

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON WATER AND OPEN GOVERNMENT

Newsletter 1, January 2020

About the OGP

In 2011, government leaders and civil society advocates came together to create a unique partnership, one that combines these powerful forces to promote accountable, responsive and inclusive governance. To date, 79 countries and a growing number of local governments—representing more than 2 billion people—along with thousands of civil society organizations are members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Through the OGP, governments work with civil society to co-create 2 year action plans, with concrete steps, or commitments, across a broad range of issues to enhance transparency, accountability and public participation in government.

Invitation to join the Community of Practice

We encourage civil society, multilateral institutions and government officials to join our Community of Practice and help us achieve clean and accessible water by:

- Bringing water sector experts into the OGP commitment process at the national or local level;
- Sharing relevant tools and resources with OGP actors;
- Developing commitment ideas and supporting implementation;
- Identifying opportunities for stronger engagement between water, sanitation and open government actors including a Water and Open Government Declaration to bring the perspectives of multiple communities together to work on water, sanitation and open government.

If you are interested in joining the Community of Practice? then please contact us at WaterOpenGovernment@siwi.org

OGP and WASH (“water, sanitation and hygiene”)

[Water & Sanitation](#) is a key policy area in OGP.

As of January 2020, [59 water commitments have been adopted in OGP action plans since 2011](#). The commitments fall within 3 clusters: water and sanitation services’ transparency; water governance transparency; and citizen monitoring and feedback.

OGP offers an opportunity to:

- Civil society to directly collaborate with other reformers in government and strengthen political support for ongoing water and sanitation reforms.
- Governments in approaching WASH as a basic human right, and not simply as a service delivery issue.
- Advance knowledge sharing and lessons learned on transparency, participation and accountability reforms to public services.



Source: OGP Commitments Public Database

About the Community of Practice

In 2017, the Open Government Partnership together with [Fundación Avina](#), [Stockholm International Water Institute](#) (SIWI), [Water Integrity Network](#) (WIN), and the [World Resources Institute](#) (WRI) formed a Community of Practice on Water and Open Government, or Water Open Government (CoP). The main goal is to strengthen the links between water and open government reformers to accelerate actions guaranteeing the right to water and sanitation. The forum facilitates knowledge sharing and the development of innovative, cross-sector approaches that leverage transparency, inclusive participation, and accountable decision-making to improve water and sanitation services.

With support from the OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund, supported by the World Bank, the Water Open Government CoP goals for 2019-2021 include:

- Creating a help desk to work with interested governments on developing and implementing country specific commitments through OGP action plans.
- Creating a knowledge and exchange mechanism to provide governments and civil society with technical information and expertise needed to create transformative water and sanitation commitments.
- Producing guidance materials to help water professionals understand the OGP process and the specific opportunities to advance water reforms.
- Organizing learning events that increase data sharing, technical expertise, good practices and peer learning to boost the development and implementation of more ambitious commitments.
- Strengthening international and national coalitions that effectively use the OGP platform to push for water reforms.

Three new OGP water-related commitments in action plans from Latin America in 2019

In 2019, 2 national governments and 1 subnational government from Latin America adopted water related commitments as part of their respective OGP action plans. In **Argentina**, [Sed Cero](#) - a collective of water organizations have been coordinating the [Water Platform](#), submitted a proposal leading up to Argentina adopting its first ever OGP water commitment in September 2019. The proposal helped initiate a dialogue with the OGP national point of contact and the National Secretariat of Water Resources resulting in the adoption of [Argentina's 4th NAP commitment #7 "monitoring of drinking water and sanitation management"](#). This commitment consists of releasing data from 8 water utilities from 8 different provinces around 10 indicators to better inform the various provinces and municipalities' policies, programs and national investment plans. Citizens could also use this data for monitoring the quality of water service provision and the efficiency of water utilities. In addition, a multi-stakeholder roundtable will be held every 6 months to address relevant water related issues – including addressing coverage of water services to the rural population.

In **Mexico**, a proposal from civil society for an OGP water commitment made into the 4th OGP NAP. [Cartocritica](#) - a civil society organization which uses georeferenced data -

led the efforts for formulating an OGP water commitment for the second time in an OGP national action plan from Mexico - the first one being in its 3rd OGP NAP. This water commitment is actually part of Mexico's [4th OGP NAP water commitment #10](#) strengthening transparency of management of water, forestry and fishery resources. The responsibility for the implementation of this commitment lies in 8 public institutions and 4 CSOs working across all three natural resources (water, forestry and fisheries). This commitment includes 3 milestones: a) setting up monitoring teams made up of public institutions and civil society' for each sector; b) developing a plan and implementing the natural resources transparency index; and c) implementing the recommendations derived from the index.

OGP subnational entity member, **Colombia's** Nariño Department, adopted a water commitment as part of its [2nd action plan commitment](#) on "Environmental Democracy". Many of the social and environmental conflicts in the Nariño department are related to water issues. One of the main activities is strengthening community groups capacities to protect water resources and the release of water data with the support of the Confluencia regional por la vida del agua en Nariño (which comprises of water user associations, activists, indigenous communities, NGOs and citizens).

Gender, water and OGP

Water access, adequate sanitation and hygiene are all gender equality issues. Studies show that women are most affected by water and sanitation deficiencies. Globally, [64% percent of women](#) are still faced with the responsibility of providing water for their households.

UNICEF has highlighted that women and girls collectively spend as much as 200 million hours each day – more than 22,800 years – collecting water. Besides the huge opportunity costs, this puts them at risk of sexual abuse, disease, and missing out on school.

The CoP is committed to sharing important resources and strategies for creating transformative water commitments through the OGP and engaging actors working at the intersection of women/gender and inclusive water public service delivery. To date, only two water commitments explicitly mention women or involve women

[Uruguay's](#) 2018 – 2020 commitment around implementation of the national water plan and [Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana's](#) Sanitation Public Service commitment. We can do better!



Photo credit: Shahab Naseri, WIN Photo Competition 2019 – Winner

Blogs and other resources

Making information on the use of water resources in Chile open and transparent:

The promotion of an open government and the empowerment of citizens through co-creation processes using technology might sound like a distant goal. But, as challenging as it sounds, there are steps being taken in this direction in Chile, including in OGP action.

Innovations in water management in the city of São Paulo: the leading role of civil society:

The Metropolitan Region of São Paulo faced a grave water crisis from 2014 to 2016. Despite the gravity of the situation, the political leadership of Brazil's largest city remained mostly silent about ways it could be addressed. Seeing no one take action, Alliance for Water broke the status quo by asking a simple question: What exactly are the real responsibilities of Brazilian municipalities in the complex and multi-sectoral management of water?

CitizENGAGE: The provision of water and sanitation in the Peruvian region of La Libertad presents many problems. The government's latest commitment will ensure a sustainable and clean water supply by empowering citizens to report the status and location of water and sanitation systems. Read more [here](#).

OGP declaration

The Water and Open Government Declaration aims to shed light on the diverse perspectives of multiple communities on which targeted open government mechanisms are needed to address water and sanitation problems. The declaration will act as a united voice across multiple forums, defining targeted government commitments that need to be made in meeting global priorities and making water and sanitation for everyone, everywhere a reality. The upcoming consultations on the Declaration planned are:

- **February 2020:** Open Government Partnership Workshop in Brasilia, Brazil
- **August 2020:** World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden

The Declaration will focus on using open government to ensure accountability in water and sanitation for the most vulnerable using 4 categories of commitment areas, including:

- **Transparency:** Sharing open data on water access and quality, setting tariffs, level of service, distribution and recovering cost or investment plans.
- **Participation:** Integrating participatory and equitable

- approaches to decision-making to “leave no one behind,” participatory budgeting and contracts, citizen monitoring using technology to accelerate response.
- **Gender and Social Inclusion:** Addressing reasons for inequitable water quality and sanitation on water-stressed and marginalized communities, including people with disabilities, women, the poor and other vulnerable groups.
- **Accountability:** Improving complaint mechanisms.

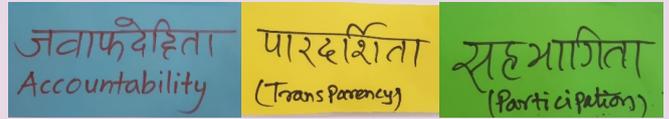


Photo credit: WIN, Nepal workshop on Water Integrity, December 2019

Within these categories, we welcome feedback on the priorities that are needed to improve water and sanitation for everyone, everywhere, by [filling out this survey](#).

For more information on the process and how you can get involved, please contact, the Community of Practice on Water and Open Government: WaterOpenGovernment@siwi.org.

Save the date(s)

Strengthening the water sector through the Open Government Partnership Workshop, February 10 and 11, 2020 in Brasilia

The CoP is collaborating this workshop with the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU) and the National Water Agency (ANA). The workshop will host officials from public policy or regulatory bodies in the water sector and officials representing the OGP from 6 Latin American countries. The event aims to:

- ◊ Promote integrity reforms in the water sector
- ◊ Highlight OGP as a relevant forum/platform in support of strengthening integrity in the water sector
- ◊ Share methodologies and tools that facilitate the identification and implementation of relevant (or linked) water commitments
- ◊ Present cases and lessons learned in the formulation and implementation of water commitments in national action plans.
- ◊ Identify interests and needs in terms of capacity building for the formulation and implementation of sound water commitments and areas for future cooperation.

CoP Webinar Series

The CoP is organizing a webinar in March, tentatively entitled “WASH and OGP – ground truthing where we are.”

This webinar is part of a larger series designed to help develop more technically robust, detailed WASH/water management OGP commitments. Other topics under consideration include

- ◊ Inclusive WASH: How to create gender transformative commitments and tools for integrating a gender-informed approach into WASH programming
- ◊ Identifying water priorities – lessons from SWA, SDGs, OECD other key water forums open government advocates should know about
- ◊ Inclusive and innovative financing sources to sustain WASH services
- ◊ Elements needed to create a transformative OGP commitments: setting goals, planning, and implementation.
- ◊ Urban WASH Sustainability – connecting commitments to local level action
- ◊ Evidence based decision making - approaches for assessing and optimizing the value of data for water governance

We want to hear from you –

Have any issues you want to present or learn more about, contact us to share ideas on other webinar topics! Stay tuned!

Open Government Week

OGP will host [Open Gov Week](#), May 3 – 10, 2020. The week will include a series of events designed to promote inclusive and accountable governance.

2019 Wrap-up!

CoP organized a session at the World Bank's 6th **Global Partnership for Social Accountability Forum** on water and public service delivery in November 2019. Entitled, *Ensuring Water and Sanitation for All: How Social Accountability Can Help Overcome Water Inequality and Empower Communities*, the session highlighted findings from a global review of evidence on accountability and innovative local accountability examples from PAMSIMAS, Indonesia's largest and longest community managed rural water program and civil society's effort to improve water management in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Strategies for using the CoP as an important accountability mechanism that can connect local water priorities to international efforts and actors was also presented.

During the Stockholm World Water Week (WWW), Aug 2019, the CoP organized a mingle event to discuss opportunities to increase transparency, participation, accountability and integrity in the water sector through OGP and to learn more about the CoP's workplan for 2019 – 2021. The World Water Week is the world's most influential movement focused on transforming global water challenges. The theme for 2019's WWW theme was *Water for Society: Including all*. At the OGP event, members of the CoP had the opportunity to discuss and explain to WWW participants why and how OGP is a key platform for countries and civil society to achieve all global water challenges.



CoP team in the launching mingle, Photo credit: SIWI, Aug 2019



Photo credit: ARTIGO 19 Brasil, Nov 2019

The CoP supported Brazilian NGO Artigo19 and other partners with a session on “*Ways to promote open government in water resource management*” as part of the IV Brazilian Open Government Meeting (EBGA) held in Brasilia in November, 2019. The key findings of the third edition of the [INTRAG](#) – the Ranking of Transparency of Water Management across the 26 Brazilian states and the Federal District – were presented. This tool assesses the availability of information concerning water management around six categories (legal framework; consumers' rights and public participation; planning process; water resource use; financing; and procurement). In addition, participants discussed the implementation of the OGP water commitment in Brazil's national action plan and ideas for future water commitments.

In December 2019, a regional workshop- **Civil society regional workshop on access to information and water** - was organized by the CoP in Montevideo (Uruguay), in partnership with La Diaria's initiative 'Río Abierto'. The workshop gathered civil society practitioners and investigative journalists working on water issues, transparency and open data from 6 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) - all of which have had or are implementing OGP water commitments. Civil society practitioners from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico shared their experiences on the OGP water commitments. The workshop assessed gaps in water access in the Latin American region underscoring the issue of limited data availability on water quality and access – particularly in rural areas. Some of the key highlights and feedback from the participants included the importance of data on water rights; tariff setting and the discrepancies around it and prioritizing areas of common interest for future collaboration.



Photo credit: Fundación Avina, December 2019