



Search the site



DECEMBER 09, 2024

Opening the Doors to Transparent Governance

The Open Government Partnership promotes transparency, accountability, and public participation in government. Steven Hendrix discusses how this global initiative impacts governance, legal practices, and public trust.

STEVEN E. HENDRIX

[Comments \(0\)](#)

SHARE THIS:

Governments worldwide are facing growing demands for openness, transparency, and accountability.

As part of this shift, the [Open Government Partnership](#) (OGP) stands out as a pioneering international initiative committed to fostering government transparency and citizen engagement. Established in 2011, the OGP now includes 78 countries and numerous local governments, each dedicated to advancing these principles in governance.

What is the Open Government Partnership?

The OGP is an initiative founded to create more transparent and accountable governments by encouraging commitments to open government reforms. These reforms focus on four key areas: transparency, accountability, technology and innovation, and civic participation.



Steven E. Hendrix, U.W. 1987, is the principal and managing director of [Hendrix, LLC](#) in Waupaca, where he focuses on national security, foreign policy, evidence-based strategic planning and impact evaluation, executive leadership, and problem elimination.

Through these commitments, member countries aim to create a culture where the public has a voice in government decisions, ensuring that leaders serve citizens' interests rather than their own.

Countries participating in the OGP commit to a two-year cycle of developing action plans. These action plans, developed collaboratively with citizens, outline specific goals that governments intend to achieve. From combating corruption to ensuring budget transparency, the commitments are tailored to address each country's specific challenges and needs.

The OGP in the United States is administered by the U.S. Open Government Secretariat, housed within the [General Services Administration](#) (GSA). This Secretariat collaborates with other agencies, including the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to develop and oversee U.S. participation in the OGP. It focuses on crafting national action plans and promoting transparency and civic engagement at all levels of government.



Why the OGP Matters for Legal Practitioners

The OGP has significant implications for the legal field, especially in areas like compliance, transparency law, and governance. Lawyers in both private and public sectors can play a vital role in helping governments meet OGP commitments by advising on regulatory compliance, helping to craft legislation that supports transparency, and encouraging client practices aligned with open government principles.

For example, attorneys involved in government procurement might advise on transparency best practices that align with OGP standards, such as open data requirements or clear reporting mechanisms. These measures reduce the likelihood of corruption and build public trust in government processes.

Legal professionals can also assist in implementing new technologies that facilitate public access to information, ensuring the law supports an open flow of data and compliance with OGP commitments.

Success Stories: How OGP Reforms Have Impacted Governance

Several countries have seen substantial benefits from their participation in the OGP. In Brazil, open data policies have made government contracts available to the public, which has led to better monitoring of public funds and a significant reduction in corruption. In Nigeria, budget transparency initiatives have allowed citizens to monitor government spending, leading to a marked increase in government accountability and public trust.

These success stories highlight the transformative power of OGP reforms. By enhancing public access to information, governments not only improve their transparency but also enable their citizens to participate in shaping policies that directly affect their lives.

The Path Forward: Building a Culture of Openness

The U.S. has played a significant role in promoting transparency through its [commitments to the OGP](#). Since co-founding the initiative in 2011 under President Barack Obama and [through the administrations since](#), the U.S. has supported various reforms in partner countries, such as enhancing public access to government data and fostering collaboration with civil society.

Domestically, the U.S. has implemented initiatives like budget transparency and open data platforms, which serve as models for other nations. Internationally, the U.S. has pushed for anti-corruption measures, beneficial ownership transparency, and open procurement reforms, setting global benchmarks for democratic governance.

As the OGP continues to expand, the potential for meaningful, citizen-driven governance grows. For legal professionals, this means new opportunities to support and guide government entities and private clients toward compliance with open government standards. By fostering an environment where information flows freely and citizens can engage with their government, we can contribute to building stronger, more resilient democracies worldwide.

The OGP underscores the essential role of transparency and accountability in modern governance. As this initiative grows, so too does the call for legal frameworks that support these values – making it an exciting and critical time for legal professionals to engage with and support open government principles.

Conclusion: What's Next?

The OGP provides a framework for governments to become more accountable and transparent, offering legal practitioners a unique opportunity to contribute meaningfully to public governance. As this partnership grows, legal professionals have an essential role to play in helping shape and guide policies that align with these global standards.

This article was originally published on the State Bar of Wisconsin's [International Practice Section Blog](#). Visit the State Bar [sections](#) or the [International Practice Section](#) webpages to learn more about the benefits of section membership.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

SHARE THIS:

Need help? Want to update your email address?

Contact [Customer Service](#), (800) 728-7788

International Practice Section Blog is published by the State Bar of Wisconsin; blog posts are written by section members. To contribute to this blog, contact [Jaya Sharma](#) and review [Author Submission Guidelines](#). Learn more about the [International Practice Section](#) or [become a member](#).

Disclaimer: Views presented in blog posts are those of the blog post authors, not necessarily those of the Section or the State Bar of Wisconsin. Due to the rapidly changing nature of law and our reliance on information provided by outside sources, the State Bar of Wisconsin makes no warranty or guarantee concerning the accuracy or completeness of this content.

© 2024 State Bar of Wisconsin, P.O. Box 7158, Madison, WI 53707-7158.

