

Access to Information Working Group

Work Plan 2014



18/03/2014

Introduction

Increasing transparency and access to information (ATI) is at the core of OGP values and principles. Taking this into consideration, and responding to the need to create further opportunities for learning across OGP participants, as well as to encourage countries to make stronger and more ambitious commitments as part of their OGP action plans, a diverse group of countries and civil society organizations decided to combine efforts and jointly lead the OGP Access to Information Working Group (ATI WG). The group is composed by Mexico (Federal Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection), The Carter Center, Brazil (Office of the Comptroller General), the *Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información*, Indonesia (Central Information Commission) and the Centre for Freedom of Information.

The main aims of the Access to Information Working Group (ATI WG) are:

- To become a resource that helps governments in their designing and implementation of effective and ambitious commitments regarding ATI and disclosure of relevant information.
- To support the participation of key stakeholders, ATI oversight agencies, networks and civil society in the OGP ATI dialogue.

Purpose and objectives

The right of access to information is at different stages, and its legal development and implementation vary widely internationally. Thus, the ATI WG will look to engage at key moments in the fulfillment of four purposes:

- 1) To provide direction and support to ensure full compliance with the access to information eligibility criteria to governments which are not presently part of OGP but interested in joining or which are seeking to improve their ATI-related scores.
- 2) To promote an inclusive dialogue where multiple stakeholders, particularly ATI oversight bodies and civil society leaders, participate in the OGP stages (from consultation to evaluation), and actively engage in permanent national dialogue mechanisms.
- 3) To support governments that are developing their commitments or making new commitments around access to information. The ATI WG will promote the adoption of ambitious commitments that advance the national ATI agenda and lead to greater transparency and openness.
- 4) To serve as a resource and support for government agencies and civil society groups that are trying to fulfill their ATI-related commitments.

Working Group Membership

The ATI Working Group is open to interested government representatives, civil society organizations, networks, advocates of the right to access information, and any other person whose work relates to access of information.

The ATI Working Group will define its activities and move forward to the extent that participants show interest and engagement. Currently, *Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información* is working on a draft of the Articles of Governance for the ATI Working Group which will dictate the functioning of the working group.

Lead Coordinators

Juan Pablo Guerrero, Secretary General, and Tania Sánchez, General Director of International Affairs, Federal Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection

Laura Neuman, Manager of the Global Access to Information Initiative and Senior Associate Director, The Carter Center

Activities and deliverables for 2014

1. Analysis on ATI-related commitments in OGP Participating Countries First Action Plans

Date: February

**To be uploaded to the ATI WG website*

In support of Objective 3 to promote ambitious action plans, this study has been prepared as an input for the ATI WG members to provide them with factual information about the engagement of ATI commitments within OGP country's first action plans. It also provides examples of commitments that are specific, measurable, and time-bound in order to give ideas to countries preparing new action plans for 2014-15.

The note comprises the following sections:

1. *Defining key terms: Transparency, freedom of information, right of access to information, open data*
2. *The "Open Government Standards": A rating for measuring ATI commitments*
3. *What types of ATI commitments have OGP participating countries made?*
4. *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the commitments in light of the OGS?*
5. *Concluding comments*

2. Probing needs of Cohort 2 and Cohort 4 countries

Date: February-April

**Currently under implementation*

Since January, forty-six countries have begun to develop new action plans that are due in April. Taking this into consideration, and in the advancement of objective 3, the ATI WG will approach interested government representatives to ask them about the type of support they need in their drafting of commitments on access to information for their new Action Plans. This action will shed more light on the expectations of ATI WG interested countries and facilitate the definition of the activities the Group could carry out to meet countries' demands.

3. Webinar on analysis of IRM reports for Cohort 2 countries

Date: Early April

In February, the Independent Reporting Mechanism will publish progress reports for the 35 countries from to Cohort 2. The ATI WG will look into IRM findings related to ATI commitments in order to learn about countries' achievements and shortcomings, and thus propose innovative ideas and actions to tackle difficulties, as well as promoting successful experiences. The information and experiences presented at the Webinar will serve countries in the process of drafting their new Action Plans, and will support inclusive dialogue (objective 2), promote adoption of ambitious commitments (objective 3) and serve as a resource for those trying to meet their ATI-related commitments (objective 4).

4. Peer-review of draft Action Plans

Date: April

**To be uploaded to the ATI WG website*

At present, OGP participating countries are at different stages of the Action Plan drafting process. In advancement of working group objectives 3 and 4, the ATI WG proposes to provide feedback on interested government's specific commitments related to access to information. While it would be beyond the aim of this activity to assess the overall relevance or achievability of these commitments without some detailed country-specific analysis, it will be feasible in the short term to consider the extent to which the suggested commitments are specific, measurable, and time-bound.

5. Visits for exchanging experiences

Date: Tentatively scheduled in May - August

**Countries to be confirmed*

As part of its annual program for 2014, IFAI's Directorate General of International Affairs has planned to support four international visits to IFAI facilities in Mexico City that will be branded as part of the activities performed by the ATI WG. In principle, visits will aim at presenting countries' delegations

(comprised of representatives from government, the legislative and civil society) with the experience of IFAI in overseeing and upholding the right to information during a decade. Arrangements could be made to set up a roundtable or a workshop with civil society organizations of Mexico in order to share their experience in advancing the right to information agenda, and in fulfillment of working group objectives 2 and 4.

6. ATI WG panels and in-person workshops at OGP regional meetings

Date: Tentatively scheduled panels in May and side event July

**To be confirmed*

The OGP regional meetings that will take place throughout the year provide an unmatched opportunity for ATI WG members to get together, share their experiences and give mutual feedback on their Action Plan commitments and implementation. Panels comprised of ATI WG members will be organized as part of the regional workshop; and a more extensive technical workshop on topics relevant for the members will be prepared and conducted by the ATI WG. The decision on the region around which the ATI WG events will take place will be decided well in advance through consultations with the members.

Regional Meeting	Host Country	Date
Asia Pacific	Indonesia	6-7 May 2014
Europe	Ireland	8-9 May 2014
Latin and North America	Costa Rica	Late July 2014
Africa	TBC	TBC

7. Webinar

Topic to be confirmed.

8. Development of the Articles of Governance of the ATI WG

Currently, *Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información* is working on a draft of the Articles of Governance for the ATI Working Group. The Articles of Governance will dictate the functioning of the Access to Information Working Group.

ATI WG activities for 2014

ACTIVITIES OBJECTIVES	1. Analysis on ATI in First Action Plans.	2. Probing needs of Cohort 2 and Cohort 4 countries	3. Webinar on IRM reports for Cohort 2 countries	4. Peer-review of draft Action Plans	5. Visits for exchanging experiences	6. ATI WG workshops at OGP regional meetings	7. Webinar	8. Articles of Governance
1. Supporting on compliance with ATI eligibility criteria.								
2. Promoting an inclusive dialogue in the OGP process								
3. Supporting development of commitments								
4. Resource for actors trying to meet their ATI-related commitments								

ATI WG Schedule for 2014

ACTIVITIES MONTH	1. Analysis on ATI in First Action Plans.	2. Probing needs of Cohort 2 and Cohort 4 countries	3. Webinar on IRM reports for Cohort 2 countries	4. Peer-review of draft Action Plans	5. Visits for exchanging experiences	6. ATI WG workshops at OGP regional meetings	7. Webinar	8. Articles of Governance
January								
February								
March								
April								
May								
June								
July								
August								
September								
October								
November								
December								
Four visits to IFAI's facilities are scheduled to take place throughout the year. Dates to be confirmed.								

One in-person technical workshop will take place on the sides of OGP regional meetings. **Date to be confirmed.**

Access to Information Working Group

Aims

- 1 To become a resource that helps governments in their designing and implementing of effective and ambitious commitments regarding ATI and disclosure of relevant information.
- 2 To support the participation of key stakeholders, ATI oversight agencies, networks and civil society in OGP ATI dialogue.

Objectives

1	To provide direction and support to ensure full compliance with the access to information eligibility criteria to governments, which are not part of OGP or are seeking to improve their ATI-related scores.	2	To promote an inclusive dialogue where multiple stakeholders, particularly ATI oversight bodies and civil society leaders, participate in the OGP stages (from consultation to evaluation), and actively engage in permanent national dialogue mechanisms.	3	To support governments that are developing their commitments or making new commitments around access to information. The ATI WG will promote the adoption of ambitious commitments that advance the national ATI agenda and lead to greater transparency and openness.	4	To serve as a resource and support for government agencies and civil society groups that are trying to meet their ATI-related commitments.
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Activities

1				A1	Analysis on ATI-related commitments in OGP Participating Countries First Action Plans		
2				A2	Probing needs of Cohort 2 and Cohort 4 countries		
3		A3	Webinar on analysis of IRM reports for Cohort 2 countries	A3	Webinar on analysis of IRM reports for Cohort 2 countries	A3	Webinar on analysis of IRM reports for Cohort 2 countries
4				A4	Peer-review of draft Action Plans	A4	Peer-review of draft Action Plans
5		A5	Visits for exchanging experiences			A5	Visits for exchanging experiences
6		A6	ATI WG in-person workshops at OGP regional meetings			A6	ATI WG in-person workshops at OGP regional meetings
7		A7	Webinar	A7	Webinar	A7	Webinar
8	Development of the ATI WG Articles of Governance						