitated using a variety of spaces and platforms appropriate to the country context.



**Co-ownership and joint decision making** - Government, civil society and other stakeholders should jointly own and develop the process.

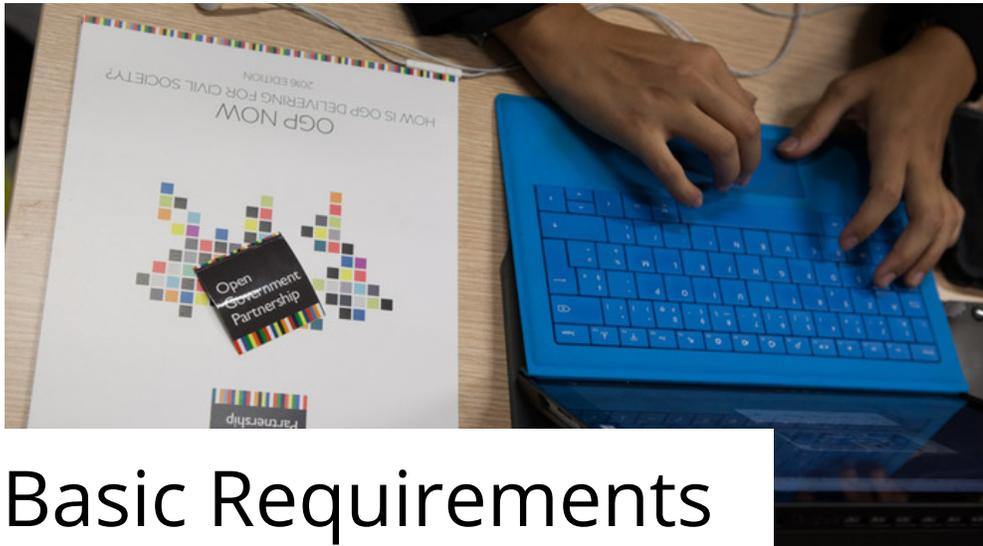


## Measuring compliance, performance and ambition

The IRM will assess country performance in the following ways and levels.

- ➔ **Minimum requirements to have a consultation in line with OGP process** - A subset of the detailed basic requirements will be used as proxy indicators for acting in line with the OGP process.
- ➔ **Performance assessment** - The IRM will use metrics associated with each requirement to assess the performance of a country on the OGP Participation and Co-creation standards. A more detailed methodology to accompany the new standards will be developed by the IRM team together with the IEP. The assessment will also describe where a country is using alternative/innovative approaches that are comparable to the standards.
- ➔ **Ambition** - The IRM will assess if countries are taking any advanced steps, including what level of the IAP2 spectrum a country meets both during the development of a new NAP and during implementation of the NAP.

## 2. Standards



### Basic Requirements

All OGP countries are expected to meet the basic requirements outlined in this section.

#### Throughout the OGP cycle...

##### **Dissemination of information**

- There is a national OGP website (or OGP webpage on a government website) where information on all aspects of the national OGP process is proactively published. The website or webpage should be visible, accessible and searchable.
- The lead agency and point of contact for OGP is clearly identified and their contact details are publicly available on the national OGP website/webpage.
- The government publishes OGP information and documents in all administrative languages.
- Government collects and publishes a document repository on the national OGP website/webpage, which provides a historical record and access to all documents related to the national OGP process, including (but not limited to) consultation documents, National Action Plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and supporting documentation of commitment implementation (e.g links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications).

- The government communicates information about OGP to stakeholders in advance to guarantee they are informed and prepared to participate in all stages of the process.

### Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation

- A multi-stakeholder forum is formed to oversee the OGP process.<sup>2</sup> It meets on a regular basis (i.e. at least every quarter) in person or remotely, as appropriate.
- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum accepts inputs and representation on the NAP process from any civil society or other stakeholders
- Opportunities for remote participation are provided for at least some meetings and events to enable the inclusion of groups unable to attend in person.
- The government facilitates a mechanism for direct communication with stakeholders to respond to NAP process questions, particularly during times of intense OGP activity. Government keeps a record of communications and responses to make available to the IRM researcher.
- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum conducts outreach and awareness raising activities to relevant stakeholders (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to inform them of the OGP process.

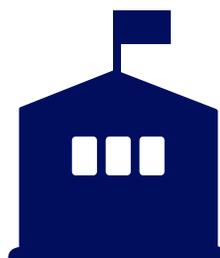
Throughout the OGP cycle...

<sup>2</sup> The standards draw on the practice of many successful OGP countries in requiring the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Forum - defined as a group of government, civil society and other stakeholders selected through a fair and transparent process, with a clear remit, membership and governance, that meets on a regular basis to oversee the OGP process. While the standards set out high level criteria that the multi-stakeholder forum should meet, countries are encouraged to adopt a model that fits their specific country context. Detailed guidance and examples can be found in the OGP handbook on 'Designing and Managing an OGP Multistakeholder Forum.'

## Co-ownership and joint decision making

- Members of the multi-stakeholder forum jointly develop its remit, membership and governance (e.g. frequency of meetings, who sets the agenda, how decisions are made, how conflicts are managed, the level of detail of minutes, and decision making authority), which are communicated on the national OGP website/webpage.
- The multi-stakeholder forum includes an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives.
- Non-governmental members of the multi-stakeholder forum are selected through a fair and transparent process. The forum's rules should allow non-governmental members to lead their own selection process.
- The multi-stakeholder forum proactively communicates and reports back on its decisions, activities and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders.
- The multi-stakeholder forum includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government to ensure it is sufficiently empowered to take action (e.g. the Ministerial level OGP point of contact).

Throughout the OGP cycle...



 **When developing a National Action Plan...****Dissemination of information**

- The government or multi-stakeholder forum proactively communicates, via the national OGP website/webpage and other channels of communication used in the country, with adequate notice, the process for the development of the NAP. This should include a timeline of key stages and deadlines; opportunities to be involved (e.g. details of meetings, events, written consultations, feedback mechanisms); and the decision making process for agreeing commitments and finalising the NAP.
- The government publishes, via the national OGP website/webpage, regular (i.e. at least every month) progress updates on the development of the NAP, including notes of events, drafts of commitments, and other relevant information.
- The government publishes an overview of public and civil society contributions, and the government's response, on the national OGP website/webpage.

**Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation**

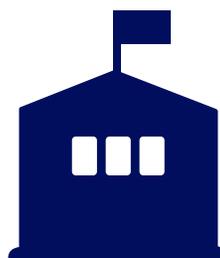
- The government, guided by the multi-stakeholder forum, provides opportunities to any interested stakeholders (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) to participate in the development of the NAP.
- The government provides adequate background information (e.g. about open government, the OGP, the scope of the NAP, and development process), to participants in order that they can participate in an informed manner. This should be provided via the national OGP website/webpage and at meetings/events.



- The government or multi-stakeholder forum develops an appropriate methodology for the consultation. This should include an appropriate combination of open meetings and online engagement for the country context, involve groups throughout the country, and be open for an adequate duration.
- The government publishes and collects feedback on draft commitments. This information should be available and disseminated (i.e. via the national OGP website/webpage and other appropriate channels), include a range of options for stakeholders to respond (e.g. written responses, online discussions, surveys, face-to-face or remote meetings), and be open for an adequate duration (e.g. at least 2 weeks).

### Co-ownership and joint decision making

- The multi-stakeholder forum meets frequently (e.g. at least once a month), and discusses, agrees and oversees the NAP development process (e.g. number of events, location, format)
- During the development of commitments, government representatives discuss with other members of the multi-stakeholder forum the government's priorities for commitments and the political feasibility of adopting civil society priorities and proposed commitments.
- Once commitments have been drafted, government representatives review with the multi-stakeholder forum their comments, the final selection of commitments to be included in the NAP and state clearly their reasoning behind decisions.



## When implementing, monitoring and reporting a National Action Plan...

### Dissemination of information

- The government publishes via the national OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e. at least every six months) on the progress of commitments, including progress against milestones, reasons for any delays, next steps. This is in addition to publishing self-assessment report.
- The website/webpage should have a feature to allow the public to comment on progress updates.



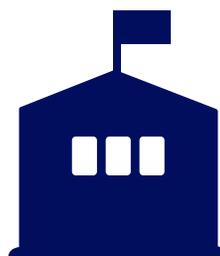
### Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation

- The government holds at least two open meetings with civil society (one per year) on the implementation of the NAP.
- The government shares the link to the IRM report with other government institutions and stakeholders to encourage input during the public comment phase.



### Co-ownership and joint decision making

- The multi-stakeholder forum monitors and deliberates on how to improve the implementation of the NAP.
- The government submit its self-assessment report to the national multi-stakeholder forum for comments and feedback on the content of the report.





## 2. Standards



### Advanced Steps

In addition to meeting the basic requirements outlined in the previous section, countries are encouraged to adopt the advanced steps outlined below.

#### Throughout the OGP cycle...

##### **Dissemination of information**

- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum publishes information and documents in plain and accessible language that can be understood quickly, easily and completely
- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum uses a range of channels commonly used by citizens, civil society and other stakeholders, including traditional and new media (e.g. newspapers, television, radio, email, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.) as appropriate, for awareness raising and dissemination of progress updates.
- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum conduct targeted outreach to relevant stakeholder groups to raise awareness of open government, the OGP and opportunities to get involved.





- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum use visualisations, infographics, videos or other appropriate media to communicate relevant information and updates on the process and its outcomes to a non-expert audience.

### Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation



- The multi-stakeholder forum has a strategy to bring in additional government and non-government actors into the OGP process.
- The multi-stakeholder forum coordinates multiple face-to-face outreach and engagement events around the country, which are open and accessible to any interested members of the public, civil society and other stakeholders to attend (e.g., at suitable times and locations).
- An online forum is established to enable ongoing discussion across stakeholders involved in the OGP process.

### Co-ownership and joint decision making

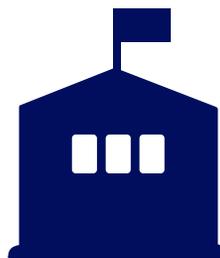


- The multi-stakeholder forum is jointly chaired by government and civil society.
- The multi-stakeholder forum includes a variety of government and non-government actors (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations, government departments, subnational governments, parliament, academics, private sector, etc.) that bring in a diverse range of views.
- The multi-stakeholder forum acts in a decision making capacity, with key decisions regarding the process and content of NAPs made jointly by its members.



- Members of the multi-stakeholder forum commit to ethical standards (e.g. honesty, transparency, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and acting in the public interest) through signing an ethics statement and conflict of interest declaration, with clear sanctions in the case of breach.

Throughout the OGP cycle...



 **When developing a National Action Plan...****Dissemination of information**

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- The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum uses a range of channels commonly used by citizens, civil society and other stakeholders, including traditional and new media (e.g. newspapers, television, radio, email, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Slack, etc.) as appropriate, to publicize the NAP development process and opportunities to get involved.
  - The government and/or multi-stakeholder forum publishes all written contributions (e.g. consultation responses) to the NAP development on the national OGP website/webpage.
  - The multi-stakeholder forum publishes, via the national OGP website/webpage, its reasoning behind the selection of commitments in the NAP, including justifications for commitment proposals not adopted.

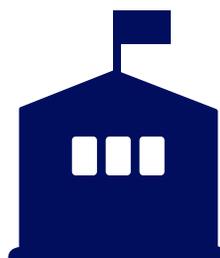
**Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation**

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- The multi-stakeholder forum engages civil society and other stakeholders in setting the agenda for the NAP. This may include selecting thematic priorities, identifying problems to resolve and/or suggesting ideas for commitments.
  - The multi-stakeholder forum ensures there are a range of opportunities available for civil society and other stakeholders to engage with developing the NAP, including a programme of outreach and engagement events around the country and online discussions.
  - The multi-stakeholder forum oversees the formation of working groups including relevant stakeholders from government, civil society and beyond to discuss and refine ideas into full draft commitments.

- The multi-stakeholder forum collects feedback from stakeholders on the draft NAP. This should be well publicized, include a range of options for stakeholders to respond (e.g. written responses, online discussions, surveys, face-to-face or remote meetings), and be open for an adequate duration.

### Co-ownership and joint decision making

- The national multi-stakeholder forum jointly designs and agrees the NAP development process (e.g. number of events, location, format), though government retains ultimate responsibility for the quality of the process.
- Commitment proposals are assessed by the multi-stakeholder forum through an open and transparent process. All parties have equal veto power over commitments included in the NAP.
- Government and civil society, via the multi-stakeholder forum, jointly agree the commitments to be included in the NAP.

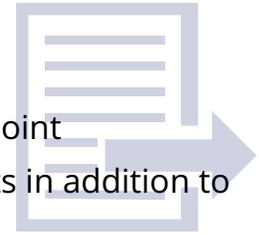




## When implementing, monitoring and reporting a National Action Plan...

### Dissemination of information

- The multi-stakeholder forum oversees the publication of regular joint government-civil society updates on the progress of commitments in addition to government self-assessment reports.
- The government publishes a dashboard on the national OGP website/webpage that provides up to date information on the status of all commitments in an accessible and easy-to-understand format for an average citizen.



### Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation

- The government holds at least a four-week public consultation on its self-assessment and proactively disseminates and promotes the public comment period through multiple channels (e.g. mailing lists of participants during NAP development and the national OGP website/webpage).
- Government provides members of civil society, through the national multi-stakeholder forum or otherwise, with regular (i.e. at least biannual) opportunities to meet with the responsible minister to review progress, the government self-assessment and IRM reports.
- Government provides an interactive space on the national OGP website/webpage for stakeholders to discuss the progress of commitments, and government responds to questions/issues within 20 days.
- If the IRM report is publicly launched, the government sends a high level representative (i.e. minister or senior official) responsible for the OGP to discuss the findings in open dialogue with other participants.



## Co-ownership and joint decision making

- Working groups including a range of relevant stakeholders are formed for implementing and monitoring each commitment, with their members selected through an appropriate methods (e.g. by the multi-stakeholder forum or through an open call).
- Government proactively organizes frequent (i.e. at least quarterly) meetings of each working group, who produce regular (i.e. at least biannual) jointly agreed progress updates on the implementation of the commitment. These updates should form the basis for the government self-assessment report.

