Independent Reporting Mechanism

Results Report: Republic of Korea 2021–2023

Open Government Partnership

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Executive Summary

Implementation of Korea's fifth action plan strengthened legislative whistleblower protections. The government also launched an online system for citizen petitions, engaged youth in policymaking, and provided access to information on government safety inspections. However, the change in administration and shift in policy priorities contributed to a reduction overall in civic participation opportunities.

Early Results

Four of 14 commitments in Korea's action plan achieved moderate early results. Commitment 6, identified as having the potential to realize the most promising results in the Action Plan Review, moderately strengthened legislative whistleblower protections. In addition, Commitment 1 went beyond its planned milestones to engage youth participation in government ministries and committees, Commitment 3 launched an online system for citizen petitions, and Commitment 12 eased access to information on government safety inspection results. Despite successful implementation, the remaining ten commitments did not produce notable open government results. This was largely due to weaknesses in the ambition and open government relevance of their initial design. Four of these commitments ended with more limited access to civic participation opportunities. Under the new administration that came into office in May 2022, the government shrank budget allocation to participatory budgeting (Commitments 4.1 and 4.2) and suspended committees for institutionalized civil society participation in government decision making (Commitments 8 and 9). None of the action plan's commitments achieved significant early results.

IMPLEMENTATION AT A GLANCE

LEVEL OF COMPLETION

13/14   **Complete or substantially complete commitments**

EARLY RESULTS

4/14   **Commitments with early results**

0/14   **Commitments with significant early results**

COMPLIANCE WITH MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Acting according to OGP process.

Completion

All but one of the action plan's 14 commitments were completely or substantially implemented, which is a similar rate to the previous action plan. This reflected an alignment between most of the commitments and existing government objectives. In many cases, commitments were implemented within the context of routine government activities. While this contributed to strong implementation, it limited early results in opening government. Commitment 9 saw limited implementation ,as the Civil Society Committee was suspended.

Participation and Co-Creation

The fifth action plan widened participation compared to previous action plan cycles. Korea's OGP efforts were coordinated by its multistakeholder forum, the Open Government Committee (OGC, formerly Open Government Forum). The Vice Minister of Interior and Safety and Transparency International Korea co-chaired the committee. Its institutional framework was upgraded from ministerial to prime ministerial level. The action plan was developed through one and a half years of online engagement and mostly reflected government-proposed initiatives. Following the co-

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creation process, the OGC expanded to include academic and private sector representatives, although civil society representatives constituted a smaller portion of the committee than the previous co-creation process.[1] Following low level of civil society engagement in developing commitments, civil society participation in implementation varied across commitments. Compared to the previous cycle, the OGP website and repository were more accessible and regularly updated with co-creation and OGC meeting records. To strengthen the OGP process, civil society could have a more active role in commitment development and implementation. Meanwhile, a more systematic and publicly reported monitoring of implementation would improve transparency.

Implementation in Context
The change of administration in 2022 and accompanying shift in policy priorities had a dampening effect on the action plan's open government results. In particular, civil society's operating environment tightened, with a worsening score for civil society repression according to the Varieties of Democracy Index.[2] Restrictions of civil society organizations weaken their participation and ability to inform, mobilize, and represent the interests of the general public. An open operational environment for civil society is key to addressing the socio-economic challenges facing South Korea.

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[1] The Open Government Committee for this action plan was composed of 8 government, 10 civil society, and 12 academia and private sector representatives. During the previous co-creation process, it was composed of 7 government and 13 civil society representatives. As of February 2024, OGC was reformulated to 23 members: 8 government, 14 academic and private sector representatives, and one civil society representative.
[2] According to the Varieties of Democracy Index (V-Dem), the Republic of Korea's score for civil society repression worsened from 2.6 in 2021 to 0.88 in 2023 (0 being worst, 4 being best). See "V-Dem Dataset v14," Varieties of Democracy Project, https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset.

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Section I: Key Observations

Observation 1: Systems for public participation were strengthened rather than participation in practice. From co-creation of the action plan to implementation of certain commitments, focus was sometimes placed on systems for public participation, rather than on actual participation. For example, during co-creation, public proposals were solicited, but the final selection of commitments were driven by government actors. For participatory budgeting (Commitments 4.1 and 4.2), milestones focused on operating participatory budgeting committees and platforms to certain specifications (annually, online channels, offline channels) but did not monitor whether these systems were understood and utilized by the public and did not include goals to improve acceptance and funding rates of public proposals. Similarly, Commitment 3 focused on making various public participation platforms available but did not follow through to ensure that the platforms were widely publicized or utilized.

Observation 2: The space for civil society participation in government decision making narrowed. With the change of administration in 2022, the space for civil society participation in government decision making narrowed. A clear indication of this is that three of the action plan's four civic participation commitments fell short of their targets. Commitments 4.1 and 4.2 aimed to improve participatory budgeting, but many local governments decreased their participatory budgets in 2022 and 2023. Despite Commitment 8, the Presidential Decree which temporarily provided the legal basis for the Public-Private Consultative Councils for Transparent Society expired in 2023 with no current plans for extension. Likewise, despite Commitment 9, the Civil Society Committee was disbanded in 2023 and civil society members of the 2050 Carbon Neutral Green Growth Committee halved.[1] Unilateral suspension of these committees by the government was viewed as indicative of a decline in government openness to engage in deliberative dialogue with civil society.[2] The shrinking space for civil society organizations is likely to be amplified. If civil society organizations that specialize in certain areas of governance (e.g., participatory budgeting, climate change) are constrained, not only does their own participation suffer, but also their ability to inform, mobilize, and represent the public interest is hampered. Another indication of shrinking civic space is the government's comprehensive audit of civil society organizations since 2022, which various civil society representatives criticized as being conducted in order to "tame" and "suppress" civic groups.[3]

Observation 3: The shift to digital is both an opportunity and a challenge to the quality of civic participation. In line with the government's broader prioritization of digital transformation, Korea's OGP action plans emphasize digital commitments and mechanisms. Korea presents its action plan as comprised of three pillars: anti-corruption, civic participation, and digital (this omits the OGP value of transparency). The fifth action plan included 7 digital commitments (3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13). Two Open Government Committee members noted that digital mechanisms can be a way to promote civic participation in an efficient, cost-effective manner—as the current administration has diminished in promoting civic participation and continues to prioritize digital mechanisms to enhance governance.[4] In terms of efficacy, digital platforms can accommodate significantly more participants. Thousands can comment on a policy online versus several dozens or hundreds that typically participate in an offline town hall session. On the other hand, digital participation can be shallower. For instance, comments on discussion boards for participatory budgeting proposals are typically cursory and stand-alone, not iterative.[5] Moving forward,

reformers can consider pathways to make digital participation channels more iterative and deliberative and reframe their use as a supplement—not replacement—of offline channels.

Observation 4: Open government information needs to be better organized and curated to be more useful. The Republic of Korea has made great strides in opening access to government information since the Open Data Act came into effect in 2013. By the end of 2022, the government had opened 77,000 pieces of data (estimated at more than 87,000 pieces of data as of 2023)—a 15-fold increase since 2013.[6] Private use of open government data increased by more than 3,300 times since 2013, reaching 31.55 million downloads and open API applications by 2022. These efforts brought Korea to rank first within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for public data provision in 2015–2020. Civil society OGC members have commended government's continued, planned, and proactive release of information, but also noted the need for better curation of open government data so that it is more useable for the public.[7] Sometimes, for a single topic, different types of information are provided via different data providers, making it difficult for users to grasp a comprehensive view. One example is information on OGP, which is spread between the OGP repository and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety website without cross-linking. Public-private open data initiatives, like those under Commitment 13, can be a participatory way to tidy and curate data. However, open data advocates note that this approach would need more systematic coordination and funding from the government for sustainability. Thus, in addition to quantitative expansion, it is advisable for the government to take steps to improve the quality and curation of its open data.

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[1] "윤석열 정부의 '시민사회 활성화 대통령령' 폐지를 반대한다," [We oppose the abolition of the 'Civil Society Activation Presidential Decree' by the Yoon Seok-yeol government], People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, 14 September 2022, https://www.peoplepower21.org/solidarity/1912379; Nam Jong-young & Kim Yun-ju, "'신속한 의사결정'에서 시민은 빠져라? '그들만의 리그' 된 탄녹," [Are citizens excluded from 'rapid decision-making'? Tannokwi becomes a 'league of their own'], Hankyoreh, 26 October 2022, https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/environment/1064356.html.

[2] Seon Dam-eun, "정부, 시민사회위원회 폐지 수순...시민사회 '민관 협치 붕괴'," [Government takes steps to abolish civil society committees... Civil society 'collapse of public-private cooperation'], Hankyoreh, 6 September 2022, https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/assembly/1057810.html.

[3] Jeong Jeong-yong, "시민단체 감사 강화, 의도성 있는 압박 아니길," [Strengthening audits of civic groups, hope this is not intentional pressure], Gwangju Dream, 11 June 2023, https://www.gjdream.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=629042; Lim Min-jeong, "尹정부, 시민단체에 칼날...바로잡기인가, 진보단체 줄세우기인가," [The government and civic groups are on the edge of the knife... Is it a correction or a line of progressive groups], Nocut News, 30 December 2022, https://www.nocutnews.co.kr/news/5872195.

[4] Kweon O-hyeon (Code for Korea), interview by IRM researcher, 18 October 2023; Park Ji-hwan (Open Net), correspondence with IRM researcher, 4 December 2023.

[5] "단계별 사업진행 현황" [Step-by-Step Project Progress], Ministry of Strategy and Finance, accessed 13 September 2024, https://www.mybudget.go.kr/howsItPrcsng/bsnsPropseSttusList.

[6] "공공데이터 개방," [Open Government Data], Ministry of the Interior and Safety Digital Government Office, accessed 4 March 2024, https://www.mois.go.kr/frt/sub/a06/b02/openData/screen.do; Park Hyun-jin, "'공공데이터의 미래 발전 방향을 모색하다'....행안부-NIA, 공공데이터법 제정 10 주년 기념식 및 발전 심포지엄 개최," [Exploring the future development direction of public data... Ministry of Public Administration and Security-NIA hold 10th anniversary ceremony and development symposium on the enactment of the Open Data Act], AI Times, 18 October 2023, https://www.aitimes.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=29140.

[7] Park Ji-hwan (Open Net), interview by IRM researcher, 17 October 2023.

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Section II: Implementation and Early Results

The following section looks at the commitment that the IRM identified as having the strongest results from implementation. To assess early results, the IRM referred to commitments or clusters identified as promising in the Action Plan Review as a starting point. After verification of completion evidence, the IRM also took into account commitments or clusters that were not determined as promising but that, as implemented, yielded predominantly positive or significant results.

Commitment 6: Whistleblower Protection
Implementing Agency: Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission Protection and Reward Policy Division

Context and Objectives
This commitment continued more than a decade of legislative strengthening to support and protect whistleblowers, starting with the 2008 Act on Anti-Corruption (which guides public sector whistleblowing) and the 2011 Act on Protection of Public Interest Reporters (which guides private sector whistleblowing). Specifically, this commitment aimed to amend the Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (which governs whistleblowers reporting on public sector actors) and the Protection of Public Interest Reporters Act (which governs whistleblowers reporting on private sector actors). Since the Act's introduction in 2008, the legislative environment for whistleblowing has strengthened, combined with increased public awareness of the protection system for whistleblowers.[1] In this period, whistleblower reports increased significantly (from 2,821 in 2011 to 9,858 in 2023).[2] From 2011 to the end of 2023, 13,310 of the 121,519 cases reported by corruption and public interest whistleblowers were confirmed as violations.[3]

Early Results: Moderate
In January 2022, the Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission was amended and aligned with the Act on Protection of Public Interest Reporters to provide similarly high levels of protection. For anti-corruption whistleblowers, the amendment reduced liability by laying the legal grounds for public institutions to reduce disciplinary actions or administrative measures against whistleblowers or exempt them from such disciplinary actions or administrative measures without the commission's request.[4] It also supported non-real name proxy reporting so that anti-corruption whistleblowers can file reports in the name of a lawyer without revealing personal information.[5] For public interest reporters, these protections had previously been amended in 2018. Additionally, for both public interest and anti-corruption whistleblowers, the amendment expanded relief funds to cover expenses incurred in the civil and criminal litigation procedures resulting from whistleblowing, including providing financial support (including attorney fees) when the whistleblower is charged with false accusations, defamation, or obstruction of business.[6] One of the targeted legislative amendments—to strengthen confidentiality by creating effective sanctions for negligent disclosure—was completed just for the Act on Protection of Public Interests Reporters in February 2024 (beyond the action plan period).[7]

The legislative amendments had moderate results on support for whistleblowers. Transparency International – Korea noted that these were necessary for whistleblower protection's legislative framework.[8] The amendments contributed to increasing rewards and relief funds granted to

cover losses incurred by whistleblowers as a result of reporting.[9] The number of whistleblowers applying for protection largely remained stable, with 270 in 2019, 285 in 2020, 287 in 2021, 289 in 2022, and 297 in 2023.[10] However, the amendments did not lead to an increase in the acceptance rate for whistleblower protection applications, with a notable drop in rates beginning in 2021 documented by an Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission White Paper.[11] According to People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, one-third of whistleblowers granted protective measures were still penalized.[12] Meanwhile, Korea's defamation law remains a key obstacle, as corrupt individuals and entities deter charges against themselves using the threat of criminal prosecution for defamation.[13] The law penalizes even true statements against perpetrators/violators unless the statements are found to be "in the public interest."[14] Overall, whistleblower protection cases' processing times and withdrawal rates have increased since 2018.[15]

Transparency International Korea and Justice Solidarity note the continued necessity to foster broader society-wide respect for the whistleblower system, including by prosecutors, courts, and the general public.[16] In addition to further legislative strengthening, greater efforts are needed to strengthen compliance with and enforcement of the whistleblower system. Unless supplemented by such efforts, legislative amendments will not be able to fully achieve their objectives in promoting whistleblowing and anti-corruption.

Looking Ahead
This commitment is continued in Korea's 2023–2027 OGP action plan, which plans to pursue legislative amendments to expand and rationalize whistleblower protection. Protection will be expanded by amending the Act on Protection of Public Interest Reporters to add 19 laws to the list of laws subject to public interest whistleblower protection (492 currently, up from 180 in 2011).[17] Five laws covering five different types of whistleblower reports will be amended to unify compensation standards, specifically the Act on Anti-Corruption (covers public sector corruption), the Act on Protection of Public Interest Reporters (covers private sector violations of public interest), the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act (covers fraudulent claims), the Public Fund Recovery Act (covers fraudulent solicitation), and the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants (covers conflict of interest). This ongoing commitment offers an opportunity to continue closing the gaps in whistleblower protection legislation. However, as implementation of the fifth action plan's commitment shows, legislative protections must be accompanied by stronger implementation and enforcement, as well as efforts to build longer-term cultural acceptance of whistleblowers as protectors of the public interest.

[1] Han Joo-seong, "2022 년도 공공기관 공익신고 처리 및 제도 운영 현황 브리핑," [2022 Public Institution Public Interest Report Processing and System Operation Status Briefing], Public Speaks News, 5 July 2023, https://www.psnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=2028249.

[2] "2022 ACRC Annual Report," Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, 12 July 2023, https://www.acrc.go.kr/boardDownload.es?bid=134&list_no=46008&seq=2.

[3] "2022 ACRC Annual Report," Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission; Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, "국민권익 백서" [Civil Rights and Interests White Paper], 2023, https://www.data.go.kr/data/15033709/fileData.do.

[4] See Article 66 in: "부패방지 및 국민권익위원회의 설치와 운영에 관한 법률," [The Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission], Ministry of Government Legislation, 22 June 2023, https://www.law.go.kr/법령/부패방지 및 국민권익위원회의 설치와 운영에 관한 법률.

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[5] See Article 58-2 in: "The Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission," Ministry of Government Legislation.

[6] See Article 68 in: "The Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission," Ministry of Government Legislation; Ministry of the Interior and Safety, "제 5 차 열린정부 실행계획(2021~2023) 추진 실적," [Performance of the 5th Open Government Action Plan 2021–2023], Innovation24, 30 August 2023, https://www.innovation.go.kr/ucms/bbs/B0000034/view.do?nttId=13008&menuNo=300105&searchType=&searchType=&pageIndex=1; Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, correspondence with IRM researcher, 15 November 2023.

[7] See Article 12 in: "공익신고자 보호법," [Act on Protection of Public Interest Reporters], Ministry of Government Legislation, 6 February 2024, https://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=260033&lsId=&efYd=20240206&chrClsCd=010202&urlMode=lsEfInfoR&viewCls=lsRvsDocInfoR&ancYnChk=0.

[8] Lee Sang-hak (Transparency International Korea), interview by IRM researcher, 17 October 2023.

[9] Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, "국민권익 백서" [Civil Rights and Interests White Paper].

[10] Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, "국민권익 백서" [Civil Rights and Interests White Paper].

[11] Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, "국민권익 백서" [Civil Rights and Interests White Paper].

[12] Choi, "If you file a public interest report, will you protect it? "Not even half of the applications for protection will be accepted," Hankook Ilbo.

[13] Lee Sang-hak (Transparency International Korea), interview by IRM researcher, 17 November 2023; Kim Eun-hae, "정의연대, "명예훼손죄 비범죄화" 민사로 통합해야," [Justice Solidarity, "Decriminalization of defamation should be integrated into the Civil Code"], Indi Focus, 3 January 2022, http://www.indifocus.kr/34871.

[14] "Criminal defamation provisions threaten freedom of expression," Article 19, 10 May 2018, https://www.article19.org/resources/south-korea-repressive-criminal-defamation-provisions-threaten-freedom-of-expression.

[15] Lee Jae-hyuk, "'신고자 스스로 보호 포기'…권익위 보호신청, 평균 처리기간 늘자 취하율 '급증'," ["The reporter himself waived protection"… Protection application from the ACRC, withdrawal rate 'soared' as average processing time increased], MD Today, 10 October 2023, https://mdtoday.co.kr/news/view/1065572197106557.

[16] Lee, interview, 17 November 2023; Kim, "Justice Solidarity, 'Decriminalization of defamation should be integrated into the Civil Code'," Indi Focus.

[17] Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, correspondence; Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, "국민권익 백서" [Civil Rights and Interests White Paper].

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Section III. Participation and Co-Creation

Participation in the OGP process widened during the fifth action plan cycle compared to previous action plan cycles. To further improve the process, efforts could strengthen civil society leadership in commitment development and implementation. More systematic and publicly reported monitoring of implementation would benefit transparency.

Korea's OGP efforts are coordinated by the Open Government Committee (OGC), the country's multistakeholder forum, which is co-chaired by the Vice Minister of Interior and Safety and an elected non-government member. During the co-creation process, it was composed of 7 government and 13 civil society representatives, like the previous cycle. In August 2021, with enactment of the Regulations on the Establishment and Operation of the Open Government Committee of the Republic of Korea, its membership expanded to include 8 government and 22 non-government representatives (comprised of 13 from civil society organizations, 6 from the academia, and 3 from the private sector).[1] Some non-government members noted that civil society representatives constituted a smaller portion of the new committee than the previous committee.[2] This trend continued in 2024, with the new MSF comprising 8 government and 15 non-government representatives, of which 14 are from academia and the private sector, and only 1 is from civil society.[3] The 2021 regulations also decreased the frequency of OGC meetings from quarterly to bi-annual. At the same time, the OGC institutional framework was upgraded from the ministerial to prime ministerial level.[4]

This action plan was developed through one and a half years of online engagement and mostly reflected government-proposed initiatives. Through the public call for proposals released in March 2020, the government received 140 proposals that were later reviewed by OGC. However, most of the final commitments were suggested by government agencies. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all OGC activities were conducted online. Budget and time for deliberation were some of the challenges that negatively affected the inclusion of civil society proposals in the final plan. Civil society participation during the co-creation process was largely limited to OGC members. The OGC mandate did not ensure strong participation by implementing agencies.[5]

The OGC met regularly during the implementation period and monitored commitments' progress. However, following a low level of civil society engagement in developing commitments, civil society engagement in implementation varied across commitments. In terms of design, none of the commitments explicitly identified a civil society stakeholder as a lead implementer or other actor involved. While civil society stakeholders did directly contribute to components of implementation for a few commitments (8, 9, and 13), many commitments did not include direct civil society participation. In those cases, civil society's role was limited to providing advice and monitoring implementation through OGC meetings. In interviews with the IRM, OGC members were not aware of the overall action plan's progress and were more likely to be informed of only one or two commitments.[6]

In terms of public access to information on the process, compared to the previous cycle, the OGP website and repository were more accessible and regularly published co-creation and OGC meeting records.[7] However, monitoring of progress was not sufficiently systematic, with results only documented and published at the end of the action plan period.[8]

Compliance with the Minimum Requirements
The IRM assesses whether member countries met the minimum requirements under OGP's Participation and Co-Creation Standards for the purposes of procedural review. During co-

creation, the Republic of Korea acted according to the OGP process. The two minimum requirements listed below must achieve at least the level of 'in progress' for a country to have acted according to OGP process.

Key:
- Green = Meets standard
- Yellow = In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)
- Red = No evidence of action

Acted according to OGP process during the implementation period?	
The government maintained an OGP repository that is online, updated at least once during the action plan cycle, and contains evidence of development and implementation of the action plan. The OGP website and repository regularly published co-creation and OGC meeting records.[9] Implementation results were published at the end of the action plan period, but prior to that were not systematically published.[10]	Yellow
The government provided the public with information on the action plan during the implementation period. The government provided non-government OGC members with information on commitment progress at OGC meetings. Public records of these OGC meetings were regularly published on the OGP website[11] and implementation results were published at the end of the action plan period.[12]	Green

[1] "Open Government Committee Meeting Records," 27 August 2021.

[2] Lee Sang-hak (Transparency International Korea), interview by IRM researcher, 17 October 2023; Park Ji-hwan (Open Net), interview by IRM researcher, 18 October 2023; Kweon O-hyeon (Code for Korea), interview by IRM researcher, 18 October 2023.

[3] "대한민국 열린정부위원회," [Open Government Committee], Innovation24, accessed 27 March 2024, https://innovation.go.kr/ucms/main/contents.do?menuNo=300165#.

[4] "Republic of Korea Action Plan Review 2021–2023," Open Government Partnership, 21 June 2022, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/republic-of-korea-action-plan-review-2021-2023.

[5] "Republic of Korea Action Plan Review 2021–2023," Open Government Partnership.

[6] Lee, interview; Park, interview; Kweon, interview; Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, interview by IRM researcher, 31 October 2023.

[7] "OGP Repository," Innovation24, https://www.innovation.go.kr/ucms/pcyDta/pcyDta/search.do?searchType=5&menuNo=300193&sort=01&searchCnd=&pageIndex=1&searchWrd=.

[8] Ministry of the Interior and Safety, "제 5 차 열린정부 실행계획(2021~2023) 추진 실적," [Performance of the 5th Open Government Action Plan 2021–2023], Innovation24, 30 August 2023, https://www.innovation.go.kr/ucms/bbs/B0000034/view.do?nttId=13008&menuNo=300105&searchType=&searchType=&pageIndex=1.

[9] "OGP Repository," Innovation24.

[10] Ministry of the Interior and Safety, "Performance of the 5th Open Government Action Plan 2021–2023," Innovation24.

[11] "OGP Repository," Innovation24.

[12] Ministry of the Interior and Safety, "Performance of the 5th Open Government Action Plan 2021–2023," Innovation24.

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Section IV. Methodology and IRM Indicators

This report supports members' accountability and learning through assessment of (i) the level of completion for commitments' implementation, (ii) early results for commitments with a high level of completion identified as promising or that yielded significant results through implementation, and (iii) participation and co-creation practices throughout the action plan cycle. The IRM commenced the research process after the first year of implementation of the action plan with the development of a research plan, preliminary desk research, and verification of evidence provided in the country's OGP repository.[1]

In 2022, OGP launched a consultation process to co-create a new strategy for 2023–2028.[2] The IRM will revisit its products, process, and indicators once the strategy co-creation is complete. Until then, Results Reports continue to assess the same indicators as previous IRM reports:

Completion
The IRM assesses the level of completion for each commitment in the action plan, including commitments clustered in the Action Plan Review.[3] The level of completion for all commitments is assessed as one of the following:
- *No Evidence Available*
- *Not Started*
- *Limited*
- *Substantial*
- *Complete*

Early Results
The IRM assesses the level of results achieved from the implementation of commitments that have a clear open government lens, a high level of completion or show evidence of achieving early results (as defined below). It considers the expected aim of the commitment prior to its implementation, the specific country context in which the commitment was implemented, the specific policy area and the changes reported.

The early results indicator establishes three levels of results:
- **No Notable Results:** According to the evidence collected (through desk research, interviews, etc.), the implementation of the open government commitment led to little or no positive results. After assessing the activities carried forward during the period of implementation and its outcomes (if any), the IRM did not find meaningful changes towards:
  - improving practices, policies or institutions governing a policy area or within the public sector, or
  - enhancing the enabling environment to build trust between citizens and the state.
- **Moderate Results:** According to the evidence collected (through desk research, interviews, etc.) the implementation of the open government commitment led to positive results. After assessing the activities carried forward during the period of implementation and its outcomes, the IRM found meaningful changes towards:
  - improving practices, policies or institutions governing a policy area or within the public sector, or
  - enhancing the enabling environment to build trust between citizens and the state.

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- **Significant Results:** According to the evidence collected (through desk research, interviews, etc.) the implementation of the open government commitment led to significant positive results. After assessing the activities carried forward during the period of implementation and its outcomes, the IRM found meaningful changes towards:
    - improving practices, policies or institutions governing a policy area or within the public sector, or
    - enhancing the enabling environment to build trust between citizens and the state. Significant positive results show clear expectations for these changes (as defined above) will be sustainable in time.

This report was prepared by the IRM in collaboration with Nancy Kim and was reviewed by Thomas Kalinowski, IRM external expert. The IRM methodology, quality of IRM products and review process is overseen by the IRM's International Experts Panel (IEP). The current IEP membership includes:

- Snjezana Bokulic
- Cesar Cruz-Rubio
- Mary Francoli
- Maha Jweied
- Rocio Moreno Lopez

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual[4] and in the Republic of Korea's Action Plan Review 2021-2023. For more information, refer to the "IRM Overview" section of the OGP website.[5] A glossary on IRM and OGP terms is available on the OGP website.[6]

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[1] "OGP Repository," Innovation24, accessed 2 February 2024, https://www.innovation.go.kr/ucms/pcyDta/pcyDta/search.do?searchType=5&menuNo=300193&sort=01&searchCnd=&pageIndex=1&searchWrd=.
[2] See "Creating OGP's Future Together: Strategic Planning 2023–2028," Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/creating-ogps-future-together/.
[3] The IRM clusters commitments that share a common policy objective during the Action Plan Review process. In these instances, the IRM assesses "potential for results" and "early results" at the cluster level. The level of completion is assessed at the commitment level. For more information on how the IRM clusters commitments, see Section IV on Methodology and IRM Indicators of the Action Plan Review.
[4] "IRM Procedures Manual, v3," Open Government Partnership, 16 September 2017, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual.
[5] "IRM Overview," Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm-guidance-overview.
[6] "OGP Glossary," Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/glossary.

Annex I. Commitment Data[1]

Commitment 1: Engage youth in policymaking and strengthen overseas networking

• **Verifiable: Yes** • **Does it have an open government lens? Yes** • **Potential for results:** Modest	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** Moderate

This commitment aimed to expand opportunities for youth to participate in policy making. Since 2019, the Citizen's Coalition for Better Government (an Open Government Committee member) holds an annual open application and interview process to recruit and convene a Youth Working Group which takes part in establishing, implementing, and assessing OGP action plans. The working group comprised 100 members in 2019[2] and continued to operate during the implementation period.[3] As OGP Co-Chair for 2020–2021, Korea held a special Youth Summit during the 7th OGP Global Summit in December 2021. An international youth network was established through the OGP Youth Summit, which was further strengthened through a Youth Debate held during the Open Government Week in May 2023.[4] All milestones were completed. The Government of Korea also went beyond the agreed commitment by having the Youth Working Group convey youth perspectives to all government ministries. From 2020 to 2023, it was gradually expanded to about 480 youth by August 2023 (20 representatives for each of the 24 ministerial agencies).[5] In addition, in March 2023, Article 15 of the Framework Act on Youth (promulgated February 2020) was amended to require at least three-tenths youth representation for committees that primarily deal with youth policies.[6]

Commitment 2.1: Improve gender diversity in all sectors of society

• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes • **This commitment has been clustered as**: Social Inclusion (Commitments 2.1 and 2.2) • **Potential for results:** Unclear	• **Completion:** Substantial • **Early results:** No Notable Results

This commitment aimed to increase women's participation and representation in the public sector. By the end of 2022, Korea met or exceeded women's appointment targets for certain categories of public officials as set out in the Plan to Enhance Gender Representation in the Public Sector.[7] The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) published the progress on appointment targets semi-annually. Overall, this resulted in small increases in the percentage of women government committee members, senior civil servants, director-level officials of central and local government, executives and managers of public organizations, managers of local public enterprises, national university professors, school principals and vice principals, as well as military, police, and coast guard officers. However, as the targets were modest, the commitment did not achieve sufficient proportional representation to empower women in government decision-making (representation rates and targets are listed in the endnote below).[8] As such, women's participation rate in Korea's public sector remained among the lowest in the OECD,[9] with a particularly acute for women from marginalized groups. Moving forward, a need to ambitiously increase diverse women's leadership in government remains.

Open
Government
Partnership

Independent
Reporting
Mechanism

The commitment also worked to increase women's participation and representation in the private sector. However, this did not have an open government lens. The MOGEF researched and disclosed the gender makeup of listed corporations' executives once during the implementation period in August 2021 (4% in 2019, 4.5% in 2020, and 5.2% in 2021).[10] This fell short of the commitment's planned regular disclosures. The ministry also provided Gender-Balanced Inclusive Growth consulting to 19–40 companies per year and signed voluntary "Gender-Balanced Inclusive Growth Partnership" agreements with 89 companies in 2020. As of November 2020, there were 100 voluntary agreements.[11] While not a planned milestone, the 2020 revision of the Capital Market Law to require companies with assets of more than 2 trillion won to have gender-diversified boards (i.e., not comprised on a single gender) also contributed to an increase in the number of women executives in the private sector.[12] However, women's inclusion in Korea's private sector also remained among the lowest in the OECD.[13]

Commitment 2.2: Expand balanced personnel management by enhancing representation of the disabled in the public sector

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes
- **This commitment has been clustered as**: Social Inclusion (Commitments 2.1 and 2.2)
- **Potential for results:** Unclear

- **Completion:** Complete
- **Early results:** No Notable Results

This commitment aimed to enhance the representation of people with disabilities in the public sector. The Ministry of Personnel Management (MPM) increased the share of people with disabilities recruited into the public sector slightly beyond the mandatory employment quota. While the quotas were 3.4%, 3.6%, and 3.6% respectively for 2021, 2022, and 2023, actual recruitment rates were 5.6% and 4.3% respectively for 2021 and 2022.[14] Figure for 2023 was not yet available at the time of writing this report. Both the increase and ultimate recruitment rates of persons with disabilities into the public sector were marginal. The MPM also began groundwork to improve public sector working conditions, conducting surveys among public sector retirees with severe disabilities in 2022 (internal report) and public officials with disabilities in 2023 (public report), as well as expanding support services and auxiliary devices.[15] All milestones of this commitment were completed, but they did not achieve notable results. To open government decision-making to this underrepresented group, reformers could pursue much higher recruitment rates and wider types of participation opportunities. For instance, advocates could support the adoption of a comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Law.[16]

Commitment 3: Engage citizens in policymaking

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes
- **Potential for results:** Modest

- **Completion:** Substantial
- **Early results:** Moderate Results

All the commitments' milestones related to the petition system were completed. The Enforcement Decree of the Petition Act was enacted in December 2021. In addition to provisions requiring state institutions to form petition councils to increase the objectivity and fairness of processing petitions, petitioners to be notified of their petition status, and enabling

open and public petitions, the decree also mandated the establishment of an online petition system.[17] The system, Cheongwon24, began operating in December 2022. Petitioners can file petitions related to all central government agencies via this online system.[18] Though the history of petitions in Korea dates back to the Joseon dynasty and was codified as a right in the 1948 Constitution, the cumbersome mail or in-person application process resulted in an average of just five petitions per month in 2020.[19] Following the launch of Cheongwon24, the average number of petitions jumped to more than 2,000 cases per month.[20] This is one of many existing government platforms for public participation. The IRM does not have evidence of changes in government uptake of the policy reforms that the petitions supported.

The commitment also attempted to improve other public participation platforms albeit with mixed progress. The Gwanghwamun 1st Street Open Communication Forum continued to operate, rebranded by the new administration to Communication 24 (www.sotong.go.kr). Its functions were expanded to include publicizing and ensuring fairness and transparency of public contests, in accordance with the Regulations on the Operation of Contests by Administrative Agencies.[21] In terms of the milestone on establishing a pre-notification system, a Public Participation Schedule is available on the Communication 24 platform, which allows people to sign up for pre-notification services on the popular mobile messaging application Kakao Talk.[22]

The milestone to connect different platforms to enable people to participate more easily was not fully completed. By February 2024, the Communication 24 platform listed links to 56 public participation sites, including 15 regional and 14 local government platforms, so that users can search for public hearing and input opportunities across these different platforms.[23] Such opportunities are likely to increase with the revision of the Administrative Procedure Act to allow online (in addition to on-site) public hearings.[24] However, according to the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, there are no plans to link other central government-run platforms.[25] The Yoon administration's Presidential Transition Committee previously announced that it would create a single public participation window by merging Blue House National Petition, Communication 24, People's Newspaper, People's Thoughts, and local government platforms. Instead, the new policy seems to be to operate and take advantage of the specialized services of the various platforms e.g., civil complaints via People's Newspaper, official petitions via Cheongwon24, policy proposals via People's Thoughts, and public participation and deliberation opportunities via Communication 24.[26]

Moving forward, in lieu of full integration of these platforms, several OGC members recommend, at the very least, publicizing a clear explanation of the different types of participation opportunities and which agencies or platforms to use (e.g., civil complaints via "People's Newspaper").[27] Code for Korea noted that ideally the system should operate like a mailbox which allows people to mail different kinds of letters through one channel to then be delivered to the appropriate responsible agencies.[28] Further work is also needed to ensure smooth public participation by clarifying and, if needed, connecting and referring different public participation opportunities and platforms.

Commitment 4.1: Expand participatory budgeting

• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes • **This commitment has been clustered as**: Participatory Budgeting (Commitments 4.1 and 4.2)	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** No Notable Results

Open Government Partnership

Independent Reporting Mechanism

• **Potential for results:** Substantial	

This commitment's milestones were completed but early results were offset by a contraction in annual national participatory budgeting. The Participatory Budgeting Citizen's Committee, comprised of one to two thousand people (size and composition by gender, vulnerability status, age, and residence determined in accordance with the population census) solicited citizen inputs for participatory budgeting annually.[29] The Ministry of Economy and Finance coordinated relevant ministries and the Participatory Budgeting Citizen's Committee to: (i) solicit proposals from the public for possible inclusion in the following year's national budget (January–February); (ii) examine and determine projects eligible for consideration as well as respond to all proposals (February–March); (iii) facilitate online public discussion and voting to narrow eligible proposals (April–July); (iv) facilitate offline discussions to further develop selected proposals, with about 100 persons participating in each session (June–July); and (v) consider the potential impact of projects as well as citizen preferences, select projects, and include them in the annual national budget request to the National Assembly (August).[30] In addition, broader public participation processes were enhanced and systematized utilizing the mybudget.go.kr portal to publicize opportunities, solicit and document input, and keep the public informed of participatory budget decisions and projects, including monitoring of execution. However, the operation and inputs of the Participatory Budgeting Citizen's Committee could be more open, transparent, and publicized.

While this commitment made improvements to the system for participatory budgeting, the national participatory budget has been significantly cut in recent years. The first national participatory budget in 2018 was 42.2 billion KRW. Reflecting the previous administration's policy prioritization, the participatory budget more than doubled in 2019 to 92.8 billion KRW, and then continued to increase to 105.7 billion KRW (2020), 116.8 billion KRW (2021), and 142.9 billion KRW (2022). The budget then decreased to 50 billion KRW in 2023 and 17 billion KRW in 2024.[31] While there is some correspondence with the previous and current administrations' respective fiscal stances[32] i.e., government spending as share of GDP expanding from 20.38% in 2018 to 28.65% in 2022 and contracting in 2023 (25.32%) and 2024 (24.85%), the participatory share of the overall budget shrunk by a proportionally larger share than warranted by the overall contractionary national budget trend. The participatory budget started at 0.01% of the overall budget in 2018, rose to 0.02% in 2019–2022, and shrunk to 0.007% and 0.002% in 2023 and 2024 respectively.[33] According to government stakeholders, this is because rather than focusing on quantitative expansion of citizen proposals, the government is focused on participation in government budget formulation, performance management, and execution.[34] Other trends also suggest de-prioritization of participatory budgeting within the current administration's policy priorities. The Ministry of Finance changed the name of its Participatory Budgeting Division to the Fiscal Policy Cooperation Division in 2023 and reduced the proportion of participatory budgeting in the division's responsibilities. The government stopped publishing press releases on the participatory budget as of late 2022 and efforts to expand participatory budgeting are not continued in the 2023–2027 OGP action plan.[35]

Commitment 4.2: Enhance fiscal transparency of local governments by promoting citizen participatory budgeting

• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes • **This commitment has been clustered as**: Participatory Budgeting (Commitments 4.1 and 4.2) • **Potential for results:** Substantial	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** No Notable Results

Local participatory budgeting contracted during the implementation period although it remains mandated by law. Milestones around the operationalization of Citizen Participatory Budgeting (CPB) across all local governments, providing consulting to local governments on expanding CPB, assessment and disclosure of information on CPB systems, processes, and projects (including via online CPB platforms), as well as selection and sharing of local governments' experiences in expanding CPB were all completed, but the momentum behind the commitment stalled in many local governments. Local participatory budgets were reduced in 9 of Korea's 17 provinces and special administrative divisions (which have equal status as provinces), stalled in 2, and increased in 6.[36] Faced with civil society backlash to the significant budget cuts, various local governments—including major administrations such as Seoul, Busan, Incheon, Daejeon, and Ulsan—offered the justification that participatory budget-funded projects are captured by special interests and not representative of the majority of local residents.[37] On the other hand, more than 1,000 civil society groups, local governance experts (e.g., Korea Institute of Public Administration, Chungnam National University's Department of Urban and Self-Government Convergence), and even lower-level district councils protested the budget cuts as undermining the purpose of participatory budgeting and direct deliberative democracy.[38]

Commitment 5: Provide an online system for public institutions to order network equipment that matches their capacity

• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** No • **Potential for results:** Unclear	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** No Notable Results

This commitment aimed to support IT personnel at public institutions to calculate and submit optimal equipment orders for network construction using the Network Size Calculation System http://netrfp.or.kr. To this end, a prototype of the system was developed in 2020 prior to the implementation period and operated on a trial basis from December 2020 to April 2021 in cooperation with the Korea Public Finance Information Service and Korea Environment Corporation. The system was further developed to incorporate a database for switching equipment from January to December 2021. Functional improvements (e.g., improvement of product information registration procedures and improvement of user account management) raised by users were added to the system from January to August 2022. The system was further developed to incorporate a scale calculation algorithm for transmission equipment (MSPP/ROADM/WDM) among network equipment and establish a product information database for domestic small-and-medium-sized enterprises to select and order products that meet their scale requirements. In cooperation with the ICT Polytechnic University in January 2023, the Ministry of Science and ICT began promoting the Network Size Calculation System to public institutions and industries. This included scale calculation education and system introduction for IT personnel which were still ongoing at the end of the implementation

period.[39] Despite completion of all milestones, they did not achieve notable open government results as they were not relevant to OGP values.

Commitment 6: Protect whistleblowers	
• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes • **Potential for results:** Modest	• **Completion:** Substantial • **Early results:** Moderate Results

See Section III.

Commitment 7: Leverage big data to address unfair practices in daily life	
• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes • **Potential for results:** Modest	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** No Notable Results

This commitment aimed to leverage big data to discover and rectify unfair practices in everyday life. To this end, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) continued to monitor citizen complaints data from local governments' "Saeol" administrative portal and e-People portal which integrates public communication channels across 1,074 agencies and institutions, including those for civil complaints, public proposals, and policy engagement. The ACRC continued to analyze over 12 million complaints (12.3 million in 2020, 14.83 million in 2021, and 12.69 million in 2022) collected from these sources and publish the "Voice of the People" big data newsletter weekly about trends in civil complaints and inconveniences (134 trending complaints noted in 2020 and 95 in 2021).[40] The newsletter is distributed to 1,270 institutions (including public institutions, research institutes, civic groups, and government agencies) and published on the ACRC website.[41] The ACRC also continued to conduct in-depth analysis and provide recommendations to relevant public institutions for addressing high-priority inconveniences. The number of analyses contracted during the implementation period dropped from 22 cases in 2020 to 7 in 2021.[42] Figures for 2022 were not available at the time of writing this report. To provide examples, the ACRC collaborated with the Ministry of Education in 2022 to analyze 5,036 complaints and recommend improvements related to middle school admission.[43] Also in 2022, the ACRC analyzed 1,405 complaints related to flooding of semi-basements and recommended measures to prevent damage to the Ministry of the Interior and Safety as well as the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport.[44] With complaints related to reserve military training surging in 2022, the ACRC analyzed more than 20,000 complaints and advised the Ministry of National Defense as well as the Military Manpower Administration to resolve major inconveniences, such as expanding holidays and improving meal quality.[45] The ACRC also began partnering with the National Assembly to utilize data-driven analysis in lawmaking.[46] Youth provided 38 ideas to improve government policies and administrative services. Inspections of how institutions address identified complaints and inconveniences were conducted and the results were reflected in the ACRC's annual integrity assessments. Specifically, as committed, the ACRC continued to conduct semi-annual inspections and annual integrity assessment of public sector institutions.[47] The assessment expanded to 273 public institutions in 2023 (198 in 2020; 218 in 2021; 239 in 2022).[48] Overall, although all milestones were completed, no notable early results were achieved as this

commitment did not expand the ACRC's solid track record of analyzing and identifying complaints and inconveniences for public institutions beyond business as usual.

Commitment 8: Create a transparent society through collaboration between citizens and government

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes
- **Potential for results:** Modest

- **Completion:** Substantial
- **Early results:** No Notable Results

Following administration change in 2022, the government weakened the institutional framework of anti-corruption public-private governance which is targeted by this commitment. All but one of the five milestones were completed. The ACRC supported 28 private initiatives on spreading a culture of integrity in 2021 (528 million KRW budget), 35 ethical management training sessions for private companies (9 in 2023, 10 in 2022, and 16 in 2021), improved the decision-making process of the Council (including by engaged experts), and established an evaluation system. However, a more solid legal basis for operation of the central Public-Private Consultative Council for Transparent Society was not established; instead the Prime Minister's Decree No. 753, which provided the temporary basis for the council, was left to expire. The operation of the central council has thus been suspended since February 2023.[49] At the local level, some councils continue to operate under separate local regulations depending on each local government's views on anti-corruption.[50] The council's disbandment removed a key institutional and multi-stakeholder mechanism that supported the culture of integrity, which some OGC members and experts underlined as critical for protecting whistleblowers (see Commitment 6).

Commitment 9: Lay the groundwork for civil society to grow

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes
- **Potential for results:** Modest

- **Completion:** Limited
- **Early results:** No Notable Results

Limited implementation of this commitment weakened the institutional foundation for civil society participation in policymaking following the change of administration in 2022. Only one of its four milestones was partially completed. Prior to the implementation period, the Prime Minister's Office developed a standard ordinance on promoting local civil society, which was then adopted by 24 local administrations. By October 2023, 21 additional local ordinances were adopted (14 in 2021, 6 in 2022, and 1 in 2023),[51] which fell well below the target of 243 local ordinances (17 municipal areas and 226 basic areas). The new administration did not progress the other three milestones to support non-profit organizations, promote government-civil society communication, and continue to operate the Civil Society Committee that had been in place since 2003. Funding for non-profit organizations declined from 7.28 billion KRW in 2020 to 6.84 billion KRW in 2021 and 6.5 billion KRW in 2022.[52] In August 2022, the Board of Audit and Inspection began auditing government support for non-profit organizations.[53] In October 2022, the government abolished the Civil Society Committee along with Regulations on Revitalizing Civil Society and Promotion of Public Interest Activities.[54] The administration justified its decision with the low level of participation among government members in the

committee and its policy of reducing 30–50% of the 600+ government committees.[55] The Secretary General of the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice noted that the government made this decision unilaterally without dialogue with civil society before abolishing this long-standing institution.[56]

Commitment 10: Enhance digital inclusiveness

• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** No • **Potential for results:** Unclear	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** No Notable Results

The commitment aimed to reduce the country's digital divide. To achieve this, the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) began operating 1,000 digital capability centers in August 2020, before the action plan period. During the implementation period, the centers facilitated training for nearly two million people. Starting 2021, the MSIT began operating the www.k-dcc.or.kr digital learning center platform for digital skills education. To improve infrastructure, the MSIT installed over 58,000 new free public Wi-Fi access points (exceeding the commitment's target of 41,000) and installed high speed internet in 2,291 rural villages (exceeding the target of 1,300).[57] The MSIT and lawmakers (from both the progressive and conservative parties) developed and promoted a Digital Inclusion Act to sustain and institutionalize digital inclusion as a pan-government policy priority. By the end of 2023, the Digital Inclusion Act was on the agenda for National Assembly review but not yet promulgated. While all milestones were completed, they did not achieve notable open government results as they were not relevant to OGP values.

Commitment 11: Make use of science and digital technology in tackling issues for local residents

• **Verifiable:** Yes • **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes • **Potential for results:** Modest	• **Completion:** Complete • **Early results:** No Notable Results

This commitment aimed to continue implementing joint projects called Living Labs, where local governments, residents, and technical experts directly collaborate on harnessing science and technology to solve regional problems. In 2021 and 2022, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety researched and matched regional issues and relevant technologies, selected and supported 10 projects each year to address regional problems, supported and monitored field implementation of projects, and selected and publicized success stories.[58] Some projects undertaken during the implementation period included safety patrol service technology in residential areas of single female households, real-time fine dust monitoring and response system tailored to the living space of residents, downtown smart farm using unused shopping mall walls, smart phones and ICT to prevent marine pollution, integrated thermal management platform utilizing excess power of renewable energy for carbon neutrality in the agricultural sector, digital platform to improve indoor air quality in underground shopping district,[59] and business registration authenticity verification, among others.[60] Overall, the scope of ten projects each year did not meaningfully change existing practices. Prior to the action plan implementation, local governments had undertaken eight Living Lab projects in 2020.[61] While civil society organization Open Net perceives Living Labs as an effective way to meaningfully

engage people in decision-making,[62] the number of projects can be scaled up to further institutionalize residents' ability to effect meaningful change in their communities.

Commitment 12: Disclose data for citizen safety

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes
- **Potential for results:** Modest

- **Completion:** Substantial
- **Early results:** Moderate

In 2020, prior to the implementation period, the Ministry of Interior and Safety integrated diffused disaster management information on the new Disaster and Safety Portal, initially disclosing 11 types of safety information. From 2021 to 2023, it expanded to disclose 25 new types of safety information.[63] These include government safety inspection results on various types of infrastructure, ranging from schools to hospitals, ports, facilities handling hazardous chemicals, and others.[64] Widening the range of safety inspection results available in a central online location moderately eased public access to this information.

Commitment 13: Make government data accessible and usable for the public

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes
- **Potential for results:** Modest

- **Completion:** Complete
- **Early results:** No Notable Results

This commitment completed milestones aimed to continue phased release of government data based on the Open Government Data Master Plans and National Core Data Release Plans. National core data are bundles of data determined to be to be a public priority via a multistakeholder process. Since 2015, a total of 168 bundles of national core data have been released (33 in 2015–2016, 63 in 2017–2019, and 72 in 2020–2022 during the implementation period).[65] In addition to completing this milestone, the government also completed milestones to prepare a draft guide for the opening of unstructured public data in December 2022 and support the opening of sensitive data requiring authenticity verification.[66] The National Tax Service data and Korail's SR railroad ticket data were opened in 2021 and 2022 respectively using authenticity verification.[67] The commitment's final milestone continued public-private collaboration on open data. Through public contests and in collaboration with the private sector and civil society, the government supported data collection and curated release by citizen developers, social cooperatives, university students, and others.[68] Public-private data releases included availability of masks during the COVID-19 pandemic, accessibility map and information for people with disabilities, and availability of renewable fuel.[69] While public-private open data initiatives represent a participatory way to tidy and curate data, open data advocates noted that it will not be sustainable without sufficient funding.[70] Overall, this commitment did not achieve notable early results as it did not go beyond continuing already existing open data practices.

Commitment 14: Increase the disclosure of meeting minutes

- **Verifiable:** Yes
- **Does it have an open government lens?** Yes

- **Completion:** Complete
- **Early results:** No Notable Results

• **Potential for results:** Unclear	
This commitment aimed to strengthen the transparency of public institutions' meeting minutes, which are governed by the Public Records Management Act.[71] To this end, the National Archives of Korea and the Ministry of the Interior and Security (MOIS) conducted a baseline survey to assess current practices of meeting documentation by public institutions (comprising 601 central administrative agencies, local governments, and education offices as well as 98 national universities, direct management public institutions, and military institutions). Based on the survey findings, the government supplemented the Guidelines for Public Records Management in December 2021. The Ministry of Interior and Safety reported that this expanded the list of meetings subject to the Public Records Management Act standards for preparing minutes. However, it did not provide specifics on the scope of changes undertaken. As such, it is not possible to assess if the revision represents a substantive increase in information disclosure requirements.[72] Such records can serve as a valuable tool to hold government accountable, but can be made more useful to the public if they are widely-documented and well-curated i.e., key results extracted and reported as evidence of policy implementation.	

[1] **Editorial notes**:
1. For commitments that are clustered: The assessment of potential for results and "early results" is conducted at the cluster level, rather than the individual commitment level.
2. Commitments' short titles may have been edited for brevity. For the complete text of commitments, see "5th OGP National Action Plan 2021–2023," Government of the Republic of Korea, July 2021, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/republic-of-korea-action-plan-2021-2023.
3. For more information on the assessment of the commitments' design, see "IRM Action Plan Review: Republic of Korea 2021–2023," Open Government Partnership, 21 June 2022, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/republic-of-korea-action-plan-review-2021-2023.

[2] "5th OGP National Action Plan 2021–2023," Government of the Republic of Korea.

[3] Ministry of the Interior and Safety, correspondence with IRM researcher, 30 October 2023; Ministry of the Interior and Safety, "제 5 차 열린정부 실행계획(2021~2023) 추진 실적," [Performance of the 5th Open Government Action Plan 2021–2023], Innovation24, 30 August 2023, https://www.innovation.go.kr/ucms/bbs/B0000034/view.do?nttId=13008&menuNo=300105&searchType=&searchType=&pageIndex=1.

[4] "2021 OGP Global Summit in Seoul, Republic of Korea," Open Government Partnership, 13 Decembeer 2021, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/events/2021-ogp-global-summit-seoul-republic-of-korea.

[5] Ministry of the Interior and Safety, correspondence with IRM researcher, 5 February 2024; Kwak Do-heun, "청년보좌역 및 2030 자문단 제도, 24 개 전 장관급 부처로 확대," [Youth assistant station and 2030 advisory group system expanded to all 24 ministerial ministries], EToday, 7 August 2023, https://www.etoday.co.kr/news/view/2273022;_"청소년 포털 / 청년정책조정위원회 / 위원회 활동 / 위원회 개최현황" [Youth Portal / Youth Policy Coordination Committee / Committee Activities / Committee Meetings], Office for Youth Policy Coordination, accessed 21 August 2024, https://2030.go.kr/etc/ythActivity.

[6] "청년기본법" [Framework Act on Youth], Article 15, National Legal Information Center, https://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=249017&ancYd=20230321&ancNo=19253&efYd=20230922&nwJoYnInfo=Y&efGubun=Y&chrClsCd=010202&ancYnChk=0#0000.

[7] "2018–2022 Plan to Enhance Gender Representation in the Public Sector," Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, November 2017; "2023–2027 Plan to Enhance Gender Representation in the Public Sector," Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2022.

[8] Women's representation in the public sector (actual rates for 2020 and 2022, target rates for 2022)

Category	2020 Actual	2022 Actual	2022 Target
Senior civil servant	8.5%	11.2%	10.2%
Director-level officials (central government)	22.8%	26.4%	25.0%

Open Government Partnership

Independent Reporting Mechanism

Director-level officials (local government)	20.8%	27.5%	24.5%
Executives of public organizations	22.1%	23.6%	23.0%
Managers of public organizations	26.4%	28.8%	28.0%
Managers of local public enterprises	10.6%	12.8%	12.0%
National university professors	18.1%	20.2%	19.1%
School principals and vice principals	44.5%	46.4%	46.0%
Military officers	7.5%	9.0%	8.8%
Police officers	13.4%	15.1%	15.0%
Coast guard officers	13.2%	16.6%	14.6%
Government committee members	43.2%	41.4%	40.0%

See "공공부문 성별대표성 제고 계획 및 성과," [Plans and achievements of improvement of gender representation in the public sector], Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, accessed 4 March 2024, https://www.mogef.go.kr/sp/geq/sp_geq_f003.do.

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