

Independent Reporting Mechanism

Action Plan Review:
France 2023–2025

Open
Government
Partnership



Independent
Reporting
Mechanism

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Section I: Overview of the 2023–2025 Action Plan

France’s fourth national action plan contains 17 commitments, including a promising effort to create a legal status for citizens who participate in deliberative democracy opportunities. Compared to the previous plan, it has fewer, more targeted commitments, with a clearer focus. Establishing a permanent multistakeholder space could provide effective oversight of commitment implementation.

France’s fourth national action plan includes 17 commitments. They are grouped under three thematic priorities: citizen participation and democratic innovations practices, citizen engagement to address major public policy challenges, and open government applications of digital technology. The commitments carry forward efforts on participation in healthcare and education reforms, combating disinformation, and establishing a barometer to communicate public policy outcomes. The action plan also introduces a focus on civic participation, including new commitments on participants in deliberative democracy mechanisms and consultations on local ecological planning. The current action plan has fewer and more focused commitments compared to the 2021-2023 action plan, a marked improvement in action plan design. Furthermore, most commitments include milestones, which supports setting benchmarks, assessing commitment progress and taking stock of successes.

Commitment 5 is the action plan’s most promising commitment. It takes the first step toward creating a protected legal status for citizens participating in mechanisms for deliberative democracy, like citizen assemblies. As with jury duty, providing protections and compensation could improve equal opportunity to participate, regardless of socioeconomic status. This commitment is the first of its kind in the world and could prove revolutionary in French labor law. It forms part of a broader push to combine participatory democracy with representative democracy, building on the progress achieved through the organization of citizens’ conventions, the reform of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council to lead

AT A GLANCE

Participating since: 2014
Number of commitments: 17

Overview of commitments:
Commitments with an open government lens: 15 (88%)
Commitments with substantial potential for results: 0 (0%)
Promising commitments: 1 (6%)

Policy areas:
Carried over from previous action plans:

- Health policy
- Education policy
- Public policy outcome transparency
- Countering disinformation
- Environmental planning

Emerging in this action plan:

- Streamlining civic participation

Compliance with OGP minimum requirements for co-creation:
No

major consultations including civil society, and the support provided to government departments by the Interministerial Center for Citizen Participation.¹

Many of the commitments continue initiatives that started before the action plan period, without indicating how they would leverage the Open Government Partnership (OGP) process to add value to the reforms. Some commitments also could clarify the scope of their intended reforms. For example, Commitments 8, 9, and 11 continue efforts on participation in healthcare and education reforms. These could be more impactful if implementers concretely define ambitious targets beyond what was accomplished during the previous action plan. Other commitments (1, 6, and 10) focus on civic participation, but could also ensure that the public has new opportunities to take part in government decision making. These could go further to bridge the gap between public consultations and government uptake of citizen suggestions.² To illustrate, for Commitment 10 on citizen consultations for local ecological policies, implementers could take the initiative a step further by ensuring that all non-government stakeholders across France's regions have a direct role in influencing the content of regional ecological plans, rather than simply encouraging regions to involve them.

The OGP process continued to be led by the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation. In mid-2023, the Minister for Democratic Renewal and Government Spokesperson became the political lead for OGP at the cabinet level. According to several civil society organizations (CSOs), the directorate and Minister are well-placed to navigate these efforts.³ In terms of the process for developing the action plan, the Minister and Directorate organized two co-creation workshops in October and November 2023 attended by relevant ministries, civil society organizations, and academics. These workshops were co-organized with two CSOs: Transparency International France and Démocratie Ouverte.⁴ The first workshop was limited to 12 CSOs and 12 government experts. Afterwards, all proposals were documented and made available for comment on the online platform, Klaxoon.⁵ The second workshop included a larger number of CSOs. The government presented a "what we heard from civil society" document and a list of 37 proposals for commitments. Following the workshops, civil society identified priority commitments, from which government bodies chose which proposals would become commitments in the action plan, based on feasibility. There was no public consultation on the final draft of the action plan. According to the OGP point of contact (POC), this was due to the busy end-of-year season and the need to submit the plan before the end of the year⁶ The plan was adopted and published in December 2023. The POC noted that commitments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 17 came from discussions with civil society.⁷ Other stakeholder priorities were not included in the action plan, including proposals on transparency within lobbying, public procurement, online public information, political financing, and beneficial ownership.⁸ The plan was adopted and published in December 2023.

The development of France's OGP action plan did not meet the minimum requirements for a space for dialogue, a repository, advanced notice and reasoned response as per the OGP Participation & Co-Creation Standards. As these updated standards came into effect in 2022, OGP instituted a 24-month grace period to ensure a fair and transparent transition. As this action plan was co-created and submitted before 31 December 2023, it falls within the grace period and accordingly, the procedural consequences that normally attach to non-compliance with the standards do not apply. France was found to be acting contrary to OGP process during its previous action plan cycle.⁹

Implementation could be impacted by the political climate in France. After the June–July 2024 early legislative elections, the President of the Republic was decoupled from his parliamentary majority, now necessitating governing through coalition. Uptake of this action plan’s priorities by the next French government would be essential to achieving results. This would rely on bolstering the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation’s resources for coordination and communication on the OGP process.

¹ France’s 2024-2026 National Action Plan, 3 January 2024, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/france-action-plan-2023-2025-december/>.

² Pierre-Yves Guihéneuf, “La participation citoyenne, un fait minoritaire” [Citizen participation, a minority fact], (démocratieS, 9 December 2023), <https://democraties.media/les-citoyens-qui-veulent-participer-une-petite-minorite/>.

³ Dorian Dreuil (Advocacy and Campaigns Manager for Démocratie Ouverte), interview with IRM, 4 June 2024; Kevin Garnier (Advocacy Manager with Transparency International France), interview with IRM, 30 May 2024.

⁴ Mayara Soares Faria (International Relations and Open Government Advisor at the Cabinet of the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation), interview with IRM, 15 April 2024.

⁵ Klaxoon is available at: <https://klaxoon.com/fr>.

⁶ Faria, interview.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Anticor, “Partenariat pour un gouvernement ouvert : les propositions d’Anticor” [Partnership for an open government : Anticor’s proposals], 16 February 2024, <https://www.anticor.org/2024/02/16/partenariat-pour-un-gouvernement-ouvert-les-propositions-danticor/>.

⁹ Open Government Partnership, “France – Contrary to Process Letter (August 2022)” 31 August 2022, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/france-contrary-to-process-letter-august-2022/>.

Section II: Promising Commitments in France 2023–2025 Action Plan

The following review looks at one commitment that the IRM identified as having the potential to realize the most promising results. Promising commitments address a policy area that is important to stakeholders or the national context. They must be verifiable, have a relevant open government lens, and have modest or substantial potential for results. This review also provides an analysis of challenges, opportunities, and recommendations to contribute to the learning and implementation process of this action plan.

Table 1. Promising commitments

Promising Commitments
<p>5. Participant Citizen Status: This commitment aims to facilitate citizen participation in participatory and deliberative initiatives such as citizen assemblies through the creation of a participating citizen status.</p>

Commitment 5: Participant Citizen Status

Minister for Democratic Renewal and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council

For a complete description of the commitment, see Commitment 5 in [France's 2023–2025 Action Plan](#).

Context and objectives:

France's participatory and deliberative initiatives, like citizens' assemblies,¹ draw participants at random from a large pool of citizens to support inclusive public participation in government decision-making. A political scientist at the University of Avignon found that these institutionalized participation mechanisms mobilize roughly 1% of the population.² However, some citizens are unable to volunteer for such initiatives because of their professional, financial, or family responsibilities. This commitment aims to formally define "participant citizen," with assigned payment, special temporary employment leave, and recognition for skills acquired. This intends to facilitate citizens' ability to engage in these participatory and deliberative initiatives, regardless of their income level. The commitment was proposed by the government. It forms part of a broader push to combine participatory democracy with representative democracy, building on the progress achieved through the organization of citizens' conventions, the reform of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council to lead major consultations including civil society, and the support provided to government departments by the Interministerial Center for Citizen Participation.³ The commitment responds to longstanding civil society demands, expressed in a 2020 open letter.⁴

Potential for results: Modest

This commitment addresses underrepresentation of certain groups in the French government's participatory and deliberative initiatives, particularly for vulnerable people, single parents, and shift workers. As the 2020 open letter expressed, to participate in large-scale conventions or local consultations, citizens need both to adjust their schedule and be mentally available. Without a formal status, employees have sometimes been refused leave by their employers, who do not always understand the civic interests at play.⁵ The OECD and the Council of Europe

have highlighted the importance of inclusive public participation frameworks that address any special needs so that all individuals are able to exercise their right to participate.⁶ France would be the first country in the world to initiate this discussion and establish the necessary framework.

The commitment undertakes the first steps to create a protected legal status for citizens participating in these mechanisms, similar to jury duty. The goal is not to create a group of professional citizens representing other citizens, but to widen citizen engagement and rotation.⁷ The legal status could contribute to integrating participatory democracy in the state and society, with a strong emphasis on inclusion and credibility. A civil society representative stressed the importance of legally protecting citizens' right to leave work to participate in a participatory or deliberative initiative. He also commended the commitment's uptake of the key civil society priorities of payment, special temporary leave from employment, and a recognition program for skills acquired. He noted that the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) already has a system of remuneration for participating citizens, set up by a government decree (The ESEC was established by Articles 69–71 of the 1958 Constitution and advises lawmaking bodies on economic, social, and environmental policies and holds national-level citizen consultations). However, the ESEC decree does not provide a general right to compensation for other consultations and does not address the other necessary privileges listed by the commitment.⁸ Government stakeholders also consider this commitment crucially important as a necessary legal framework to support the institutionalization of participatory initiatives, such as citizen conventions.⁹

While the commitment text plans to “define” the framework for this legal status, it does not fully guarantee the scope of the status or outline how it would be adopted. All interviewed stakeholders agreed that adoption of a participant citizen status would need to entail reform of labor and other laws.¹⁰ The commitment's lead implementers are the Ministry for Democratic Renewal and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, which are not part of the legislative branch and cannot guarantee the adoption of legal reforms. As the commitment does not guarantee the necessary binding legal framework within the two-year implementation period, its potential for results is modest. Beyond the action plan implementation period, this reform could have significant results.

Opportunities, challenges, and recommendations during implementation

Despite not confirming the adoption of a necessary legal framework, the commitment opens the opportunity to establish a binding legal framework for a participant citizen status. This framework would guarantee the freedom of choice and speech to participate in consultative mechanisms for every citizen, irrespective of their level of income or employment. Thus, the role of citizen participation would be institutionalized. This correlates with two of the challenges for the commitment: its scope and its costs. A legal expert on direct democracy pointed out that establishing this status could entail sizeable costs for national and local administrations to cover in-person participation. This would require advance budget planning to ensure that it does not dissuade decision-makers from implementing participatory and deliberative initiatives.¹¹ In future action plans, the government could go further to integrate citizen participation in decision-making, whether by pairing citizens' assemblies with wider public referendums that ensure binding public decisions, or by empowering citizens to decide which policy areas to leave to participatory democracy.¹²

To support implementation of this commitment, the IRM recommends:

- **Involve citizens who have participated in deliberative processes as well as civil society and labor sector stakeholders** in implementing this commitment. The involvement of key sectoral representatives, as well as those with actual experience dealing with the work and life impacts of deliberative processes, would be important to ensure that any future legislative proposals or implementing a legal status would adequately address current impediments to participation. Also, engaging with groups who are likely underrepresented will help in understanding what deters them from participating and addressing their needs.
- **The government could integrate an ongoing multistakeholder review into the implementation of the legal status** to ensure that it is being applied as intended and spot gaps or unintended consequences. The government could include civil society organizations, legal experts focusing on deliberative processes, academics, and citizens.
- **Implementors can develop and hold information sessions for legislators about the positive impact and need for a legally protected “participant” status in deliberative processes.** This could involve civil society to provide educational resources that build awareness and encourage the broader support necessary for legal reform. This could also include developing a study of the benefits and predicted costs of implementing such a reform, with facts and numbers to provide a basis for understanding and discussion. Building a coalition of interested parties from inside public institutions could provide institutional support not just for legal reform, but also for its later implementation. The ESEC could also outline the benefits of its remuneration for participating citizens as an already-existing, successful mechanism.
- **The government could develop informational materials and raise awareness within public institutions and the business community.** This would increase understanding of the purpose and benefits of such a reform, and any implementing requirements or considerations for the future. It could also allow institutions and businesses to discuss how this change will impact them. Citizens could also learn their rights with regard to any such legal status.
- **The government could pilot practical aspects of the framework within existing deliberative processes.** Examples are some form of remuneration that would enable broader categories of citizens to participate, or formal letters to employers noting the framework’s purpose in broadening citizen engagement. The government could also consider piloting these practical aspects at existing citizen participation mechanisms at local or regional levels. France could learn from other OGP member countries that remunerate citizens participating in deliberative processes, such as the UK.¹³

Other commitments

Other commitments that the IRM did not identify as promising are discussed below. This review provides recommendations to contribute to the learning and implementation of these commitments.

Commitment 1 aims to inventory the central government’s participatory and democratic innovation practices to encourage all ministries to adopt and implement these practices on a large scale. This commitment would complement several existing inventories on participatory practices in social affairs¹⁴ and priority city districts (disadvantaged areas facing socio-economic challenges).¹⁵ The commitment’s main result is to establish where participatory practices

effectively add value to representative democracy and inform government departments on best practices. To support implementation of this commitment, the IRM recommends that the inventory set clear guidelines for which best practices regarding civic participation are proven most effective. It would also be valuable to consider mechanisms to support uptake of these practices among ministries.

Commitment 2 focuses on training civil servants on facilitation and citizen participation. The action plan states that the trainings are not mandatory but would be available to all civil servants on a voluntary basis. A civil society representative noted that the trainings could address an area of interest, although a government representative said that the training focuses more on methods.¹⁶ As written, the commitment is unclear on how the trainings could offer added value compared to similar trainings that have happened in the past. Moving forward, the Interministerial Directorate of Public Transformation's Innovation Department could work with civil society to clearly define training outcomes. The added value of these trainings lies in their existence at the interministerial level, which also includes regional and local levels, as well as other public entities. This would be the first time such training is being deployed on this scale.¹⁷

Commitment 3 aims to establish an OGP multistakeholder forum (MSF). While the IRM assessment methodology allows to assess this commitment as having a modest potential for results, the commitment might produce substantial changes to the OGP process in France. All interviewed stakeholders stressed that it would be key toward strengthening participation and co-creation of France's OGP action plans,¹⁸ The commitment also takes into consideration recent IRM recommendations.¹⁹ The multistakeholder forum would be hosted by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC), which is a constitutionally established institution. The ESEC is a unique institution in that it holds citizen consultations at the national level and includes CSO representatives in the fields of economy and social dialogue, social cohesion and associations, and environmental and nature conservation.²⁰ Including the multi-stakeholder forum in the ESEC is a creative approach, which showcases the focus on innovation in participatory processes that the government is championing.²¹ An MSF would involve co-creating policies for future OGP national action plans and add participation by civil society actors who are not part of the circle of appointed Council members. Stakeholders anticipate implementation challenges may include finding space for this kind of co-creation in a political culture that relies on representative institutions, such as the parliament, for decision making.²² If the multi-stakeholder forum is implemented in this way, it would be a multi-stakeholder forum with a high level of standing. The IRM recommends ensuring that the MSF has public, formal rules (such as a mandate), membership selection process, and decision-making and accountability mechanisms. Non-government members could be selected in a transparent manner and have equal representation and decision-making powers as government members. Non-government stakeholders could be selected through a fair and transparent process led by civil society members themselves. The DITP could base the design of the non-government stakeholder selection process on the Dutch Talking About Information Coalition, which allows citizens to express interest to participate. An introductory meeting is then scheduled to investigate what role interested stakeholders could and want to play and what the added value would be.²³

Commitment 4 aims to expand technical and financial support for actors involved in promoting open government principles, human rights, and democratic innovation in Africa and other partner regions, under France's solidarity and sustainable investment policy. This commitment

has an unclear potential for results in France because it does not have a domestic focus. Recipient countries of this support would have their commitments assessed in their respective action plans. To demonstrate this commitment's domestic open government angle, the PAGOF team could facilitate opportunities for French public officials to learn from international examples from PAGOF recipient countries and incorporate them into their practices. This would strengthen the links between open government stakeholders in France and PAGOF recipient countries.

Commitment 6 focuses on creating and distributing an interactive visual game called "Fresque de la démocratie" to be used in workshops, seminars, and educational events. Several versions of such a tool have already been developed and deployed by Démocratie Ouverte.²⁴ A representative of Démocratie Ouverte explained that the game seeks to raise awareness and inform young people on the rules and procedures for public participation in France, which are not well-known.²⁵ The government has said that the commitment aims to create a better understanding of the challenges of democratic life, promote dialogue and share ideas.²⁶ However, it is unclear how this would increase opportunities for citizens to directly participate in government decision-making.

Commitment 7 focuses on streamlining voter registration, aiming to address low voter turnout and failure to update registration details. This commitment could encourage citizens to register to vote or update their registration, but its numeric target for improved voter turnout is unclear. To support implementation, the IRM recommends that the government set clear and ambitious targets for new and updated voter registration.

Commitment 8 continues the National Council for Refoundation's (CNR) healthcare's efforts to bring together citizens, healthcare professionals, Regional Health Agencies, elected officials, the French Social Security Collections Agency, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) to guide and prioritize the Ministry of Health and Prevention's programs. These efforts began in October 2022, prior to the implementation period,²⁷ and the commitment does not set clear targets for outcomes beyond existing practices. CNR healthcare has a dedicated budget that is managed by regional health agencies (30 million per year), enabling projects to be funded. Implementers could strengthen this commitment by setting clear and ambitious targets for civic participation in designing, streamlining, and implementing high-impact projects in healthcare through the National Council for Refoundation system.

Commitment 9 also continues an effort started in 2022: the National Council for Refoundation's initiative in education, "Notre école, faisons-la ensemble" (Our school, let's do it together).²⁸ This initiative facilitates local consultations to identify new, collective actions to improve students' achievement and wellbeing, and to reduce inequality. This is one of the few commitments with a dedicated budget, which spans from 2022 until 2027, which may be a stimulus for implementation. From the perspective of a legal expert on direct democracy,²⁹ the commitment could tackle important problems, such as dwindling numbers of teachers and professors. According to her, this approach could develop a culture of deliberation early in students' lives through learning how to tackle problems as a group, discussing arguments with others, and taking an active role in decision-making.³⁰ However, as written, the commitment has modest potential for results. It could offer clearer parameters for new public participation opportunities, leaving the details of implementation to individual schools. To support the implementation of this commitment, the IRM recommends that the government set clear

targets for citizen, and particularly student, participation in designing and implementing educational projects through the CNR system.

Commitment 10 aims to involve the public in regional environmental planning. The initiative is part of the France Green Nation plan and the ecological planning³¹ was already outlined in early 2023.³² The commitment envisions public involvement in ecological planning conferences (COPs) in each administrative region. It also plans to develop an educational tool similar to “Fresque de la démocratie” in Commitment 6 to inform citizens on ecological planning initiatives. The Prime Minister provided implementation guidance for the regional COPs in September 2023. Regional COPs should include an assessment to measure progress and set targets, a debate phase to identify the collective contributions required to achieve regional objectives and define the projects to be launched by 2024, and drawing up a regional roadmap of each region’s commitments by sector. Regional and departmental prefects are encouraged to involve all regional stakeholders, including civil society organizations, in the debate phase.³³ The government stated that it wanted to provide regions with an open, autonomous framework to conduct the COPs.³⁴ Some regions included CSOs in their debate phase, others went further and incorporated online consultations open to all (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur).³⁵ As written, the commitment only has modest potential for results as it does not guarantee binding or institutionalized changes to the role of non-governmental stakeholders in determining regional ecological plans. At this point the guidance only encourages regions and departments to include non-governmental actors in the deliberations. A legal expert on direct democracy also pointed out that the commitment does not include a clear mechanism to ensure that participation is directly linked to decision making.³⁶ A more promising commitment would provide a clear requirement for regional COPs to include all types of stakeholders in the deliberations, including civil society organizations, as well as provide clear avenues for citizens to be included in the decision-making process. The government stated that this initiative will continue in 2025, tackling the topic of climate change adaptation.³⁷ If the regional COPs are continued in 2025, this would be an opportunity to strengthen the commitment by incorporating the IRM recommendations.

Commitment 11 builds on the previous action plan³⁸ during which the Health Data Hub³⁹ developed an online repository of projects using personal health data. This commitment focuses on an awareness campaign to inform the public on their privacy rights regarding re-use of health data. A government stakeholder added that the Health Data Hub will be launching a pilot training program for local elected representatives on AI in healthcare and inform citizens on the use of health data.⁴⁰ Compared to previous efforts, it is unclear how this commitment would affect new policy changes. The IRM recommends setting ambitious and clear targets to expand the number of users of the patient information portal on health data.

Commitment 12 also builds on the prior action plan,⁴¹ in aiming to combat disinformation by raising awareness and communicating best practices. This is related to the Estates General of Information,⁴² a July 2023 presidential initiative to diagnose issues linked to disinformation and media, and to propose concrete actions at the national, European, and international levels.⁴³ A civil society representative notes that the commitment addresses an important policy field.⁴⁴ However, it has modest potential for results as its milestones are not sufficiently specific. To support the implementation of this commitment, the IRM recommends that the government set clear targets for co-creating the awareness-raising and communications plan as well as for the outreach and impact of the campaign.

Commitment 13 continues the Public Policy Outcomes Barometer,⁴⁵ which was launched in 2021. It aims to provide French citizens with more transparency around public policy outcomes at the regional and national level. In 2023, the government started working on a new version of the Barometer, to improve explanations on the portal, links to other government websites, and its regional focus. A civil society representative⁴⁶ commented that the Barometer is mostly a communication tool that could be upgraded by providing more data, for example on the recovery and resilience plan following the COVID-19 crisis.⁴⁷ While the commitment only plans for modest changes to the existing Barometer, implementers could take more ambitious steps toward transparency by using the Barometer to publish more detailed open data

Commitment 14 continues efforts on the mobile application Agora, which was launched before the action plan's adoption in 2023. Launched as "the TripAdvisor for democracy,"⁴⁸ the app's goal is to develop mass citizen consultations on major public policy challenges. A civil society representative explained that the app was created by the government without consulting civil society.⁴⁹ It allows citizens to address questions to government ministers and to vote on those questions. The OECD has noted that the mobile application is an innovative way to create opportunities for inclusive public participation and deliberation.⁵⁰ The questions with the most votes are to be acted upon by the government. The CSO representative stated that the idea behind the app is to centralize public consultations.⁵¹ This commitment entails consultations with civil society to develop Agora's features and further its use. Critics argue the app is another effort that stimulates participation and consultation but does not necessarily include citizens in decision-making.⁵² As the app is not widely used, more outreach is needed, as well as providing access to Agora from different platforms, beyond mobile phones.⁵³

Commitment 15 continues government efforts to adopt open-source software developed by citizens and private companies, which started in 2021 with the Free Software and Digital Commons Action Plan,⁵⁴ and builds on the previous OGP action plan.⁵⁵ The goal is for government organizations to adopt ten free software from the Interministerial Free Software Catalog,⁵⁶ which is the reference catalog of free software recommended by the Interministerial Directorate for Digital Affairs of the French administration. Relatedly, the government would continue to support selecting citizen-led digital commons—software that could be useful for public entities. While using open-source software could benefit public administration, it is unclear how this would improve government openness. The IRM recommends that the government ensure that the selected programs and supported digital commons directly improve government transparency, accountability, and/or public participation.

Commitment 16 aims to establish a Public Data Monitoring Centre. Its implementation would promote transparency through releasing reports on the quality of published datasets (especially reference datasets)⁵⁷ and identifying datasets that would be useful to be made available. A civil society stakeholder commented that the commitment is as promising as it is unclear.⁵⁸ Another civil society stakeholder added that the text of the commitment is very technical and lacks clarity on its intended outcomes.⁵⁹ Both stressed that it would also be particularly impactful to focus on opening public procurement data. The second civil society stakeholder noted that currently, a dataset of 10% to 20% of the largest government procurement transactions is published, but it has gaps like poor data quality or difficulties with making the datasets useable.⁶⁰ In February 2024, a CSO presented the Minister of Democratic Renewal with a detailed list of proposals on publication of public procurement, political finance, and beneficial ownership data.⁶¹ To strengthen this commitment's ambition, the Public Data Monitoring Centre

- ¹⁹ France 2021-2023 Action Plan Review, 8 August 2022, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/france-action-plan-review-2021-2023/>.
- ²⁰ The Economic, Social and Environmental Council, “Groups” (2023), <https://www.lecese.fr/en/groups>.
- ²¹ Soares Faria, 29 October 2024.
- ²² Lambert, interview.
- ²³ Over Informatie Gesproken [Talking About Information], Deelnemers Over Informatie Gesproken [Participants in Talking About Information], <https://www.overinformatiegesproken.nl/deelnemers>.
- ²⁴ La part citoyenne, “La fresque de la démocratie, on teste pour vous !” [The fresco of democracy, we test it for you!], (accessed September, 2024), <https://www.lapartcitoyenne.fr/articles/la-fresque-de-la-democratie-on-teste-pour-vous>.
- ²⁵ Dreuil, interview.
- ²⁶ Soares Faria, pre-publication comments.
- ²⁷ Ministère du Travail de la Santé et des Solidarités, “Conseil national de la refondation (CNR) – Santé” [National Refoundation Council (CNR) - Health], (accessed September, 2024), <https://sante.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/conseil-national-de-la-refondation-cnr-sante/>.
- ²⁸ Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Jeunesse, “Conseil national de la refondation : notre École, faisons-la ensemble” [National Council for Refoundation: our School, let's do it together], (accessed September, 2024), <https://www.education.gouv.fr/conseil-national-de-la-refondation-notre-ecole-faisons-la-ensemble-343168>.
- ²⁹ Stefanini, interview
- ³⁰ Stefanini, interview
- ³¹ French Government Information Service, “La planification écologique” [Ecological planning], (30 July 2024), <https://www.info.gouv.fr/grand-dossier/france-nation-verte#cest-quoi-le-plan->.
- ³² Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion, “Les COP regionaux” [Regional COPs], (12 December 2024), <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/actualites/cop-regionales>.
- ³³ Prime Minister of the French Republic, “Circulaire No 6420/SG: Mise en œuvre de la territorialisation de la planification écologique » [Circular No 6420/SG : Implementation of the territorialization of ecological planning], 29 September 2023, <https://agence-cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2023-10/circulaire-n-6420-SG-du-29-septembre-2023---territorialisation-planification-Yocologique.pdf>.
- ³⁴ Laurent Cabioch (Director of Content and Communication, General Secretariat for Ecological Planning), interview with IRM staff, 21 November 2024.
- ³⁵ Plan de transformation écologique et énergétique en Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur [Ecological and energy transformation plan for Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur], https://connaissance-territoire.maregionsud.fr/fileadmin/user_upload/planif_ecolo/Plan_de_transformation_ecologique_et_energetique_en_Provence-Alpes-Cote_d_Azur_rapportFinale.pdf; COP régionale de la planification écologique : Réponses à l'enquête citoyenne d'Octobre 2024 [Regional ecological planning COP : Responses to the October 2024 citizen survey], <https://www.cop-bfc-versdemain.fr/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/COP-BFC-Resultats-enquete-2024-VF.pdf>.
- ³⁶ Stefanini, interview.
- ³⁷ Cabioch, interview.
- ³⁸ See Commitment 35 in Open Government Partnership, *France Action Plan 2021–2023* (11 January, 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/france-action-plan-2021-2023/>.
- ³⁹ Health Data Hub: <https://www.health-data-hub.fr/>.
- ⁴⁰ Soares Faria, pre-publication comments.
- ⁴¹ See Commitment 56 in Open Government Partnership, *France Action Plan 2021–2023* (11 January, 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/france-action-plan-2021-2023/>.
- ⁴² “États généraux de l'information” [Estates general of the information]: <https://etats-generaux-information.fr/>.
- ⁴³ Economic, Social and Environmental Council, “Contribuez aux États généraux de l'information” [Contribute to the General State of Information], 12 October 2023, <https://www.lecese.fr/actualites/contribuez-aux-etats-generaux-de-linformation>.
- ⁴⁴ Dreuil, interview.
- ⁴⁵ Direction Interministérielle de la Transformation Publique [Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation], “Le Baromètre des résultats de l'action publique” [Public Policy Outcomes Barometer], (accessed September 2024), <https://www.modernisation.gouv.fr/transformer-laction-publique/le-barometre-des-resultats-de-laction-publique>.
- ⁴⁶ Gernier, interview.
- ⁴⁷ The French Republic, *National Recovery and Resilience Plan: 2021*, (2021), <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/files/files/PDF/2021/PNRR-SummaryEN.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Mathilde Golla, “Le gouvernement lance Agora, son application de démocratie directe” [The government launches Agora, its direct democracy application], (*Les Echos*, 28 Septembre 2023), <https://www.lesechos.fr/politique-societe/gouvernement/le-gouvernement-lance-agora-son-application-de-democratie-directe-1982512>.

⁴⁹ Dreuil, interview.

⁵⁰ The OECD Reinforcing Democracy Initiative: Monitoring Report – Assessing Progress and Charting the Way Forward, 2024, OECD Public Governance Reviews, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9543bcfb-en>.

⁵¹ Dreuil, interview.

⁵² Stefanini, interview.

⁵³ Stefanini, interview.

⁵⁴ Direction Interministérielle du Numérique [Interministerial Directorate for Digital Affairs], “Plan d’action logiciels libres et communs numériques” [Free Software and Digital Commons Action Plan], (10 November 2021), <https://www.numerique.gouv.fr/publications/plan-action-logiciels-libres-communs-numeriques/>.

⁵⁵ See Commitment 47 in Open Government Partnership, *France Action Plan 2021–2023* (11 January, 2022), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/france-action-plan-2021-2023/>.

⁵⁶ Direction Interministérielle du Numérique [Interministerial Directorate for Digital Affairs], “Recommended free software for French public agencies” (accessed September 2024), <https://code.gouv.fr/sill/>.

⁵⁷ Direction Interministérielle du Numérique [Interministerial Directorate for Digital Affairs], “Service public de la donnée : des données sur lesquelles vous pouvez compter” [Public data service: data you can count on], (accessed September 2024), <https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/pages/spd/reference/>.

⁵⁸ Lambert, interview.

⁵⁹ Gernier, interview.

⁶⁰ Gernier, interview.

⁶¹ Anticor, “Partenariat pour un gouvernement ouvert : les propositions d’Anticor” [Partnership for an open government: Anticor’s proposals], (16 February 2024), <https://www.anticor.org/2024/02/16/partenariat-pour-un-gouvernement-ouvert-les-propositions-danticor/>.

⁶² Commissariat général au développement durable [General Commission for Sustainable Development], “Écosphères : les données au service de la transition écologique” [Écosphères: data serving the ecological transition], (28 March, 2023), <https://www.notre-environnement.gouv.fr/actualites/breves/article/ecospheres-les-donnees-au-service-de-la-transition-ecologique>.

Section III: Methodology and IRM Indicators

This product is a concise, independent, technical review of the characteristics of the action plan and the strengths and challenges the IRM identifies to inform a stronger implementation process. The IRM highlights commitments that have the highest potential for results, represent a high priority for country stakeholders, acknowledged as a priority in the national open government context, or a combination of these factors.

The IRM products provided during a national action plan cycle include:

- **Co-Creation Brief:** A concise brief that highlights lessons from previous IRM reports to support a country's OGP process, action plan design, and overall learning.
- **Action Plan Review:** A technical review of the characteristics of the action plan and the strengths and challenges the IRM identifies to inform a stronger implementation process.
- **Midpoint Review:** A review for four-year action plans after a refresh at the midpoint. The review assesses new or significantly amended commitments in the refreshed action plan, compliance with OGP rules, and an informal update on implementation progress.
- **Results Report:** An overall implementation assessment that focuses on policy-level results and how changes happen. It also checks compliance with OGP rules and informs accountability and longer-term learning.

In the Action Plan Review, the IRM reviews commitments using three indicators:

1. Verifiability: The IRM determines whether a commitment is verifiable as written in the action plan. The indicator is assessed as:

- **Yes/No:** Are the stated objectives and proposed actions sufficiently clear and include objectively verifiable activities to assess implementation?
- Commitments that are not verifiable are considered not reviewable, and no further assessment is carried out.

2. Open Government Lens: The IRM determines if the commitment relates to the open government values of transparency, civic participation, and/or public accountability as defined by the Open Government Declaration and the OGP Articles of Governance. Based on a close reading of the commitment text, the indicator is assessed as:

- **Yes/No:** Does the commitment set out to make a policy area, institution, or decision-making process more transparent, participatory, or accountable to the public?

The following questions for each OGP value may be used as a reference to identify the specific open government lens in commitment analysis:

- **Transparency:** Will the government disclose more information, improve the legal or institutional frameworks to guarantee the right to information, improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public, or improve the transparency of government decision-making processes or institutions?
- **Civic Participation:** Will the government create or improve opportunities, processes, or mechanisms for the public to inform, influence or co-create policies, laws and/or decisions? Will the government create, enable, or improve participatory mechanisms for minorities, marginalized or underrepresented groups? Will the government improve the enabling environment for civil society (which may include NGO laws, funding mechanisms, taxation, reporting requirements, et cetera)? Will the government improve legal, policy, institutional, or practical conditions related to civic space such as freedom

of expression, association, and peaceful assembly that would facilitate participation in the public sphere? Will the government take measures to counter mis- and disinformation, especially online, to ensure people have access to reliable and factual information (which may include digital and media literacy campaigns, fact-checking, or fostering an independent news media ecosystem)?

- **Public Accountability:** Will the government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions? Will the government enable legal, policy, or institutional frameworks to foster accountability of public officials?

3. Potential for Results: The IRM analyzes the expected results and potential that would be verified in the IRM Results Report after implementation. Potential for results is an early indication of the commitment's possibility to yield meaningful results based on its articulation in the action plan in contrast with the state of play in the respective policy area. The indicator is assessed as:

- **Unclear:** The commitment is aimed at continuing ongoing practices in line with existing legislation, requirements, or policies without indication of the added value or enhanced open government approach in contrast with existing practice.
- **Modest:** A positive but standalone initiative or change to processes, practices, or policies. The commitment does not generate binding or institutionalized changes across government or institutions that govern a policy area. Examples are tools (e.g., websites) or data release, training, or pilot projects.
- **Substantial:** A possible game changer for practices, policies, or institutions that govern a policy area, public sector, or the relationship between citizens and state. The commitment generates binding and institutionalized changes across government.

This review focuses its analysis on promising commitments. Promising commitments are verifiable, have an open government lens, and at least a modest potential for results. Promising commitments may also be a priority for national stakeholders or for the particular context. The IRM may cluster commitments with a common policy objective or that contribute to the same reform or policy issue. The potential for results of clustered commitments is reviewed as a whole.

This review was prepared by the IRM in collaboration with Stephan Anguelov as researcher and Brendan Halloran as external expert reviewer. During the internal review process of this product, the IRM verifies the accuracy of findings and collects further input through peer review, OGP Support Unit feedback as needed, interviews and validation with country stakeholders, an external expert review, and oversight by IRM's International Experts Panel (IEP).¹ The IRM methodology, product quality, and review process are overseen by the IEP.²

¹ Open Government Partnership, "International Experts Panel" (2024), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/who-we-are/international-experts-panel>.

² Open Government Partnership, "Overview – Independent Reporting Mechanism" (2020), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/irm-guidance-overview>.

Annex 1: Commitment by Commitment Data¹

<p>Commitment 1: Inventory of participatory practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 2: Train civil servants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 3: Multistakeholder forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 4: Support democratic innovation in other countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 5: Participant citizen status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 6: Fresque de la démocratie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 7: Voting procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 8: National council for refoundation (CNR) in healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: No • Does it have an open government lens? Yes • Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 9: National council for refoundation (CNR) in education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifiable: Yes • Does it have an open government lens? Yes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 10: Ecological planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 11: Create a digital culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 12: Combat disinformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 13: Barometer of public action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 14: Agora development and promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 15: Digital commons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? No ● Potential for results: Unclear
<p>Commitment 16: Public data monitoring center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Modest
<p>Commitment 17: Ecosphères project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verifiable: Yes ● Does it have an open government lens? Yes ● Potential for results: Modest

¹ **Editorial note:** For the complete text of commitments, please see France’s action plan: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/France_Action-Plan_2023-2025_December_EN.pdf.

Annex 2: Action Plan Co-Creation

OGP member countries are encouraged to aim for the full ambition of the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards that came into force on 1 January 2022.¹ The IRM assesses all countries that submitted action plans from 2022 onward under the updated standards. Table 2 outlines the extent to which the countries' participation and co-creation practices meet the minimum requirements that apply during development of the action plan.

OGP instituted a 24-month grace period to ensure a fair and transparent transition to the updated standards. Action plans co-created and submitted by 31 December 2023 fall within the grace period. The IRM will assess countries' alignment with the standards and their minimum requirements.² However, countries will only be found to be acting contrary to process if they do not meet the minimum requirements for action plans co-created in 2024 and onwards.

Please note that, according to the OGP National Handbook, countries implementing four-year action plans must undertake a refresh process at the two-year mark. Countries are expected to meet minimum requirements 3.1 and 4.1 during the refresh process.³ IRM assessment of the refresh process will be included in the Results Report.

Table 2. Compliance with minimum requirements

Minimum requirement	Met during co-creation?	Met during implementation?
1.1 Space for dialogue: In the co-creation period, the government did not put in place a multistakeholder mechanism with clear rules publicly available. However, the Minister of Democratic Renewal and the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation organized two co-creation workshops in October and November 2023 attended by representative of the ministries relevant to OGP commitments, as well as civil society organizations and academics. ⁴	No	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>
2.1 OGP website: The Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation published France's fourth national action plan on a dedicated page in its website. ⁵	Yes	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>
2.2 Repository: As of February 2025, there was no repository online with information on co-creation and implementation.	No	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>
3.1 Advanced notice: The co-creation timeline and the overview of opportunities for stakeholders to participate was not published online at least two weeks before the start of the co-creation process. The Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation published a LinkedIn post announcing the start of the co-creation process, however, no clear co-creation timeline nor opportunities to participate were included. ⁶ However, according to the Interministerial Directorate for Government Transformation, ⁷ the co-creation workshops were co-organized with the support of Transparency International France and Démocratie Ouverte,	No	Not applicable

who shared some information on the OGP process with other stakeholders.		
3.2 Outreach: During the co-creation period, the Ministry of Democratic Renewal and the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation organized two co-creation workshops in October and November 2023. Between these the government also used Klaxoon, ⁸ an online tool which permitted comments on the proposed commitments. These are activities which provide information on OGP and opportunities to get involved.	Yes	Not applicable
3.3 Feedback mechanism: During the co-creation period, stakeholders were invited to present proposals and comments on the proposals presented through the two co-creation workshops and Klaxoon. In previous co-creation cycles, the Point of Contact met with civil society to gather proposals and adapted them to share with directorates. During the 2023-2025 action plan co-creation process, the proposals shared with directorates were directly drafted by civil society. ⁹	Yes	Not applicable
4.1 Reasoned response: All proposals from the government and from civil society were documented and available to comment on the online platform Klaxoon. ¹⁰ For commitments that were included in the final action plan, some verbal responses were provided to the civil society stakeholders who had proposed them at the co-creation workshops, according to Anticor ¹¹ and Démocratie Ouverte. ¹² For commitment proposals that were not included in the action plan, no reasoned response was provided during the co-creation period, based on reports from Transparency International-France ¹³ and Anticor. ¹⁴ After the action plan was published, Anticor as well as other commitment proposers ¹⁵ received a verbal response from the Minister Delegate for Democratic Renewal at a private in-person meeting in early 2024. Overall, insufficient feedback was provided to stakeholder proposals during the co-creation period.	No	Not applicable
5.1 Open implementation: The IRM will assess whether meetings were held with civil society stakeholders to present implementation results and enable civil society to provide comments in the Results Report.	Not applicable	<i>To be assessed in the Results Report</i>

The development of France’s fourth action plan did not meet the minimum requirements of the OGP Participation & Co-Creation Standards as there was not sufficient multistakeholder space for dialogue, prior notice about the co-creation timeline, reasoned response to stakeholders’ contributions, or online repository with public information about co-creation and implementation. For the next action plan, the IRM recommends that France:

- Establish a multistakeholder forum, as targeted by Commitment 3.
- Publish a co-creation timeline and overview of opportunities for stakeholders to participate on the OGP website well in advance of the start of the co-creation process.
- Report back or publish written feedback to stakeholders on how their contributions were considered during development of the action plan, including the criteria used.

- Link an OGP repository to the OGP webpage, providing regularly updated information on co-creation and implementation.

¹ 2021 OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation-co-creation-standards/>.

² IRM Guidelines for the Assessment of Minimum Requirements: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-guidelines-for-the-assessment-of-minimum-requirements/>.

³ OGP National Handbook 2022, Section 2.3: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ogp-national-handbook-rules-and-guidance-for-participants-2022/>.

⁴ Mayara Soares Faria (International Relations and Open Government Advisor at the Cabinet of the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation), interview with IRM, 15 April 2024.

⁵ Direction Interministérielle de la Transformation Publique [Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation], “Partenariat pour un gouvernement ouvert” [Open Government Partnership], (27 March, 2024), <https://www.modernisation.gouv.fr/transformer-laction-publique/partenariat-pour-un-gouvernement-ouvert>.

⁶ Interministerial Direction for Public Transformation, “Partenariat pour un gouvernement ouvert : la Direction interministérielle de la Transformation Publique (DITP) lance les travaux de co-construction »[Open Government Partnership : The Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP) launches the co-creation process], LinkedIn, 27 October 2023, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/direction-interministerielle-transformation-publique_partenariat-pour-un-gouvernement-ouvert-activity-7123666911120224256-NB-D/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop, [Date found using <https://trevorfox.com/linkedin-post-date-extractor.html>]

⁷ Soares Faria, interview.

⁸ Klaxoon is available at: <https://klaxoon.com/fr>.

⁹ Mayara Soares Faria (France OGP Point of Contact), feedback provided to IRM staff, 29 October 2024.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Maxence Lambert (lawyer with Anticor), interview with IRM, 21 June 2024.

¹² Dorian Dreuil (Advocacy and Campaigns Manager for Démocratie Ouverte), interview with IRM, 4 June 2024.

¹³ Kevin Gernier (Advocacy Manager with Transparency International France), interview with IRM, 30 May 2024.

¹⁴ Lambert, interview.

¹⁵ Soares Faria, feedback provided to IRM Staff.