

OGP CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is launching an exciting new pilot program designed to more proactively involve subnational governments in the initiative. OGP is a 69 country partnership aiming to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP is looking for subnational governments with committed political and working level reformers, and engaged and energetic partners in civil society, to take part in a pilot program designed to advance open government reform.

Since its launch in 2011 OGP has worked with its 69 national government participants to develop over 100 action plans with over 2,500 specific reform commitments to open up government. These governments are using OGP to engage in peer learning and exchange with counterparts around the world, enabling the spread of new ideas and solutions to public policy challenges. OGP requires civil society organizations to be included in the co-creation of the reform commitments, meaning governments are also experimenting with new forms of open policy-making.

While OGP has learnt a lot about how to support participating governments to make ambitious commitments, share ideas and experience, and how citizens and civil society organisations are using OGP to spur change, the Steering Committee is keen to test new ways by which OGP can make progress and have an impact. The OGP pilot program for subnational governments is one way of doing that. There are numerous organisations and partnerships that work with subnational governments and we want to collaborate with them rather than try to reinvent the wheel. Conversations with some of them and people working in and around subnational governments indicate that there does seem to be space and demand for OGP to play a role and bring the model that is working nationally to a more local level.

The objectives of the pilot program are to:

- Foster more diverse political leadership and commitment from different levels of government to OGP and to hold governments accountable at a local level, where many citizens are directly accessing services and information.
- Learn how OGP can best support subnational governments in making their regions more open, accountable and responsive to their citizens and determine the best structure for subnational participation in OGP.
- Discover and promote new and innovative open government techniques and practices emerging at the subnational level around the world.

- Create practical opportunities for subnational governments to learn from each other, share experiences, and build upon the open government work of their counterparts.
- Support and empower subnational government reformers with technical expertise and inspiration and create the right conditions and incentives for them to make concrete commitments to open government.
- Broaden and deepen participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in OGP.

Program features

Pioneers' tier

Up to 10 subnational governments that are pioneers in open government will be invited to engage directly with OGP in a pilot program. Participants will receive dedicated assistance and advice from the OGP Support Unit and OGP Steering Committee to develop and fulfill independent open government commitments in action plans, in partnership with civil society organisations. They will actively contribute to peer learning and networking activities with other subnational governments.

During the pilot program the commitments and short action plans developed by the pioneers will be assessed by OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). The pilot will give OGP the opportunity to test and assess the IRM's capacity to act as the accountability mechanism for subnational government participation.

Leaders' tier

A larger network of subnational open government actors, both from civil society and local governments, that are interested in and/or already innovating around open government will be invited to participate in learning and networking events such as global and regional OGP summits. They will be encouraged to work with their national governments to develop and include subnational commitments in their respective national action plans. We are hoping this will result in an increase in the number of subnational open government commitments in national action plans by the end of the pilot period.

This approach allows us to test two methods for strengthening OGP engagement at the subnational level: first, developing specific subnational commitments on open government using OGP's existing model and support structure; and second, building a global network of subnational governments to foster peer learning and encourage closer involvement with national action plans.

Criteria

Eligible subnational governments for both tiers need to have a minimum population of 250,000 people and the national government of the country needs to be a current [OGP participant](#).

Pioneers' tier applicants also need to:

- Commit to respect the open government principles articulated in the [Open Government Declaration](#).
- Have commitment from the political leader of the subnational government and staff who can dedicate time to developing and implementing commitments in partnership with civil society.
- Have a demonstrated track record of, or commitment to, open government, for example through open data, civic engagement, access to information, budget and fiscal transparency, participatory policymaking.
- Express interest in receiving direct, institutional support from OGP to co-create commitments and advance their open government reform efforts.
- Have experience of working positively with local civil society and a commitment to protecting civic space and engaging constructively with citizens outside government.
- Have a willingness to share experience and insights with peers.
- Are willing to take on a formal mentorship role with another subnational government after year one of the pilot program is complete.

As well as being assessed against these criteria, participants will be chosen to reflect different forms of subnational government and different stages of economic and social development.

How to apply

Pioneers' tier:

Send a letter (no more than 3 A4 pages) that addresses each of the criteria set out above. The letter should be addressed to the OGP Steering Committee and signed by the political leader of the subnational government. It should be sent to [Kitty von Bertele](#) by 29 February 2016. You should also be in touch with Kitty if you want to schedule a discussion or want more information about participation.

Letters of application should be accompanied by a short letter of endorsement from 1-2 civil society organisations that you have worked with and who are interested in playing an active role in the pilot program.

Applicants should inform your national government OGP coordinator. The OGP Support Unit can provide you with their contact details.

If your subnational government is selected the OGP Support Unit will work with you to develop a timeline for the development and implementation of commitments.

Leaders' tier

If you work in or around a subnational government and are interested in being part of this wider network with access to peer learning activities and exchanges, advice and expertise, you should email [Kitty von Bertele](#) to express your interest.