



Open Government Partnership and Multilateral Engagement: A Framework for Cooperation

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) welcomes engagement and cooperation with multilateral organizations seeking to support the efforts of OGP participating and aspiring countries to increase transparency, effectiveness and accountability in keeping with the principles of OGP. OGP recognizes that multi-lateral organizations have strong comparative advantages in helping achieve OGP's goals given their close linkages with governments, their presence on the ground in many OGP countries, their in-house technical expertise, their convening power—as well as their shared objectives.

Through OGP's work with multilateral organizations, it seeks to promote and enhance OGP participation for all stakeholders at the country level, and to mainstream the principles of open government throughout international policies and processes.

This framework document identifies areas in which multilateral bodies can support Open Government/OGP and provides guiding principles to help frame cooperation and engagement with OGP and stakeholders in its participating countries.

Ways Multilateral Bodies Can Assist OGP and OGP Aspirant Countries

Broadly speaking, there is a five-phase life cycle for country participation in OGP: eligibility, country action plan development, action plan implementation assessment, and finally, the development of follow-on action plans. There are many ways in which multilateral organizations can assist OGP countries, and OGP itself as an initiative, during each phase, including through the provision of funding, technical assistance, convening governments, civil society and other actors to foster learning and innovation across countries, research and data, best practices and lessons learned, and technical analysis:

- **Phase I—eligibility.** In this phase, assistance could involve working with countries that are close to attaining eligibility to improve policies, and undertake actions that will help them qualify for OGP.
- **Phase II—development and/or refinement of new and existing OGP Action Plans.** This could include sharing best practices and lessons learned for robust, effective engagement with civil society, carrying out or providing analysis related to areas in which government should seek to improve openness, or providing technical assistance to governments to help determine which reforms are contextually appropriate, ambitious, and achievable as part of their OGP Action Plans.



- **Phase III—implementation of commitments contained in Action Plans.** This would include helping governments identify the activities needed to effectively carry out each of the commitments they have made in their Action Plans, as well as helping countries set up mechanisms for carrying out the activities themselves. In particular, multilaterals can assist OGP by using their convening power and information channels to fully involve and engage civil society actors at the country level, and by helping governments to develop ways that they can more creatively and effectively engage citizens.
- **Phase IV—assessment of progress on Action Plan implementation.** Countries may want or need support in carrying out the self-assessment required of all OGP countries at the end of each 12-month implementation period, or to develop means through which to conduct periodic reviews during the implementation period to ensure implementation goals are on track.
- **Phase V—Development of follow-up Country Action** This may include technical assistance in implementing recommendations provided in IRM assessments, as well as revising current Action Plans or developing a new one.

Becoming an Official OGP Multilateral Partner Organization

Letter of Intent

All multilateral bodies interested in partnering with OGP to support OGP-related activities at the country/regional/international level should send a letter of intent to the OGP Steering Committee Co-Chairs that includes the following information:

- An endorsement by the multilateral organization of the following OGP principles and objectives:
 - **We recognize** that countries are at different stages in their efforts to promote openness in government, and that each country pursues an approach consistent with its national priorities and circumstances and the aspirations of its citizens.
 - **We accept** responsibility for seizing this moment to strengthen our commitments to promote transparency, fight corruption, empower citizens, and harness the power of new technologies to make government more effective and accountable in countries around the world.
 - **We value civic participation and commit to promoting engagement with civil society in our work with OGP participating countries.**



- **We embrace principles of transparency and open government** with a view toward achieving greater prosperity, well-being, and human dignity
 - **We acknowledge that open government is a process** that requires ongoing and sustained commitment.
 - **We will look for opportunities to lead by example** and will help contribute to advancing open government by sharing best practices and expertise to foster innovation, and not to define standards to be used as a precondition for cooperation or assistance or to rank countries.
- A commitment by the multilateral organization to operate according to the guidelines contained within this *Framework for Cooperation* for all OGP-related activities
 - A general outline of the areas in which the multilateral organization seeks to support/work with OGP, and how these objectives align with OGP's overall goals and principles and as well as those of the organization/initiative

Following receipt of this letter, the OGP Steering Committee will review and—absent any objections—approve the letter. The Co-Chairs will then send a formal letter of acceptance to the relevant multilateral partner. All approved letters of intent will be posted on OGP's website and these multilateral organizations will join the official list of OGP multilateral partners. The Steering Committee will review each partnership on a yearly basis.

After Letter of Intent

Once letters of intent have been accepted, all multilateral partners are asked to work closely with OGP governments and civil society to co-create support strategies for participating countries on a demand-led basis.

For those multilateral partners seeking to develop a more intensive, cross cutting partnership with OGP on particular themes and/or regions based on stakeholder demand, they should inform the OGP Networking Mechanism of this desire. OGP will then work with these multilateral partners to develop specific work plans to guide cooperation between them and OGP.

These work plans should be developed by multilateral partners in consultation with the NM, Support Unit Staff and the OGP Peer Learning and Support Sub-Committee of the Steering Committee. Once drafted, multilateral partners will be asked to present the work plan to the full OGP Steering Committee for consideration. Based on this presentation, the Steering Committee will then decide whether/how to proceed with such partnerships.



Guidelines for Multilateral Engagement with OGP

- 1. Multilaterals should designate a single point of contact within the organization to speak and act on behalf of the organization regarding open government and/or global partnerships.** The lean structure of the OGP Support Unit and the desire of the Steering Committee to be transparent about all relationships with external actors necessitates that OGP organize its contacts with multilaterals through one lead contact in each multilateral organization/initiative. This lead contact would be responsible for liaising with the OGP Support Unit, Networking Mechanism and Steering Committee on all issues related to activities, programs and actions related to OGP.
- 2. Multilaterals should coordinate their OGP-related efforts with the OGP Networking Mechanism.** OGP-related projects, activities and programs carried out to help countries in each of the phases described above should be coordinated with the OGP Networking Mechanism in order to avoid duplication of efforts by service providers and partners in any one country, and to provide visibility to the Steering Committee on the assistance being provided to countries by multilaterals. The OGP Networking Mechanism should be the central information clearinghouse for all multilateral partners to share updates about their current and planned activities, and to obtain information on other multilateral and bilateral engagement on OGP in particular countries.
- 3. OGP may invite partner multilateral organizations to participate in Steering Committee meetings for specific sessions as observers.** Although OGP's Articles of Governance do not allow for multi-lateral organizations to sit on OGP's Steering Committee (SC)-which is made up of an equal number of government and civil society representatives—OGP may invite key multilateral partners to Steering Committee meetings for specific sessions where it can enhance their strategic engagement with the initiative on an ongoing basis. OGP will also undertake to ensure that multilateral partners remain regularly updated regarding SC meeting discussions and decisions.
- 4. The OGP moniker should be used by multilaterals to describe activities that they pursue with countries that are specifically related to the 5 OGP life-cycle phases described above or partnerships directly brokered with OGP.** Multilateral organizations should only use the OGP moniker for activities related to eligibility and/or the development, implementation and assessment of OGP action plans. Additional efforts by multilaterals to support open government efforts in OGP countries are welcome, but should not be referred to as OGP-related unless they are explicitly linked to specific elements of a country's OGP process. Multilaterals should



also use the OGP moniker for activities related to partnerships that have been explicitly brokered between OGP and that organization.

5. Furthermore, the OGP Steering Committee recognizes that multilaterals initiatives may utilize existing programs and funding windows to support OGP governments or civil society. With this in mind, **multilaterals are strongly encouraged to focus their support around initiatives that are being developed by countries through the action plan development process** in consultation with civil society (vs. existing initiatives not directly linked to OGP efforts).

Who to Contact

The OGP Support Unit is the OGP secretariat and directly supports the OGP Steering Committee and co-chairs. For all macro-level and political conversations, the Support Unit is the best place to start.

Support Unit Contacts

Linda Frey: Linda.Frey@opengovpartnership.org / +1 415 561 7807

The OGP Networking Mechanism is a service offered by OGP to OGP governments that connects OGP governments to the world's leading open government thinkers and practitioners as a way of strengthening OGP Action Plans and their implementation. If you have ideas for ways in which your multilateral or regional organization can provide technical and/or financial support along the lines described above, the Networking Mechanism is the best place to start. (Global Integrity staffs the Networking Mechanism.)

Networking Mechanism Contacts

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