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TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL - JORDAN
الشفافية الدولية - الأردن

معاً للقضاء على الفساد
TOGETHER TO END CORRUPTION

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

OVERVIEW AND JORDAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Rasheed (Transparency International-Jordan) was established at the end of 2013, as a non-for-profit civil society organization, through a group of activists working in the field of anti-corruption. Rasheed (Transparency International-Jordan) commenced work in Amman at the beginning of April 2014, and it represents the only official contact group of Transparency International in Jordan.

Rasheed (Transparency International-Jordan) aims to reinforce the involvement of the Jordanian citizen in anti-corruption activities, protect public, private and local governance institutions against corruption, enhance the efficiency and independence of control agencies specialized in the area of anti-corruption, strengthen the integrity of the legislative and judicial authorities, and reinforce the performance of Rasheed (Transparency International-Jordan) towards achieving its mission and vision

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UNDERSTANDING OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

An Open Government Partnership is a simple, but powerful idea, the essence of which is to improve the work of governments for the benefit of people, being based on principles of transparency, participation and accountability of such governments.

The purpose of this initiative is to unite the efforts of governments and civil society institutions to meet the needs and interests of citizens, to encourage them to engage in dialogue and to ensure a high level of openness and transparency in government activities. While, the aim is to devise mechanisms that will make the dialogue between government and the community as transparent and effective as possible. In addition, this dialogue must be continuous, from the joint formulation of the problem and the definition of obligations to their joint fulfillment.

Open government reforms are being implemented in order to achieve a range of goals. The most successful reforms are those that solve a specific problem and have a well-developed theory of change. Some of the most common goals of open government reforms are the pursuit of good governance, more effective decision-making, greater public trust, less corruption and more efficient public services.

Common definitions of open government are most often based on three basic principles - transparency, participation and accountability. The following table explains what such principles mean for citizens and government:

Principle	Values for governments	Values for people
Transparency	Discovery of government data and information on government spending, government contracts, lobbying, policy development and impact as well as public service delivery.	The public can see and understand the actions of their government.
Participation	Supporting a strong and independent civil society, involving citizens and other stakeholders in decision-making processes, and protecting whistleblowers and other individuals who report waste, negligence or corruption in government.	The public can influence the work of their government.
Accountability	Implementation of rules, laws and mechanisms to ensure that the government listens, learns, responds, and changes when needed.	Public may require the government to be accountable for its actions.

Open government is a generic term for a wide range of practices that promote these principles, including open data initiatives, access to information laws, political rights, informant protection, public consultation and engagement processes, among many other principles. The notion of open government also often encompasses initiatives aimed at other powerful institutions (such as business, parliament, legal systems, etc.).



Efficient decision-making

The intrinsic value of an open government, which is associated with good governance but is still different from it, is its instrumental value for achieving better decision-making. It is often viewed that an open government facilitates more effective government decision-making. On the one hand, such a vision is often based on the idea that openness hinders the worst manifestations of excess power and encourages more responsible and fair decision-making because of fear of being caught, which is linked with reducing corruption. On the other hand, there is the value that citizens and other stakeholders can influence decision-making in the form of personal experience, ideas, skills and supervision as larger and more diverse groups of people tend to make better decisions than smaller and homogeneous ones (Surowiecki, 2014).



Increasing public trust

Increasing openness is often seen as a way to overcome the public confidence crisis in public institutions that is being observed worldwide. In practice, the real relationship between open government and trust is complicated. Public involvement, where it is actively initiated, can help build trust between citizens and institutions. Although people usually have a negative perception of an amorphous institution, personal meetings with executives can help build trust, especially when people feel they are listened to and valued.



On the other side, transparency has the potential to diminish public confidence, since it makes corruption visible, poor decision-making and other weaknesses in government. However, increasing trust in government is an important precursor to increasing public confidence, and transparency can be a useful mechanism to achieve this (CLRA, 2018).

Corruption reduction

Openness and transparency has a regulative effect on the behavior of public servants, when they feel that the public, media, civil society or law enforcement are monitoring them. However, transparency will reduce corruption only if such an event is supported by effective accountability mechanisms that impose sanctions on corrupt officials. Without such mechanisms, detecting corruption only diminishes public confidence and discourages whistleblowers.

However, with a comprehensive and effective system of standards, detection, reporting, investigations and sanctions in place, an open government can significantly help reduce corruption.



More efficient services

Open government is also often offered as a mechanism for improving public services. Such vision is based on the idea that public services that increase responsibility and accountability to the people as well as benefit from their understanding, ideas, energy and supervision, will work for the benefit of the people.

However, the relationship between an open government and a more efficient service is difficult and depends on a number of contextual factors like civic space, state capability and independent media, good design (such as a clear problem statement and working with time) as well as a clear theory of change. Successful reforms typically require a clear link between transparency (including access to information and open data) and accountability (such as stimulus, sanctions and feedback cycles) (Hughes, Scott, Maassen, 2017).



OPEN GOVERNMENT COMPLEX ELEMENTS

Fundamental elements of an open government include:

Access to Information – also known as the right to information or freedom of information, is a compulsory element of open government. It grants citizens the legal right to request information from the government that is to be disclosed unless it falls within the special exemption requirements of the law.

Open Data – it is a relatively recent addition to open government, which envisages the advancement of information and communication technologies that makes it easy to collect, publish and process large amounts of data. Open data and materials may be freely used, modified and made available for any purpose. These three qualities of free use, reuse, and publication are important to keep data open.

Proper Recordkeeping – proper recordkeeping procedures ensure that information is credible and reliable, can be obtained quickly and easily, stored for a certain period of time, can be safely and properly disposed, and is properly protected, whether private or confidential.

Civil Space – open government mechanisms are often based on the assumption that citizens and civil society will solicit and access information and use it to engage those responsible. This is only possible where civil society is free from restrictions and is not afraid of possible consequences. Civic space is defined as freedom and a means for individuals and organized groups to speak, gain access to information, join, organize and participate in state-level decision-making and is identified as an important prerequisite for an open government (Malena, 2015).

Involvement of the Public – also known as public participation or public engagement, refers to the situation in which the government actively cooperates with citizens, civil society and other stakeholder groups. Public involvement can take place at any stage of the policy cycle, from prioritizing through information and decision making to policy implementation and evaluation. It can also take place at different levels: from public consultations, where stakeholders are informed about the decision-making process, to participation in budgeting, where citizens make their own final decision.

Whistleblowers Protection – employees are often the first to notice corrupt, dangerous, dishonest and/or illegal behavior in an organization. Whistleblowers, therefore, play a key role in open government by informing organizations and the public about the offense where it occurs. Responsible organizations establish clear information procedures and “informant” safeguards to ensure that individuals can report their concerns with confidence that such signals will be properly addressed and without fear of adverse consequences for their safety or career.

Audit – internal and external audits are critical to ensuring that public funds are properly collected, managed and spent by the local government.

Codes of Ethics – it outline certain expectations of public servants and form an important basis for combating corruption in government. Codes of ethics must be supported by clear procedures for filing complaints, reviewing and applying sanctions.

JORDAN`S OGP ACHIEVEMENTS

Jordan was the first Arab country to join OGP in September 2011, and so far, it is one of the few Arab countries participating in the OGP process, scoring high on governance indicators in respect to the regional average. According to Worldwide Governance Indicators last available data that is presented for 2018, Jordan is ranked among states with highest ranking in the region with the score 57.21 out of 100 (World Bank, 2018).

Since 2011, Jordan had 63 commitments in 20 policy areas. The most efforts were made in the area of Public Service Delivery with 19 commitments, following with Legislation & Regulation and Civic Space areas with 6 commitments for each, as well as Audits & Controls and Fiscal Transparency with 4 commitments for each.

It is worth mentioning that the score for the average implementation since 2011 is 2.72 out of 4, which is recognized to be as good implementation rate. Moreover, there are some policy areas, like Open Contracting and Procurement, Capacity Building and Asset Disclosure, were scored 4 out of 4.

The following table is representing the detailed description of Jordan`s achievements within its OGP commitments for the last 10 years:



10

Years of Partnership

20

Policy Areas

63

Commitments

2.72

Average Implementation Score

Policy Area	Title	Implementation	Submitted
Civic Space <i>(TI - 2/4)</i>	1. Strengthening the Financial and Operational Independence of the National Center for Human Rights	● ○○○	2012
	2. Strengthen the Framework Governing the Freedom of the Media	● ○○○	2016
	3. Public Sector/Civil Society Collaboration	N/A	2018
	4. Media-Sector Restructuring	● ● ● ●	2014
	5. Completion of the Second Phase of the Jordan Aid Information Management System- JAIMS	● ○○○	2012
	6. Applying the Principles of Good Governance	● ● ● ○	2014
Open Data <i>(TI - 2/4)</i>	1. Open Data	N/A	2018
	2. Implement an Open Data Sources Policy	● ● ○○	2016
Money in Politics <i>(TI - N/A)</i>	1. Fostering National Dialogue to Achieve Political Reform	N/A	2018
Justice <i>(TI - 2.5/4)</i>	1. Establishment of a Constitutional Court	● ● ● ●	2012
	2. Human Rights Violations Complaint Mechanism	N/A	2018
	3. Establishment of an Administrative Court	● ○○○	2012
Human Rights <i>(TI - N/A)</i>	1. Access to Information Law	N/A	2018
Right to Information <i>(TI - 1.5/4)</i>	1. Strengthen the Legislative Framework Governing Access to Information	● ○○○	2016
	2. Adopting Amendments to the Access to Information Law	● ● ○○	2012
Public Service Delivery <i>(TI - 2.75/4)</i>	1. Upgrading Services in Remote Areas	● ● ○○	2014
	2. Strengthen the Facilities Available for Persons with Disabilities to Access the Justice System	● ● ● ○	2016
	3. Issue the Requisite Regulations and Instructions to Implement the Decentralization Law and Hold Governorate Council Elections in 2017	● ● ● ●	2016
	4. Service Delivery Process Assessment	● ● ● ○	2014
	5. Publish Service Delivery Standards	● ● ● ●	2014
	6. Improve Service Delivery	● ● ● ●	2014
	7. Ensuring Full Compliance with Service Delivery Standards	● ● ● ●	2014
	8. Ensure the Implementation of the "Government Services Improvement Guidelines Manual"	● ● ● ○	2012
	9. Enhance Partnership and Integration Among Government-S Entities	● ● ○○	2012
	10. Developing a Services-Monitoring Body	● ● ○○	2014
	11. Develop an Interactive Observatory Forum for Citizens to Monitor the Implementation of the Government's Plans and Progress	● ○○○	2016

	12. Develop Transparent and Participatory Policies Regarding Climate Change Challenges	● ● ○ ○	2016
	13. Develop Service Delivery Standards and Targets	● ● ● ○	2014
	14. Develop Healthcare Services and Automate the Healthcare Sector Through Electronic Linkages	● ● ● ○	2016
	15. Designing the Second Phase of the National Program for Improving Public Services	● ● ○ ○	2012
	16. Conduct a Comprehensive Customers-Satisfaction Survey	● ● ○ ○	2012
	17. Complaints and Grievances Related to Violations Committed Against Citizen	● ○ ○ ○	2016
	18. Complaints Related to Governmental Services and the Surrounding Environment of Its Provision	● ● ● ●	2016
	19. Amending "The Government Services Improvement Bylaw"	● ● ● ○	2012
Fiscal Transparency <i>(TI - 3.3/4)</i>	1. Transparency in Public Spending	● ● ○ ○	2012
	2. Launching GFMS in Government Ministries and Departments and Financial Centers	N/A	2012
	3. Enhance the Transparency of the General Budget Preparation and Disseminate Information on Process	● ● ● ●	2012
	4. Adopt the Principle of Budget Disclosure in Accordance with International Standards and Promote Transparency and Financial Disclosure	● ● ● ●	2016
Asset Disclosure <i>(TI - 4/4)</i>	1. Internal Control Units Structures	● ● ● ●	2014
Legislation & Regulation <i>(TI - 3.1/4)</i>	1. Approval of the Independent National Electoral Commission Law	● ● ● ●	2012
	2. Public-Sector Restructuring	● ● ● ○	2014
	3. Institutional Capacity Building	● ● ● ○	2014
	4. Enactment of a New E-Transactions Law	● ○ ○ ○	2012
	5. Approval of the New Elections Law by Parliament	● ● ● ●	2012
	6. Adoption of a New Political Parties Law by Parliament	● ● ● ●	2012
Conflicts of Interest <i>(TI - 3/4)</i>	1. Update the Civil Service Bylaw	● ● ● ●	2014
	2. Ensuring the Implementation of the Code of Conduct Among Government Employees	● ● ○ ○	2012
Capacity Building <i>(TI - 4/4)</i>	1. Promoting the Culture of Excellence in Public Sector	N/A	2012
	2. Code of Ethics in Civil Service	● ● ● ●	2014
E-Government <i>(TI - 2/4)</i>	1. Continue Working on Linking the Governmental Institutions with the E-Government	● ● ○ ○	2012

Audits and Controls (<i>TI - 1.75/4</i>)	1. Setting Standards and Indicators to the Internal Audit Units	● ● ○○	2012
	2. Increasing Transparency and Accountability in the Use of Public Funds	● ○○○	2012
	3. Establish an Internal Audit Function in Line Ministries	● ● ○○	2012
	4. Amendment of the Audit Bureau Law	● ● ○○	2012
Anti-Corruption Institutions (<i>TI - 3.5/4</i>)	1. Publishing the Annual Reports for 2011 of the Audit Bureau and Anti-Corruption Commission	● ● ● ●	2012
	2. Anti-Corruption Law Reform	● ● ● ○	2012
Subnational (<i>TI - 3/4</i>)	1. Holding a Municipal Elections in 2013	● ● ● ○	2012
Open Contracting and Procurement (<i>TI - 4/4</i>)	1. Unified Procurement Bylaw	● ● ● ●	2012
	2. National Procurement Systems Self-Assessment	● ● ● ●	2012
Gender (<i>TI - 2/4</i>)	1. Gender and Child Aspects in Government Units Budget	● ● ○○	2012
Oversight of Budget/Fiscal Policies (<i>TI - 2/4</i>)	1. Preparing a Strategy for the Financial Decentralization Project	● ● ○○	2012
Extractive Industries (<i>TI - 1/4</i>)	1. Initiating Discussions to Join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative	● ○○○	2012

* *TI - Total Implementation score*

** **Improve Citizen Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms (2012)** – Policy Area is not stated in the source (Implementation rate - ● ● ○○).

***All the information and data is retrieved from Open Government Partnership website: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/jordan/>

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