

**Inside the black box: Making public-sector algorithms accountable to citizens
and communities**
Side-Event RightsCon 2021
Roundtable discussion
Wednesday June 9, 6:00 am ET/ 10:00 am GMT/ 10:00 pm Wellington

Zoom link: <https://opengovpartnership-org.zoom.us/j/98168898593>

Dial by your location - Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abJoMFr55U>

Meeting ID: 98168898593

Background

Governments are increasingly using algorithms to help make decisions that have a significant impact on citizens' everyday lives. However, when technological responses are not accompanied by a real involvement of the affected communities in their design and use, they could result in more harm than good. The use of algorithms in public policy can pose a serious problem to democratic processes when they are poorly designed, opaque and lead to biased or unintended policy decisions. To achieve robust digital tools it is fundamental to strengthen the human systems around them, by incorporating an open government approach that considers transparency, participation, inclusion and accountability as key pillars in their design and implementation.

Within the Open Government Partnership (OGP), countries like Canada, France, the Netherlands and New Zealand have made commitments in their OGP action plans to advance a set of issues related to the transparency and accountability of government algorithmic decision-making. Since 2020, OGP has initiated an informal network on open algorithms, convening implementation agencies from these countries, along with expert partners, to promote cross-country learning on policy questions and challenges related to the design and implementation of public sector algorithms. In the past couple of meetings, the group has [discussed](#) issues related to intergovernmental coordination and awareness-raising among public officials, algorithmic transparency and accountability and sectoral approaches to the use of algorithms in government.

Meeting description

Similar to meetings of the [OGP informal network on open algorithms](#), this 90-minute invite-only roundtable will bring together implementers of reforms related to algorithmic accountability from OGP national and local members, with civil society and other partners to discuss the issue of civil society and community engagement in algorithmic accountability policy. Building on the partnership between the AI Now Institute, Ada Lovelace Institute, and the Open Government Partnership (OGP), on the first global study evaluating the initial wave of algorithmic accountability policy, this session will discuss the preliminary findings of this report and provide an opportunity to share country experiences, including from government implementing agencies that have expressed interest in advancing this agenda.



Objectives

- Facilitate peer learning across jurisdictions working to advance accountability of public sector use of algorithms.
- Catalyze country action on algorithmic accountability, including through OGP Action Plans.
- Forge stronger partnerships of governments and civil society for collaboration on public sector algorithmic accountability.

Invited Participants

- Governments of the OGP Informal Network on Open Algorithms: Canada, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.
- Governments that have expressed interest in advancing this policy area: Chile, Estonia, Finland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay.
- Local Governments of Mexico City, Ontario, Amsterdam, Los Angeles.
- Civil society partners including AI Now, Ada Lovelace Institute, Access Now, Algorithms Watch, Center for Internet and Society, Latin American Open Data Initiative (ILDA), Transparency International New Zealand and other partners doing relevant work in or with the above jurisdictions.

