Collaboration with Non-Govt Stakeholders: Examples from MENA Countries

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What is Open Government?

"A culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth"

OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government
Adopted in 2017 - First international legal instrument on OG
Adherent: OECD member countries + Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Romania, Tunisia
Motivations for strengthening government-citizen relationships

1. Improve the quality of policy, by allowing governments to tap wider sources of information, perspectives, and potential solutions
2. Meet the challenges of the information society, to prepare for greater and faster interactions with citizens
3. Integrate public input into the policy making process, in order to respond to citizens’ expectations that their voices are heard in decision making
4. Respond to calls for greater government transparency and accountability
5. Strengthen public trust in government and reverse the declining confidence in public institutions.
Examples from the MENA region

1. Tunisia: Citizen charters

- A citizen charter is a voluntary public commitment made by a service provider to uphold standards of quality, transparency and accountability
- Drafted in a participatory way, with measurable indicators, widely publicised
- Each charter is specific to a service
- CSO constructive monitoring and collaboration
- Legal framework: governmental decree
Examples from the MENA region

2. Morocco: Co-creation of OGP NAP

- In the framework of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2021-2022
- 10 themes: integrity and anti-corruption, budget and fiscal transparency, inclusion, access to information, open justice, quality of public services, gender equality, participatory democracy, environment/national resources, innovation/digital governance
- 10 (online) co-creation events led by CSOs, 748 participants, 176 proposals
- A public consultation platform: http://www.gouvernement-ouvert.ma/

Proposals for themes Jan-Feb
Collection of proposals per theme Oct
Prioritisation, lead identification Nov
Drafting of engagements Nov-Dec
Validation and adoption of NAP Dec

Examples from the MENA region

3. Jordan: Enhancing partnership, dialogue between public sector & CS

- First engagement of the 4th OGP NAP 2018 - 2021
- Focusing on the mechanisms of approving CSOs’ foreign funding, on their governance standards and on policies to improve their work

Review of procedures followed for the approval of foreign funding
First meeting in 2019 with 60 participants from Government and CSOs
A model for the foreign funding request discussed with CSOs and approved by Cabinet
Governance manual for NGOs being drafted in a participatory way (80% completed)
Ongoing...
Examples from the MENA region

4. Lebanon: award by CSO to public administration on ATI

- Gherbal Initiative is a non-profit organisation founded in 2017. “It aims to make data visually accessible to the public”
- “Transparency in Lebanese Public Administrations” project in cooperation with the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR)
- Submitted requests for information to 140 administrations asking for closure of accounts for 2017
- A shield of honor was handed over to the 17 public administrations which provided the requested information within the 15-day legal timeframe established by the ATI law

Challenges & good engagement principles

- Limited citizens’ interest, awareness
- Limited capacity of CSOs/NGOs
- Limited requirements and incentive for public officials
- Limited awareness among public officials of the value added
- Limited financial, human resources and capacities in public administration
- Involves CSOs representatives in the design of the consultation process
- Clarify what is under consideration
- Careful follow-up and feedback
- Ensure representation (selection procedures)
- Tailor to capability of different groups
- Beyond one-off engagement
- ATI, enabling environment for CSOs/NGOs

Covid-19

- Opportunity to foster digital and hybrid participation (but accessibility issues remain)
- Trust in govt essential to ensure compliance during emergency and for recovery
- Open gov data, working with media, dialogue with citizens to respond to ‘infodemic’
- Joining efforts: providing equipment, aid to vulnerable people, info/sensitisation
Thank you!

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https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/