Winds of Change

The Progress of Open Government Policymaking in Latin America and the Caribbean

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IDB

Inter-American Development Bank

2014

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ABSTRACT*

The year 2013 has become known as the year of Open Government. The continuing progress of the Open Government Partnership represents the consolidation of a process that, in less than two years, has strengthened the promotion and implemention of public policies. These policies are founded on the principles of transparency and access to public information, citizen participation, integrity, and the harnessing of technology on behalf of openness and accountability in 63 participating countries. The Latin American and Caribbean region, in particular, stands out with the most widespread participation, including 15 borrowing member countries of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Fourteen of these have action plans in process for the implementation and/or evaluation of these policies, reinforcing their commitment to open government. Trinidad and Tobago, one of the 15 member countries, will soon present its own action plan. To date, various countries are developing public consultation processes and opportunities for participation for a new two-year period of commitments relating to open government. It is, therefore, worthwhile to review, country-by-country, the commitments that have been carried out and to consider the views expressed by relevant stakeholders. This analysis will further contribute to this emerging domain—a new paradigm for public policy and management reform in the 21st century.

The growth of the middle class, ever-higher levels of education, and access to new technologies have led to the emergence of a new type of citizen, who is increasingly demanding of public management. This represents a challenge for governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to reduce the gap between the objectives established in their programs and the services received by their respective citizens. The Institutional Capacity of the State Division (ICS) of the Institutions for Development Sector (IFD) at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its Public Management group, supports the efforts of member countries to improve service by promoting effective, efficient, and open government.

In order to support governments that operate with transparency and accountability, actively involve their citizens, and apply the latest information and communications technologies (ICTs) and technological innovations, the IDB's operational support centers on (i) strengthening and implementing open government policies, (ii) reinforcing legal and institutional frameworks to prevent corruption, (iii) developing and implementing access to information policies, and (iv) strengthening and modernizing auditing processes.

This study is a part of the series of knowledge products that relates to transparency and complements the relevant operational portfolio.

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INTRODUCTION

Open government is being proposed as a new model of state reform and modernization of public administration to improve the value to the public of the delivery of public services in an equal and reciprocal manner. It is based on an innovative way of coordinating transparency initiatives, citizen participation, and stakeholder collaboration.

Since the launch of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in September 2011, 63 borrowing member countries of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have registered their commitment to this multilateral initiative. It seeks to (i) increase the level of transparency and accountability; (ii) expand effective mechanisms for citizen participation, and (iii) develop innovative platforms for civic collaboration in order to co-produce public value in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and services.

This process is significant in the 15 LAC countries, with the region representing the highest proportion of participating nations in comparison to other regions. Of the 15 countries[1], all countries have presented and implemented their respective action plans (with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, which will do so in 2014). These include a number of specific and measurable commitments, the estimated dates for implementation over the short and the medium terms, and which agencies will be responsible. New plans for the next two years are currently being drawn up, which include increased citizen participation and public consultation processes involving civil society than those that were carried out in 2012.

The soundness of open government that has been exhibited by the OGP can be explained, in part, by the emergence of a new type of citizen: one who is more critical, organized, and active—a person who expects greater participation in political decision-making and who is interested in collaborating with government to seek solutions to the problems and needs of the community. This paradigm shift has transformed the role of citizens, from having been passive consumers of services to becoming agents who can contribute value and knowledge; from having been mere spectators to becoming players increasingly committed to public affairs beyond the electoral process. This, in turn, has brought about a model of civic engagement that makes use of social networks and digital technology as catalytic tools, not only to control political leadership, but also to generate new solutions to socially complex problems.[2]

When referring to open government, specifically, there are certain principles: to (i)

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[1] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.
[2] Pekka Himanen (2004) included this point of view in his book, when he referred to politicians having progressively lost their monopoly in setting their own agenda within the framework of a much more open space, in which committed citizens can mobilize efforts to generate and carry out the processes that have a direct impact on the political-administrative system.

improve the levels of transparency and access to public information (i.e, exercise public control and accountability) and use public sector information (i.e., promote innovation and economic development); (ii) facilitate citizen participation in public policy design and implementation (i.e., influence decision-making); and (iii) encourage the creation of spaces for collaboration among diverse stakeholders, particularly among public administrations, civil society, and the private sector.

Open government, ultimately, relates to the promotion of policies that are open in order to coproduce public value beyond institutional exclusivity (and, in many cases, monopolistic) of the State domain; it does not only relate to the adequate provision and delivery of public goods and services. Public value, referred to in specialist literature (OECD, 2010 and 2011; Ramírez-Alujas and Dassen, 2012), is conceived within the purpose of strengthening democratic systems, increasing the level of citizen trust in public institutions and civic commitment, and improving the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of government and public administration.[3]

This paper includes a detailed analysis of the progress of open government strategies within the region, based on an in-depth review of the action plans of 14 of the 15 current OGP Latin American and Caribbean members. The analysis complements the principal stakeholder opinions that form part of this initiative: on the one hand, from those stakeholders with institutional leadership who, within the government's domain, have been responsible for taking on the challenge of building and carrying out open government strategies in the OGP-member countries and, on the other hand, the viewpoint of a representative selection of stakeholders from civil society organizations (CSO), who represent the government's counterpart and who provide legitimacy to the pledge for open government in the region.

The first section of this Technical Notes provides a brief description of the OGP objectives and its governance to better understand the scope of the LAC region's commitments. It presents these commitments in a comparative and integrated manner. The second section includes, in three sections, an integral view of the progress made by countries in the region in relation to open government. The first section relates to a review of the key characteristics in the development of action plans, as well as the entities or departments assigned to coordinate the policies; the second section provides a critical and thematical analysis of the content of the action plans to determine the gaps that need to be addressed and bridged in the near term; and the third section provides a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the responses of civil servants and civil society members, gathered from a series of interviews relating to their view of joining the OGP in a political context and the progress made, so far, in the fulfillment of commitments. The final section includes the conclusions that represent certain paradoxical aspects of the OGP process. These are followed by some brief recommendations and reflections in relation to the direction of the debate with regard to the evolution of more open societies.

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[3] In today's "wikinomic" world (based on fluid and permanent interactive spaces between the players involved in public affairs), this is increasingly more evident. "[…] In the new model of public service delivery, the citizens can take on a more active and engaged role in identifying needs and helping to shape their fulfillment. The technology and tools become a means to finding better ways to integrate service—taking into account a person's preferences, his or her community's needs and the places and spaces where services are needed most. The result could be a dramatic improvement in the responsiveness of public systems, and an increased ability to focus the energy on all those involved—from officials, to stakeholders to citizens themselves—in setting and achieving goals together […]" (Tapscott and Williams, 2011: 372).

1 THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The LAC region has developed into an area that is conducive to the concept of open government. For nearly 20 years, 15 IDB borrowing member countries have been working toward open government policies. Examples include the implementation of anticorruption agreements, efforts to modernize the state by incorporating new technologies and decentralizing public services, and the enactment of legislation relating to access to public information.[4]

The comparative value of the OGP is that it is jointly managed by governments and CSOs and that, as of October 2013, three multilateral agencies have joined in partnership: World Bank (WB), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and IDB. In accordance to their respective roles and capacities, these organizations will jointly encourage the progress of action plans toward compliance. Independent reports have published the initial results within the region.[5] Of significant note is that two of the founding members are Brazil and Mexico, with the latter co-chairing the Executive Committee.

To be a member of the OGP, each country must demonstrate a willingness to comply with the Initiative's four objectives:

i.   Endorse the "Declaration of Principles on Open Government" and approve it at the highest level.
ii. Assume responsibility for specific commitments by drafting an action plan at the national level that goes beyond existing practices and implementing it through a consultation process to includes key stakeholders and the active participation of citizens and civil society.
iii. Commit to an evaluation of the progress of commitments in the action plan, to be undertaken by a panel of independent experts.
iv. Contribute to the promotion of open government in other countries by sharing knowledge and learning of best practices, capacity building and expertise, and technology resources, among others.

The commitments that are defined by the OGP are aligned with the following five significant challenges or strategic pillars, which governments are required to accept in order to be a member.

[4] Non-member countries have also been working on these open government-related policies.
[5] See www.opengovpartnership for the reports from Mexico and Brazil, added to those of Indonesia, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States.

1. **Improvement of public services (IPS).** Seeks to promote optimization and innovation in the provision and management of a wide range of public services (health, education, justice, drinking water, electricity and telecommunications, among others).
2. **Strengthening of public integrity (SPI).** Includes initiatives to improve public integrity, prevent and fight corruption, allow access to information and financial reforms, as well as promote and reinforce freedom of civil society and the media.
3. **Effectiveness and efficiency of public resource management (PRM).** Appropriate use of internal and external budgetary and financial allocations, as well as the use and conservation of natural resources.
4. **Building of safer communities (BSC).** Improves public security, response and reaction to natural disaster, environmental risk and civil protection, among others.
5. **Strengthening of corporate responsibility and accountability, including the private sector (SCA).** Promotes corporate responsibility in areas such as environment, consumer protection, community participation, and anticorruption.

Commitments must reflect and be directed by the four central principles of open government: (i) transparency, (ii) citizen participation, (iii) accountability, and (iv) innovation and technology. Of the 15 LAC countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay), 14 have presented action plans. Trinidad and Tobago is scheduled to present its own action plan in 2014. Given the varying times that countries signed up for membership, action plans are at different stages of implementation. Mexico and Brazil are the only two to have published independent evaluation reports.

Map 1. Open Government Partnership: Member Countries
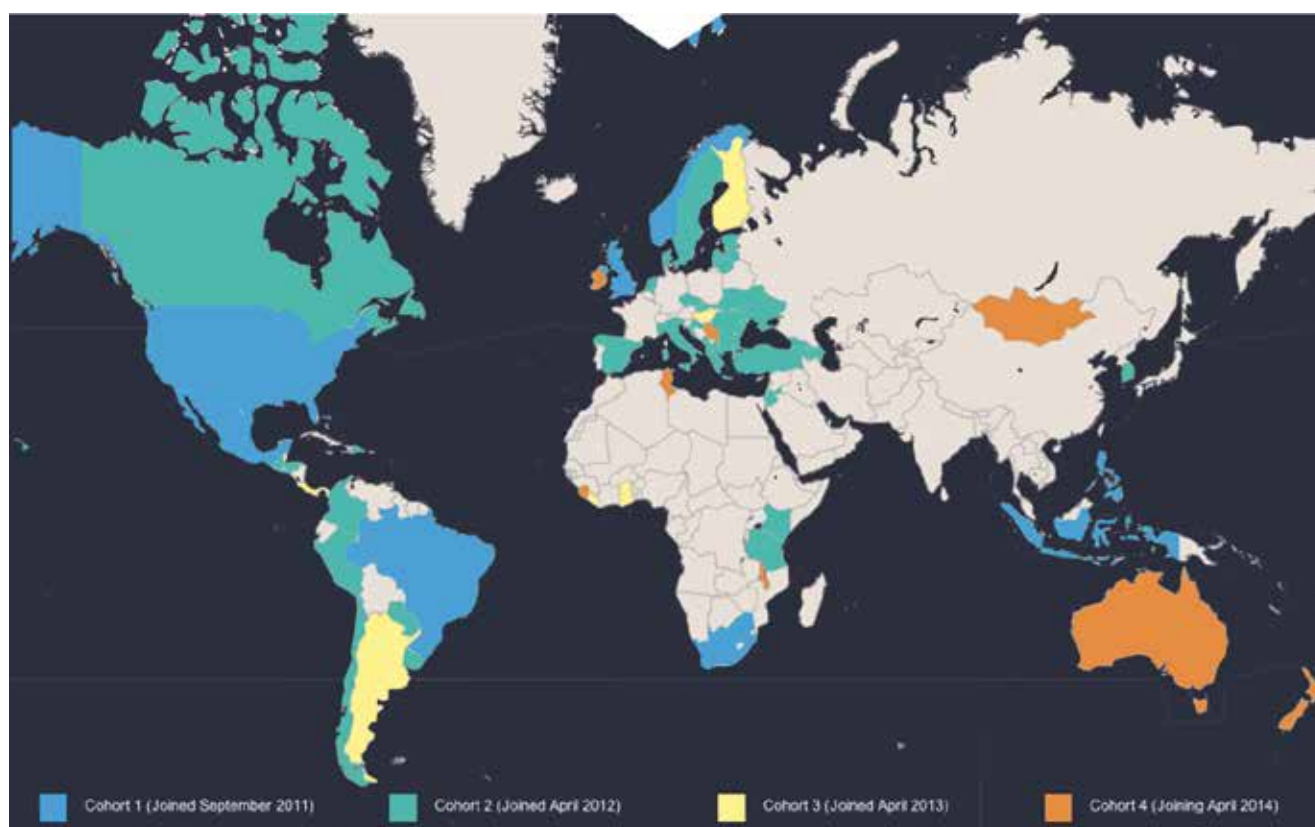
Source: Open Government Partnership (2013).
Note: Highlighted in blue on the map are the countries that joined in September 2011 (LAC: Brazil and Mexico); in green are those that joined in April 2012 (LAC: Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay); in yellow are those that joined in April 2013 (LAC: Argentina, Costa Rica, and Panama), and in orange is the country scheduled to join in April 2014 (LAC: Trinidad and Tobago), as well as those countries that have pending action plans.

The commitments included in the reviewed action plans of the 14 LAC countries add up to a significant number: 328. This makes the OGP's aims and perspectives in the region worth reviewing in greater depth and detail. Taking into account the basic classification that supports the model put forward by the Initiative, an initial analysis shows commitments by country in the LAC region, based on one or more of the five challenges and/or strategic pillars of the partnership (Table 1).[6]

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[6] One of the major challenges arising from the grouping together and comparison of proposed commitments is that, when comparing the wording and the brief description of the initiatives with their ascription to one or more of the five OGP challenges or strategic pillars, in many cases it would appear that the commitment does not necessarily apply to a specific pillar. In order to avoid problems of data interpretation, the classification by which each country had presented its commitments in the proposals has been maintained.

Table 1. Breakdown of Commitments in National Action Plans (by country and strategic pillar)

Country/Number of commitments in the action plan	OGP Strategic Challenges				
	Improvement of public services	Stengthening of public integrity	Effectiveness and efficiency of public resource management	Building of safer Communities	Strengthening of corporate responsibility and accountability
Argentina * (19)	6	11	2	--	--
Brazil (32)	4	22	5	--	1
Chile *** (19)	4	11	--	1	3
Colombia (27)	8	13	6	--	--
Costa Rica (23)	9	11	3	--	--
El Salvador * (21)	3	14	3	--	1
Guatemala * (3)	--	1	2	--	--
Honduras (20)	7	6	7	--	--
México ** (55)	7	22	19	--	7
Panamá * (5)	--	5	--	--	--
Paraguay * (15)	7	3	5	--	--
Peru (47)	8	37	2	--	--
Dominican Republic* (24)	5	15	4	--	--
Uruguay (18)	7	6	5	--	--
Total (328)	75	177	63	1	12
Percentage of total (approximate)	22.86%	53.96%	19.09%	0.30%	3.65%

Source: Authors' elaboration, updated according to Ramírez-Alujas and Dassen (2012).

* In the cases of Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, and Dominican Republic, the different initiatives were grouped under the criterion of correspondence/approximation to one or more of the five OGP challenges. This is due to the original commitments not having been classified in this way in their respective action plans. Their descriptions relate more toward endorsing the OGP's guiding principles (transparency, participation, accountability and innovation, and intensive use of technologies).

** In the case of Mexico, the total number of commitments is the sum of the Original Action Plan (OAP) (19 initiatives) plus the additional ones set out in the Extended Action Plan (EAP) (36 initiatives).

*** In the case of Chile, there are three commitments that were classified in the action plan under "institutional responsibility". They are included in this table under the pillar relating to Strengthening of Corporate Responsibility and Accountability. They relate, however, to citizenship participation, community electorates, and citizenship initiatives for draft legislation and, technically, should be grouped under the pillar that relates to Strengthening of Public Integrity.

This above table presents an introduction to each country's most significant area(s) of interest in terms of open government. Mexico, for example, has opted to enhance public integrity, while Paraguay focuses on the improvement of public services. The most significant characteristics of each action are shown in greater detail below.

To complement this, an aggregate view of the pillars defines which are the priorities within the regional Open Government agenda. Strengthening of public integrity is prominent (177 initiatives; 54 percent), followed by an improvement of public services (75 initiatives; 23 percent) and effective public resource management (63 initiatives; 19 percent). The fact that there are fewer commitments in corporate responsibility and accountability and safer communities may signal future challenges (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Open Government Challenges and Commitments in the LAC Region
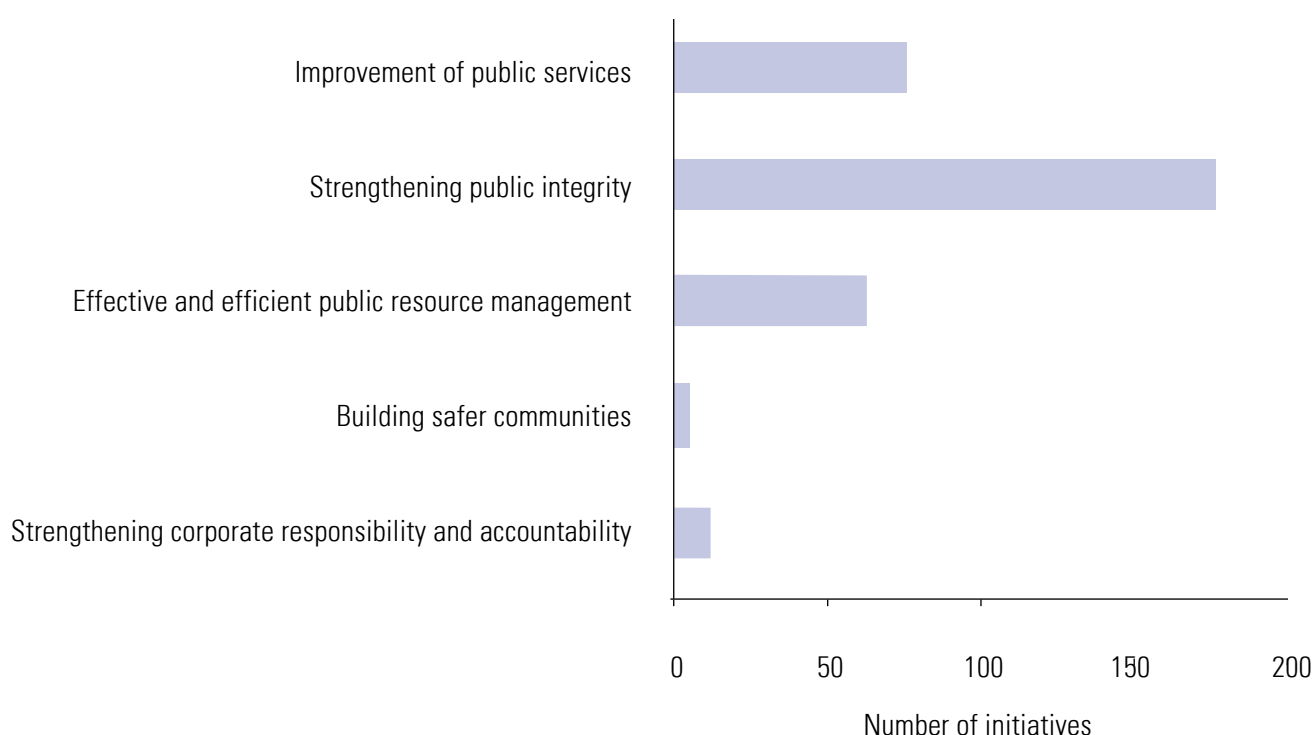
Source: Authors' elaboration.

2 THE ACTION PLANS, THEIR CONTENTS, AND BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section comprises three subsections, which provide a wholistic view of the progress made by each country on its respective commitments within the OGP framework, as well as their scope and perspectives within the LAC region. The first subsection contains an analysis of the principal characteristics of the action plans in terms of their development process. It also includes the entities or agencies that will be responsible for the coordination of open government policies. The second subsection analyzes the content of these action plans. It takes a more critical and thematic review of the gaps that remain to be addressed in the immediate term. The methodology applied in the first two sections of this paper consists of a record for each country that relates to the information available in the respective official action plans. Included is information that has been published by governments over time through different means to inform the public about the initiative (Annex 1).

The third subsection examines the responses of civil servants and members of civil society. These were gathered from a series of interviews to determine their view of the political context of the OGP membership process, as well as their opinion relating to the progress being made toward the undertaking of commitments.[7] The interviews were conducted on the basis of a standardized questionnaire, based on the matrix set out in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview Matrix

a) Context variables in drafting and implementing the OGP action plan	a. Context b. Link to other initiatives (plans, institutional programs, or strategies)
b) Process variables in drafting and implementing the OGP action plan	c. General information regarding action plans/priorities d. Organization(s) responsible and coordinating tasks e. Working process (networks of consultation and participation with other actors) f. Obstacles, barriers, or limitations g. Facilitators (or encouraging factors) h. Successful initiatives or recognized best practices

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[7] Information contained in this and the following sections has been processed on the basis of interviews with, and questionnaires submitted to, those responsible for or in charge of drafting and implementing open government action plans in the LAC region (relating to the first phase of information gathering for the purpose of this paper). This process took place between November 2012 and March 2013 (the annexes contain more details about the criteria, the questionnaire, and the titles of those interviewed). Only in specific cases was the original information complemented with additional data or details in order to provide greater consistency relating to the description in each case.

2.1 The Importance of Design: From Development to the Institutionalization of Open Government

In contrast to international conventions, the OGP is a voluntary initiative; it neither places high demands on its member countries in terms of how they internally should be organized nor does it specify to what they should commit themselves. There are no previously established rules that countries should adhere to when consulting with CSOs about their action plans. In order to track the progress of implementation of the freely selected commitments, the OGP has established an independent review mechanism, drawing on information from a self-evaluation report delivered by each country and comparing it to a separate report carried out by a local researcher selected by the OGP Support Unit, especially designed for each country.

The entities or agencies in each country that are responsible for the design, implementation, and/or coordination of action plans range from (i) public management or governance units that are close to the Presidency; (ii) experts of e-government topics; (iii) organizations concerned with transparency and/or public integrity; (iv) coordinating agencies or multisector entities. With regard to the latter, many countries have established informal networks for active participation by both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to formulate, monitor, and oversee compliance with the commitments set out in the plans and, in some cases, to evaluate and to generate basic inputs for future initiatives relating to the continuation of this effort.

The most outstanding examples of the collaborative effort between multiple actors include, without doubt, Peru's Permanent Multisector Commission (Comisión Multisectorial Permanente), Uruguay's Interinstitutional Working Group (Grupo de Trabajo Interinstitucional), the Tripartite Technical Secretariat in Mexico (Secretariado Técnico Tripartito), and Brazil's Interministerial Committee on Open Government (Comité Interministerial Gobierno Abierto), which is led by the

Comptroller-General's Office (Contraloría General de la Unión) and made up of the heads of 22 public departments (the Chief of Staff (Casa Civil), the Presidency of the Republic, and ministries). In these cases, active commitment was prolonged and made more sustainable by extending spaces for citizen participation—not merely as a procedural exercise or a prerequisite for approving and drafting an action plan, but as an institutionalized practice to provide more consistency of and scope to open government policies.

Another example of how a sustainable public sector policy can be institutionalized relates to Chile which, in November 2012, published its Presidential Guidelines on Open Government (Instructivo Presidencial sobre Gobierno Abierto). The most significant guidelines include instructions to openly publish public data (technical rule); establish a single electronic portal (or dashboard); consolidate information relating to transparency; establish participatory mechanisms (public consultations); as well as create an electronic platform for citizens to send proposals.

Table 3 lists the different coordinating mechanisms. In some countries, leadership entities work jointly with the units that coordinate and monitor the implementation of the action plans.

It is important to recognize the various institutional arrangements that exist in each country, which indicate how they approach open government. It is obvious that it is not only a matter of transparency or integrity, nor does it exclusively have to do with e-government. Those countries where the Presidency directly is involved view open government as crosscutting within their administration, which will modernize the State and improve the provision of public services (Table 3).

With regard to consultation with civil society for the development of action plans, emphasis was placed, in the first round, on the drafting of

Table 3. Agencies that Coordinate with the OGP in Each Country

Coordinating Agency	Units Close to the Presidency	Areas of E-Government	Areas of Transparency or Integrity	Multisector Committees
Argentina		Secretariat for Technology Management		
Brazil			Comptroller General of the Nation	Interministerial Committee on Open Government (CIGA)
Chile	Probity and Transparency Commission of the Ministry's General Secretariat relating to the Presidency			Working Group
Colombia*			Secretariat on Transparency	
Costa Rica		Secretariat relating to the Technology of R- Government		National Monitoring Committee
Dominican Republic			Directorate for Government Ethics and Integrity	
El Salvador			Transparency and Anticorruption Secretariat	
Guatemala		Presidential Commission for Transparency and E-Government (COPRET), joint with the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP)	Secretariat for Control and Transparency (Vice-Presidency)	
Honduras	Technical Support Unit under the President, Governance and Transparency			Tripartite Coordination between Government, Civil Society and International Cooperation Agencies
México		Coordination of the National Digital Strategy, Office of the President		Tripartite Technical Secretariat (SFP, IFAI and CSO)
Panama			National Council for Transparency against Corruption	Coordination with: National Authority for Government Innovation, Ministry of the Presidency, National Assembly, Ministery of Economy and Finance
Paraguay*			National Anticorruption Secretariat (Senac)	Inter-Institutional Working Group
Peru	Public Administration Secretariat of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers			Permanent Multisectoral Commission
Trinidad and Tobago		Trade & Investment Convention (TIC)		Interministerial Committee, Technical Advisory Committee
Uruguay		Agency for Electronic Government and Information (Agesic)		Inter-Institutional Working Group

* * Colombia, until 2013, had a Presidential Council for Governance and Administrative Efficiency of the Presidency of the Republic. Paraguay, until 2013, had a Directorate for Information on the Development of the Secretariat of Technical Planning.

the commitments. The process itself was not particularly robust and the lessons learned will be put to future use (Vasani, 2013). There were some face-to-face consultations by way of seminars or workshops with CSOs (as in the case of Guatemala, Honduras and Panama). In the majority of cases, the workshops were held in combination with teleconferencing and social networking facilities (as in the case of Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Uruguay).

In the case of Mexico, in order to comply with a specific deadline, its action plan—to which a group of eight CSOs put forward more than 100 commitment proposals—was drafted too hastily. The government drew criticism from civil society for not having included many of the proposals put forward, as it considered them to be too generic and not sufficiently strategic. As a result, the government and civil society reached an agreement to better coordinate their efforts by creating the Tripartite Technical Secretariat (Secretariado Técnico Tripartito), which comprised the Civil Service Secretariat (Secretaría de la Función Pública), the Institute for Access to Information (Instituto de Acceso a la Información), and social organizations, to draw up a revised Extended Action Plan (Plan de Acción Ampliado). Had the same eight CSOs—headquartered in Mexico City and which contributed to the new action plan—conducted business nationally, the consultations would have been more extensive (Vasani, 2013).

The process in Peru was participatory from the outset. An executive committee comprising four state entities and four CSOs was creasted which, together, reached a consensus on an outline action plan. Once approved, the plan was made public for a specific period through the website of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros) and links to public and CSO websites, as well as through widespread media broadcasting and social networks (Ibarra, 2013). The widespread outreach, however, resulted in only 33 contributions (9 from citizens, 9 from CSOs and 15 from public entities), which was considered satisfactory by governmental and civil society

stakeholders in terms of the synergy in developing the plan. The actors involved, however, agreed that the lack of time, human resources, and budget had limited them to holding interviews only within the urban area of the capital city, Lima (Vasani, 2013). The current round of consultations for the drafting of the second plan, however, include workshops at the regional level.

In Chile, the government convened a roundtable for discussion with representatives from Parliament, Office of the Comptroller General (Contraloría General de la República), Transparency Council (Consejo para la Transparencia), a government team (formed to undertake the modernization of the State and address integrity and transparency and led by the Ministry of the General Secretariat of the Presidency (Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, or SEGPRES), and a group of CSOs. A proposal was put forward after two meetings for public consultation over 15 days. This resulted in 12 contributions, 6 from citizens and 6 from CSOs, focusing on transparency and citizen participation (Ibarra, 2013).

Costa Rica, a country that is renowned for its wide-ranging and active social participation that has enabled it to change public policy, also combined government and CSO actors by including more than 70 representatives from government, think-tanks, media, academia, and the private sector. Some criticism ensued relating to a vagueness as to which organizations presented what proposals and which proposals were accepted or rejected. This was due to the emphasis that was centered on the government's digital strategy rather than on the development of policies and actions to promote citizen participation and transparency, tackle corruption, or improve access to public information (Martínez, 2013).

The Brazilian case may be the most prominent due to the diverse ways used to draw participation and the impressive number of people and organizations that were inspired to participate. Brazil created (i) a virtual forum, known as "Virtual Dialogue: Government and

Society" (Diálogo Virtual: Gobierno y Sociedad"), from which 15 proposals were contributed for inclusion in the second action plan; (ii) events, such as the National Conference on Transparency and Social Control (Conferencia Nacional sobre Transparencia y Control Social, or CONSOCIAL), which drew 12,000 delegates from organizations representing approximately 150,000 Brazilians, and a Government-Civil Society Dialogue (Diálogo Gobierno-Sociedad Civil), in which 66 CSO representatives participated and where 17 commitment proposals were submitted. The CSOs were also permitted observer-status at the meetings of the Executive Group of the Interministerial Committee on Open Government (Grupo Ejecutivo del Comité Interministerial de Gobierno Abierto, or CIGA) and a permanent civil

society working group was created to guarantee the continued involvement of the public to monitor the execution of the action plan.[8]

Some common denominators emerge from the above highlighted examples, which will be elaborated on at the end of this paper. There is a need, for example, to expand the network for citizen participation to the interior regions of a country and to extend to social organizations concerned with promoting and protecting basic social rights. Other factors include the need for additional human, technical, and budgetary resources and the preparation of processes well in advance to allow for an adequate period of time for public consultation to ensure the validity, legitimacy, and aptness of the initiatives.

2.2 An Analysis of the Action Plans

When the action plans of the OGP-member countries in the LAC region are comparatively examined, there are certain common elements that are identified that partially explain the significant interest in the Initiative. These elements, in some cases, are indicative of a

serious and ambitious process toward the objectives of the action plans. The most significant and crosscutting fact that has been identified is that 62.2 percent of the commitments rely on the use of ICT for their implementation.

Figure 2. The Presence of ICT in Action Plans

37,8%

62,2%

Yes
No
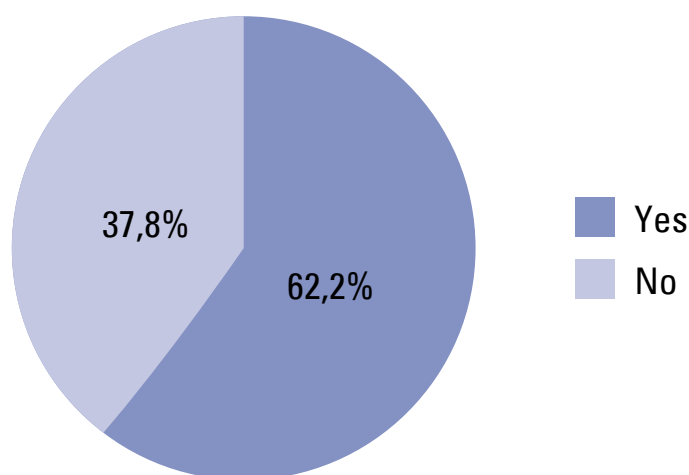
Source: Authors' elaboration.

The most common commitments that relate to the harnessing of ICT are the transparent portals that offer both general and targeted information, open data portals, and electronic government solutions to improve public services by simplifying bureaucratic processes. At the political level, this is consistent with a focus on a more citizen-oriented approach through the intensive use of technology to deliver integral, timely, and adequate responses to the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration that the OGP encourages.

There are marked differences, on the other hand, with regard to the degree of detail of and intensity of ambition for some commitments. These differences come to light when reviewing Guatemala's action plan, which includes only three commitments.[9] These commitments are broad in nature and very ambitious, and fail to provide time frames for carrying them out or identifying management responsibility. The Honduras action plan, which includes the implementation of an Anticorruption Plan (Plan contra la Corrupción),[10] and Peru's plan, contains a list of 47 commitments.

A homogenous classification of proposed initiatives in order to group and analyze them in comparative terms has proved complex, given the lack of a common and precise framework for reference[11] Certain patterns, however, do emerge when some semblance of order is established.

In order to visualize and precisely identify the dimensions and scope of commitments in the LAC region in aggregate terms, the 328 initiatives in the 14 action plans, officially presented within the OGP framework, were reclassified and grouped together according to a variety of thematic headings (Table 4).

The classification follows the thematic pillars that have often been applied to analyze the progress of open government issues and is not limited to the five pillars proposed by the OGP.[12] The following figure presents an updated overview of the commitments undertaken to consolidate open government policies in LAC countries.

Certain considerations emerge from these results and trends in terms of how the initiatives should be consolidated in the LAC region in the coming years. Firstly, it is important that initiatives relating to the right to access public information are a priority for the OGP-member countries in the LAC region (94 commitments). The underlying fact is the right to exercise other rights (economic, social, and political). In effect, laws relating to the access to information were promoted with a commitment to encourage governmental transparency and accountability, leading to greater social control, more active citizen participation, improved quality and understanding of public decisions, and enhanced confidence in government. Although the achievement of these objectives are yet to be seen (Worthy, 2010), it does provide an opportunity for the bodies responsible for guaranteeing these rights in the countries—where the right to access to information already exists (e.g., Chile and Mexico)—to collaborate by sharing knowledge with their peers in the countries that are experiencing slower institutional development. This challenge has already been taken on board as part of the working agenda of the LAC region's Transparency and Access to Information Network

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[9] This includes the implementation of the Results-Based Management Evaluation System, strengthening of the supervision of public credit, and the continuation of monitoring and transparency efforts of apply the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST), Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR), or Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

[10] To promote compliance of the Transparency and Anti-Corruption Plan (Plan de Transparencia y Lucha contra la Corrupción) by executing and monitoring 115 actions, linked to 25 public sector and civil society institutions.

[11] A previous study (Ramírez-Alujas and Dassen, 2012) included this particular situation, whereby commitments are presented under the label of one or other of the OGP fundamental principles or under the five pillars while, in terms of content, have little to do with the details in the original description.

[12] For the purpose of the classification and synthesis of results in this section, only the commitments set out in the original, official action plans by OGP LAC countries (available from http://www.opengovpartnership.org) will be considered. In the case of Mexico, the figures include the additional commitments to the original action plan.

Table 4. Thematic Classification of Action Plan Commitments

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PUBLIC SERVICES	Services offered by public administrations or public and/or public-private enterprises, aimed at guaranteeing political, economic, social and cultural rights.
CIVIL SERVICE	Measures and/or activities that aim to professionalize employment in the public sector.
ACCESS TO INFORMATION	Includes laws, regulations, policies and entities that guarantee access to public information, as well as open data and archiving policies.
TARGETED TRANSPARENCY	Relates to data systems that provide information relating to the determined purpose of a particular public policy in different economic and social sectors, and which include the target beneficiaries and how the information will be used.
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDITING	Commitments relating to the activities carried out by reputable fiscal institutions responsible for the control of the use and audit of public resources.
ANTICORRUPTION	Commitments relating to the prevention of and fight against corruption, which is the responsibility of specialized agencies.
PUBLIC ETHICS	Refers to the guidelines relating to behavior that are a part of the ethical codes or rules governing public employment, which include regulations to avoid conflict of interest and to control the financial disclosure forms of public officials.
CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION	Actions aimed at involving civil society in debates; implementing, monitoring, and evaluating public policies (e.g., public hearings, regulatory consultation processes, citizen audits, participatory budget, and so on.).
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT	Goods and services procurement systems for public administrations that use financial resources from the public budget.
PUBLIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Includes the transparent management and use of the public budget, and includes financial, fiscal, and taxation aspects of public policies.
CITIZEN SECURITY	Public security policy measures, such as crime prevention and actions to control/mitigate natural disaster that put the survival of vulnerable communities at risk.
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY	Refers to matters relating to corporate ethics, corporate social responsibility, and policies to control fraud and enhance private sector transparency.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

(Red de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información, or RTA).[13] Among the most significant commitments are the laws relating to the access to public information, approved in Brazil and Colombia, and the draft proposal submitted by Costa Rica; transparency portals in Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, and Peru; projects to modify and/or strengthen current regulations and improve access to information mechanisms; training courses for civil servants; and wider dissemination of policies to promote the rights of citizens.

One element that stands out, nevertheless, is the absence of clear commitment relating to public sector document and archive management. It is as important to have clear policies with regard to the creation and care of records—especially in terms of quality, security, and conservation—as it is to be able to access information. The impact that trust in and sustainability of the data management systems (used by the public sector on a day-to-day basis) would bring could be formidable.

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[13] The Transparency and Access to Information Network (Red de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información, or RTA) is an exchange network between entities and/or public agencies that monitor transparency and the right to access public information. In Latin America, there is a priority by a number of governments and/or public agencies to promote the approval and implementation of legislation relating to access to public information and the sharing of knowledge. For more information, see http://www.redrta.org/SitePages/Portada.aspx.

Figure 3. Principal Commitments in the Regional Open Government Agenda
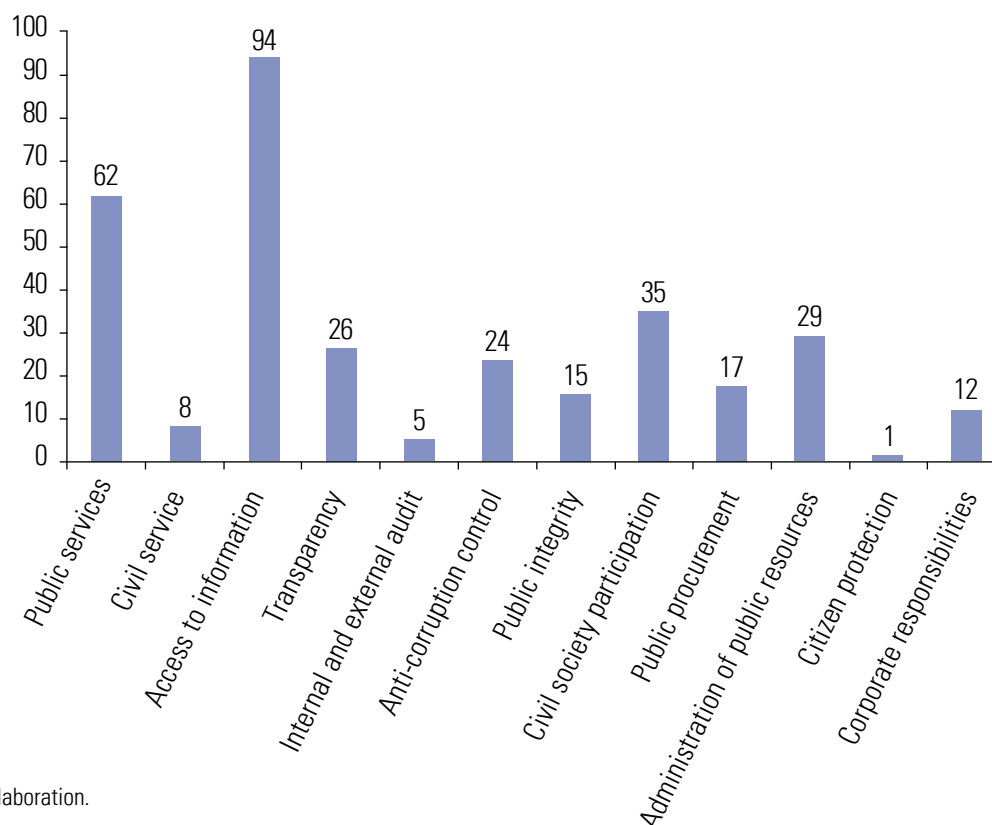
Source: Authors' elaboration.

Worth noting are the 26 commitments on targeted transparency. This type of information is sector-based in nature and is, therefore, essentially of use to those using the information. Selected were sectors such as public works in Guatemala; extractive industries in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru; education in Brazil; and housing in Colombia, which indicate that open and pro-citizen public management is prepared for institutional coordination. El Salvador and Mexico, in their concern to allow the public to hold public management to account, are developing portals with social information in a variety of economic and social sectors, thereby promoting a greater uptake of public services.

Furthermore, 9 of the 14 action plans include 25 commitments concerning policy relating to the publishing of open format data. The policy may be of a regulatory perspective or relate to the creation of catalogues, repositories, and/or portals designed for open format data (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay). This demonstrates the significant importance that is placed on open data within the scope of open government policies in the LAC region, paralleling a global trend.[14]

Open data can enable the public and organizations to develop new ideas and become innovative, and it falls between what is known as access to public information and the provision of public services. It is usually published in raw databases in open format, can be reused by different software programs, and can be automatically downloaded. The reuse of data by software programs fits in with the spirit of open government—by exploiting the use of technology, social networks and electronic platforms, it can bring in the co-production of public value through collaborative mechanisms between governments, civil society, and the private sector.

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[14] For the declaration on the G8 Open Data Charter and Technical Annex, see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-data-charter/g8-open-data-charter-and-technical-annex#technical-annex.

Open data platforms can create jobs and generate economic value. The majority of the more than 100,000 applications for smartphones, for example, have been designed by the private sector using public data. Open data enables electricity supply companies to improve their investment planning by analyzing a country's demographic growth (McKinsey & Company, 2013). Furthermore, it generates social value, allowing citizens the potential to select a school for their children (by analyzing the school rankings in their area) or select the safest neighborhood in which to live (by cross-referencing crime incidence maps with real estate data). It also engenders greater social control by enabling CSOs and the media to gain access to public data and develop publishing systems in formats that are visible to, and comprehended, by the public (infographs, data visualization), an example of which has taken place in Argentina with the disclosure of tax and wealth reports pertaining to public officials.[15]

With regard to public integrity, there are various initiatives to promote a change within public institutions and to ensure the integrity of civil servants (15 commitments).[16] The most outstanding initiatives involve refining the mechanisms that disclose wealth, prevent conflicts of interest, and regulate public integrity (codes of conduct); they also include new mechanisms to denounce and sanction abuse, as well as a draft legislation and new regulatory framework relating to lobbies.

Twenty-four commitments relate to anticorruption, among which there are policies and plans (Colombia, Honduras, and Peru); electronic portals and systems to handle complaints (Paraguay and Peru); awards for the most transparent organizations (Uruguay); mechanisms for compliance with international transparency standards, information dissemination, research, and sanctions (Mexico, El Salvador); and institutional watchdogs and transparency rankings (Costa Rica and Dominican Republic), among others.

The commitments relating to public integrity and corruption control fall within the agenda of anticorruption conventions that countries and CSOs have been laboring over for 15 years with irregular results, where commitments have yet to be formed into legislation or they still require institutional implementation.[17] These make up 11.8 percent of the 328 commitments, which is another example of LAC countries not considering the OGP merely as an anticorruption initiative. ICT cannot be considered the key issue between the old and new agenda, as this is included within only 4 of the 39 commitments (10 percent).[18]

The above number of commitments relating to corruption control contrasts with that of civil society participation (35), which include the use of ICT systems. They comprise manuals for social networks, organizing hackathons (public data marathons, using technology to resolve socially relevant issues), implementing consultative processes to garner public opinion, drafting regulations, or creating participatory budgets.

There is little doubt that, within the first years of the 21st century, technology in open government will strengthen democracies through the creation of both virtual and physical spaces, wherein governments and CSOs can collaborate. Institutions and organizations are known for dialogue, but it is thanks to innovative technology platforms that enable citizens to

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[15] See the article in the Argentine newspaper, La Nación, wherein the tax and wealth reports of civil servants were published on a user-friendly platform: http://interactivos.lanacion.com.ar/declaraciones-juradas/

[16] Chile (5), Colombia (1), Dominican Republic (3), Honduras (1), and Peru (5).

[17] For more information, see the reports of the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, available at: http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/faq_ac.htm.

[18] Mexico's commitment includes the development of a website that will publish permanent and updated monthly information on allocated resources and their use relating to the protection of journalists and human rights. Other country commitments include Paraguay: the development and implementation of the Citizen Complaint Portal (Portal Ciudadano de Denuncias); Dominican Republic: the creation of a virtual school on transparency; Peru: incorporation of formats that will offer information to the public with regard to the management of public administration by way of the Official Activities platform within the Standard Transparency Portal (Portal de Transparencia Estándar).

come together in real time to comment and share ideas from their own unique perspectives. This opens new spaces for collaboration and co-production without cost or bureaucratic challenge. Social networking provides the means to promote and facilitate transformation (Castells, 2009).

Similarly, certain social control mechanisms are worth mentioning that regulate individual and group behavior in networks where they participate. Notably among these are the integrity agreement of El Salvador, the social auditing office of Honduras, the joint auditing mechanisms of the Dominican Republic, and the impressive work that Brazil's Office of the Comptroller General (Contraloría General de la Unión) undertakes to stimulate social engagement. By cross-referencing social control mechanisms with the commitment to strengthen internal and external government auditing, there seems to be significant potential for collaboration between supreme audit offices and CSOs, which is not being fully exploited.[19] In this regard, some very interesting collaborative lessons have emerged, whereby CSOs have provided support in identifying areas where there is a misuse of public funds, contribution of information for a particular audit, proposal or programs for specific audits, or advocacy before Legislative Committees to ensure that audit reports are scrutinized (Cornejo, Guillán and Levin, 2013).[20]

To improve the management of public services and provide for greater efficiency in State expenditure, grouped together are various initiatives that seek to increase institutional capacities within the public sector and offer a new model for the provision and delivery of services and delivery. In addition, there are initiatives to improve the quality of service (especially in relation to education, security, right to identity, and health); improve customer service for citizens and offer options relating to services and commitments; simplify administrative procedures; improve the mechanisms relating to public spending, financial administration, and public procurement/contracting; and enhance public administration systems.

The use of ICT is crucial to the implemention of commitments. From a total of 116 diversely related commitments,[21] 75 percent (87) require the use of ICT systems. There is an obvious trend toward the creation of web portals as service platforms to improve space for interaction and communication to and from the public. Such is the case in Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In some cases, these collaborative spaces have included the monitoring of open government initiatives, as in the case of Chile. Furthermore, there are many commitments associated with the design and implementation of single windows to simplify bureaucratic processes for the public (8 of 14). In a similar vein, with regard to the challenges of interoperability,[22] only Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru and, to some extent, Brazil, have made explicit commitments to move forward in this area, either through frameworks of action or through regulations and/or schemes to promote interoperability throughout the public sector.

It lies at the heart of modernization and efficiency of the State when an integral strategy is created to provide capacity building within the public sector for public data management and administration and, simultaneously, to limit silos—a common factor in Latin American bureaucracy. Likewise, an increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of the State is

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[19] These include the strengthening of internal monitoring agencies (Honduras, El Salvador, and Paraguay), creating a national audit system at the state and municipal levels (Mexico), and implementing social audits (Dominican Republic).

[20] See also the Transparency, Participation and Accountability Initiative (TPA) at: http://iniciativatpa.wordpress.com/.

[21] The commitments analyzed here are those that relate to improving public services, the civil service, public procurement and administration of public resources.

[22] Understood to be the capacity of organizations and systems to interact, using consensual and common objectives to obtain mutual benefit, in which case the interaction implies that departments and entities share infrastructure, information, and knowledge by exchanging data between their respective ICT systems.

inconceivable, unless it is combined with the principles of transparency. If a State is deemed corrupt, neither can it be efficient nor gain the confidence of the public over the medium and long terms; therefore, when countries work toward the decentralization of services and the reduction of bureaucracy, set up e-government solutions, strengthen their auditing agencies, and promote access to information, they will be seen as not only promoting efficient governments, but also becoming integral, transparent, and accountable.

A series of initiatives have been grouped together into one item, which relates to the small number of actions proposed as part of the OGP challenges regarding safer communities and increasing corporate accountability and/or ethics (citizen security, cybernetic security, the World's Most-Ethical Companies List (WME), ranking of private banks, business integrity and corporate governance, among others). The 13 commitments in the LAC region, relating to this issue, show a clear imbalance when compared to the specific weighting of the rest of the thematic issues analyzed in this section. With the exception of countries such as Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, or Peru—which include collective action initiatives involving diverse public, private, and social actors among their commitments[23]—the OGP represents an opportunity for further collaboration with the private sector (Pieth, 2012).

Finally, there are two common factors that, due to their absence or limited scope, are proposed as possible areas for future action. The first relates to focusing action plans at the central government level. Only five action plans include specific commitments targeting open government at the subnational or local level.[24] This demonstrates the significant potential for future initiatives to establish citizen engagement in the debate for open government, with the understanding that the public service closest to the people's needs is that at the municipal level.

The second common factor relates to the participation of other State offices beyond that of the Executive, in particular the legislative and the judicial branches. In the case of Argentina, for example, reforms have been put forward relating to judicial issues, whereas Chile has proposed a roundtable for the Legislature and other stakeholders to discuss transparency. Among other examples, Brazil plans to strengthen the role of the Ombudsman an its related instruments while, in El Salvador, a Political Parties Act (Ley de Partidos Políticos) is ready to be put forward to Parliament.

The above demonstrates the influence that open government has had on other areas of State in the LAC region, such as the Open Parliaments Initiative. This initiative represents a turning point in the scope and reach that, in practice, open government strategies will have over the short and medium term. This adds to the fact that many of the commitments enshrined in the regional agenda call for coordination and collaboration with the legislative bodies to approve draft legislation or other reforms that require a parliamentary quorum, such as the enactment and/or strengthening of laws relating to access to public information, regulation of lobbies, financing of political parties, and so on.

2.3 The OGP, Viewed by Government Stakeholders and Civil Society

With regard to the evolution of the OGP, those representing each country—together with

CSOs—were solicited their opinion of the aspects that were not entirely explicit or were not

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[23] These initiatives include those, such as the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST), Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR), and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).
[24] Colombia, Mexico, and Honduras: the enhancement of financial administration monitoring; Paraguay: its electronic government strategy; and the Dominican Republic: its fiscal transparency model for local government.

evident from the action plans and evaluation reports presented.[25] The information was gathered by using a SWOT analysis model to complement the breakdown in the tables in Annex 2.

What follows is a summary of the responses from those civil servants represented in the OGP. The following section provides a similar summary of opinions, garnered from the CSOs that took part in this exercise.

From the high number of civil servant and CSO views, it appears—depending on various elements (such as the level of political commitment of a country or degree of donor support)—that, in general, the OGP constitutes an opportunity for closer collaboration toward a common goal. These opinions confirm some criticism regarding the OGP process, making clear the need for the OGP to establish clearer rules and be more results-oriented.

2.3.1. The View of Government Stakeholders

A review of government opinions in the LAC region produced a two-sides-of-the-coin analysis, representing the positive aspects (strengths and opportunities) and the areas where there should be more focus (weaknesses and threats). The latter two are gaps that, at some stage, will need to be bridged for open government to be sustainable and effective in the different representative countries (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Strengths and Weaknesses, according to Government Stakeholders Responsible for Open Government Plans

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Presence of political commitment and support (government and other authorities). • Existence of earlier OGP policies, such as transparency, anticorruption, and modernization of the State. • Presence of networks for dialogue with CSOs, reflecting either potential commitment and/or active support. • Flexibility to draft action plan and collaborate with other civil society stakeholders. • Possibility to monitor and evaluate commitments proposed.	• Lack of conceptual clarity concerning what constitutes open government; lack of direction from the OGP. • Lack of time, given that countries were required to present their action plans prior to the First Annual Meeting; lack of standard methodologies for developing consultation process and citizen participation in the drafting, implementation, and evaluation of action plans. • Absence of metrics and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Action plans lack clearly defined goals and distinct tasks, among other aspects. • Diverse points of conflict between government and civil society stakeholders about the roles and mechanisms for binding agreements between both parties. • Resistance to commitments that go beyond the demands of government. • Bureaucratic resistance to change makes it difficult to eradicate a culture of secrecy, make progress in sharing information, and include public in networks. • Low capacity in terms of human resources; lack of adequate training. • Exclusion of public consultation; lack of openness toward citizens (e.g., public management practices). • Limited financial resources required to execute initiatives. • Lack of technical assistance and conceptual guidelines and methodologies on the nature of open government and how to include it in public policy.

[25] See the list of interviewees in Annex 2.

Table 6. Opportunities and Threats, according to Government Stakeholders Representing Open Government Action Plans

Opportunities	Threats
• Placing open government topics on the international public agenda. • Possibility to form networks for collaborating and sharing knowledge with other countries. • Ability to work jointly with CSOs to generate virtual networks in decision-making and designing public policy. • Recognition of ICT to support openness and improve government. • Existence of interconnected networks for monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of results, supported by rules of transparency and review of compliance with OGP commitments.	• Periodic changes in government risk process disruption. • Weakness in coordinaton of various activities linked to implemention of the action plan, which should be reinforced to avoid duplication of efforts and to guarantee best use of available resources. • Scarce possibilities to receive support from community or international organizations. • Technical assistance subject to donor conditions. • Difficulties in complying with commitments due to dependence on coordinated work of other institutional actors (e.g., passage of draft legislation through Parliament).

The SWOT matrix constitutes a practical medium to promote and formulate strategy, based on an analysis of the background and internal monitoring process. By crossing referencing, four variables were derived: (i) prospects (strength and opportunity); (ii) challenges (opportunities and weaknesses); (iii) risks (strengths and threats); and (iv) limitations (weaknesses and threats).

With regard to prospects, the OGP is well reputed and well placed internationally. It has significant political support to implement the commitments that governments had been developing before the partnership was formed. The flexibility of the initiative to adapt to the institutional context of each country is obvious, as well as its capacity to form a network of governments which, in turn, work with CSOs.

A challenge is to collaboratively create a framework of reference for open government, which should include basic guidelines to become international standard. Mechanisms to provide for adequate consultation and citizen participation should also be developed to more actively engage the private sector and CSOs. To implement commitments, the following actions will be required: (i) to fully utilize ICT systems and expand networks; (ii) to strengthen institutional capacities in public administration; (iii) to build frameworks of co-responsibility, co-management and co-governance for the government/civil society process; and (iv) to develop processes for monitoring and evaluating action plans (metrics and indicators).

Among the risks to be mitigated is the mapping of initiatives and collaborative platforms, which are somewhat disconnected and hinder efforts to efficiently coordinate support. More worrying is the way in which action plans can be affected by a change in government, aggravated by the OGP's flexibility to enable easy modification of action plans. The OGP—known for its flexibility, adaptability and avoidance to call for more rigorous compliance by countries—could be seen as lax and not goal-oriented when a change of government occurs. It is therefore vital that open government policy should become State policy. There are limitations that may affect this process: lack of available resources, political uncertainty, and the possibility of uncertain long-term sustainability—yet to be tested.

2.3.2. The View by Civil Society

A representative sample of CSO stakeholders, directly involved in the process, was consulted. This complements the views that were collected from the action plans, as well as the interviews with governments regarding the progress of drafting and implementing government action plans in the region. The details are included in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. Strengths and Weaknesses, according to CSO Stakeholders

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Favorable change in system of communication between governments and civil society due to consultation process used to formulate action plans. • Facilities for developing initiative: use of CSO networks and knowledge. • Achievement of voluntary adherence by 63 countries as evidence of strong political willingness. • Both governmental and social actors are committed to initiative. • Participation mechanism is relatively simple and dynamic. Entry is made easy for countries, as long as they fulfill requirements. • Pillars of OGP declaration are wide-ranging and make for diverse commitments but are, at the same time, convergent and coherent in their commitment to governance.	• Governments fail to disseminate sufficient information in a proactive fashion (i.e., without the need to be asked for it). • In cases where there is need for a commitment, there is a lack of willingness by the State to execute the action plan. • OGP lacks institutionality (structure and clear rules). • Governmental actors responsible for decision making in OGP appear isolated from realities of respective country. • Scant clarity and certainty regarding actions and sanctions to be applied in case of non-compliance of commitments. • Governments can weaken concept of "open government" to use and promotion of ICTs. • Governments can use their membership to OGP as a way to avoid responsibilities, at local level, for any failures in these areas.

Table 8. Opportunities and Threats, according to CSO Stakeholders

| Opportunities	Threats
• Collaboration with governments to improve transparency, based on a process of shared responsibility. • Enhanced citizen participation in the struggle against corruption, with greater access to public information. • The open government issue is well positioned on the public agenda at the international level. • International donors are interested in funding the initiative. • Idea of "open government" is widely accepted; it would be difficult for a government to overtly refuse to participate in an openness initiative. • Main proponents of initiative are countries respected in the United States.	• Technical agencies, in most countries, are charged by government to guiding processes. Process may come to a standstill if government willingness falters, either due to changes in national priorities or change in government. • Civil society plays a secondary role. • Open government is often confused with open data, and the two terms are sometimes used synonimously. • Process can lose legitimacy if expected results are not achieved. • Lack of resources to support independent monitoring of processes. Local civil society actors depend on resources to fund their own processes and, although there is some donor interest to contribute, the range of participating countries continues to expand. This makes it increasingly difficult to fund ongoing processes in each country.

According to CSO opinions, the OGP is viewed as a forum representing an opportunity to contribute to and collaborate in the development of a reform agenda with defined objectives. It is also considered a collaborative process in which CSOs stand behind common goals and actions to improve the quality of democracy in the LAC region.

One area where CSOs tend to disagree is the definition of open government.[26] Some organizations believe that open government should be a fundamental public policy to promote the right to access to information and transparency. Other organizations view it as a concept of open government, which includes—apart from access to information—citizen participation in the public decision-making process and making government accountable for its actions and achievements. This debate has led various regional CSOs to agree on a proposal to determine where the previously mentioned elements converge in order to establish a common concept of open government (Table 9).

Table 9: Definition of Open Government, according to CSO Stakeholders

Access to information and participation as a *right*

+

Transparency and accountability as a *policy*

+

Open data as a *tool*

=
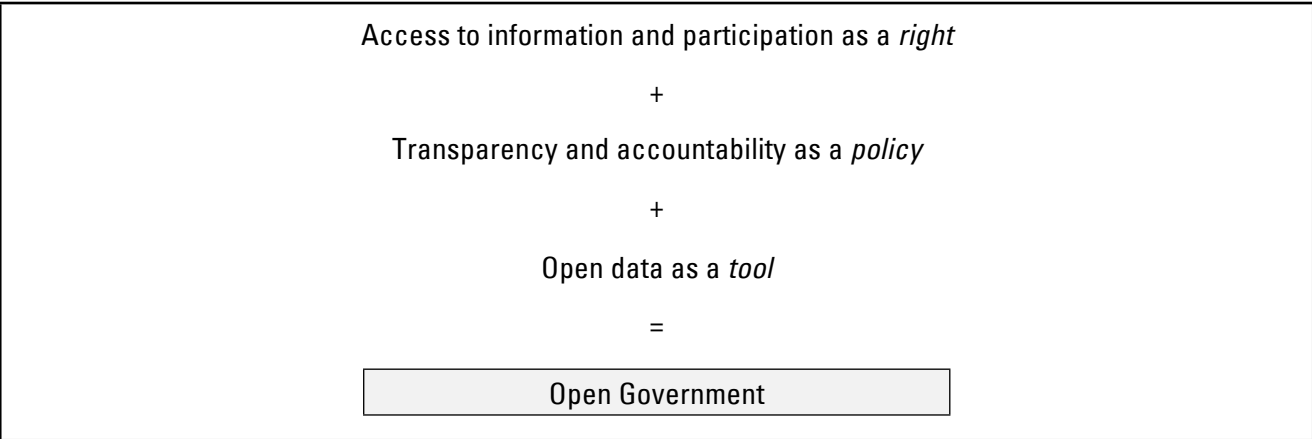
Open Government

While this definition is somewhat restrictive, given that it omits the potential to seek network collaboration to co-produce public value in the provision of public services, it is clear that open government neither should be confused with electronic government nor should it be limited to the mere publication of governmental information in open formats; rather, it should be understood as a means to a much wider end. Likewise, the principal barriers that civil society actors identified refer to the following issues:

1. Lack of mutual and homogenous understanding between government and CSOs regarding the purpose and scope of the OGP.

2. Lack of a standard definition for open government, leading to various interpretations which, logically, has important implications when drafting, developing, monitoring, and evaluating action plans.

3. In comparative terms within the region, the main limitation is the level of civil society participation in the process. Mistrust between government and CSOs is high and, in many cases, has not lessened. This also relates to the heterogeneity and diverse institutional and cultural contexts within which the initiative has been promoted in the LAC region.

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[26] Opinions were gathered from the following organizations: Peru's Regional Alliance for the Freedom of Expression and Information (Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información) and Proética; Transparency for Colombia (Transparencia por Colombia); Mexico's Fundar; and Zoë Reiter, Transparency International.

4. Prevalence of action plans with commitments that are too wide-ranging; that fail to complement the initiatives that are in progress; whose goals are difficult to measure and monitor; wherein responsibilities and chronogram are ill-defined; and where there is an absence of interinstitutional coordination mechanisms and strategies between State, civil society, and private sector.

5. Lack of capacity among the actors involved in the process, both from civil society and from government and public administration; lack of mechanisms to identify and bridge the gaps in the short term.

6. Absence of strategies for communicating and disseminating the contents, development processes, objectives, targets, and scope of the action plans. This has a direct impact on the tasks of monitoring and evaluation.

7. OGP rules that require commitments that have been adopted to be implemented in a relatively short period, implying that only those commitments that depend on the Executive or other autonomous authority have a chance of being implemented. Commitments that include legislative reform or those that require linkages, partnerships, and teamwork may often be delayed, which could be counterproductive to the approval of greater public policy reforms.

On the other hand, the fact that it is essential that civil society take on a more active role and that the consultation process—during the drafting and the evaluation stages of the action plans—should no longer be considered as a mere OGP formality or requirement. It should, instead, be transformed into a more fundamental and influential network.

Similarly, there were some questions regarding the perceived lack of capacity of the OGP Coordinating Committee to guide governments in their efforts and to act proactively during certain phases of inadequate implementation of action plans, as has occurred in the case of citizen participation networks. The OGP's independent reporting mechanism should treat all member countries in a fair manner and be able to distinguish the initiatives that have been carried out in good faith from those that simply occupy a political space on the multilateral agenda.

Finally, within the OGP framework carried out by CSOs in the LAC region, a series of recommendations to strengthen the process have been put forward:

1. Generate processes for eligible and ineligible countries, as well as for those that are eligible but are not members, to facilitate and guarantee CSO participation.
2. Ensure that the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) guarantees participation, transparency, and confidentiality in order to protect actors who are at risk.
3. Extend the OGP's strategic scope beyond the Executive branch to other State institutions. This should be done by taking into account local and regional actualities.
4. Develop an institutional plan, based on transparent and participatory selection processes, whereby civil society representatives can form part of the various OGP units (Executive Committee, commissions, working groups).
5. Define an internal and external communications strategy through public consultation.
6. Ensure that the OGP carry out a process to clearly define open government.

3 CONCLUSIONS: PARADOXES OF THE ACTION PLANS AND THE PROMISE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

To conclude, a review will be made of the development and content of action plans and how they are being implemented in LAC countries. To emphasize what is essential for the success of open government strategies, the findings are established in the form of "paradoxes" for their acceptance and resolution, and can be considered as material for learning and improvement over the short and the medium terms.

Paradox 1: The concept of open government is...too widespread

There are various ways in which commitments are addressed and presented in open government action plans, making comparison a challenge. The concept of commitment can be interpreted in many ways, both in form and in substance (Global Integrity, 2012a). Some countries have preferred to limit their initiatives to a few of the five OGP challenges, establishing strong links between actions and objectives. Other countries have presented commitments that are in line with the OGP's guiding principles, but do not conform to the OGP pillars. Yet other countries have declared commitments that have been integrated into initiatives that predate the OGP. Finally, the fourth group of countries is identified as having opted for a model with a looser structure with more in-depth detail

regarding the specific actions to be carried out (deadlines, specific responsibilities, etc.).

This divergency not only leads to increasingly dispersed levels and complicates the already difficult task of integrating commitments; it also impacts on the potential to develop a reference framework to enable a list of comparisons, to carry out in-depth analyses, and balance efforts by using sustainable and functional equivalents. Likewise, the lack of a common definition for open government brings about the risk that the initiatives thus form part of a shopping list of issues that are usually developed in the public sector. This, however, would not affect the basic paradigm upon which the traditional way of managing public affairs is sustained. The possibility that the OGP becomes an avenue for merely communicating information regarding progress with no sustainable results and impact can be another risk.

Paradox 2: E-government does not equal an open government.

Open government is not the same as e-government or open data. On the contrary, the latter are best utilized when framed within wider open government policies. In some cases, there is widespread confusion leading to the perception that open government is an extension or higher level of initiatives carried out to consolidate

e-government or electronic administration strategies,[27] or that its scope is to simply put open data policies into practice.

While the publication and disclosure of data in open file format—as well as the use of e-platforms for improving service delivery or interaction with citizens—do help in strengthening democracy, they do not alter the terminology, fundamentally, nor do the form and substance of the exercise of public power.

Open government ultimately represents a combination of values and ideals for redesigning a new model for liaison between the leaders and those led. This goes far beyond simply applying certain systems (ICT) to improve the provision of services, enhance quality, and increase the level of citizens' satisfaction with regard to these services.[28]

Paradox 3: Self-referential action plans

In general, action plans are not drafted with citizens in mind. Abstract in lieu of plain language is used and, in some cases, the initiatives and commitments are written too formally or there is an over-use of regulatory or technical terminology.

One fact that underlines this inconsistency, and which contrasts with efforts to publish and reuse public data, is that the majority of action plans have been published in closed or proprietary format (in particular, PDF). This makes it difficult to reprocess raw data for comparative analysis or for other related purposes. This limits the understanding and commitment of who will reap the benefits of an open government strategy in the OGP-member countries and beyond: the citizens.

Paradox 4: More of the same versus too much of the new

Short-, medium-, and long-term approaches are often stated for the same action plan, as is innovation placed together with the already developed. The approaches in action plans can be substantially different. One approach relating to the requirement that commitments be implemented rapidly and effectively—especially in relation to the use of technological systems—may be found in parallel to one relating to sustainable reforms or wider outreach for certain issues of open government. The reason for this may be that some action plans focus on commitments that can be extrapolated from ongoing initiatives and are, therefore, incremental in nature with no need to add value or improve upon what has already been effected (which is not necessarily negative). On the other hand, there are significantly ambitious and extensive action plans that crosscut various areas of open government and which run the risk of raising the expectation of the stakeholders involved and, especially, those in civil society.

It is preferable to take on commitments that are more limited and achievable (step-by-step) to help rebuild the confidence of citizens in their government, instead of promising initiatives whose implementation cannot be guaranteed. Failure to do so runs the risk that the cure is worse than the illness. Moreover, many commitments depend directly on actors located beyond the sphere of the Executive office, with the need for political willpower to make them real (e.g., the approval of a law by the Legislature). Open government policy, therefore, should be

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[27] E-government relates to the policies, actions, and criteria for the use and exploitation of information technologies (IT) to improve the provision of services to citizens and the interaction of government with the various economic sectors; to facilitate citizen's access to information generated by the government; and to improve governance by making public management more efficient and facilitating interaction between departments and agencies.

[28] In most cases, the concept of open government has been confused with the incorporation and intensive use of IT in public administrations, above all in its most sophisticated and powerful form. At present, it is included within the framework of Web 2.0 to work closely with virtual social networks and to build complex interactive and collaborative networks. This trend could become extremely dangerous and lead to deception and misunderstandings: window dressing the public sector with technology does not resolve the basic dynamic and perversity of continuing to manage things exactly the way in which it has always been done. Many projects relating to e-government, in actual fact, have failed due to the exaggerated (and almost naïve) delusion that a technological system or application could solve problems and generate externalities for other areas of the organizational network, let alone for other sectors of the public administration.

transformed into State policy in order to become sustainable over time and to be absorbed into the different branches of government.

Paradox 5: The process of dialogue between stakeholders of governmental and civil society is important, or more so than the commitments undertaken in action plans

Full citizen participation in the consultation process has been an exception rather than the rule. One of the key elements of the OGP is the role that it assigns to civil society in the drafting of action plans. In some ways, it is hoped that the outcome of this process will create a new network of diverse stakeholders from civil society to collaboratively work toward joint commitments. It has been clear in many cases, unfortunately, that the public consultation process for developing, improving, and/or approving action plans has been merely a formality and that focus on extending the space for participation has been more of an exception than the rule.

New methodologies, therefore, should be designed to involve those CSOs beyond the ones usually associated with issues of transparency and access to information. They should include, for example, CSOs that work for issues relating to human rights and consumer protection, neighborhood organizations, and stakeholders from the private sector, academia, research and development fields, among others who, to date, have been ignored. Other government actors should be similarly included in the process, such as the Legislative branch (where Chile and Mexico now stand), the Judiciary, as well as local and regional levels of government.

Paradox 6: To consolidate open government, greater commitment, participation, and involvement actors who are excluded

Open government does not only imply transparency, integrity, and citizen participation; it also involves new forms of leadership in cooperation with citizens to achieve greater efficiency in the public sphere. Essential are a citizen-oriented discourse and civic ownership of the practices of open government. A key element in the debate is to avoid pigeon-holing the concept of open government exclusively in terms of transparency, access to information, and public integrity. While these issues are fundamental to the action plans in terms of regional priorities, it should be remembered that the main objective is to move from openness and transparency toward reforming the State and modernizing public management through a citizen-based approach. This can only be done when government and civil society are committed and can work together, away from the traditional model relating to the provision of public goods and services in which the State has been the historical leading figure, par excellence.[29]

It is, therefore, essentially appropriate that the leadership and coordination of implementing open government initiatives reside within the units responsible for State reform and public management modernization of public management in each country. This will avoid any obvious controversy over the way in which the process is being conducted and the manner in which action plans are monitored and evaluated, and it will provide a level of cohesion that will benefit multiple actors to work adequately together.

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[29] With regard to the change of role (or model) in defining and providing public services in the current context of the 21st century, Tapscott and Williams (2011: 371) maintain the following: "[…] Today we have the opportunity to substitute the transactional approach for a global perspective, centered on persons in which the citizens themselves take on a more active and continuous role when it comes to defining, and even organizing, the portfolio of services that they require […]".

4 THE PATH AHEAD: RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINAL WORDS

Open government policies should be considered as part of a complex and crosscutting network of change throughout the public sector's institutional structure. They support the new interconnected practices, values, and culture that create a platform upon which a new model of open and collaborative governance can be established for, with, and by the people (Ramírez-Alujas, 2012).

In light of the lessons learned and the above-mentioned anomalies, the following recommendations are put forward with a view to improving the OGP process. Reflections on future debates on open government are included:

a) Direct the action plans toward the needs of people. When developing new action plans, effort should be made to concentrate on ensuring that the initiatives put forward directly benefit citizens. This will not only help to improve the quality of public services, but will also enable citizens to adapt to the idea of open government in a way as to become increasingly demanding of public authorities to comply with their commitments.

This issue should be analyzed within the framework of commitment evaluation by the Independent Reporting Mechanism. In this way, recommendations that guide how future action plans should be drafted, in consultation with CSOs, can be included.

The commitments that have been carried out, furthermore, should be sufficiently politically and financially supported and managed in order to be effectively implemented. It is worth remembering that in a majority of action plans that were analyzed, the commitments lack details on who is responsible, the deadlines, and the available resources to ensure effective implementation. One specific recommendation is that commitments be integrated into the budgetary programming process. Commitments should be accepted as a part of each country's normal public action agenda, rather than as a combination of supplementary initiatives, or they should be attributed to certain entities that may operate with discretion or willingness to carry them out.

Finally, from the standpoint of the OGP itself, a mechanism is required that will enable the review of minimum standards prior to the development and publication of national action plans (an ex-ante check-up). This would ensure, in part, that proposals that are published will be of a quality as to include the five pillars, and will greatly facilitate their implementation and evaluation.

b) Open government does not stop with the government: move toward a new model of society. While the issue is about opening up government, it becomes obvious that the move goes beyond the boundaries of State and penetrates deep into society. The agenda of the themes and actors will extend into areas ranging from education and (open) knowledge management, to business, and to various sectors of industry. Private sector

stakeholders and business associations should, therefore, be more actively included, in parallel to academia, research and development centers, and other networks, as well as CSOs, thereby extending the scope and outreach of future initiatives that will constitute the second generation of commitments in the LAC region.

The open government debate requires civic ownership to recognize that this is a process of redistribution and change in power (political and public). This requires a move from a position of "my plan is to listen to you[30]" to that of "our commitment is to work together." The language used here is not insignificant; it is important that the background interpretation of open government continues toward *building a closer and less asymmetric linkage* in the task to resolve serious public problems and challenges. The move, therefore, should head toward a *relationship founded on trust,* mutual recognition of capacities, and honest management in order to improve public institutions and exert a positive impact on the quality of democratic systems and the public good.

There are, today, innumerable tools available to enable the sharing of power with civil society. Better coordination and harmony can be achieved and greater advantage can be taken of the wisdom of society, in order to resolve and tackle old and new challenges. It is an important and unique opportunity to co-produce the process that underpins the exercise of power and how government functions in a move toward a more open and inclusive democratic model that will offer collective wellbeing and the ability for people to reach for a better quality of life.

Open government, as an emerging paradigm, constitutes a unique opportunity to move toward a new model of political, social and economic development. From this

perspective, it is worth remembering that all the countries that have embraced this reform option have found themselves at similar stages of evolution and learning—in a kind of global laboratory of experiences. It becomes vital, therefore, to establish networks for the exchange and management of knowledge relating to public strategies, practices, and policies that will help to consolidate this model as a plausible and complementary response to other institutional efforts that also aim to improve the quality of democracy and how institutions operate.

c) The debate between access to information, privacy, and security. This new model of society will require a debate to take place within the ambit of the OGP, a debate that is already on the global agenda, with regard to matters on access to information and privacy. There is clear and unresolved tension relating to the treatment of public information and the protection of personal and sensitive data (e.g., with regard to the handling of personal data that may be published for public interest, such as grants, beneficiary registers, or civil servant incomes, to name a few). In many instances, the defense of privacy often becomes the principal obstacle to transparency. Regulatory frameworks should be developed in a balanced way to help resolve these dilemmas and controversies while, at the same time, to ensure that they adapt to diverse institutional, cultural, and political contexts.

Furthermore—and owing to the recent cases relating to whistle-blowers and secret government information leaks via the Internet—the issue of borders, the scope and limits of surveillance, national security, and the right of access to information and transparency should be debated. This goes hand in hand with a matter that is already sensitive: the protection of and guarantee for

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[30] The slogan for the public consultation process was adopted by the Uruguayan Government when drafting its action plan.

whistleblowers, an issue that is conspicuously absent from the initiatives set out in the open government agenda of the LAC region.

Finally, the main challenge is to move toward a model of open society where relationships between all actors will contribute toward the development of democratic space, based on confidence, openness, transparency, integrity, and collaboration. In this way, the foundation for a new civic architecture can be designed, to be upheld by shared responsibility and commitment between governments and their public administrations, the private sector, and civil society, in order to strengthen, day by day, the institutional network and practices that will reflect on the collective wellbeing, justice, and fairness.

In short, *open government is a path, not a goal.* It is a means, not an end in itself, and it will depend—in the near future—on whether or not this new concept of social contract will bear fruit and help toward more prosperous, fair, and just societies. On it will also depend whether or not the results will improve the quality of people's lives and the collective wellbeing of citizens.

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ANNEX 1
COMMITMENTS MADE BY EACH COUNTRY

1. Argentina
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (6)	Strengthen Public Integrity (11)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (2)
1. Promote increased flexible use of the electronic signature. 2. Circulate Argentine Public Software Repository (Repositorio de Software Público Argentino). 3. Develop a national program: Critical Information Infrastructure and Cybersecurity (ICIC) (Programa Nacional de Infraestructura Crítica de Información y Ciberseguridad) and Internet Sano. 4. Extend survey to identify priorities and levels of access to ICT. 5. Create a new web portal for bureaucratic processes. 6. Improve Program Letter of Commitment to the Citizen (PCCC) (Programa Carta Compromiso con el Ciudadano).	7. Draft a manual for electronic document management for a paper-free environment. 8. Create a site map for the State portal (Mapa del Estado). 9. Create a public data portal. 10. Draft a manual of best practices for government. 11. Design a training course for those responsible for access to public information. 12. Design a data processing matrix (Decree 1.172/2003 AIP). 13. Draft legislation relating to judicial reform. 14. Decentralize working groups relating to integration of digital technologies. 15. Organize a national Open Government event. 16. Public data hackathon. 17. Encourage the use of other mechanisms for citizen participation, included in Decree 1.172/2003 (public meetings, collective drafting of regulations, register of meetings and interests).	18. Strengthen the electronic Public Procurement System (Sistema Electrónico de Contrataciones Públicas). 19. Regulation of Law 26.653, relating to electronic access to information.

Note: In the case of Argentina's action plan (April 2013), the commitments relate to three pillars: (i) e-government and public services; (ii) transparency and access to public information; and (iii) citizen participation. On this basis, the commitments have been assigned to three of the OGP challenges: to improve the provision of public services, increase public integrity, and enhance institutional accountability.

2. Brazil
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (4)	Strengthen Public Integrity (22)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (5)
1. Implement a systematic integration of Ombudsman units. 2. Continue training units of the Federal Executive Branch Ombudsman. 3. Develop a platform for an integrated monitoring and evaluation system for public access. 4. Develop guidelines for the public services web portal.	5. Develop a diagnostic of the values, knowledge and culture that influence access to public information at the Executive level. 6. Diagnostic of the role of the Ombudsman. 7. Develop guidelines for civil servants on API. 8. Review the demands of citizen regarding API and active transparency. 9. Organizational model for API service provision. 10. Develop an API distance-learning program. 11. Design and execute a capacity-building program for civil servants. 12. Draft an open data catalogue. 13. Develop a transparency portal. 14. Restructure the transparency portal along open data principles. 15. Open SICONV data in public format. 16. Develop open data and IT platforms. 17. Develop National Open Data Infrastructure (INDA) (Infraestructura Nacional de Datos Abiertos). 18. Create an INDA Capacity-building Plan. 19. Develop awareness-raising activities. 20. Launch Brazil's Open Data Portal (Portal de Datos Abiertos de Brasil). 21. Organize the National Conference on Transparency and Social Monitoring (CONSOCIAL) (Conferencia Nacional de Transparencia y Control Social). 22. Coordinate the National Seminar on Social Participation (Seminario Nacional de Participación Social). 23. Organize Intercouncil Forum PPA 2012-2015 (Phase 2). 24. Develop a partnership with W3C Brazil to stimulate and encourage open data. 25. Collaborate with the Digital Culture Laboratory (Laboratorio de Cultura Digital). 26. Organize first National Open Data Meeting (Reunión Nacional Datos Abiertos).	27. Create a school development plan 28. Facilitate access to specific databases in the Transparency portal to enhance citizens' access to information relating to federal budget, transparency, and public expenditure monitoring. 29. Make available data contained in Unified System for Pre-registration of Suppliers (SICAF) (Registro Unificado de Proveedores) and agreements. 30. Develop the National Education Price Register (Registro de Precios de la Educación Nacional), a centralized procurement model designed to serve the State and its municipalities. 31. Procurement and contracts management of information technology services.
Increase of Corporate/Institutional Accountability(1)	32. Implement World's Most Ethical Companies List (WME) to raise awareness of those businesses that invest in ethics, integrity, and anticorruption.	

3. Chile
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (4)	Strengthen Public Integrity (11)	Increase Corporate/Institutional Accountability (3)
1. ChileAtiende: public multiservice network 2. Create interoperability framework. 3. Design open government portal. 4. Digital identity.	5. Improve legislation on access to public information. 6. Draft legislation on Civil Service Integrity (Probidad en la Función Pública). 7. Develop a roundtable to promote transparency, comprising of government, legislature and CSO participation. 8. Create a Transparency portal. 9. Establish a working group to issue recommendations for a National Archive Policy (Política Nacional de Archivos). 10. Elaborateof a Letter of commitment by civil servants to comply with ethical conduct . 11. Implement best practices relating to the transparency of wealth and budget. 12. Improve new format for declaring wealth and budget. 13. Outline legislation relating to lobbies. 14. Outline legislation relating to political parties. 15. Promote the model legislation on access to information from the Organization of American States (OAS)	16. Promote citizen participation. 17. Draft law on community electorate. 18. Project aimed at constitutional reform of the Citizen Initiative Law (Iniciativa Ciudadana de Ley).
Create Safer Communities (1)	19. Citizen participation on social issues (seek appropriate ICT systems and improve social justice).	

4. Colombia
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (8)	Strengthen Public Integrity (13)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (6)
1. Develop online government portal. 2. Develop open data portal. 3. Promote higher quality in education. 4. Promote higher quality in healthcare. 5. Ensure regulation of public services. 6. Ensure consumer protection. 7. Improve public services. 8. Promote more efficient entities.	9. Draft law on access to public information (A). 10. Ensure language is clear and information is of high quality (A). 11. Develop a State portal. 12. Improve government performance and accountability. (A). 13. Implement transparency policy and anticorruption plan (B). 14. Develop anticorruption observatory (B). 15. Enhance transparency of information relating to the judicial system (B). 16. Develop policy guidelines and statute on citizen participation (C). 17. Participate in policymaking (C). 18. Implement citizen participation mechanisms (C). 19. Monitor social participation (C). 20. Promote capacity-building for citizens (C). 21. Encourage open government at the territorial level (C).	22. Ensure efficient procurement. 23. Develop economic transparency portal. 24. Ensure online monitoring. 25. Royalties. 26. Invest in monitoring public services. 27. Partner with the private sector and civil society.

Note: Commitments relating to public integrity are grouped under the following headings: (A) access to information; (B) transparency and social control; and (C) citizen participation and commitment.

5. Costa Rica
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (9)	Strengthen Public Integrity (11)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (3)
1. Enhance and strengthen Cctizens' portal (www.gob.go.cr). 2. Implement Building Business (Crear Empresa) platform throughout all municipalities. 3. Extend range of services provided by electronic platforms (VES). 4. Encourage use of real time platform. 5. Implement electronic register of health products. 6. Encourage interoperability framework. 7. Strengthen National Comptroller of Services (Sistema Nacional de Contralorías de Servicio). 8. Conduct feasibility study to modernize postal system. 9. Update manual on website development.	10. Implement openness of the public budget. 11. Develop transparency index for public institutions. 12. Present draft Access to Public Information Law (LAIP) (Ley de Acceso a Información Públics) to Congress. 13. Define and implement national Open Data policy. 14. Ensure openness of public data. 15. Disseminate concept and philosophy of Open Government. 16. Develop manual relating to use of social networks in public institutions. 17. Empower people throug API and create spaces for citizen participation. 18. Continue first Open Data hackathon and organize more such events. 19. Establish a forum on access to information and citizen participation relating to environmental affairs. 20. Establish guidelines regarding publication of Minutes.	21. Implement the pension system in National Pension Agency (Dirección Nacional de Pensiones). 22. Implement single, State-wide, public procurement system. 23. Implement Citizen Digital Security project (Seguridad Ciudadana Digital).

6. El Salvador
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (3)	Strengthen Public Integrity (14)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (3)
1. Empower citizen control of public services and improve principal services within 60 days. 2. Develop a public/private legal aid system. 3. Extend electronic regulations to benefit foreign investment.	4. Open information and response centers in all Executive bodies. 5. Open 14 information and response centers in 14 local government offices, among others. 6. Revise legislation concerning Ombudsman and right to reply. 7. Disseminiate letters detailing consumer rights. 8. Create distance learning program for civil servants on the subject of API. 9. Develop good quality annual accountability exercises (institutional culture). 10. Extend departmental management cabinet accountability exercises. 11. Implement agreements relating to integrity. 12. Conduct case study of notorious corruption cases. 13. Promote law for political parties to regulate electoral propaganda. 14. Offer employment mediation service. 15. Publish catalogue of government's priorities. 16. Develop unicode targeted transparency portal. 17. Disseminate a digital newspaper, Transparencia activa.	18. Speed up and improve transparency process for public investment. 19. Form auditing committees and recruit professionals to Executive internal auditing units. 20. Create a fiscal transparency portal containing information on revenue and expenditure.
Increase Corporate Responsibility and Accountability (1)	21. Conduct private bank ranking.	

7. Guatemala
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Increase of Public Integrity (1)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (2)
1. Continue transparency and accountability efforts with Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST), Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR), or the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).	2. Implement results-based Management Evaluation System. 3. Strengthen public credit control.

8. Honduras
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (7)	Strengthen Public Integrity (6)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (7)
4. Implement National Agreement (Gran Acuerdo Nacional) with regard to public spending.	11. Boost compliance with the Transparency and Anticorruption Plan (Plan de Transparencia y Lucha contra la Corrupción) (115 actions/25 institutions).	17. Publish in a timely and accessible way, information on public finances within framework of transparency, access to public information, and partnerships for an open budget.
5. Support public security reform proposal.	12. Increase citizens' access to information and public management through improved mechanisms (Transparency and Access to Public Information Law).	18. Develop strategy to empower citizens with regard to budgetary information.
6. Strengthen Honduras electronic regulation project and transparency portal, and simplify administrative processes.	13. Coordinate efforts between the Executive branch and CSOs to boost enactment of a National Records Law (Ley Nacional de Archivos).	19. Implement framework agreements and corporate procurement and publish annual procurement plans and contracts of all institutions with connection to the integrated financial administration system, among others.
7. Promote, in line with National Agreement on Social Fairness (Crecimiento Económico con Equidad Social), the simplification of administrative initiatives relating to business and public procedures.	14. Draft regulation regarding sanctions against violations of Public Servant Code of Conduct (Código de Conducta del Servidor Público).	20. Integrate 30 municipalities into the Integrated Municipal Administration System (SAMI) and link with SIAFI.
8. Encourage fiscal literacy.	15. Present draft Internal Control Law (Ley de Control Interno) to Congress.	21. Update and disclose Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) out-of-cycle review.
9. Carry out evaluations, together with CSOs, of fiscal management and public services.	16. Approve the Integral Anticorruption Policy (Política Integral Anticorrupción de Honduras).	22. Strengthen decentralization processes.
10. Implement arrangements established in Law for Basic Education (Ley Fundamental de Educación), particularly with regard to improving public education services.		23. Extend outreach and training activities regarding Country Vision (Visión de País) and Nation Plan (Plan de Nación).

9. Mexico
Pillars in Original (Plan de Acción Original, or PAO) and Extended (Plan de Acción Ampliado, or PAA) Action Plans.

OGP Pillars	Commitments PAO	Commitments PAA	Total
1. Improve public services	4	3	7
2. Increase public integrity	9	13	22
3. Promote effective management of public resources	3	16	19
4. Create safer communities	--	--	--
5. Increase corporate accountability	3	4	7
	19	36	55

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Mexico:
Action Plans (original and extended): Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Original Action Plan (PAO)		
Improve Public Services(4)	Strengthen Public Integrity (9)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (3)
1. Evaluation by citizens of 300 high-impact federal procedures and services. 2. Develop web portal www. gob.mx. 3. Develop interoperability and open data scheme. 4. Generate public digital goods.	5. Publish of socially useful information. 6. Strengthen budget transparency. 7. Ensure transparency in the security, telecommunications and hydrocarbons sectors. 8. Gather information about crime rates affecting public security. 9. Apply transparency criteria to telecommunications. 10. Gather transparency and publication of information regarding hydrocarbons. 11. Improve teaching standards through training. 12. Increase number of schools and pupils participating in the ENLACE test. 13. Make available desegregated information regarding number of schools, teachers, and pupils.	14. Ensure progress toward homogenous public hacienda that guarantees greater transparency and accountability (methodologies and accounting systems). 15. Develop a national auditing system (Sistema Nacional de Fiscalización). 16. Consolidate new Public Procurement system (Sistema de Contrataciones Públicas).
Increase of Corporate Responsibility (3)	17. Develop business integrity workshop. 18. Produce publications about corporate governance, economic and other results in enterprises. 19. Design and implement self-regulatory mechanisms to achieve greater corporate integrity and improved private sector accountability.	
Extended Action Plan (PAA)		
Improve Public Services (3)	Strengthen Public Integrity (13)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (16)
1. Develop public services website. 2. Establish tools and organize events to create communities of learning for programmers, entrepreneurs, and CSOs in order to encourage innovation and a platform for public service challenges. 3. Create a catalogue of national social programs.	4. Publish resolutions and opinions of regulatory body relating to Energy in an understandable and useful format. 5. Publish resolutions and opinions of regulatory body relating to Telecommunications in an understandable and useful format. 6. Publish resolutions and opinions of regulatory bodies relating to aeronautics, communication and transport in an understandable and useful format. 7. Design website that compiles training, dissemination and capacity-building materials and tools for taxpayers. 8. Create synergies between existing platforms linked to the local community and to API units in order to promote Disclosure and Access to Information (DAI). 9. Implement program targeted on the victims of crime.	17. Publish registers of subsidy beneficiaries in open format. 18. Improve quality of certain research databases. 19. Develop website that publishes permanent and updated information regarding monthly allocation, assignment and execution of budgetary resources. 20. Publish amounts allocated to federal entities for purchase of medicine and healthcare inputs. 21. Generate information that will enable State's efforts to fulfill its human rights obligations for evaluation purposes.

Extended Action Plan (PAA)		
Improve Public Services (3)	Strengthen Public Integrity (13)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (16)
	10. Publish the number of complaints made to each public ministry (type of crime, location, and so on). 11. Improve the tools for diffusion and access to information about the environmental impact studies conducted by SEMARNAT. 12. Identify and systemize the information (resources, expenses) regarding initiatives related to climate change and institutionalize the citizen participation mechanisms. 13. Launch website specifically for sanctioning non-compliance with the access to information regulatory framework. 14. Relay that a PDF should not be considered as public information, and encourage open data formats. 15. Launch website that complies all of the sector-based plans and programs of the federal public administration. 16. Launch website containing permanent and updated information regarding trade unions.	22. containing information about extractive industry exploration and exploitation projects. 23. Publish on PEMEX website annual list of donations, reports, and use of resources. 24. Draft and present a budget for each public primary and secondary school in the Federal District of Mexico. 25. Publish details of bidding and contracts awarded on Compranet, PEMEX and related subsidiary websites. 26. Improve electronic procurement systems (Compranet) of the federal government. 27. Develop website with information on expenditures relating to official publicity, according to relevant department or entity. 28. Integrate public servant wage budget relating to federal public administration (PEF 2012). 29. Include additional information (formulation, budget, calculation base, etc.) on web portal, www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx. 30. Create microsite located on the SAT website detailing massive cancellation of fiscal credits in 2007, based on open data. 31. Strengthen transparency of budgetary programs by publishing. 32. Identify historical evolution of the Results Indicators Matrix (MIR) (Matriz de Indicadores de Resultado) by publishing in the programs.
Increase of Corporate Responsibility (4)	33. Increase number of enterprises that provide significant public information. 34. Publish statistics on research conducted by Mexican and foreign enterprises relating to cross-border bribery. 35. Encourage co-responsibility among private enterprises for effective waste handling. 36. Ensure Mexico's adherence to Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).	

10. Panama
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Strengthening of Public Integrity (5)
1. Institutionalize Open Government in Panama
2. Raise awareness of OGP objectives, goals, and initiatives.
3. Implement Law on Transparency (Ley de Transparencia).
4. Provide internet portal for citizen consultation.
5. Call on civil society to extend action plan.

11. Paraguay

Paraguay's action plan comprises 15 commitments that, according to the OGP challenges, are classified as follows: seven commitments to improve public services, three to stengthen public integrity, and five to strengthen effectiveness of public resource management (see table below).

Process: Participatory and consultative workshops took place with various social sectors, where the action was debated and improved upon. An outreach and awareness program was launched, supported by social networks.

Coordination: The Directorate General of Information for the Development f the Secretariat forTechnical Planning (Dirección General de Información para el Desarrollo de la Secretaría Técnica de Planificación) established an interinstitutional roundtable (including ten units and departments). The National Anticorruption Secretariat (Secretaría Nacional Anticorrupción (SENAC) will take over responsibility going forward.

Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (7)	Strengthen Public Integrity (3)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (5)
1. Web portal representing the government. 2. Integrated health administration system (e-health). 3. National Personal Registration and Identification System (Sistema Nacional de Registro e Identificación de las Personas). 4. Integrated Complaints System (Sistema Integrado de Denuncias). 5. Legal information service (e-legal). 6. Local electronic government (e-local). 7. Integrated System for Public Administration Procedures (SIGTRAP) (Sistema Integrado de Gestión de Trámites de la Administración Pública).	8. Implement Standard Model for Internal Control of Public Institutions (MECIP) (Modelo Estándar de Control Interno para las Instituciones Públicas del Paraguay). 9. Create single web portal dealing with compliance with international anticorruption regulations. 10. Develop integrated Administrative Career Control System (SICCA) (Sistema Integrado de Control de la Carrera Administrativa) and the Single Portal for Public Employment (Portal Único de Empleo Público).	11. Interinstitutional information exchange system. 12. National Planning System (SISPLAN) (Sistema Nacional de Planificación). 13. Contracts Management System (Sistema de Gestión de Contratos). 14. System enabling procurement via electronic catalogue. 15. Implement anti-cyber attack security measures.

12. Peru
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (8)	Strengthen Public Integrity (37)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (2)
1. Promote open data exchange between public entities. 2. Reduce digital gap (include policies and digital literacy). 3. Create Multi-Sector Committee to Monitor Peruvian Digital Agenda 2.0. (Comisión Multisectorial de Seguimiento de la Agenda Digital Peruana 2.0). 4. Create an interoperability platform. 5. Design and implement regulatory framework and incentives to improve procedural simplification and customer service. 6. Standardize and simplify document management systems at central government level and include use of digital certificates and signatures. 7. Promote implementation of online procedures, as well as provide training in the use of technology tools and guidelines for relevant users. 8. Design a regulatory framework that guarantees information security and integrity that enables adequate and safe access to information, including drafting and publishing guidelines conforming to national and international standards for protecting critical infrastructure and cyber security.	9. Review and improve regulatory framework on transparency and access to public information. 10. Design system for monitoring compliance with the law on transparency. 11. Establish standard, up-to-date, and user-friendly transparency portals. 12. Review and improve regulations regarding document management. 13. Establish profiles and improve capacity of civil servants to carrying out their duties. 14. Certify public entities that comply with rules on standard transparency portals. 15. Review and strengthen instruments to monitor implementation of rules on transparency and access to public information. 16. Evaluate creation of an autonomous and specialized institution to guarantees protection of right to access information. 17. Train civil servants and citizens about rules relating to access to public information. 18. Improve access to public information and transparency with regard to the environment and extractive industries. 19. Extend spaces for participation, consensus-building, and auditing. 20. Promote capacity-building for CSOs and citizens to guarantee informed and active participation and oversight. 21. Promote capacity-building to officials and public servants in order to stress importance of citizen participation processes. 22. Promote ICT in public institutions to gather opinions and comments from citizens, as well as an effective means of responding. 23. Extend use of ICT to facilitate greater collaboration between citizens and various levels of government. 24. Improve mechanisms to enable citizens' access to and understanding of budget information. 25. Adopt plenary agreements made by Supreme Court of Justice (Corte Suprema de Justicia). 26. romote citizen participation to oversee tenders, auctions and bidding processes. 27. Approve National Anticorruption Plan (Plan Nacional de Lucha Contra la Corrupción	46. Consolidate the EITI Commission. 47. Integrate Integrated Financial Management System processes, Administrative Managemnt, and National State Public Investment System, and improve information systems.

(Continue on the next page)

Improve Public Services (8)	Strengthen Public Integrity (37)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (2)
	28. Improve regulatory framework relating to income tax returns and declarations of goods and wealth of civil servants.	
	29. Promote regulatory scheme to prevent and detect conflicts of interest.	
	30. Review accountability mechanism.	
	31. Strengthen fiscal and judicial subsystems, specialized in combating corruption.	
	32. Strengthen Peruvian State Defense Committee (Consejo de Defensa del Estado Peruano) by creating an Anticorruption Prosecutor-General (Procuraduría General Anticorrupción).	
	33. Strengthen High-Level Anticorruption Committee (Comisión de Alto Nivel Anticorrupción, or CAN).	
	34. Develop a governance observatory.	
	35. Disseminate information to citizens on the outcome of investigations into acts of corruption.	
	36. Strengthen National Complaints Attention System (Sistema Nacional de Atención de Denuncias, or SINAD).	
	37. Strengthen National Civil Service Authority (Autoridad Nacional del Servicio Civil, or SERVIR) to operate on behalf of the public.	
	38. Review resumes (Hojas de Vida) of National Election Panel (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones).	
	39. Design and implement regulatory framework and incentives for enterprises to operate according to corporate integrity and governance standards.	
	40. Review regulatory framework for social programs in dialogue with decentralized governments to foster transparency and central and decentralized management.	
	41. Implement a monitoring and oversight system for public procurement relating to social programs.	
	42. Incorporate formats that provide the citizen with information about management of public administration under official activities of the Standard Transparency portal.	
	43. Strengthen administrative simplification process.	
	44. Create a committee to undertake criminal and professional background checks of potential public employees and managers.	
	45. Identify learning experiences of schoolchildren relating to citizen oversight and public integrity, and draft a proposal for citizen and schoolchildren outreach.	

13. Dominican Republic
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (5)	Strengthen Public Integrity (15)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (4)
1. Consolidación del sistema de información normativa del Estado. 2. Instalación de extensiones del Sistema de los Servicios Públicos (Punto Gob) con las normas de interoperabilidad. 3. Publicación de las estadísticas sobre las denuncias a los servicios públicos. 4. Portal de servicios del Estado para los ciudadanos. 5. Creación del marco jurídico de los procedimientos administrativos y la aplicación de sistemas de ventanilla única.	6. Presidential Balanced Scorecard (BSCP); create data.gov.do website. 7. Officially established anticorruption initiative. 8. Redesign and strengthen Public Institution Ethical Committees (Comisiones de Ética en Instituciones Públicas, or CEP). 9. Monitor Law of Civil Service (Ley de Función Pública) through local government. 10. Develop administration system for public servants at the local level. 11. Create Institute for Virtual Transparency (Escuela Virtual Transparencia). 12. Implement a social audit system, involving institutions responsible for internal and external monitoring. 13. Establish and implement supreme body relating to access to public information and personal data. 14. Implement the Personal Data Protection Act (Ley de Protección de Datos Personales). 15. Promote the publication of the Institutional Evaluation of Transparency System (Sistema de Evaluación Institucional de Transparencia). 16. Promote socialization and awareness-raising workshop regarding transparency and API regulations. 17. Approve outline of Law on the Declaration of Wealth and Taxes (Ley de Declaración Jurada de Patrimonio). 18. Standardize access to public information manuals. 19. Create tools for citizen participation in drafting of regulations. 20. Implement a social audit system for institutions responsible for external control of State.	21. Consolidate National Statistics System (Sistema Nacional de Estadísticas). 22. Complete process to create Treasury Single-Account System (Sistema de Cuenta Única del Tesoro). 23. Implement portal for public procurement and contract processes. 24. Implement a project to promote fiscal transparency in mayor offices.

Note: Commitments in the action plan of the Dominican Republic are classifed as follows: access to information; strengthening of transparency and auditing bodies; professionalizing the civil service; citizen participation through the use of ICT to complement the General Law on Free Access to Public Information (Ley General de Libre Acceso a la Información Publica); protection of personal data; utilization of ICT for improved government; management of single platforms; awareness-raising of issues relating to open government; and ensuring compliance with constitutional principles.

14. Uruguay
Action Plan: Commitments according to OGP Pillars

Improve Public Services (7)	Strengthen Public Integrity (6)	Increase Effectiveness of Public Resource Management (5)
1. Develop ponline procedures and services. 2. Incorporate electronic single windows. 3. Develop "Uruguay Concursa" portal. 4. Develop Uruguayan State portal. 5. Implement procedures and services for Uruguayans living abroad. 6. Develop electronic citizens' funds. 7. Create Electronic Fiscal Supporting Document.	8. Improve access to public information and UAIP portal: raise awareness, disseminate information and train public servants and citizens. 9. Strengthen culture of transparency. 10. Develop National Transparency Prize. 11. Encourage electronic citizen participation. 12. Implement portal and catalogue containing government open data (datos.gub.uy). 13. Implement National Digital Literacy Plan (Plan National de Alfabetización Digital).	14. Implement an Integrated Administrative Management system (Sistema Integrado de Gestión Administrativa, or GRP). 15. Establish a State pProcurement and contracting agency (Agencia de Compras y Contrataciones del Estado). 16. Implement an electronic dossier system (Sistema de Expediente Electrónico) throughout the central administration. 17. Implement a national public software portal. 18. Launch Open Data National Competititon (Concurso Nacional de Datos Abiertos).

ANNEX 2
TABLES WITH SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Table A2.1. Interviewees Responsible for Open Government Strategy

Country	Name	Position/ Department
Argentina	Dr. María Sol Tischik	Advisor to the Management Technologies Under-Secretary, the Cabinet and Administrative Coordination Secretariat, and the Cabinet Office of Natonal Ministries
Brazil	Roberta Solís Ribeiro	Advisor, International Affairs and the Comptroller-General's Office
Chile	Alberto Precht Rorris	Executive Secretary to the Integrity and Transparency Commission, General Secretariat, Ministry of the Presidency
Colombia	María Lorena Gutiérrez Botero	Senior Presidential Counselor on Governance and Administrative Efficiency, Presidency of the Republic
Costa Rica	Maikol Porras Morales	Coordinator, Open Government, e-Government Technical Secretariat
Dominican Republic	Dra. Patricia Minaya Lilia Fernández León	Director, Government Transparencyand Head of the Open Government Department at the Directorate-General for Ethics and Government Integrity
El Salvador	Marcos Rodríguez	Under-Secretary for Transparency and Anticorruption, Secretary for Strategic Affairs for the Presidency of the Republic.
Guatemala	Luis Pedro Castellanos	Advisor to the Office of the Vice-Presidency of Guatemala.
Honduras	Rocío Tabora	Technical Advisor to the Secretary of State at the Presidential Office and to the Presidential Technical Support Unit
Mexico	Alonso Cerdán Verástegui	Director, Policy Studies on Transparency and Accountability and Evaluation at the Civil Service Secretariat
Panama	Mario Cruz Vergara	Head of Legal Department, Executive Secretariat of the National Council for Transparency against Corruption
Paraguay	Rubén Cubilla Pereira	Director for Information for Development, Technical Planning Secretariat
Peru	Mariana Llona Rosa	Public Management Secretariat, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
Trinidad and Tobago	Delia Chatoor	Permanent Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Uruguay	Virginia Pardo	Director, Digital Citizenship, e-Government and Social Information Agency (Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información, of AGESIC), Presidency of the Republic.

Table A2.2. Representatives of Civil Society Organizations

Name	Position/Civil Society Organization
Karina Banfi	Executive Secretary, Regional Alliance for Freedom of Expression and Information (Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información) (Argentina)
Ricardo Corona	Coordinator, Public Finances at the Mexico Institute for Competitiveness (Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad A.C., or IMCO)
Andrés Hernández	Director, Citizenship for Transparency of Colombia (TPC)
Paula Martins	Director for the South America Region at Artigo 19 (Brazil)
Haydeé Pérez Garrido	Coordinator, Transparency and Accountability at Fundar, Center for Research and Analysis, A.C. (Mexico)
Zoe Reiter	Regional Program Manager, Department of Transparency International in the Americas
Samuel Rotta Castilla	Deputy Director, Proética, the Peruvian branch of Transparency International (Peru)
Alexandre Sampaio	Officer, Access to Information at Artigo 19 (Brazil)
Moisés Sánchez Riquelme	Executive Director, Pro Acceso Foundation, Member of the Transparency Consortium (Consorcio por la Transparencia) (Chile)
David Sasaki	Director, Omidyar Network (Mexico/United States)
Elisabeth Ungar Bleier	Executive Director, Transparency for Colombia (Transparencia por Colombia, or TPC).

Table A2.3. Progress on Open Government Initiatives: Outstanding Needs/Challenges

Country	Outstanding Needs/Challenges
Argentina	• Did not report.
Brazil	• Lack of motivation by society to participate in focus groups. • Need to review data-modeling work. • Need to invest in ICT; delays in tender process. • Application of complex systems and technologies.
Chile	• Some commitments do not depend solely on the Executive (e.g., draft legislation). • Coordination difficulty with civil society. • Need for OGP definition and clear guidelines regarding procedures for participation in the initiative.
Colombia	• Need to build citizen capacity. • Need for executive capacity at the territorial level. • Need of an open data culture.
Costa Rica	• Change in leadership at the d-Government Technical Secretariat (Secretaría Técnica de Gobierno Digital), due to the replacement of the coordinator in November 2012. • Need for more time to finalize action plan to comply with date for presentation to civil society. • Need for a commitment to disclose specific results, among them data released by 21 institutions; need to celebrate first open data hackathon.
Dominican Republic	• Improve diffusion of action plan. • The electoral process, the transition period, and swearing-in the new administration. • Need to define linkages and support group for civil society participation. • Need for definition of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
El Salvador	• Cultural resistance within the public administration. • Private sector reluctance to take on its own commitments relating to transparency. • Public finance limitation for State reform.

Country	Outstanding Needs/Challenges
Guatemala	• Political position of those most affected by intense transparency (administrative obstacles). • Opposition party's support for an agenda to block the Control and Transparency Secretariat (Secretaría de Control y Transparency), which resulted in the establishment of the Presidential Committee on Transparency and e-Government (Comisión Presidencial de Transparencia y Gobierno electrónico) toward the end of 2012. • Important laws yet to be debated in Congress, despite promoting a package of transparency measures that includes at least 11 laws (some of which have already been approved); other extremely important laws have yet to be debated in Congress (e.g., Ley de Sistemas de Información).
Honduras	• Insufficient information on open government as a new initiative. • Generalized nature of operational information, which hampers efforts to draft a detailed open government plan. • Dilemma facing countries to draft plans is that while they are prepared to do so, the scope of the plans has not been defined.
Mexico	• Main obstacle hindering efforts to implement PAO and PAA is because implementation got underway during the administration's final year of office. • Limited capacity to allocate resources to ensure compliance with some commitments due to their timing.
Panama	• Scant—or almost nonexistence—civil society representation and participation. • Remove dependence on other State entities to decide actions to be taken. • Prevent duplication of initiatives by public entities relating to participation and transparency.
Paraguay	• Need for civil servants, assigned by institutions, to take part in roundtables. • Bureaucratic inertia and strong resistance hampers progress to consolidate a State policy in favor of open government. • Need for a law on access to information.
Peru	• Increase knowledge of civil servants and citizens, in general, about scope of open government. • Motivate participation by local and regional governments. • Low level of active transparency, the result of a culture of secrecy. • Bridge the digital and electronic gap. • Need to development more citizen participation spaces.
Trinidad and Tobago	• Did not report.
Uruguay	• Strengthen culture of transparency. • Back-up economic and human resources, as well as existing capacities within State (ICT).

Country	Successes
Argentina	• Did not report.
Brazil	• Existence of numerous open dialogue mechanisms and civil society motivation and participation in public policymaking. • Good coordination between governmental bodies.
Chile	• Importance that Chilean State places on Open Government. • Leadership in Open Government by Chile. • Continuous progress made by Open Government policy.
Colombia	• Leadership of the Government. • Allocation of responsibilities. • Legal framework underpins initiatives (National Development Plan) (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo).
Costa Rica	• Commitment and support from the Presidency of the Republic. • Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture supports and effectively coordinates with those responsible for the project. • Support is provided by institutions involved, including Ombudsman (Defensoría de los Habitantes), National Planning Ministry (Ministerio de Planificación Nacional), among others. • e-Government Technical Secretariat (Secretaría Técnica de Gobierno Digital) commits to the task.

Country	Successes
Dominican Republic	• Creation of the Directorate-General for Governmental Ethics and Integrity (Dirección General de Ética e Integridad Gubernamental). • Pre-existence of spaces to debate public policies and establish priorities.
El Salvador	• Existence of an earlier transparency work plan since the beginning of the current administration (2009), formulated in consultation with civil and business organizations. • Civil society is well organized. • Issues of transparency and anticorruption have been incorporated into public agenda at the time current Government took office.
Guatemala	• Increased political willingness among country's leaders toward socializing, debating and implementing actions to provide access to public information. • Significant commitment by civil society and media. • Utilizaton of IT has taken place to facilitate communication between public administration and citizens.
Honduras	• Government had taken steps some decades ago, such as budget reform in 2004. • Need to draft a government plan has been considered previously. • Workshops and national and international conferences on Open Government have taken place. • Exchange of experiences and best practices has taken place with regard to access to information, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, in order to strengthen integrity and to combat corruption.
Mexico	• High-level political commitment to OGP initiative and to compliance of commitments. • CSO participation throughout entire process.
Panama	• Government's willingness to implement OGP principles throughout State. • Country's regulatory frameworks encourage and support OGP initiatives. • Some government entities have independently gone ahead with sound initatives that coincide with OGP objectives.
Paraguay	• Increasingly significant increase of citizen organizations and groups interested in participating in the definition of public priorities and monitoring government performance. • Establishment of a participatory process to draft action plan that will include specific and measurable commitments.
Peru	• Government's political willingness. • Satisfactory coordination between various public entities and CSOs that make up the working groups to draft action plan. • Commitment by key civil society actors to encourage compliance with Open Government commitments..
Trinidad and Tobago	• Needs to report.
Uruguay	• Action plan was drafted by a working party of various stakeholders. • Existence of a solid legal framework.

Table A2.4. SWOT Matrix Components

Country	Strengths
Argentina	• Did not report.
Brazil	• Prior existence of networks for dialogue with civil society. • Existence of prior initiatives developed to promote transparency and prevent and combat corruption.
Chile	• Open Government policy is important to the Chilean State (the process of the agenda on transparency and public sector reform as a State policy). • Leadership of Chile in this area.
Colombia	• Commitment of the national government and civil society. • Government's coordination and leadership in implementing commitments.
Costa Rica	• Technical leadership (e-Government Technical Secretariat). • Country-wide approval and support.
Dominican Republic	• Prior consensus: projects presented were gathered from previously-constituted forums that debated public policy and determined priorities • Plans were included in strategic plans and, consequently, were budgeted for.
El Salvador	• Government's political will. • Civil society is well-organized.
Guatemala	• Political will: commitment by politicians. • Civil society support.
Honduras	• Political will. • Publication of the Open Government Plan: monitoring and oversight of commitments on integrity, transparency, participation, and access to information.
Mexico	• International legitimacy and prestige of initiative. • Defining action plans in a flexibility manner.
Panama	• Governmental willingness. • Organizational capacity.
Paraguay	• Increase in information availability. • Support for citizen participation.
Peru	• Government's political will. • Commitment by key civil society stakeholders to encourage compliance with commitments established in action plans.
Trinidad and Tobago	• Access to information: accessible and user-friendly portals, such as iGovTT and ttconnect, which are online government information portals. • Access to national funds: 2013 budget allocated funds to comply with action plan commitments.
Uruguay	• Leadership and institutionality: political commitment from Presidency of the Republic and establishment of responsibilities. • Process sustained over time: sustained strategy adapted for public information.

Country	Weaknesses
Argentina	• Did not report.
Brazil	• Lack of time for a wide-ranging consultation with civil society to participate in drafting first action plan. • Controversy between certain transparency initiatives and application of new law relating to access to public information.
Chile	• Impossible to monitor all commitments. • OGP directives lack clarity.
Colombia	• Lack of citizen capacity. • Insufficient capacity at territorial level.
Costa Rica	• Resources are limited. • Need for time to appropriate and implement government actions on new project.
Dominican Republic	• Need to define monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for commitments; need to redefine relevant scope and indicators. • Need to define linkages with civil society and create support team to promote participation.
El Salvador	• Cultural resistance by the public administration. • Resistance by CSOs and private sector to make own commitments beyond those demanded by State (including the media).
Guatemala	• Administrative bureaucracy: complex and slow procedures for implementing new actions. • Automatization of processes.
Honduras	• Open Government plan lacks goals and clearly defined responsibilities. • Lack of technical expertise.
Mexico	• Partnership's significant flexibility could be seen as a weakness, especially if countries fail to take their commitments seriously. • General failure to comply with commitments established by Government.
Panama	• Lack of awareness of OGP principles. • Cultural shift: culture of secrecy; large part of community does not actively participate in State issues.
Paraguay	• Unwillingness to disclose information (excessive bureaucracy). • Absence of public consultation.
Peru	• Digital gap between countries in the region (extensive heterogeneity and digital illiteracy). • Failure to develop adequate spaces for social participation by public administration.
Trinidad and Tobago	• Reorganization of the ministerial portfolios. • Delay of implementation process due to ministerial portfolios having been revised twice under current Government, with various programs being assigned to other ministries.
Uruguay	• Scant availability of human and economic resources. • Process is voluntary in the different entities.

Country	Opportunities
Argentina	• Did not report.
Brazil	• Possibility to form cooperative networks to exchange information between countries to generate lessons learned. • Opportunity to work together with civil society.
Chile	• Consolidate Open Government policy by Government. • Existence of fluid relationship with civil society (with potential partnerships).
Colombia	• Greater participation in public policy design. • Government and civil society relationship.
Costa Rica	• Political leadership. • International cooperation.
Dominican Republic	• Willingness to open spaces for debate with civil society. • Develop partnerships with technical capacities and financial resources to ensure projects are executed.

Country	Opportunities
El Salvador	• Positioning Open Government on public agenda. • Existence of similar international experiences.
Guatemala	• Support and use of media. • New technologies.
Honduras	• In a country context, encourage public and private institutions to participate in process. • Participation in Open Government seminars at the national and international level.
Mexico	• Structure of action plans and monitoring guidelines evaluated to guarantees results. • Transparency and accountability proposals can be easily reexamined.
Panama	• Monitoring of action plan. • Effective legal arrangements.
Paraguay	• Benefits from IT. • Promotion of citizen participation in government decision-making processes.
Peru	• Economic development (incentives). • Technology changes and use maximize benefits of Open Government.
Trinidad and Tobago	• Access to technical assistance from international sources: Trinidad and Tobago has signed a series of technical cooperation agreements with other countries to facilitate implementation of commitments included in action plan.
Uruguay	• Democratic stability and consensual judicial framework. • High level of ICT penetration in Uruguayan society: high connectivity, broadband, Plan Ceibal, use of multiple channels, and high degree of digital literacy among population.

Country	Threats
Argentina	• Did not report.
Brazil	• Need for coordination of initiatives and activities (to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure best use of available resources). • Offer of unconditional and flexible technical assistance to fulfill commitments.
Chile	• Did not report.
Colombia	• Lack of continuity in action plan implementation. • Prevailing civil service culture.
Costa Rica	• Current fiscal situation. • Change of government (electoral process underway throughout 2013 and elections in February 2014).
Dominican Republic	• Failure to diffuse action plan. • Lost time due to electoral process and swearing-in of new administration; significant time lost during project execution.
El Salvador	• Polarization of national policy. • Polarization of international politics.
Guatemala	• Political opposition: administrative obstacles that negatively affect program implementation. • Overall political situation.
Honduras	• Withdrawal of support of international cooperation: political and economic instability hinders consolidation of action plan. • Hidden information relating to corruption: lack of a deeply-rooted culture of transparency.
Mexico	• Lack of mechanisms to enable CSO participation in process of drafting, implemention, and evaluation of action plan.
Panama	• Resistance to change. • Change of government.
Paraguay	• Did not report.

Country	Threats
Peru	• Security threats, which may signify that security laws conflict with transparency laws; inadequate legal interpretation of the latter may be in favor of the former, thereby restricting certain information.
Trinidad and Tobago	• Other programs may compete for resources.
Uruguay	• Did not report.

About the Authors

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Álvaro is the founder, teacher, and head researcher of the Department of Government, Administration and Public Policy Research Group (Grupo de Investigación en Gobierno, Administración y Políticas Públicas, GIGAPP) at Madrid's Ortega y Gasset Research University Institute (Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset, IUIOG). He currently teaches at the University of Chile's Public Affairs Institute (INAP). He has a degree in advanced studies (Diplomado en Estudios Avanzados, DEA) from the Complutense University of Madrid (2010) and Ph.D. (c) in Government and Public Administration from the IUIOG, and also possesses a political sciences and public administration degree (1995) and an MA in public policy and management from the University of Chile (2001). Álvaro has collaborated with diverse international organizations, such as the United Nations, the IDB, Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD), the International Latin American Foundation for Public Administrations and Public Policies (FIIAPP), and various Ibero-American governments. His main areas of professional interest include open government and public sector innovation, reform of the State and modernization of public administration, public management, and access to information.

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Nicolás has a law degree from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), Argentina, and an LL.M in international law from New York University. He currently works as a senior specialist in the IDB's Institutional Capacity of the State Division, specializing in the areas of transparency and open government, corruption prevention, internal and external audit and control, and strengthening of parliament. He was an advisor to the Argentine National Congress and the Council of Magistrates (Consejo de la Magistratura) on matters of institutional strengthening and justice (2003–2009). Nicolás was Argentina's Lead Expert at the Organization of American States' Mechanism for Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) (2002–2003), as well as a member of the Argentine delegation to the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Officials, under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) between 2000 and 2003. He has taught Constitutional Law at the Universities of Buenos Aires and San Andrés, and corruption monitoring to postgraduate Law students at UBA and the Universidad de Palermo (Buenos Aires). He is also the author of various articles on the above themes.

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