

# Making Climate Commitments through the Open Government Partnership

*A product of collaboration between the World Resources Institute and the Government of France, October 2016 (updated)  
Co-chairs of the Open Government Partnership*

## I. Why should the Open Government Partnership be used as a forum to make climate commitments?

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. The Paris Agreement provides a framework for multilateral cooperation on climate change. A central issue in the landmark Agreement is the strengthening of transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure countries make progress on achieving their national determined contributions and other commitments. One of the key areas for transparency improvement is the design and implementation of climate policies. The Paris Agreement is premised on effective:

- i. Transparency on greenhouse gas emissions, targets and their adequacy and the implementation of mitigation actions and adaptation efforts;
- ii. Transparency on the level of financial support, technology transfer and capacity building provided or received;
- iii. Transparency as part of the compliance and review process;
- iv. Transparency on policy and project level decision-making that can contribute to de-carbonisation of the economy at national, subnational and company levels;
- v. Capacity building and public participation to enhance actions under the Agreement;
- vi. Measures to ensure the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions for national climate action.

The Paris agreement also constitutes an unprecedented recognition of the role of non-State actors in tackling climate change and contributing to the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures. Responding to this opportunity, subnational entities (local authorities, cities and regions) and businesses have made thousands of climate commitments, announced at COP21.

In early October, the Agreement crossed the dual thresholds required for the Agreement to be ratified. The success of the Paris Agreement now lies in its implementation, in particular through the transposition of national contributions into strong public policies and investment plans for mitigation and adaptation.

Cooperation among actors, exchange of good practices, and access to information is central to effective implementation. The importance of transparency, participation, and accountability mechanisms is emphasized in multiple Articles of the Paris Agreement. However, the ability of citizens, stakeholders, and even other government agencies to access relevant data and information and participate in policymaking processes varies widely across parties to the Agreement.

Several Articles in the Paris Agreement require countries to develop new capacities for collecting, processing, and sharing information on country level action. They imply a similar level of effort from subnational actors that have made commitments related to climate action. They also require new levels of progressive action to facilitate public access (whether at national or subnational level) to data and information on climate change initiatives, policies and results of actions to ensure the public can participate in decision-making processes to address and respond to climate change. While the UNFCCC remains the body responsible for the preparation and the adoption of the decision on transparency and public participation, **governments can accelerate progress on these objectives by making climate action commitments in their OGP National Action Plans. City, municipal and**

**regional governments can adopt a similar approach at the local level under the OGP Subnational Government Pilot Program.**

As the incoming OGP co-chairs, the Government of France and the World Resources Institute have prioritized **climate change and sustainable development** as one of their core priorities.<sup>1</sup> This is a new thrust for the OGP. We believe open government has enormous potential to advance progress on climate action by providing open data and information as resources for citizens who wish to get involved. The modalities of the OGP, including joint government and civil society working groups, a collaborative National Action Planning process, and an Independent Reporting Mechanism support the principles and objectives of the Paris Agreement

**II. What types of climate commitments can be made?**

There are a number of different types of commitments that could be made by countries; several of these are directly applicable to subnational government authorities.

- a. **More transparent and participatory development of climate policies at the local, national and international level** (using proxy measures on both mitigation and action):
  - i. **Creating timely, robust and transparent public participation processes** that are accessible to wider stakeholders for the design of local and national climate strategies and plans, including nationally determined contributions; long-term, midcentury low emissions strategies; and other national submissions requested under the new transparency framework.
  - ii. **Ensuring a breadth of consultation** with relevant ministries, including civil society, scientists, trade unions, marginalized and vulnerable groups, local authorities and the private sector, to seek a diverse range of views and inputs. Also providing adequate notice to ensure accessibility and opportunity to engage in the preparation and submissions of national and local climate submissions to international bodies.
  - iii. **Documenting the outcome of public consultation and government responses** and all individual written comment submissions that were made available (e.g. online, through dashboards).
- b. **More open reporting on climate finance through improved budget accountability and financial transparency:**
  - i. **Improving national budget systems** to allow greater predictability of finance to be mobilized or provided in future years for climate action (for developed countries); map and better understand the international and domestic climate-related financial support available or received (for developing countries); and marshal financial resources effectively and direct them where needed to reduce emissions and/or build resilience.
  - ii. **Require national financial institutions and the private sector (investors, insurers, banks and consumers) to disclose more public information** about the financial risk of their investments and the measures adopted to manage climate risks. This can help align public and private financial flows with a zero-carbon and climate-resilient trajectory, while also increasing companies' and investors' awareness and management of the effects of climate change and climate policy.
- c. **Providing user friendly data and information regarding climate related action:**
  - i. **Creating a user-friendly public tool to track policy implementation** with critical milestones in specific sectors. Countries and subnational actors could commit to track policies through a central database that showcases progress on commitments, including toward specific

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/UNGA\\_CoChairDec\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/UNGA_CoChairDec_Eng.pdf)

- greenhouse gas targets, renewable energy, forest restoration, clean mobility, green buildings, and other policy goals and targets.
- ii. **Providing adequate and relevant climate information to the public at the policy and project level (reactively and proactively)** with a focus on usability, accessibility and publicity.
  - iii. **Making datasets publicly available in open data formats, along with climate models and scenarios, with an accessible explanation of uncertainty levels** to meet the requirements of the Doha Plan of Action that would help educate, empower and engage all stakeholders.
- d. **Measures to ensure the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions for national climate action:**
- i. **Establish national legislative frameworks** for open and inclusive climate change institutions, policy making and reporting processes;
  - ii. **Build the awareness and understanding of diverse country level stakeholders** concerning national commitments and needs for climate change policies through multiple communication channels, including for ministries (e.g., environment, energy, planning, finance, agriculture), local authorities, civil society, private sector, parliamentarians, and academia; and
  - iii. **Establish an appropriate legal and regulatory framework for the collection and supply of climate change relevant data, including from the private sector**, and build partnerships with national statistics bodies, climate research institutions, and regional centers of excellence to enhance understanding of climate change impacts. The French example of the law on energy transition, with Article 173 related to the mandatory disclosure of climate related information by companies, offers a good practice to be shared more widely.

### III. Current OGP Climate Commitments

A growing number of OGP countries have incorporated pioneering climate commitments in their respective national action plans which other countries can draw on. These include:

- i. **France:** 2015-2016 Action Plan commits to involve civil society in the COP21 conference and promote transparency regarding the agenda and negotiations; invest in Opening data sets and creating visualizations related to climate and sustainable development; provide on the platform [www.data.gouv.fr](http://www.data.gouv.fr) data, models and simulators regarding climate, energy transition; Release and publish data from impact assessment; initiate new collaborations with civil society to develop innovative solutions to meet the challenges of climate change; and open and organize dialogue between stakeholders in climate change in a participatory approach. Concrete initiatives have already been put in place like DRIAS (<http://www.drias-climat.fr>), a Météo-France-led project that opens data, models and simulations related to adaptation to climate change effects.
- ii. **Honduras:** Its 2016-2018 Action Plan commits to ensure citizen appropriation and collective action in the designing and implementation of the National Plan on Climate Change. Honduras intends to design an electronic platform by which citizens will be able to submit proposals to its next climate action plan. It also commits to build community resilience through enhanced use of technology to improve early warning systems, consult with communities to identify threats, and monitor disaster risk to build local preparedness and improve planning.
- iii. **Kenya:** In its 2016-2018 Action Plan Kenya commits to create a transparent and participatory environment for the implementation of sound climate policies as per the Climate Change Act 2016 through the development of a robust transparent multi-stakeholder consultative process to operationalize the Climate Change Act; the establishment of the multi-stakeholder Climate Change Council and Climate Change Directorate; and opening up forestry datasets,

- encouraging its reuse and the development of user-friendly data-driven applications and services by civil society organizations and the private sector.
- iv. **Macedonia:** Its 2016-2018 Action Plan commits to developing climate policies at the national level in a transparent and participatory manner, providing open access to national databases on amounts and sources of greenhouse gas emissions at national and local levels; information and data on climate change effects including relevant climate scenarios; information and data on climate change mitigation; establish appropriate legal and regulatory framework from the private sector for delivery of data relevant to climate change.
  - v. **Mexico:** Mexico's 2016-2018 Action Plan commits to reducing vulnerability and risks associate with climate variability by publishing all relevant information related to climate change impacts such as SEGOB risk atlas, INECC vulnerability atlas, projects registered with the National Infrastructure Program, assessments of environmental change, permits changes in land use, etc.), through the Interministerial Commission on Climate Change.
  - vi. **Sierra Leone:** In its 2016-2018 Action Plan commits to provide user-friendly open data and information on climate-related action, including early warning information, and a publicly available database to track policy implementation and progress towards commitments.
  - vii. **United States:** It's 2015-2016 Action Plan commits to promote open climate data around the globe by a) working with other Arctic Council member countries "inventory relevant government data and publish a list of datasets that are public or can be made public", b) stimulate partnerships and innovation by leveraging climate relevant open data to support national climate change preparedness, c) fill critical data gaps such as the publicly available high-resolution Digital Elevation Model of the Arctic and other landscapes while looking towards creating similar resources for areas of the world where high-resolution publicly available data do not yet exist and d) create a National Integrated Heat Health Information System to act as a heat early-warning system to enable public preparation and response.

#### IV. Recommendations

1. Countries should consider including transformational commitments in their NAPs to strengthen the implementation of the Paris Agreement based on the following elements:
  - i. More transparent and participatory development of climate polices at the national level;
  - ii. Releasing in open data key environmental datasets and climate models and encourage their reuse;
  - iii. Measures to ensure the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions for national climate action.

Subnational governments and local authorities can adopt a similar approach.

2. The OGP provides an opportunity for promoting open government innovations in the climate arena. Through the OGP, likeminded governments and city administrations can develop a strong and accountable process for co-creation of commitments with civil society and robust reporting through the Independent Reporting Mechanism.
3. Opportunities should be sought to promote learning and understanding on climate commitments between non-OGP member countries and OGP members. Civil society organizations can play a role in sharing lessons learnt and adoption of best practices from the OGP with the climate community.

## **ABOUT THE WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE**

WRI is a global research organization that turns big ideas into action at the nexus of environment, economic opportunity and human wellbeing. Contact WRI through:

<b>WRI</b>
Yamide Dagnet ( <a href="mailto:YDagnet@wri.org">YDagnet@wri.org</a> ); Jesse Worker ( <a href="mailto:JWorker@wri.org">JWorker@wri.org</a> ); Carole Excell ( <a href="mailto:CExcell@wri.org">CExcell@wri.org</a> )

<b>Government of France</b>
Arthur Saraiva Ferreira ( <a href="mailto:arthur.saraiva-ferreira@diplomatie.gouv.fr">arthur.saraiva-ferreira@diplomatie.gouv.fr</a> )