

**WEBINAR 2: DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLANS  
To the Belizean Open Government Ecosystem  
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2020**

In the framework of the Project:

**“Transformation to an Open Public Administration in Belize (2019-2021)”**

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**ABOUT CO-CREATING AND ACTIONS PLANS ACCORDING TO OGP**

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# **OGP HANDBOOK**

Rules + Guidance  
for Participants

## 3. Participation and co-creation tools

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

[OGP Participation and Co-creation Standards](#) set out requirements for engaging civil society, citizens, and other stakeholders throughout the OGP process, including:

- **Dissemination of information:** Provide the public, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders with timely information about all aspects of the OGP process, including feedback on how their input is taken into account.
- **Spaces and platforms for dialogue and co-creation:** Facilitate an inclusive and ongoing dialogue using a variety of spaces and platforms appropriate to the government context.
- **Co-ownership and joint decision making:** Government, civil society, and other stakeholders should jointly own and develop the process.

As established in the standards, these requirements reflect the often difficult realities of making open government reforms work. Past, successful reform models make clear that transformative and sustainable change require the efforts of coalitions made up of different sectors and groups, including ministers, secretaries, and officials, national and local CSOs, citizens, parliamentarians, academics, and the media.

# OGP Participation and Co-Creation Toolkit



## 4. Guidance on drafting OGP documents: Action plan and End-of-Term Self-assessment report

### 4.1 Action plans

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. As participants begin their own processes, it is important to consider the following:

- **Action plans must be submitted to the OGP Support Unit in both the administrative language of the country and English.** Not only is this mandatory, but submitting in English ensures that people from other countries can read more about your open government reforms and that learning across borders can take place.
- **The official version of your action plan is the one published on the OGP website.** If a participating government wishes to amend any part of their action plan, they must do so within one year of the original due date for submission (that is, August 31st of the next year). To change the action plan, the participating government must send an updated version, in English and in the administrative language (if applicable), to the OGP Support Unit that clearly outlines all changes.

## 4.1.1 Main Action Plan characteristics

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

- **Ambitious goals:** 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. Participating governments may choose to initiate new open government initiatives in their action plans or improve upon ongoing reforms. They are also encouraged to show clear improvement from one action plan to the next.
- **Relevant:** Participating governments should ensure that each commitment included in the action plan is clearly advancing one or more of the following open government values:
  - **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 outward-facing component (i.e., they are not solely accountable to internal systems, but also involve the public).
  - **Public participation:** Governments seek to engage citizens in a dialogue on public policies or programs, and request their input, feedback, and contributions, which 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 many benefits of increasing its capacity. Technology and innovation cannot be a stand-alone principle but must support/advance the previous three principles.
- **The SMART framework:** Assisting participating governments in seeking effective, clear, and measurable commitments:
  - **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.
  - **Answerable:** The commitment clearly specifies the main agency responsible for implementation, 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 and innovation).
  - **Time-bound:** The commitment clearly states the date when it will be completed, as well as dates for milestones, benchmarks, and other potential deadlines.

## 4.1.2 Format and length

Experience has shown that action plans comprising 5-15 high-quality commitments spread over multiple themes are more effective than those with a large number of less ambitious commitments. In 2017, the Steering Committee strongly recommended that participating governments cap the number of commitments per action plan to 20, with a suggested maximum of five milestones per commitment, with the aim of incentivising more ambitious commitments.

OGP Local participants should deliver no more than five commitments in their action plans.

Additional considerations when determining commitment format and length:

- **Clarity:** Action plans should be clear, succinct, and action-oriented, and should be written in plain language with minimal use of jargon or technical terms.
- **Holistic:** Governments are encouraged to apply a whole-of-government approach to the development and implementation of their commitments.
- **Time-bound:** All action plans should cover a two-year period, with the implementation period ending on 31 August of the second year. At minimum, each commitment should have yearly milestones, so that governments, civil society organizations, and the IRM have a common set of time-bound metrics to assess progress.
- **Extension requirements:** Commitments that will take longer than two years to implement are allowed as long as they are clearly cited in the country's next action plan and include a two-year intermediate milestone.



## OGP HANBOOK

[https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/OGP\\_Handbook-Rules-Guidance-for-Participants\\_20190313.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/OGP_Handbook-Rules-Guidance-for-Participants_20190313.pdf)

## OGP PARTICIPATION AND CO-CREATION TOOLKIT

[https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2001/01/OGP\\_Participation-CoCreation-Toolkit\\_20180509.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2001/01/OGP_Participation-CoCreation-Toolkit_20180509.pdf)

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