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MAKING ALL  
VOICES COUNT

PRACTICE PAPER

A GRAND CHALLENGE  
FOR DEVELOPMENT

# Making coordination a catalyst for the Open Government Partnership in South Africa

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## Acronyms

|      |  |
|------|--|
| ANC  | African National Congress                        |
| CSO  | Civil society organisation                       |
| DPSA | Department of Public Services and Administration |
| IDS  | Institute of Development Studies                 |
| IRM  | Independent Review Mechanism                     |
| NAP  | National Action Plan                             |
| NPC  | National Planning Commission                     |
| ODAC | Open Democracy Advice Centre                     |
| OGP  | Open Government Partnership                      |
| PDM  | Permanent Dialogue Mechanism                     |

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# Summary

Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC), a South African civil society organisation (CSO) working on transparency and accountability, has been heavily involved in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) since its inception. Through its contributions to and monitoring of South Africa's OGP National Action Plans (NAPs), it saw that poor interdepartmental coordination was hindering the South African government's ability to implement its ambitious commitments to revitalise the public service, promote transparency, and use technology to strengthen governance.

Making All Voices Count gave ODAC a practitioner research and learning grant of £25,000 to see what could be learned about interdepartmental coordination from different contexts, how these relate to the South African context, and how interventions like the OGP can enhance the potential for interdepartmental coordination.

Using a conversational format, this Practice Paper discusses both the research findings, and the broader context for open governance reform in South Africa. It highlights:

- challenges for transparency and accountability advocates in South Africa which – despite robust legal protections – include attacks on key integrity institutions, endemic corruption and fear of speaking out
- the history of civil society advocacy for a Permanent Dialogue Mechanism (PDM) as a vehicle to drive interdepartmental coordination on the OGP
- ODAC's strategic approach to working with government actors on implementing OGP commitments to encourage and enhance interdepartmental coordination
- the structural issues that prevent the OGP from serving as a catalyst for opening government data, which include lack of synergy between different commitments, departments and agencies, little consideration of end users, no overarching legal framework, and poor fiscal planning for coordinated action
- the risk that the success of the OGP is contingent on the political and institutional strength of the lead agency.

ODAC suggests that a better mechanism for managing the OGP initiative would be a PDM tasked with the responsibility of developing, monitoring and implementing the NAP. It would include departments with coordinating functions and mandates that cover OGP commitments, and civil society would have an equal voice. ODAC will continue to push for a PDM, and expand the scope for more diverse CSOs to contribute to the OGP initiative.

# Setting the scene for practitioner learning

Making All Voices Count is a citizen engagement and accountable governance programme. Its Research, Evidence and Learning component, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), focuses on building an evidence base on what works in technology for voice, transparency and accountability, how it works, and why (McGee et al 2015). Through practitioner research and learning grants, IDS gives tech for transparency and accountability practitioners grants of around £25,000, and mentoring support. This provides them with the space and capabilities to explore key questions that will enable them to better implement their governance projects. It is hoped that this real-time applied research will contribute to project learning and improved practice.

The practitioner research and learning grants support grantees to form their own learning and judgements, and the development of the Making All Voices Count practice papers series is part of this process. Practice papers document the practitioner research and learning processes from the perspectives of both the grant recipients and the fund managers. They situate the research findings and the reflective processes which led to them in contemporary debates in the field of transparency and accountability.

Making All Voices Count Practice Papers are co-

produced and intended to prompt critical reflection on key learning questions. The Making All Voices Count–IDS team does not proscribe research questions and methods; rather, it encourages grant recipients to explore questions that they believe are of importance to the implementation of their project. Some of the practitioner research is embedded in Making All Voices Count’s innovation and scaling grants, which are curated and managed by Ushahidi and Hivos.

This practice paper focuses on the work of the Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC), a prominent South African civil society organisation (CSO) working on transparency and accountability. Its practitioner research, led by its head of research Gabriella Razzano, set out to understand interdepartmental coordination in the implementation of Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments. The paper documents a conversation between Razzano and IDS research officer Ciana-Marie Pegus, who works on the Making All Voices Count programme. It describes: how and why ODAC has been involved in the OGP initiative; the questions it sought to answer through the research, and how it went about getting answers; the context in which ODAC works; what the research showed and the implications of the findings; recommendations, and the way forward for ODAC.

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## What is the Open Democracy and Advice Centre?

ODAC is one of the leading organisations working on access to information and freedom of expression in South Africa, and across the continent. Since 2001, it has driven strategic litigation on the Promotion of Access to Information Act and the Protected Disclosures Act, and remains at the forefront of parliamentary advocacy on laws relating to transparency and good governance. It provides

support to ensure the effective implementation of key legislation, by assisting public and private institutions to develop policies, procedures and systems. It provides public information and training on using legislation through public awareness campaigns, and workshops. It also conducts applied and comparative research, which forms the evidence base for its other activities.

# What is the Open Government Partnership?

The OGP is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance (OGP 2016a). It was launched in September 2011, and South Africa was one of the eight founding members; its membership has since grown to 70. Each country's participation is guided by a National Action Plan (NAP) that should be developed

biennially in collaboration with civil society. NAPs contain commitments to enhance transparency, accountability and public participation, which are then reviewed by the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM), which also makes technical recommendations. The OGP encourages countries to establish a permanent dialogue mechanism (PDM) to consolidate civil society's role in co-creating NAPs, supporting their implementation, and monitoring and evaluating them.

## ODAC's role in the OGP

ODAC has been deeply engaged in South Africa's OGP process since its inception, making submissions to the first NAP, and participating in the monitoring of the second and third NAPs. Since 2014, ODAC's Executive Director, Mukelani Dimba, has been on the OGP Steering Committee, the executive, decision-making body of the global-level OGP initiative. In 2015, ODAC conducted research to situate the OGP IRM with other review mechanisms that South Africa is a part of,

and examined real and perceived intersections, harmonies and inconsistencies (Razzano 2015a). ODAC believes that the OGP represents a unique opportunity to work with government to drive a culture of transparency and accountability, and to improve service delivery. ODAC is also the recipient of a £100,000 MAVC grant to support South African CSOs and social justice campaigns participating in the OGP initiative, and capacitate new organisations to be able to participate.

## Research focus and methods

The research used a case study approach to pull out lessons on how interdepartmental coordination can be used to advance South Africa's open data commitments. There was a particular emphasis on using interdepartmental coordination as a vehicle to enhance citizen engagement and transparency.

### Key questions were:

- What lessons can be learned from cases of best and worst practice in OGP-related interdepartmental coordination, and how do these relate to the South African context?
- Can interventions such as the OGP process enhance the potential for interdepartmental coordination and, if so, how?

### ODAC answered these questions through:

- active participation in OGP consultative processes throughout research period
- three country case studies on interdepartmental coordination on the OGP (UK, Canada, Malawi)
- two case studies of interdepartmental coordination in South Africa (the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Data Technical Working Group of the Economies of Regions Learning Network)
- eight key informant interviews
- a literature review.

*Accountability is only possible if action can be taken when rights are violated.*

## The context – strong legal protections, weak implementation and pervasive corruption

### Ciana-Marie Pegus:

South Africa has some of the most robust constitutional provisions protecting human rights and liberal democracy in the world. However, key public institutions – the National Prosecuting Authority, the South African Police Services, the Public Protector, the South African Revenue Service – have been beset by scandals and allegations of political interference. Most recently, the Public Protector's October 2016 State Capture report outlined a litany of serious ethical and legal breaches by President Zuma, and many of his key associates (Office of the Public Protector 2016). Can you comment on what you consider to be the constraints for transparency and accountability advocates in South Africa?

### Gabriella Razzano:

In South Africa, the laws aren't the problem, it's the implementation of those laws. So, for example, there has been a particular political assault on integrity institutions in South Africa in recent years. But accountability is only possible if action can be taken when rights are violated. Without these integrity institutions, undue reliance is placed upon the judiciary, which not only threatens separation of powers, but also puts the courts under unnecessary political scrutiny.

The opposite of accountability is impunity. I think this connects to a broader issue – South Africa's electoral system, which is closed-list proportional representation. So voters do not elect representatives, they vote for a party. The party in power, the African National Congress (ANC), submits

a list of individuals to be elected as members of national and provincial legislatures. Only the ANC has the power to recall these representatives. This creates a situation where elected officials are more accountable to their party than to the public. The constitution did not set out to entrench political party loyalty; it was trying to ensure that the rights of all groups were protected in the post-apartheid dispensation. But seems to have contributed to an environment that fosters impunity.

### Ciana-Marie:

After apartheid, the South African government made sweeping legislative changes in order to entrench democracy and the rule of law. The ANC government had the mammoth task of radically revamping the racially skewed, fragmented public service (NPC 2012). Nowadays, a key priority for the South African government is amalgamating and streamlining an inflated public service, and this is reflected in its OGP commitments. The second NAP (2013–5) focused on building an accountability framework for public servants (OGP South Africa 2012). What do you think are the major impediments to strengthening accountability structures in the public sector in South Africa?

### Gabriella:

A key inhibitor to promoting transparency in the public sector is endemic corruption. Public service is viewed by some as a means for unlawfully accessing resources. Work we have done with whistle-blowers shows how dangerous speaking out against corruption can truly be (Razzano 2015b). Exposing corrupt practices could mean career

*The fear factor is real, and is a serious disincentive to creating an environment that fosters an effective, accountable public service.*

suicide, or result in a variety of forms of harassment or discrimination at work, or even create risks to a whistle-blower's personal security. The fear factor is real, and is a serious disincentive to creating an environment that fosters an effective, accountable public service.

That said, I believe the Public Service Commission has made a concerted effort to ground and embed the eight *Batho Pele* (People First) principles to improve standards of public service delivery, by creating normative standards that put the interests of the user – as a citizen – first. Again, how these principles can be practically implemented remains the real challenge.

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## Interdepartmental coordination, civil society and the struggle for a permanent dialogue mechanism

### Ciana-Marie:

South Africa's IRM assessment for the 2013–5 period flagged a lack of sufficient civil society engagement in the national-level OGP (Adeleke 2016).<sup>1</sup> The South African government has signalled its intent to establish a PDM – something for which ODAC and other CSOs have been advocating for quite a while. As I understand it, you also consider this a critical tool to facilitate interdepartmental coordination. Can you give me a bit of background about civil society efforts to establish the PDM? And how has ODAC's approach shifted?

### Gabriella:

Some in government have argued that co-governance and co-creation are unconstitutional, the implication being that civil society is trying to usurp the role of an elected government. I don't believe that this is what civil society in South Africa is trying to do. We are trying to co-create NAPs, assist with the implementation of commitments

where appropriate, and play our watchdog role in ensuring that the government is fulfilling its commitments to greater transparency and accountability as part of the OGP. Partnership is what the OGP is all about, which means civil society must be firmly embedded in the process.

Civil society has been pushing for a PDM for at least the past few years. This resulted in letters being addressed to the Special Envoy during the 2016 OGP Africa Summit in Cape Town, and prior to the OGP Summit in Mexico in 2015. It was also one of the main recommendations of the OGP meeting civil society organised in partnership with the Department of Public Services and Administration (DPSA), and hosted at the Nelson Mandela Foundation at the end of 2014. We believe a PDM could assist not just with civil society coordination, but inter-departmental coordination as well. Such a structure not only provides a specific space for coordination, but can also ensure that coordination itself is viewed as a central goal and facilitated through considered interventions.

<sup>1</sup> The full assessment of the second NAP by the IRM was released for public comment in November. The deadline for comment was 30 November 2016. The full report is available here: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/south-africa/irm>, accessed 24 November 2016.

*Partnership is what the OGP is all about, which means civil society must be firmly embedded in the process.*

Over the years, the number of CSOs and social justice campaigns interested in the OGP initiative has been slowly growing in South Africa. Generally, the civil society agenda has focused on pushing the DPSA for a more institutionalised and deeper consultative process. To have an effective dialogue, and an effective PDM no less, you have to be in dialogue. This means that we cannot afford an impasse between the major South African stakeholders in the OGP.

Focusing singularly on consultation, however, means that you spend less time focusing on how and whether commitments are implemented. That's why ODAC has adopted an approach that focuses on the commitments themselves, rather than just the process. We work with government entities such as National Treasury, the Chief Director of E-Enablement and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation to implement commitments. Through this research we hoped, and still hope, to encourage more direct coordination between departments. I believe that working closely with these different departments will open doors to greater civil society involvement in the OGP initiative. We are learning as we go, and when we encounter roadblocks, we need to change our approach.

#### **Ciana-Marie:**

South Africa was one of the founders of the OGP, and during your research it was the co-chair of the OGP Steering Committee. I imagine this must have made your research quite relevant, and helped build

broader interest in it. A key element of your research process was active participation in key workshops and meetings convened around South Africa's co-chairmanship of the OGP, including the OGP Africa regional meeting in May in Cape Town. How did South Africa's co-chairmanship help or hinder civil society advocacy?

#### **Gabriella:**

I think the South African government really wanted the OGP Regional Summit in May 2016 to be a success. There was a drive to make it work, and for civil society this offered some leverage, as the government was more responsive. But to be honest, I don't think South Africa's co-chairmanship influenced its championing of OGP as much as we had hoped it would.

That said, there were vociferous demands from civil society for a PDM at the Regional Summit, and the government agreed in principle to establish one. Following the Summit, the DPSA circulated some 'rules for engagement', a code of conduct for civil society engagement with government on the OGP initiative. However, the actual establishment has been slow and, in the meantime, the ad hoc nature of civil society engagements has made systematic monitoring of the OGP process very difficult. At these ad hoc engagements, which are generally by the invitation of the DPSA, there's no institutionalised accountability relationship between civil society and government representatives (see Cornwall 2004).

# Interdepartmental coordination: A strategic focus

## Ciana-Marie:

So what led you to do this research? There were many angles which you could have chosen to explore in your research – why the focus on interdepartmental coordination?

## Gabriella:

Through its multipronged engagement with different government agencies on the OGP, particularly relating to making data open, ODAC realised that interdepartmental coordination was proving to be a critical challenge hampering the implementation of the OGP. It's a universal weakness across government initiatives. In South Africa, OGP has been quite disjointed. One agency – the DPSA – has been driving the implementation of the commitments, and this is insufficient if the aim is to “stretch government beyond its current baseline” (OGP 2016b: no page).

## Ciana-Marie:

In 1994 the newly instated government of South Africa had the enormous task of providing decent public services (education, healthcare, housing and public works) for all South Africans, and it inherited an infrastructure that was developed to serve the needs of a small minority of the population. And while the South African government welcomes the contribution of CSOs to plugging service delivery gaps and providing technical assistance, the comments by the OGP Special Envoy and others that equate co-governance – and, by extension, meaningful engagement – with unconstitutionality show that some actors in the OGP are not always willing to “invite [civil] society into the inner chambers of the state” (Ackerman 2004: 448). ODAC has managed to actively contribute to the OGP process, and has good working relationships with key actors in various departments; it also continues to advocate for a PDM and tries to create space for civil society advocates that are new to the OGP process. How do you manage this complex balancing act? How does ODAC position itself in this space?

## Gabriella:

ODAC focuses on engaged and effective advocacy with supportive champions in government, which also entails helping departments achieve their own goals of transparency, as articulated in their OGP commitments. There is quite a lot of potential impact through open engagement and capacity-building. A discrete example has been ODAC's work to train frontline government staff on how to process freedom of information requests, using its guide on access to information. ODAC doesn't generally adopt a combative approach, as we just don't want to miss opportunities to influence the willingness and enhance the capacity of different facets of government to implement measures to improve transparency and accountability. The topic of interdepartmental collaboration was a strategic choice. It's a practical in-road for continuing to enhance relationships with these champions, while building drive and the impetus of government departments to coordinate on the development and implementation of their OGP commitments.

This is not the approach of all civil society groups. And sometimes our relationship with government is not in line with the positions taken by our civil society partners. However, our goal is to advance transparency and turn it to something meaningful. To make that a reality, we have to take considered strategies – sometimes that's a partnership with government, sometimes with civil society, and sometimes both. I think our approach is just to always be open to dialogue, and then make rational decisions that remain focused on our core goal. If you remain true to your organisation's mandate, but also communicative and open with all partners, you can't really go wrong.

*The challenge of making open government data available is not just a technical problem but a human one, and the process of opening data should be productive dialogue among data providers, users and developers.*

## Interdepartmental coordination and the challenge of making data open

### Ciana-Marie:

You mention in your research report that the challenges in making open government data available are a microcosm of broader structural problems between government agencies and departments (Razzano 2016). You rightly say it's not just a technical problem, but a human one, and the process of opening data should be productive dialogue among data providers, users and developers. I think there is a real tendency to underestimate how complex this process truly is (see Carter 2016), especially when we are talking about getting bureaucratic behemoths to work together to share information in an understandable and accessible format. In 2001, DPSA developed a good Public Service IT Policy Framework, with an emphasis on integrating intra-governmental operations, interoperability (allowing for automatic sharing of information across different systems, networks and applications), and eliminating duplication (DPSA 2001). The framework stressed the need for "strategic and in-depth planning and major co-ordination and consolidation of government IT projects and resources" (2001: 5). Years later, this vision has yet to be realised. What do you see as the key inhibitors of effective interdepartmental coordination in South Africa, especially concerning the sharing of open data?

### Gabriella:

ODAC has had a long-standing interest in promoting timely, intelligible, discoverable, non-proprietary open government data. And ODAC sees the OGP as

an important catalyst for opening government data. An example from the research is the South African government's commitment to pilot an open data portal. It will include datasets from all three levels of government – national, provincial and local. These levels of government are interrelated but independent. There has been little consideration of how to get relevant data from government agencies and departments. The key implementers are considered to be the developers of the platform, not the data providers.

Problematically open data is viewed as a vision that's part of a specific programme or project endeavour specific to a department, rather than an end in and of itself. So, for instance, the National Treasury has an open data initiative under its Open Tenders project, and the Department of Environment has committed to developing an integrated and publicly accessible portal of environmental management information. How these data sets relate to each other isn't considered. The end users, members of the public and what information is useful to them, aren't necessarily planned for under a cohesive OGP banner. Government actors tend to build data portals thinking about their needs, and are inward looking. This is symptomatic of a broader problem of using open data to demonstrate transparency without taking steps to make it useful for accountability advocates. The National Treasury has been quite open to this argument – and in fact is now developing a programme of engagement with civil society and the public as 'users', to consider what they might need. However, the coordination

problem is more difficult for one department to try and overcome.

There is also no dedicated budget for implementation of OGP commitments or interdepartmental coordination. Each department responsible for implementing OGP commitments has to use funds from their own existing budgets. And yet there is a great deal of interconnection between the commitments. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation is responsible for strengthening citizen-based monitoring, a cross-cutting commitment. This is also the case for Commitment 7 (raising awareness of the open government initiative), which is the responsibility

of the Government Communication and Information System, and for the DPISA's open data portal. How is interdepartmental coordination supposed to happen if budgets for different commitments are housed in different ministries, and thus no financial incentive to coordinating? And if these ministries need to rely on their existing resources, how ambitious can these commitments really be? There is also no overarching legal framework that governs sharing open data. Multiple contradictory pieces of legislation create unnecessary ambiguity. This leads to a reluctance to share data amongst government officials who don't want to find themselves on the wrong side of the law.

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## What better interdepartmental coordination might look like

### Ciana-Marie:

In Malawi, there's a more top-down approach to interdepartmental coordination, with the OGP Steering Committee's lead agency being housed in the Office of the President and Cabinet. I know Malawi is a relatively new addition to the OGP, only joining in 2016, but can you comment on the advantages and disadvantages of this approach, especially compared with the South African approach?

### Gabriella:

The advantage is that it creates a strong political driver for the OGP. In South Africa, a lack of Cabinet approval of the OGP at its inception has meant that there was less impetus for interdepartmental coordination from the very start. Without high level political support, the OGP initiative could be all but crushed by a lack of political investment. On the other hand, in Malawi, there's concern around what happens if the Presidency no longer supports the OGP, or there's waning interest in transparency. Ideally, what's needed is a balance between voiced, high-level political support – like there is in Malawi – and broad based endorsement, buy-in and implementation at the administrative level.

### Ciana-Marie:

According to data you found in the OGP explorer, less than 20% of reviewed countries have a forum for regular dialogue between departments implementing OGP commitments. And of course, having a forum doesn't necessarily mean that it is effective. You considered that engaging in the Open Data Working Group of the Economies of Regions Learning Network, a community of practice, was very valuable to your research and learning process – and you note it as a good example of interagency coordination. Can you say more about the aims and objectives of this group, and why you think it works so well? What lessons should we take from this model of cooperation?

### Gabriella:

The group has a strong focus: driving economic development. It is also driven by the department most invested in its functioning, the National Treasury, which has also been somewhat of a flagship department in open data. This means that the Open Data Working Group has a strong political driver. It is also a result of the individuals involved – there is a strong personal commitment to open data amongst members, who see it as directly beneficial to their work in the administration. This means they are engaged and interested. They very much see

coordination as a part of their work, not an addition to it.

A problem for OGP implementation is that there is a lack of a unified goal, which is what is needed to sustain coordination efforts. South Africa's National Development Plan, developed by the National Planning Commission (NPC) to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030, represents a massive opportunity for interdepartmental coordination. The DPSA says it guided the development of the OGP commitments in South Africa, but what does this mean in practice? It would be a missed opportunity if the National Development Plan was seen as a vision document produced by politicians, while the implementers – the administration – continue with business as usual. The National Development Plan and the OGP process need to be much more closely aligned.

#### Ciana-Marie:

As you point out, interdepartmental coordination – or what has been called a 'whole-of-government' approach – is critical to realising the ambitions of the OGP. However, few countries in the OGP adopt this approach. So there is an over-reliance on lead agencies to drive the implementation of far-reaching commitments that are contingent on the cooperation and compliance of practically all departments. What do you see as the ideal role of the lead agency?

#### Gabriella:

I believe a lead agency should be a good coordinating body that creates connections, and does not try to have a greater role beyond that. If its influence extends beyond that, this tends to drown out other voices – civil society or otherwise. Our research shows that this happened when the DPSA coordinated efforts for South African's submissions to the African Peer Review Mechanism. If the lead agency takes on the primary responsibility for developing OGP commitments, it means these commitments remain siloed and may not be significantly aspirational. I think the PDM should design the OGP NAPs, not the lead agency. Too much concentration of power in the lead agency also risks the success of the OGP being directly affected by the political and institutional strength – or lack thereof – of the incumbent department.

#### Ciana-Marie:

And what would the ideal composition of the PDM in South Africa look like? Who needs to be part of it, and how should it operate?

#### Gabriella:

Ideally, it would include both departments with a coordinating function (such as the Presidency, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and the NPC) alongside departments with specific open government functions (such as the National Treasury, the DPSA, and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development). Ad hoc committees could then develop around specific commitments, driven by the assigned lead agency for that commitment. Civil society would have an equal voice, and there should be a good mix of organisations, which bring different competencies and speak up on behalf of different constituencies.

## Recommendations from ODAC's research

- Establish a PDM, including departments with a coordination function and departments with mandates that fall under the areas covered by the OGP.
- Re-define the remit of the DPSA, so that its main focus is on coordination. Devolve much of its current planning and policy remit to the PDM.
- Encourage the formation of communities of civil society and government experts around the effective implementation of specific commitments.
- Make coordination a specific goal for the OGP in South Africa.
- Departments with responsibilities assigned in the NAP must be aware of these commitments and explicitly sign on to them.

## What now for ODAC?

### Ciana-Marie:

What do you think were some of the key limitations in conducting this research? What areas do you think need to be further explored? And what are ODAC's priorities now?

### Gabriella:

The constraints for us, like with any project really, were time and money. As with any research, it is the research uptake that will take time – it's an ongoing process. We are heavily invested in better interdepartmental coordination, and the establishment of a PDM.

I do think there is a strong case for exploring how interdepartmental coordination is working in other contexts on the continent, like Nigeria and Tunisia, and how it pans out in Malawi too. I know that interdepartmental coordination has been an increasing focus for OGP internationally, and we're hoping to contribute increasingly to that discussion. Personally, I think it would be fun to explore behavioural interventions for enhancing coordination in departments involved in the OGP.

Through the OGP Tracker tool we are developing through our Making All Voices Count project, ODAC will continue to monitor the South African government's implementation of OGP commitments. We are also trying to bring new civil society actors into the OGP space, and encourage them to bring their relevant expertise and insight to the table (Making All Voices Count 2016). Our role in coordinating civil society and bringing diverse voices into the process is an attempt to provide a space for coordination, even when the PDM is still in progress. We are not giving up hope – we are continuing to push the idea of the PDM with the departments that we engage with regularly. At the OGP Summit in Paris in December 2016, our immediate priority is to ensure that this is still very much on the agenda.

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## About Making All Voices Count

Making All Voices Count is a programme working towards a world in which open, effective and participatory governance is the norm and not the exception. It focuses global attention on creative and cutting-edge solutions to transform the relationship between citizens and their governments. The programme is inspired by and supports the goals of the Open Government Partnership.

Making All Voices Count is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Omidyar Network, and is implemented by a consortium consisting of Hivos, IDS and Ushahidi.

## Research, Evidence and Learning component

The programme's Research, Evidence and Learning component, managed by IDS, contributes to improving performance and practice, and builds an evidence base in the field of citizen voice, government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (T&A) and technology for T&A (Tech4T&A).

## About Making All Voices Count practice papers

The Research, Evidence and Learning component has made a series of practitioner research and learning grants to support a range of actors working on citizen voice, T&A and governance to carry out self-critical enquiry into their own experiences and contexts. The main output of each grant is what the practitioner learns and applies to their own practice. Practitioners can also decide to produce their own written outputs. The purpose of the practice paper, written on completion of each grant, is to capture the essence of that learning process through a reflective dialogue between programme staff and funded partners, to share with a wider audience of peer practitioners and policy-makers.

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