



LINKING OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN MACEDONIA

About the Open Government Partnership

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. It was formally launched in September 2011.

To become a member of OGP, participating countries must:

1. Endorse a high-level Open Government Declaration;
2. Deliver a country action plan developed with public consultation; and
3. Commit to independent reporting on country progress going forward.

The Republic of Macedonia is one of the 70 participating countries that have committed to make their governments more open and accountable.

Support of 2030 Agenda

The “Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” adopted in September 2015, called on OGP countries to use “Open Government National Action Plans” to adopt commitments that could at the same time serve for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Declaration outlines the importance of OGP’s core values of transparency, accountability and citizen participation, for the 2030 Agenda’s success.

The 2030 Agenda and the OGP Agenda both seek the broad engagement of society in the process of implementation and aim to have a transformative impact on the quality of people’s lives.



Macedonia's Experience

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia joined the OGP in 2011 and has since prepared three National Action Plans for Open Government.

Aiming to maximize the benefit from OGP at national level, and keeping up with the developments of the International OGP, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, in cooperation with the Center for Research and Policy Making and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), embarked on the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the 2016-2018 OGP Action Plan.

Public awareness of the goals of the OGP and of the recently adopted SDGs was low among civil society and public servants.

As part of the objective to help implement the SDGs through the OGP Action Plan 2016-2018, it was therefore necessary to inform stakeholders about the value both initiatives can bring to our society.

Three thematic coalition-building events were organized to engage more people from civil society, the business sector and the academic community before the preparation of the first draft version of the OGP Action Plan 2016-2018 and to present the SDGs. The topics of these meetings were broad and included (1) transparency and accountability, (2) freedom of information and open data, and (3) public service.

The Second Public Consultative Meeting for the OGP AP2016-2018 gave space to better inform stakeholders about the 2030 Agenda and about its relevance for OGP. The participants were encouraged to think and propose how measures of the Open Government Partnership Action Plan may be relevant and adjusted with the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All of the measures proposed by the coalition, as well as the second draft version of the OGP Action Plan 2016-2018 were then linked with the SDGs they help achieve.

These events have significantly contributed to broad awareness raising of both the OGP and the SDGs among civil society, academia and the private sector.

Now, the majority of the measures of the OGP Action Plan 2016-2018 aligned with Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), while others matched Goal 1 (no poverty) Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), Goal 13 (climate change) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the goals).

Key highlights and achievements

The entire process set an example on how the OGP and SDG agendas can be harmonized with national policies.

The process helped identify three ways of linking the OGP and the SDGs:

- 1) Open government principles are clearly addressed in Goal 16, which aims to "build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels," and in other targets across other goals;
- 2) The principles of open government are embedded across many SDGs where transparency, participation and accountable institutions are key to achieving a particular target.
- 3) The implementation of the 2030 Agenda rests on core OGP principles. The 2030 Agenda calls for follow-up and review processes that are "open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders."

Furthermore, the OGP National Action Plan (NAP) 2016-2018 beside participatory policy-making, open data, freedom of information, preventing corruption and promoting good governance, effective public resources management (fiscal transparency) and local level openness, now contains two additional important commitments that did not exist before: public services and climate change. The measures under the commitment for public services are focused on creating and improving conditions for social services delivery by creating a model for social contracts in the areas of child protection and social services. The measures under the commitment to tackle climate change focus mainly on amending the legal framework in order to be able to seek greater responsibility from the private sector as well as to improve the availability and transparency of data around the efforts to deal with climate change.

This is a pioneering effort, which clearly paves the way for future similar efforts to be undertaken at both national and regional level.