

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON WATER AND OPEN GOVERNMENT

Newsletter 4, June 2021

## About the OGP

In 2011, government leaders and civil society advocates came together to create a unique partnership, one that combines these powerful forces to promote accountable, responsive and inclusive governance. To date, 78 countries and a growing number of local governments—representing more than 2 billion people—along with thousands of civil society organizations, are members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Through the OGP, governments work with civil society to co-create action plans, with concrete steps or commitments, across a broad range of issues to enhance transparency, accountability and public participation in government.



Photo Credit: WONG Chi Keung, WIN Photo Competition 2020

## Invitation to join the Community of Practice

We encourage civil society, multilateral institutions and government officials to join our Community of Practice and help us achieve clean and accessible water by:

- Bringing water sector experts into the OGP commitment process at the national or local level;
- Sharing relevant tools and resources with OGP actors;
- Developing commitment ideas and supporting implementation;
- Identifying opportunities for stronger engagement between water, sanitation and open government actors including a Water and Open Government Declaration to bring the perspectives of multiple communities together to work on water, sanitation and open government.

If you are interested in joining the Community of Practice, please contact us at [WaterOpenGovernment@siwi.org](mailto:WaterOpenGovernment@siwi.org)

## A Look Back at the Community of Practice (CoP)

In 2017, the Water Integrity Network, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), World Resources Institute (WRI), Fundación Avina and the Open Government Partnership (OGP) formed a Community of Practice (CoP) on Water and Open Government. We recognized that by working across OGP, the CoP has a unique opportunity to bring water and open government experts together to spark the development of innovative approaches to leverage transparency, inclusive participation and accountable decision-making into improved water management and service delivery.

In these past four years we have:

- **Created a Help Desk** for technical assistance and support for the development of new water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) commitments,
- **Hosted** webinars, conference events, and regional learning forums connecting inclusive and participatory water management with the OGP,
- **Produced** this quarterly newsletter, along with a blog series and other outreach and communication materials specifically designed to bring in new water actors into the OGP space.
- **Authored** a [step by step guide for cities](#) to strengthen open government reforms in the urban water and sanitation sector and enhance local-national strategies integration, and
- **Drafted** a [Declaration on Water and Open Government](#) to spur targeted implementation actions based on the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability and anti-corruption.

These efforts have made a difference on access to clean water and sanitation for people across the globe. The CoP facilitated the creation of WASH commitments - where we engaged and supported governments and civil society - in Brazil, Mongolia, Tunisia, Paraguay, Lima in Peru, Makueni county in Kenya, Argentina, Indonesia, and the Shama district in Ghana. We supported the application processes for OGP Local in Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro City as well as the implementation of WASH commitments in Morocco; Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana; Chile; and Paraguay.

Together with our partners, we deepened collaboration and expanded partnerships between key water actors in the OGP. These include important connections with the [Sanitation and Water for All \(SWA\)](#), [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), [Inter-American Development Bank \(IADB\)](#), regulators and policy makers, indigenous organizations, and national and local civil society groups. We also helped raise awareness of open government initiatives that have accelerated inclusive and participatory WASH decision making - such as those in [São Paulo](#), [Mexico City](#), [Brazil](#) and [Chile](#).

Now more than ever, in the wake of the pandemic, global social unrest, and climate change, we must leverage the fundamental values of open government to overcome inequity and advance WASH service delivery. More effort is needed to strengthen linkages between open government leaders and specific WASH utilities, water regulators and line ministries to determine how best to advance and implement sector-specific commitments. More concrete strategies are also needed to leverage OGP as an accountability and implementation mechanism for international principles such as those of the OECD and SWA, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the coming years, the CoP hopes to identify new resources to help countries and key stakeholders by:

- **Focusing on new commitment themes:** to highlight the impact of climate change on water, employ the lenses of gender, culture and income inequality, and consider the urgent need to develop integrated governance and technical support to address WASH and pandemic recovery.
- **Deepening engagement in OGP Local:** to engage new cohorts that would expand the entry points for new water commitments to push for decentralization of WASH service delivery and integrate action at national and local levels.
- **Accelerating Water Declaration engagement:** to strengthen and identify new partnerships with key WASH sector stakeholders not currently involved in the OGP process.



Photo Credit: Jewel Chakma, WIN Photo Competition 2019

## Engaging WASH stakeholders in OGP: Leveling the field as a prerequisite

Thanks to the funding support from the OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund, the CoP has spent the past two years actively supporting the development and implementation of WASH-related commitments. The CoP has provided technical assistance to a range of government and civil society organizations. For example, we have supported the application of Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro into OGP Local; facilitated WASH-related commitments in the OGP action plan in Makeni county (Kenya), Shama District (Ghana) and Lima (Peru); and supported the

implementation of an OGP WASH-related commitment in Sekondi-Takoradi (Ghana).

Based on our hands-on experience, it is increasingly clear that the key to success on WASH commitments is a robust process of engagement with WASH stakeholders. However, ensuring effective participation in a space where transparency and open government focused CSOs and public institutions have played a dominant role is a challenge. There seems to be less room available to identify and engage

OGP champions across sectors such as education, health, WASH, etc. The circle of engagement continues to remain largely confined to the organizations and institutions, who have been participating in OGP for years. The predominance of transparency-focused CSOs and public institutions in the international steering committees, as well as within the national multi-stakeholder fora in various OGP member countries is one illustration of this issue.

We do believe that for a truly meaningful engagement of WASH stakeholders to be a permanent feature, OGP must go beyond the usual leadership and level the field for new stakeholders to get involved.

Based on the work of the CoP, a few factors can be identified that may be hindering WASH engagement in OGP:

- **Lack of knowledge of sector actors.** The CSOs and public institutions working on transparency reforms are not familiar with the particularities of a specific sector or its stakeholders such as WASH public institutions and civil society groups.
- **Competition for limited space within OGP action plans.** OGP actors do not necessarily have the proper incentives or interest to reach out to other parties as they are advocating their own reforms in terms of possible OGP commitments.
- **Diversity of stakeholders.** The nature and diversity of civil society groups and public institutions of the WASH sector differs very much from those working on transparency and open government. Water user associations and consumer protection organizations and collectives/groups working at local level are more vocal and visible in the WASH sector. This is also why the CoP actively engaged with the collective [Sed Cero](#) in Argentina, the [Observatorio Social](#) and [Artigo19](#) in Rio de Janeiro, [Lima Cómo Vamos](#) in the city of Lima, [CESPAD](#) in Makueni county, and [Controla tu Gobierno](#) in Mexico, among others. Within the public sector, water utilities and WASH regulatory agencies also play an important role.
- **Lack of knowledge of OGP.** WASH stakeholders are not sufficiently familiar with OGP and its processes – including the existence of commitments, action plans, government points of contact (PoC) or a multi-stakeholder forum. While WASH stakeholders participate in other international fora such as SWA and the World Water Week, there most certainly needs to be better networking platforms and outreach between OGP and the diverse WASH platforms.

In light of these factors, an open call for the co-creation of an action plan by the OGP Points of Contact (PoC) and/or local multi-stakeholder forum is insufficient to ensure the meaningful participation of WASH stakeholders. The OGP PoC must do groundwork early on – ahead of the launch of the co-creation process. For example, in the case of Makueni



Photo Credit: Sandipan Mukherjee, WIN Photo Competition 2012

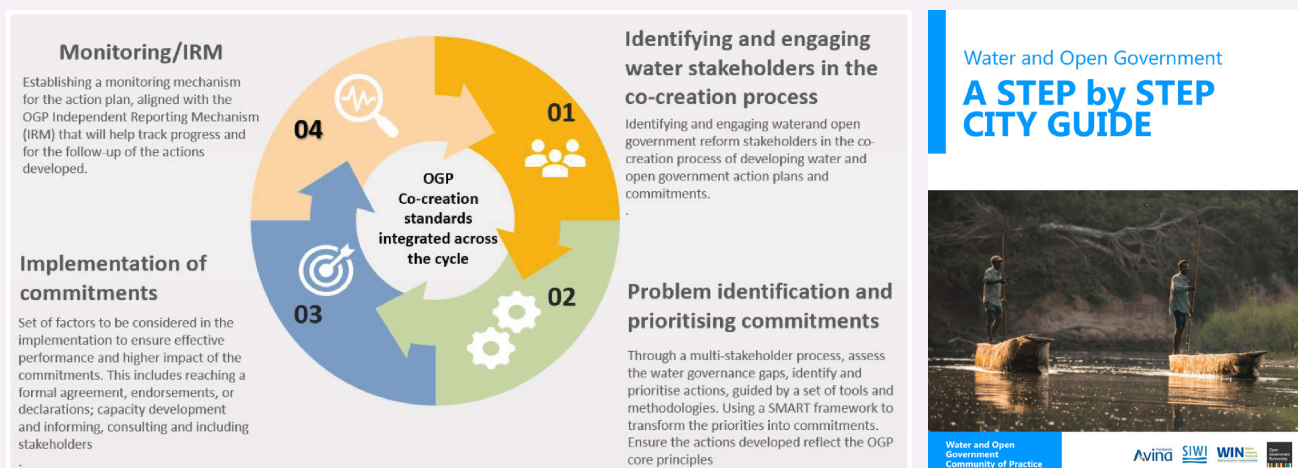
County, a local CSO, the Centre for Social Planning and Administrative Development (CESPAD)<sup>1</sup> agreed to conduct a quick assessment on priorities and areas of cooperation to promote a more informed dialogue between OGP and WASH stakeholders and to be better equipped when the co-creation process is launched. This work could include other activities like mapping WASH stakeholders, reaching out to them, promoting an understanding of each other's priorities and areas of collaboration (particularly by linking OGP with the SDGs), and building trust. Otherwise, the usual suspects – from both civil society and the public sector – may end up participating/ leading during the OGP co-creation process. In addition, those stakeholders working on crosscutting issues such as fiscal transparency, open contracting or open data can explore how to incorporate milestones related to a particular sector such as WASH, even if the time is not right for promoting a WASH-specific commitment in the OGP action plan.

In conclusion, awareness raising on OGP among WASH stakeholders is needed before engagement in the OGP co-creation process. This process must be complemented by OGP PoC<sup>2</sup> and the participating CSOs learning about key WASH issues in advance, so that they effectively (and contextually) promote transparency and accountability in WASH. This approach is crucial for WASH stakeholders to explore why and how they can participate in OGP before considering submitting a commitment in an action plan.

<sup>1</sup> CESPAD is a local non-governmental organization in Makueni County, Kenya, which specializes on integrated water resources management (IWRM), sanitation, hygiene, environmental conservation, agriculture and poverty analysis. CESPAD has been working for the past years with different stakeholders aiming to improve water governance in the County.

<sup>2</sup> List of OGP Points of Contact- [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QBPldTK\\_36UmlcFZp5aZsDhX1EA-l02XAtgwJ7cWM/edit#gid=123163770](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QBPldTK_36UmlcFZp5aZsDhX1EA-l02XAtgwJ7cWM/edit#gid=123163770)

## Water and Open Government: A Step By Step City Guide



Credit : The step by step methodology, SIWI

As cities around the world are at a tipping point with the increasing pressure of impending water crises, immediate action is needed to accelerate the improvement of urban water governance and a transformation to inclusive, safe, and resilient cities. To address this need, the CoP is happy to announce its new City Guide.

This guide provides a step-by-step methodology, complimented with a set of tools and resources that enables users to:

- Strengthen open government reforms in urban Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH);
- Improve coordination of water stakeholders on open government reform by strengthening water users' cooperation with the government through the engagement of civil society organizations, and
- Inform action planning around water and open government at the local level.

Though developed to provide resources for local governments on how best to use the OGP platform and co-creation processes for water commitments and open government actions, this guide can be employed by any stakeholder in a city. This includes WASH service providers, who could play a valuable role in strengthening and promoting such commitments together with the local government, CSOs, and PoCs. The guide targets OGP Points of Contact (PoC) and civil society organizations working in the areas of open government reforms and the WASH sector.

The guide is available [here](#), and the newsletter sheds further light on how we have applied and shared it with the OGP and WASH community

## SUPPORT TO LOCAL PROGRAMS

In 2020, OGP welcomed 56 new local jurisdictions to take part in OGP Local. Since then, the CoP has been working closely with the OGP Points of Contact and civil society organizations in Lima (Peru), Makueni County (Kenya), Mexico City (Mexico), and Sekondi-Takoradi (Ghana) to help set the context for the co-creation of water and open government commitments and facilitate action.



### Training for OGP Local Points of Contact on the application of the Step by Step City Guide for water and open government

On 10 March, 2021, two online training sessions titled '**Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) - Thematic Deep Dive for OGP Local Point of Contacts**' were held in collaboration with the OGP Local Program. These sessions targeted OGP Points of Contact (PoC) across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) for the purpose of sharing, learning, reflecting, and promoting the need to develop WASH and open government commitments within the OGP local program.

Participants benefited from fresh insights on the current trends and challenges around urban water and sanitation, the benefit/impact of strengthening WASH services, and examples on WASH commitments within the OGP. Part of this knowledge transfer included a presentation of the step by step guide that illustrated the tools that can be used to engage water stakeholders, identify the existing water governance challenges and collaboratively develop water

and open government actions and commitments. PoCs also shared learnings and reflections around the WASH challenges in their own countries.

Combined with the learning and exchange gained from the aforementioned Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) experience on steps taken to develop their sanitation commitment implementation work plan, the sessions enabled the participants to understand WASH in the context of cities and OGP and the possibility of co-

## Starting a dialogue to explore interest on a WASH commitment in [Lima, Peru](#)

creation of commitments in the sector.

Peru has been a member of OGP since 2012, and Lima joined OGP Local in 2020. Lima has all the necessary elements that make a WASH-related commitment possible. This includes experience with OGP WASH-related commitments in other regions in the country (e.g. La Libertad); high engagement of WASH stakeholders on the topic of integrity; and proactive leadership of Lima's water utility [SEDAPAL](#), which promotes open government actions in its own anti-corruption sector plan.

The work in Lima started in late 2020 when a conversation was initiated between the Water Integrity Network (WIN), the SEDAPAL city water utility - who participated at the [CoP workshop in Brasilia in 2019](#) - and the NGO [Ciudadanos al Día](#) who have engaged in OGP at the national level. With support from OGP Local, the CoP contacted the PoC for Lima, who is based in Lima's municipal department of Digital Government and Innovation. The PoC later brought the head of the Unit for Environmental Strategy and Climate Change (Subgerencia de Estrategia Ambiental y Cambio Climatico) from the municipal government into this dialogue.

The initial communication with each organization led to a number of joint online meetings and finally a webinar (*see box*) on the occasion of World Water Day, designed as a quick assessment exercise to level the field for all stakeholders. Through this webinar, government and civil society came together to discuss opportunities and challenges on access to water and sanitation services in Lima from an open government perspective. They then identified issues that would inform a potential OGP WASH-related commitment.

Although the stakeholders involved showed a big interest in further exploring an OGP WASH-related commitment, guaranteeing local ownership of the process was challenging, in part because of the short timeframe available for the creation of the commitments. Other challenges were the presidential elections in Peru (the first round was held in April 2021) and the limited information shared openly on the co-creation process.

After the webinar, a follow-up meeting was held with the CSO [Lima Cómo Vamos](#) and the Unit for Environmental Strategy and Climate Change where the possibility for setting up a multi-stakeholder forum to address WASH issues from a transparency and accountability perspective was suggested. The Unit then invited [Lima Cómo Vamos](#) to participate in the first meeting of the Metropolitan Technical Group on

### Webinar on OGP and WASH – Lima, Peru

On World Water Day (22 March 2021), OGP, the Municipality of Lima, the Potable Water and Sewerage Service of Lima – SEDAPAL, Ciudadanos al Día and WIN (representing the CoP) organized a webinar on OGP and WASH. Participating parties met to discuss key issues related to transparency, citizen participation and accountability in the access to water and sanitation in Lima. The webinar aimed to identify relevant issues for the co-creation of a water and sanitation commitment in the Open Government Plan of Lima.

After an introduction by the OGP Support Unit on the importance of water governance for the OGP, the mayor of Lima, Jorge Muñoz Wells, gave a brief talk on the initiatives implemented by the Municipality to promote better water management and governance. This was followed by a presentation by Jorge Rucoba Tello, manager of development and research at SEDAPAL, on the coverage of water and sanitation services in Lima and the way in which different social stakeholders have been involved in the provision of services.

Mariana Alegre, from Lima Cómo Vamos, stressed the importance of having transparent and accessible information on water and sanitation to facilitate decision-making in the sector and to give citizens the mechanisms to hold governments accountable. She also stressed the inequalities the city needs to deal with in terms of access.

Climate Change and Water Resources in April to present the idea to a larger group. Lima will deliver its OGP action plan by July 31, 2021.

The experience of the CoP supporting the process of co-creation in Lima exemplifies some of the obstacles stakeholders face when creating water-related commitments. A strong level of local ownership and empowerment to make a commitment succeed are needed to counter the lack of knowledge of sector actors on OGP. One also needs to bear in mind the dynamics of competition between sectors for a limited number of commitments in the action plans.

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Photo Credit: Joel Mwesigwas, WIN Photo Competition 2020

## [Makueni County, Kenya](#)

Makueni County, one of the forty-seven devolved governance units of Kenya, has been a member of OGP since 2020 and has made good strides in the process of developing commitments on governance and development on a local level. It is in this context that the [Centre for Social Planning and Administrative Development](#) (CESPAD), in partnership with the CoP, is implementing a project on water and open Government.

Supported by the Water Integrity Network (WIN), the Point of Contact for Makueni County Government, the Mobilization Agency for Paralegal Communities in Africa (MAPACA) and OGP Local, CESPAD held a series of stakeholder meetings to develop water commitments. These commitments aim to improve service delivery, water resource management and equitable distribution of clean and accessible water in the water-scarce county., in accordance with the OGP principles. The first engagement meeting was held online with participants from civil society networks, the media, community water projects and the Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) Council. Key thematic areas were identified, including social inclusion in the technical aspects of WASH, community capacity building on the

technical aspects of monitoring and evaluation to ensure the sustainability of projects, County government funding of WRUAs, and Climate Change resilience.

These thematic areas were then narrowed down to specific priority issues that focused on governance, finance, capacity building and climate change. Besides the community water project representatives, media, WRUA council representatives and CSOs, attendees also included county government representatives from the Budget and Planning Department, Department of Water, Ministry of Health, the Water Resource Authority and water service providers. This indicated a serious commitment to the achievement of SDG 6 through open government reforms.

Reformers will meet in the coming months to finalize the commitments and develop an implementation roadmap. Like Lima, Makueni will also deliver its action plan by July 31, 2021.

For more information, please contact Val Mbuthia [valmbuthia@gmail.com](mailto:valmbuthia@gmail.com).



Photo Credit: Taisir Mehdi, WIN Photo Competition 2020

## Learning by doing – applying the Step by Step Guide for Cities in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana

A step-by-step methodology was successfully implemented in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) in Ghana, which helped inform their implementation work plan for their commitment on [Citizen Engagement in the Delivery of Public Sanitation Services](#). In December 2020, OGP organized a series of five virtual design sprint sessions with support from the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), who contributed through WASH technical advice and facilitation expertise.

Tools used included the “accountability triangle” framework, which helped outline how policy-makers, service providers, and communities/users are part of an interconnected system that must work together to be successful in the long term. In addition, the WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASH BAT) was used for problem identification and prioritization of key activities around improving sanitation services in households and schools, to guide STMA in strengthening their action plan.

Through this process, STMA was able to identify key water and sanitation stakeholders, identify problems, prioritize key activities, and refine an action plan by integrating the OGP-guided considerations of how stakeholders and policies could be enablers for the implementation of the commitments.



Photo Credit: Siddharth Rathod, WIN Photo Competition 2020

## Open Government and Water and Sanitation Declaration

The Open Government and Water and Sanitation Declaration ([EN](#)) and ([ES](#)) aims to support countries and relevant actors in defining open government commitments to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals on water and sanitation by 2030. It represents an international call for ambitious action in WASH decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic, while offering an opportunity to increase collaboration and define global priorities on tracking improvements in water access and sanitation worldwide. This Declaration also outlines targeted recommendations that leverage transparency, participation and accountability and anti-corruption that can be supported via OGP and other WASH forums to increase collaboration and help to realize the human right to water and sanitation.

A broad coalition of civil society and international organizations worked to co-create the Declaration. **The Declaration remains open for endorsement from open government and water advocates through September 2021.** If you are interested in endorsing the Declaration and sending a clear message on the importance of addressing WASH through an open government lens, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, please fill out this form in [EN](#) or [ES](#).

You can learn more about the process for developing the Declaration in a recent blog, available in [EN](#) and [ES](#). A webinar titled **WASH and Open Government: A Pathway to Achieving the SDGs by 2030** was held during the Open Gov Week in May 2021 to launch the Declaration. You can see the recording here ([EN](#)) and ([ES](#)).

For more information, please contact [Elizabeth.Moses@wri.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Moses@wri.org)

## BLOGS AND OTHER RESOURCES

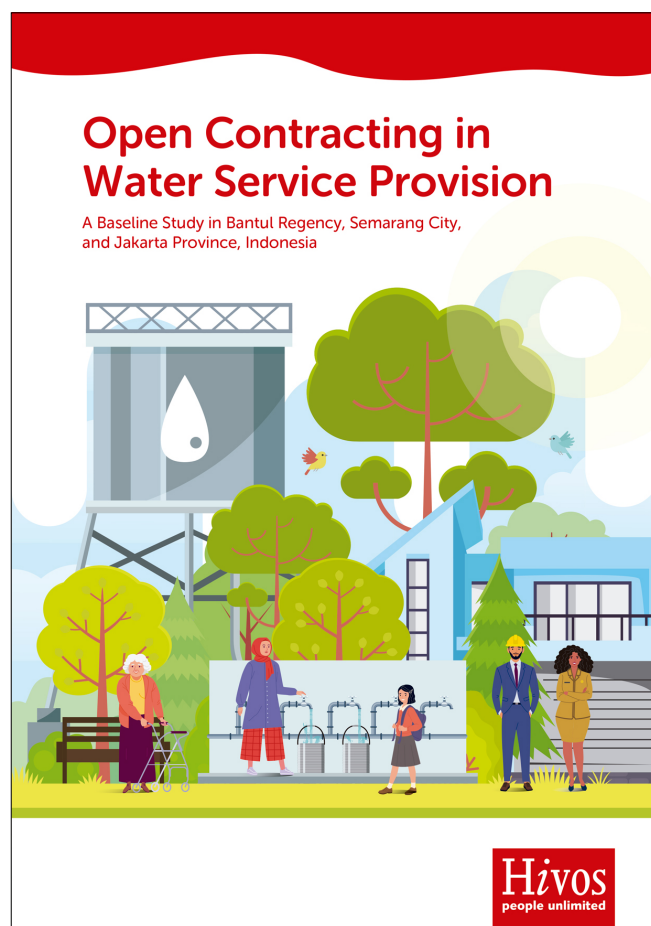
### Open Contracting in the Water Services Sector, a Preliminary Study in Bantul Regency, Semarang City, and DKI Jakarta Province

In Indonesia, the citizens' rights to potable and clean water are warranted by the 1945 Constitution. It stipulates that the State has the obligation to manage resources, including water, and to use them for the greatest benefit of the people. The Government of Indonesia has also ratified the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights that endorsed the UN's Resolution on the Right to Water. Moreover, the Government is responsible to always respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of its citizens to water.

To that end, the Government of Indonesia has appointed a regional government-owned water enterprise Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum (PDAM) to distribute clean and potable water to citizens throughout the archipelago. However, only 57 per cent out of the total 391 existing PDAMs are considered healthy companies. The rest are ailing, a situation that cannot be separated from the poor governance in the water sector.

Hivos-Open Contracting Program collaborated with the Center for Regulation, Policy and Governance (CRPG), IDEA Yogyakarta, PATTIRO Semarang, and AMRTA Institute to conduct a scoping study on the water sector in three regions – the DKI Jakarta Province, Semarang City in Central Java Province, and Bantul Regency in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. In the Semarang and Bantul case studies, stakeholders express their strong interest in participating in utilities business and investment plans in order to ensure that utilities expand or maintain networks in their neighborhoods. Utilities suppliers also complain about the lack of transparency in the current water utilities procurement system and thus support the idea of Open Contracting.

The study has been valuable in identifying the most effective measures so that the program could contribute to addressing the issues. In this study, we identified relevant actors, their interest in open contracting initiative, actors' capacity,



as well as challenges and barriers in incorporating open contracting in water governance.

Here is the [link](#) to learn more about the work.

If you are interested in more OGP CoP resources including previous newsletters and blogs, you can find them [here](#).

For more information on the OGP CoP, visit us [here](#)