

Open Government Partnership

Thematic Leadership Monthly Call Summary

17 September 2020 | 08:00 - 9:30 EDT

Attendees:

- Government of Canada: Melanie Robert, Benoit Frenette, Sarah Berube and Darine Benkalha
- Government of Germany: Sebastian Haselbeck
- Government of South Africa: Patrick Sohkela
- Zuzana Wienk, White Crow
- OGP Support Unit

Special Guests:

- Eric Bertram, Laura Bradbury, Mariana Brandao, Myriam Pineault-Latreille and Wendy Clarke, Global Affairs Canada, Chair of the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society, Communities of Democracy
- Government of Argentina: Carolina Cornejo
- Government of South Korea: Yujin Lee
- Maria Baron, Directorio Legislativo
- Lysa John, CIVICUS
- Elisa Peter, Publish What You Pay

Apologies:

- Government of Indonesia
- Government of Romania
- Helen Darbshire, Access Info Europe
- Giorgi Kldiashvili, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
- Tur-Od Lkhagvajav, Asia Democracy Network

Call Summary

I. Thematic discussion: civic space

The Government of Korea and Maria Baron provided an overview of their Co-Chair priorities, particularly the focus on encouraging civic space and participation as a key priority for their co-chair year, and promoting open government values and to encourage more and more ambitious OGP commitments in this area. Some measures shared to support this include strengthening ties with stakeholders that are no longer engaged, energizing new stakeholders to champion OGP's work, and gathering more high-level leadership to prioritize this through OGP. One of the things this discussion focused on is what other civic space efforts the incoming Co-Chairs could link to and build synergies with.

OGP and Communities of Democracy (CoD) share many synergies in terms of vision and mission, as well as matrixed membership between the two initiatives. As a

concrete example of this related to civic space, representatives from Global Affairs Canada, Chair of the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society at the Communities of Democracy presented an overview of their work, which includes working with a number of multistakeholder fora with an integration of member states and civil society organizations focusing on civic space. The working group has become more focused on restrictions on civic participation due to COVID-19 responses, and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with OGP and Steering Committee members to respond to civic space issues on a global scale by facilitating dialogues between stakeholders.

Additionally on OGP and CoD synergies, at the country level OGP and CoD can collaborate by leveraging OGP action plans to integrate CoD recommendations to help increase focus on civic space and democracy issues across mutual member countries. At the global level, OGP and CoD can identify spaces in international fora to amplify each other's efforts, advocate for ambitious civic space reforms in mutual member countries, and engage in peer exchange. More discussion on collaboration opportunities between the two organizations can be found in the attached brief.

II. Leaders Network engagement model (45 minutes)

The Government of Argentina joined this portion of the meeting to provide an overview of the Leaders Network, an initiative advanced as part of the Government of Argentina-Robin Hodess Co-Chair priorities. The Support Unit also provided an overview of the proposed engagement model for the Leaders Network participants, which includes engagement with the Steering Committee and TLS, presentations on the status of their area of work, peer exchange events and support to the Partnership on the Leader's reform topic (see attached note). The Support Unit was encouraged to approach the Leaders as an integrated aid to the OGP mission rather than an independent mechanism.

III. AOB

The co-chairs thanked the Government of South Africa for their engagement and leadership on the Steering Committee as they rotate out of the Steering Committee on October 1.

