

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Open Government Partnership Thematic Leadership Subcommittee Working Level Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 19 September 2017**  
**New York City**

**Participants**

Zuzana Wienk (Fair Play Alliance)	Sandra Pernar (Croatia)
Thomas Townsend (U.K.)	Mark Robinson (WRI)
Hazel Hobbs (U.K.)	Giorgi Kldiashvili (IDFI)
Laure Lucchesi (France)	Jongsoo Yoon (S. Korea)
Mathilde Bras (France)	Yujin Lee (S. Korea)
Amelie Banzet (France)	Wonjae Park (S. Korea)
Aidan Eyakuze (Twaweza)	Abhinav Bahl (OGP Support Unit)
Pablo Villareal (Mexico)	Tonu Basu (OGP Support Unit)
Alejandra Rascón (Mexico)	Mohammad Ali Haider (OGP Support Unit)

**1. Introduction to the New Thematic Leadership Subcommittee (TLS)**

TLS co-chairs convened the first meeting of the new subcommittee and welcomed new members.

The co-chairs reminded the subcommittee of the June 2017 Steering Committee meeting at which the former Peer Learning and Support subcommittee (PLS) and the Support Unit (SU) recommended changes to OGP's current peer learning and exchange framework. This was the result of consultations with key actors in the Partnership and a review of OGP's peer learning tools with the goal of developing an improved approach that aligns with strategic refresh objectives.

- The PLS resolved to replace itself with a subcommittee with a strategic and political mandate (TLS) to advance thematic leadership across core open government areas outlined in the Paris Declaration.
- The strategic and political work of the TLS will be complemented by greater capacity within the SU and a new model for peer exchange, which consists of replacing the working groups with strategic thematic partnerships driven by priorities emerging within OGP countries.

Members resolved to address the shortcomings of the previous framework including a loose operating model for the PLS with a lack of clear deliverables and deadlines and inconsistency in working group performance. The new framework should use positive incentives to encourage a race to the top through greater coordination and oversight by the SU, funding to partners awarded on a competitive basis, and showcasing and drawing on expertise of governments and civil society across the Partnership.

**2. TLS Mandate and Opportunities**

Mandate

TLS co-chairs walked members through the three distinct components of the subcommittee's mandate to advance political leadership and ambition in the partnership:

- a. *Raise ambition of reforms in-country*: TLS should lead by example and strive to develop and implement ambitious reforms in SC countries.

- b. *Showcase and inspire transformative reforms through cross-country peer exchange:* TLS members have expertise or excel in specific thematic areas and can help advance open government norms by showcasing their own reforms as well as those of non-SC actors exhibiting thematic leadership. TLS should work with the SU to create opportunities to train, mentor, provide technical and peer learning support to government and civil society to advance core thematic priorities. E.g. Beneficial Ownership workshop in Bratislava co-hosted by SC member Zuzana Weink's organization Fairplay Alliance along with the Government of Slovakia, and OGP Support Unit. Lastly, TLS members should help the Support Unit develop mechanisms to incentivize thematic advancement and learning in countries across the partnership.
- c. *Lighthouse and advocacy:* Thought leadership to advance the global open government agenda by spotting and scaling frontier issues for open government reform within the Partnership and creating momentum for new ideas.

Members highlighted the opportunity created by the new subcommittee to elevate to the Steering Committee discussions focused on the content of action plans and not just the process.

**Decision:** There was a shared consensus on the TLS mandate, sun setting the working groups, and the direction of travel for the new model for strategic thematic partnerships.

#### Paris Declaration

The subcommittee also agreed that the Paris Declaration provides a framework for setting thematic priorities across the Partnership. Recognizing the Paris Declaration did not have a global coordination mechanism, members agreed that the TLS and Support Unit can play the coordinating role in setting priorities and following up with countries and organizations committed to the collective actions across the declaration. To further narrow focus of where the subcommittee can provide the biggest push, additional filters such as co-chair priorities or Support Unit priorities will be taken into consideration. Potential themes for consideration discussed include social innovation, service delivery, anti-corruption, legislative openness, climate change, and subnationals.

#### Events & Fora

Members also stressed the need to leverage global and regional events to strategically push for greater ambition and learning across thematic reforms. Events could encompass both OGP and non-OGP events including the 2018 OGP Summit in Georgia, the Argentinian G20 presidency, and the EITI conference co-hosted by the Government of Indonesia in October 2017. Additional potential fora to promote OGP include Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Community of Democracies, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Support Unit will work with the TLS co-chairs to identify three key milestones over the course of the year that the TLS can drive the Steering Committee and other OGP countries to use as action-forcing moments.

### **3. Operationalizing TLS and strategic thematic partnerships**

#### TLS

TLS agreed that the operational and tactical aspects of the subcommittee should be devolved to the Support Unit, which is increasing its capacity to scale up peer learning activities and tools through its menu of services. The TLS will focus on things that the Support Unit cannot do such as opening political doors in peer countries, leveraging member diplomatic networks and social capital in other fora, and providing mentorship and technical assistance to peer governments and civil society in OGP countries.

The discussion was centered around the need to develop a clear sense of direction on where to go next, when to meet, specific actions, etc. TLS members agreed there should be regular exchanges to touch base and track progress.

There was consensus around working towards a specific challenge instead of an open ended agenda. TLS co-chairs brought up the example of the recently held Beneficial Ownership workshop in Bratislava as a successful example of peer exchange. The workshop was just the start of a longer term multi-stakeholder cooperation, bringing in actors from various sectors such as auditors and journalists.

There was also discussion of using existing government exchange programs and co-brand them as OGP. One idea cited were identifying existing initiatives such as Visitor/Fellowship programs hosted by countries and adapting them to advance OGP's thematic priorities. TLS members were asked to reflect and explore on what is already in place in member countries that can leveraged.

The TLS also discussed how incentives for participation, beyond funding, need to be considered and popularized, particularly to involve officials from countries outside the Steering Committee. This is especially important in order to incentivize government participation since active participation in peer learning and exchange activities is not always domestically rewarded or recognized, which makes it difficult to justify further participation in such activities. For these officials to get the support of their respective departments, incentives that help raise the profile of their work and provide recognition at international fora would help secure political buy-in.

#### Strategic Thematic Partnerships

The OGP working groups will be sunset by 2018 and replaced by strategic and flexible partnerships (i.e. MOUs) with expert organizations across thematic priority areas. These thematic partnerships will provide greater responsiveness to emerging country priorities. The new model will rely on a transparent and competitive process to leverage resources, including from the OGP Trust Fund, should some partners need funding.

**Decision:** The decision to sunset the working groups was agreed by consensus.

The operational model outlining how the partnerships will operate and be funded will be developed by the Support Unit in consultation with TLS, working groups co-anchors, and other stakeholders in a participatory and transparent manner. In the interim, to ensure continuity of services, the Support Unit will use \$150,000 of funding allocated for the working groups to support some partners that may require funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.