

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2020 | 08:00 am - 09:00 am | Virtual

Members Present

Mukelani Dimba, Board Chair
Laura Gorrie, Secretary/Treasurer
Maria Baron, Member
Stefano Pizzicannella, Member
Sanjay Pradhan, CEO (ex officio)

Staff Present

Joe Powell, Deputy CEO
Kate Lasso, CFOO
Judith McCormack, Director of Finance
Enrico Campos, Operations Associate

Apologies

Aidan Eyakuze, Member

1. Opening Remarks and Agenda Overview

Mukelani opened the meeting at 8:06 am (Eastern Standard Time) with a brief overview of the agenda and noted the absence of Aidan Eyakuze for this meeting. Mukelani then opened the floor for any changes to the agenda, there were none.

2. Update on OGP Secretariat Financial Position

Mukelani then invited Sanjay who provided the following updates to the Board on the recent and unexpected cuts in donor funding for 2020 and the steps taken by the OGP Secretariat to mitigate potential negative impacts:

- A. DFID:** Due to the United Kingdom's declining GNI on account of COVID-19, DFID (which is merging with FCO) will be cutting its OGP funding in the current UK fiscal year 2020-2021 by approximately 50%. This represents an ~\$1.5M reduction in revenue. The next immediate step for the OGP Secretariat will be to draft an options memo, with proposals and arguments about how to allocate the 50% reduction. DFID has indicated that it will look to identify discretionary funds that it might be able to tap into for OGP, although expectations for this should be low.
- B. OSF:** OSF has informed the OGP Secretariat that its annual funding grant of \$500,000 for core support to OGP will no longer have a home within its Economic Justice Program beginning in 2022. To address medium-term risk, the OGP Secretariat is currently working to find a new departmental home within OSF to lead on OGP funding.
- C. IDRC:** IDRC has informed the OGP Secretariat that it will not be disbursing its grant which was initially budgeted for at \$200,000 USD per year for 2020 and 2021. The OGP Secretariat is currently in discussions with IDRC in order to recover at least \$100,000 USD of the original grant.
- D. Risk Mitigation Actions:** The following steps have been taken by the OGP Secretariat to mitigate the potential negative impacts posed by the reduced donor funding:

Short Term Actions

- a. Three currently advertised job vacancies have been filled internally in order to reduce pressure on budget and staffing. The Eastern Partnership job vacancies will continue to remain advertised, however, options are being explored to see if these positions can be filled internally.
- b. Effective September 1, 2020 OGP is reducing its number of desks at its Washington D.C. office (Open Gov Hub) from 36 to 10. This represents a monthly reduction of ~\$18,000 USD in expenditures. Nine of these desks will be available for any staff member who wishes to come in to work at the Hub rather than being assigned to an individual; the tenth desk is an in-kind swap with NRGi for office space in their London office..
- c. The difficult decision has been made to postpone much of the Learning & Innovation unit's planned external learning support outside the MDTF until later next year and, thus, eliminating one Program Officer position.

Medium - Term Actions

- a. OGP Secretariat will continue to explore revenue sources, including approaching foundations and donors to review the impact of cuts on the vital open government agenda. For example, OGP is in the process of finalizing a new USAID reward to OGP and has begun discussions on a strategic partnership between USAID and OGP.
- b. Later in the Fall, OGP Secretariat will comprehensively review 2021-22 resource situation and expenditures in the context of the 2021 work plan and budget process.
- c. As CEO, Sanjay has offered to take a voluntary salary cut in response to these developments. The senior leadership team (SLT) indicated a preference to consider this as a collective and in combination with other cost saving measures if the need arises in the context of the 2021 budget. During the Board discussion on this point Mukelani indicated that the implications on staff morale should also be kept in mind.
- d. It is likely that the OGP Secretariat will need to dip into its operational reserves in 2021 to help fund its work, including the next Global Summit currently scheduled for December 2021.

Long-Term Actions

- a. As part of OGP @ 10, OGP Secretariat is aiming to host a donor meeting at the 2021 Global Summit with the objective of renewal pledges from donors to help spearhead the new phase of OGP.
- b. Identification of new donors (i.e. Danida) to cultivate.

Mukelani then invited Board members to give their input/comments into the updates and actions taken to mitigate the reduced donor revenues. The Board highlighted the following:

1. The Board recognized the thoughtful, transparent and timely organizational measures taken to address the uncertainty ahead and expressed confidence in management ably and proactively handling a challenging situation. The Board requested that the OGP Secretariat evaluate and provide preliminary estimates on the amount of reserves that will need to be withdrawn for the 2021 budget.



2. The Board encouraged the OGP Secretariat to further think about actions that could be taken to increase the self-sustainability of OGP in order to reduce the reliance on donor funding. Some organizational areas suggested where this could be significant cost-saving measures include: PEO fees; and the current IRM contracting model.

3. Next Virtual Board Meeting and Closing

The next Board meeting will be scheduled either in late September or early October. The OGP Secretariat will solicit availability from Board members and schedule this meeting.

With no other business at hand, Laura motioned to close the meeting, which was seconded by Maria. The Board meeting closed at 8:58 AM (Eastern Standard Time).

