

Open Government Partnership
DRAFT Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
London, United Kingdom
October 29, 2013

Tuesday, October 29: Working-Level Steering Committee Meeting

Lunch: Informal IRM discussion among Steering Committee members

Business Meeting: Welcome

The Executive Director of the OGP Support Unit welcomed the delegates and began the meeting by reviewing the agenda and providing a brief update on progress since the July meeting, including:

- Development and launch of OGP's new website
- Launch of 5 new OGP working groups, 4 of which have had webinars with broad participation
- Extensive preparations for the OGP Summit (working closely with the UK team)
- IRM released first 8 draft progress reports; hired and trained researchers for 36 Cohort 2 countries.

Summit Agenda and Decisions

The Government of the United Kingdom, as the lead chair and host of the London Summit, presented a draft statement on Summit outcomes for approval by the SC. Members of the SC had provided comments on a previous draft, so discussion was limited to identifying any concerns. The SC agreed that participants would send any objections by email within 24 hours, and if there were any major objections the statement would just be released by the OGP co-chairs. *[In the end the statement was approved, after a final round of edits submitted by SC members, and released on 31 October on behalf of the OGP Steering Committee.]*

The UK next provided an overview of the Summit agenda and key opportunities for Steering Committee members (particularly government Ministers) to engage, including announcing their flagship commitments at regional press conferences. The UK also updated the SC on senior government officials (Heads of State and Deputy Heads of State) confirmed to attend the Summit.

Finally, the SU Executive Director reviewed the objectives and format for the Friday morning sessions at the Summit on the new National Action Plans and first draft IRM progress reports of the founding 8 countries. She encouraged participating SC members to come prepared to discuss the questions circulated the previous week. Finally, the SU thanked South Africa, Norway, Mexico and the Philippines for agreeing to coordinate the four regional caucus meetings and suggested that facilitators remind participants that there will be elections next year to bring new countries onto the OGP Steering Committee.

OGP Summit: Media Outreach and Communications

The Support Unit Deputy Director, Joe Powell, presented a summary of media outreach and communications work underway for the Summit, including a template press release on the Summit that had been shared with all OGP participating countries. He also updated the SC on 3 press releases to be published in the days to come: 1) Announcement of multilateral partnerships (30 Oct); 2) General Summit press release (31 October) and 3) Announcement of Open Government Awards prize competition (1 November). Joe Powell also thanked the Omidyar Network for their generous support of some of the global media outreach being led by Hanover Communications, and for supporting the Summit live streaming on the OGP website and YouTube channel.

Proposed Task Force on Civic Space

The SU Executive Director briefly introduced a proposal from several SC members to set up a short-term, internal OGP task force on the issue of safeguarding civic space. Civil society Steering Committee member Alejandro Gonzalez outlined the rationale for such a task force, noting that a number of SC members had been discussing this issue since early 2013. He emphasized that the task force should have a limited mandate, focused on making concrete recommendations to the full SC in March 2014. Several participants commented that the September 23rd event organized by the U.S. government and led by President Obama had provided critical momentum for progress on this issue.

Although most SC members agreed that OGP should find ways to address the issue of safeguarding civic space in OGP countries, there were differing opinions on the best way to go about it. Some members felt that the SC should work within existing Steering Committee structures rather than setting up a special task force to address this issue. Others felt they had not had sufficient time to consider the proposal in advance of the meeting.

During the discussion, several members stressed the urgency of the issue and noted that an ad hoc task force was a useful way to develop a concrete set of recommendations for consideration by the entire Steering Committee. Others noted that the issue required a response, given threats to civic space in some OGP countries that could undermine the credibility of OGP and viability of its partnership model.

The SC could not reach agreement on the task force, and discussion closed without a resolution. The civil society members of the SC agreed to continue the discussion on the issue and consider alternative ways of addressing the shared concern.

The Open Government Awards

The SU Executive Director reminded the group of the Steering Committee's agreement in July to design an OGP prize competition to be launched at the London Summit. She then introduced Jaison Morgan of The Common Pool, the firm that is advising OGP on the design of the Open Government Awards.

Jaison's brief presentation outlined progress to date and the timeline moving forward to launch the competition in early 2014. He noted that the most effective and reputable prize competitions are open and transparent, and that this is clearly an imperative for any competition run by the Open Government Partnership. He described the proposed approach to ensuring a rigorous selection process and using an online application portal to promote peer learning across the Partnership. Jaison also explained the rationale for the recommended focus on the theme of 'citizen engagement' in 2014.

Looking Ahead to 2014 – Brief Updates

2014 Calendar: The Government of Indonesia, as incoming lead chair, presented a draft calendar for OGP Steering Committee meetings in 2014. The first set of events will be in mid-March in Indonesia and will include a ministerial SC meeting, an Asia regional meeting, and an “Open Up Asia” event being organized by Omidyar Network. In mid-June, it is likely that Mexico, as OGP co-chair, will host a working-level SC meeting in conjunction with a possible regional meeting for Latin America (dates TBC). Indonesia reminded SC members that OGP will shift to a biannual (vs. annual) global OGP Summit, partly due to the fact that Indonesia has both legislative and presidential elections in 2014. Instead of a global Summit in 2014, OGP hopes to convene a second ministerial SC meeting and a head of state-level OGP event on the margins of UNGA next September in New York.

OGP Funding Model and Organizational Status: The SU Executive Director briefly summarized the July SC discussion that tasked the Support Unit with considering two related questions: 1) Should OGP adopt a funding model that would require all participating countries to contribute annual dues? 2) Should OGP seek independent legal status or another way of facilitating contributions from governments? The Executive Director then introduced Purnima Chawla and Ravi Singh of the Center for Non-Profit Strategies, who will be working with the Support Unit to analyze various options and present a set of concrete recommendations for discussion by the Steering Committee in March. Several members emphasized the importance of moving quickly to resolve these issues.

Support Unit Budget and Staffing: The SU Executive Director updated SC members on 2013 revenues and expenditures, including the following contributions received since July: dues from Brazil – for 2013 and 2014 – and Tanzania – for 2013 – and a grant from the Ford Foundation. She reported that the Support Unit is on target to secure the necessary revenues to fund the 2013 budget, provided the two remaining government payments come through. Spending is also on target, with approximately 60% of the projected budget spent as of mid-October, but many Summit-related invoices due to be paid in November. Following the Summit, the SU and IRM will work together to prepare a budget for 2014. After seeking GL input on the budget, the SU will share the 2014 budget with the full SC [by email] before the end of the year.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism

The IRM Program Manager, Joseph Foti and two IEP members, Rosemary McGee and Jonathan Fox, joined the Steering Committee meeting for the final session.

IRM Program Manager’s Report

- Progress Reports: The IRM team completed all 8 Cohort 1 draft reports while hiring and training 38 new researchers for Cohort 2. The IRM will be working on at least 35 new reports over the coming 3 months, due January 31st for public comment. This will be challenging due to the small size of the IRM staff, as well as the fact that many self-assessment reports from Cohort 2 countries are coming in late.

- International Experts Panel: The IEP Technical Experts have been working well together; at least two different members reviewed each of the first 8 reports. The members of the IEP expressed concern about the ability of the 5 members to review all 35 reports for cohort 2 countries in the next few months.
- IRM Senior Advisors: A short-list of recommended candidates has been shared with the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee for comment. The IEP plans to move to a decision on at least one new Senior Advisor in the first half of November.
- IRM Reflection Piece: The IRM and IEP plan to produce a draft for discussion in March to focus on (1) cross-cutting lessons from the IRM reports in 43 countries; (2) recommendations to strengthen OGP's impact in participating countries; and (3) recommended changes to IRM processes and guiding principles. The IRM will also seek to formalize its processes and governance in an 'IRM Charter,' which would expand on the current IRM "Concept Note" and "Guiding Principles." The IEP and IRM will aim to present a draft of this document to the Steering Committee in June or July of 2014 (exact timeline TBC).

The OGP co-chairs then summarized comments from the earlier IRM lunch discussion, including:

- Insufficient time for some governments to review reports during the allotted 10-day period;
- Late timing of the IRM reports relative to informing the development of the new action plan;
- Lack of clarity and formality in some communications from the IRM, including advance notice of the process and timeline for commenting;
- Whether the research method was appropriate; several countries had concerns about factual inaccuracies in their reports.

One of the biggest challenges in the IRM process for the founding 8 countries related to the pre-publication government comment period. In response to this concern, IEP member Rosie McGee presented the updated language that the IRM sent to Cohort 2 countries to clarify the timeline and expectations for the government comment period:

"For a period of three weeks (15 working days), governments will be given an opportunity to identify possible factual errors in their country report. Note that you are not required to provide comments and a further opportunity for formal and informal comments will be provided when the report is available for public review. Please alert the IRM if you wish to waive this optional comment period. In cases where comments merit additional verification, the IRM researcher and the IRM staff may need to contact you for additional information. This is best done through informal processes. In order to be fair to all participating governments, to meet IRM deadlines, and to insure that the IRM is a useful input to your next action plan, extensions will not be granted for this comment period."

Steering Committee members shared the following reactions:

- The IRM should consider adopting more formality in its communications moving forward.
- More work should be done to clarify the "rules of procedure," including clarifying the distinction between pre-public and post-public periods for comment on IRM draft progress reports, and which types of comments should be included in each.
- There was debate about whether civil society partners in each country should also have the opportunity to comment during the pre-public comment period, which is currently restricted to government review. One civil society member of the SC suggested that at the very least civil society should know when the draft is to be reviewed by government, and that government should actually be encouraged to share the draft with partner civil society organizations.

- Some governments wanted to extend the government comment period to 20 working days to allow for broader review by more government stakeholders.

At the request of Steering Committee members, the IRM team offered to work quickly to clarify and provide a calendar on the IRM process on the OGP website and share with all Cohort 2 countries.

Participant List
October 29, 2013 - OGP Steering Committee Meeting

Location:

Churchill Room
HM Revenue and Customs
100 Parliament Street, London SW1A 2BQ

Steering Committee

Governments

Brazil

Roberta Solis Ribiero
Otavio Castro Neves

Office of the Comptroller General (CGU)
Office of the Comptroller General (CGU)

Indonesia

Tara Hidayat
Jourdan Hussein
Satrio Bramono

President's Delivery Unit (UKP4)
President's Delivery Unit (UKP4)
Indonesian Embassy in the UK

Mexico

Undersec. Julian Alfonso Olivas
Juan Pablo Guerrero
Ania Calderon
Alonso Cerdán

Ministry of Public Administration
Federal Access to Information Institute
President's Office
Ministry of Public Administration

Norway

Terje Dyrstad

Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs

Philippines

Undersec. Richard Moya
Carmencita Mahinay
Rolando Toledo
Patrick Lim

Department of Budget and Management
Department of Budget and Management
Department of Budget and Management
Department of Budget and Management

South Africa

Unathi Bongco
Qinsile Delwa

Department of Public Service and Administration
Department of Public Service and Administration

Tanzania Charles Mmbando	Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs
United Kingdom Paul Maltby Peter Lawrence Ollie Buckley Kitty von Bertele	Cabinet Office Cabinet Office Cabinet Office Cabinet Office
United States Dara Duncan Heather Flynn Sarah Mendelson	Department of State Department of State US Agency for International Development
<i>Civil Society</i>	
Maryati Abdullah	Publish What You Pay (Indonesia)
Veronica Cretu	CMB Training Center
Nikhil Dey	MKSS
Alejandro Gonzalez	GESOC
Suneeta Kaimal	Revenue Watch Institute
Warren Krafchik	International Budget Partnership
Iara Pietricovsky	INESC
Rakesh Rajani	Twaweza
Martin Tisne	Transparency and Accountability Initiative (Omidyar Network)
Open Government Partnership	
<i>Support Unit</i>	
Linda Frey Joe Powell Jack Mahoney	Executive Director Deputy Director Program Associate
<i>Independent Reporting Mechanism</i>	
Joseph Foti Lesly Baesens Preston Whitt	Program Manager Program Associate Research Assistant

International Expert Panel

Jonathan Fox

Member, IEP

Rosemary McGee

Member, IEP

Independent Civil Society Coordinator

Paul Maassen

Independent CSC