

ANEEJ CASAN PROJECT INCEPTION MEETING

UPDATES FROM FMOJ/OGP SECRETARIAT

Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that focuses on improving government transparency, accountability and responsiveness to citizens through technology and innovation. The OGP was formally launched in 2011 when the 8 founding governments (Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States) endorsed the Open Government Declaration, and announced their country action plans. Since then OGP has welcomed the commitment of 62 additional governments, bringing to 70 the number of countries that are currently members of the initiative.

Nigeria formally joined the OGP in July 2016 two months after President Muhammadu Buhari attended the Anti-Corruption Summit organized by the government of the United Kingdom in May, 2016. At that summit, he reaffirmed the Nigerian government's commitment to strengthen anti-corruption reforms and bring integrity to governance through leadership by example. Consultation meetings were held to afford government officials from MDAs and CSO members the opportunity to make inputs to the Country Statement on Anti-Corruption made by the President in London. The inputs derived from the consultations as well as the President's Country Statement formed Nigeria's OGP thematic areas.

They are: FISCAL TRANSPARENCY,
ANTI-CORRUPTION/ASSET
DECLARATION, ACCESS TO
INFORMATION and CITIZENS'
ENGAGEMENT.

Nigeria as an OGP partner has set up a National Steering Committee. This was jointly done by CSO members and government officials in a meeting where they self-selected themselves. The National Steering Committee made up of government officials and CSO members jointly developed the Nigeria-OGP two-year National Action Plan. This was formally presented at the OGP Global Summit in Paris in December 2016

Summary of National Action Plan Commitments by Thematic Areas

<i>Fiscal Transparency</i>	
1	Ensure more effective citizens' participation across the entire budget cycle.
2	Full implementation of Open Contracting and adoption of Open Contracting Data Standards in the public sector.
3	Work together with all stakeholders to enhance transparency in the extractive sector through a concrete set of disclosures related to payments by companies and receipts by governments on all transactions across the sector's value chain.
4	Adopt common reporting standards and the Addis Tax initiative aimed at improving the fairness, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the tax system.
5	Improve the ease of doing business and Nigeria's ranking on the World Bank Doing Business Index.

Anti-Corruption

6	Establish a Public register of Beneficial Owners of Companies,
7	Establish a platform for sharing information among Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs), National Security Adviser (NSA) and financial sector regulators to detect, prevent and disrupt corrupt practices.
8	Strengthen Nigeria's asset recovery legislation including non-conviction based confiscation powers and the introduction of unexplained wealth orders.
9	Take appropriate actions to co-ordinate anti-corruption activities; improve integrity and transparency and accountability.

Access to Information

Improved compliance of public institutions with the Freedom of Information Act in respect of the annual reporting obligations by public institutions and level of responses to requests.

Improved compliance of public institutions with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) with respect to the Proactive disclosure provisions and stipulating mandatory publication requirements.

Citizen Engagement

Develop a Permanent Dialogue Mechanism on transparency, accountability and good governance between citizens and government to facilitate a culture of openness.

Government-civil society to jointly review existing legislations on transparency and accountability issues and make recommendations to the National Assembly.

Adopt a technology-based citizens' feedback on projects and programs across transparency and accountability.

This can be found on the Federal Ministry of Justice website which is WWW.JUSTICE.GOV.NG; our email address is FMOJREFORM@GMAIL.COM while you can reach us on the following mobile lines: 09093032603; 09093032607; 08068178454 and 08099658437.

Civil Society experts are equal partners in leading and promoting OGP in Nigeria. The more civil society is engaged and has a genuine role in the process, the more likely it is that OGP commitments will be ambitious, shared priorities and that they will be implemented. A domestic policy mechanism has already been set up through which government and civil society established an ongoing dialogue on the design, implementation and monitoring of the commitments included in Nigeria's national action plan. Therefore, in implementing Nigeria's OGP National Action Plan, constructive civil society engagement is critical. There exists an OGP working group which is made up of CSO members and government officials. This group makes technical input to the OGP process in Nigeria

Presently, a working group meeting of CSO members and government officials is expected to hold next month for all participants to contribute towards the development of a one-year OGP implementation work plan. This principle of parity is reflected at all levels of the OGP process in Nigeria. In working together to develop our OGP commitments, both governments and civil society must take risks and make some compromises. Civil society should accept that shifting bureaucracies is not easy and that collaborating with government requires pragmatism, patience and flexibility. It is hard work but makes a transformative shift when both sides change their way of doing business.

Civil servants in turn open up the doors of government and recognize that good ideas can and must come from outside. An OGP Secretariat has been set up in the Federal Ministry of Justice where CSO inputs are always welcome for the OGP process to move forward in Nigeria.

Presently, CSO members are involved in the asset recovery process of the ABACHA looted funds. The Nigeria Network on the Recovery of Stolen Assets (NNSA) are part of the repatriation process from the inception stage and will also be part of the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the National Social Safety Net project (NASSCO).

THANK YOU