



Learning to open governance - Strategy summary

Governance matters. The institutions or rules of the game that structure the relationship between citizens and the state make a difference to how societies function and to their ability to effectively address challenges such as corruption, poor service delivery, environmental degradation and persistent poverty. The rules of the game shape how priorities are set, how resources are used, how things get done and how societies evolve.

Effective governance does not emerge through the cookie-cutter application of “Good Governance” principles across diverse contexts. Politics and context matter. Effective governance emerges - or doesn't - as the result of ongoing processes of engagement between citizens and states. Our strategy is to increase the likelihood of that engagement leading to more effective governance by supporting processes of country-level learning that empower the champions of governance reform, strengthen their relationships, build their political capital and enable them to drive progress towards more open and effective governance.

We will support processes of country-level learning by providing richer evidence about policies and their effectiveness, and by helping to facilitate processes of structured reflection that - by bringing together government and civil society stakeholders to review evidence, to conduct joint analysis of the political landscape, and to collectively strategize about how to move things forward - enable country-level actors to better address the challenges that they face. By supporting processes of adaptive, exploratory, learning that focus on issues around open governance, we will help to strengthen and expand the virtuous circles, or open learning loops, that can lead to more effective governance.

We will develop and deploy an approach to supporting country-level learning which combines and integrates three strands of work:

- **Cross-country comparative research** will generate evidence about the policies that countries have in place to address governance-related challenges and how they are playing out in practice. This strand of work will build on our existing indicator-based research, but evolve to better meet the needs of country-level learning.
- **In-country engagement** will focus on facilitating joint learning and political analysis that informs collective action. We will do this by strengthening the cycle of learning: providing data, evidence and stories to inform structured reflection; facilitating analysis of the feasibility of various policy options; and, helping to put in place the monitoring systems that are needed to inform future reflection and action.
- **Advocacy** will help to ensure that the findings from our comparative research and in-country engagement feed into the international policy processes that - by setting norms and influencing practice - shape the space for learning and the prospects for open governance at country level.

We will use this integrated approach to make connections amongst key open governance issues. These will include fiscal governance - from aid and extractives, to budgets, contracts, and illicit financial flows, with open data and citizen engagement as common threads - and money in politics, an issue that has received insufficient attention but which helps to explain why governance, including fiscal governance, is often dysfunctional. By making connections amongst key open governance issues in our work, providing evidence and analysis about how various issues are interrelated, and the challenges and opportunities that this creates, we will help country-level actors to make the connections more clearly in theirs.

Our niche in the open governance ecosystem will be to support adaptive learning at country-level, bringing cross-country data, stories and evidence to bear, and facilitating processes of structured reflection and political analysis about how progress might be made towards more open - and ultimately more effective - governance. By occupying this niche, making connections across issues, and collaborating with partners in ways that complement their issue-based expertise, we will strengthen the open governance ecosystem as a whole and add value to an increasingly crowded space.

Global Integrity's experience in assessing systems of governance, our global network of researchers, our high-quality research processes and the rich data that they generate, our journalistic origins, our focus on policy in practice as well as on paper, our expertise and experience on money in politics and fiscal governance, our global perspective, our access to international policy processes, our position at the center of the open governance community in Washington D.C. and beyond, and our proven willingness to innovate, experiment and learn, make us uniquely well-placed to drive this agenda forward.

Our strategy is ambitious and exploratory. We will move forward incrementally, identifying opportunities to develop our current projects and to contribute to ongoing efforts by other initiatives and organizations. This might include, for instance: adding a country-engagement element to our work on money in politics; extending our work on mapping and strengthening the landscape of fiscal governance in Mexico; working to support the development and implementation of National Action Plans by members of the Open Government Partnership; and, supporting the learning function of the Effective Institutions Platform, including in relation to fiscal governance.

Our strategy builds on our core strengths in research and evidence, but points the organization in an exciting new direction. Now, we are known for our data. In five years' time, we will be known for two things. First, for our ability to use data, evidence and stories to support processes of country-level learning that drive progress towards more open and effective governance. Second, for the value we add to the work of others through our leadership on adaptive learning and open governance, and the connections we make amongst issues. As we move forward, ambitiously, but incrementally, we will practice what we preach, being transparent, participatory, accountable and open in everything we do, and learning as we go.

Full version [here](#) - 7th July 2015