OGP PEER LEARNING AND SUPPORT SUBCOMMITTEE
Country Support and Peer Learning Strategy Proposal

Draft as of April 15th, 2013

Overview

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) will succeed to the extent that participating countries (both governments and civil society) succeed in developing and implementing meaningful open government reforms. To support countries in achieving their OGP goals, there is general consensus that the Support Unit should be doing more to activate peer learning across the Partnership. However, to date there have been limited human and financial resources available to achieve this goal.

The Articles of Governance established an OGP Networking Mechanism to "help participating governments identify and connect with the networks, expertise, resources and technology they need to develop and implement their OGP commitments." Reflecting on the past 12 months of implementation, we are not certain that this function should be outsourced, and we recognize as well that there are many other kinds of support, going well beyond 'referrals,' that OGP countries want and need.

Given that the OGP Support Unit is lean by design, we must think creatively about how to support country-level success through a package of focused and achievable interventions. We will need to continue to work with outside partners to deliver targeted technical support, but the Support Unit should increasingly take responsibility for brokering and coordinating various efforts to assist OGP participating countries.

This concept note proposes a revised strategy for supporting country-level success through a combination of customized country support, expanded opportunities for peer exchange, and better documentation of success stories and lessons learned. In making these recommendations, we are drawing on lessons learned by the Networking Mechanism and Support Unit over the course of the past year. The Peer Learning and Support subcommittee has endorsed this proposal and agrees that the subcommittee should play a more active role in overseeing the implementation of the proposed strategy over the course of the next two years.

What kind of support is needed?

There are three broad categories of support that OGP should seek to provide:

1. <u>Direct Country Support</u>: Many countries would benefit from targeted support to help them draft and implement truly innovative OGP action plans. Activities in this category include:

a. *Real-time tracking (ongoing)*: Tracking progress of action plans and implementation across OGP countries to identify assistance needs and inform the other three work streams outlined below.

b. *Referrals (one-time, light touch)*: Act as a quick agent of introduction between OGP governments and peer governments, non-governmental groups, and private companies with expertise in implementing open government reforms.

c. *Coordinating multilateral support (ongoing broker role)*: Coordinating with multilaterals and OGP governments to facilitate the delivery of customized technical assistance to help specific countries with the drafting or implementation of their OGP action plans.

d. (TBD) *Technical assistance 'missions' (short-term but resource-intensive)*: Creating OGP "SWAT" teams consisting of open government technical experts to directly support priority OGP countries that have requested technical assistance.

2. Peer Exchange: Countries have expressed a strong interest in learning more about what other countries are doing as part of their OGP action plans. Activities in this category include:

a. *Regional/ Global Workshops*: Organizing regional and thematic face-to-face networking events to bring countries together to share experiences and lessons learned. [In 2013 this will include regional events in Africa and Asia, as well as organizing workshops at the OGP Annual Conference in October.]

b. *Webinars*: Continue hosting webinars with expert trainers on a variety of open government topics in partnership with the World Bank Institute and other suitable partners.

c. *Thematic Working Groups*: Establish working groups on particular open government topics of interest to multiple countries (e.g. access to info, fiscal transparency, open data, open parliaments) to bring together like-minded governments and expert organizations to share experience and insights. [We hope to launch several of these working groups at the OGP Annual Conference in October.]

d. (TBD) *Solidarity Network of Domestic Reformers* Over the longer-term, should OGP aspire to build a network of the actual implementers of OGP Action Plans at the country level (e.g. those in domestic line ministries)? Or can we achieve this through the previous 3 work streams?

3. Learning and Impact: Both governments and civil society would like to have access to write-ups of success stories and best practices to help them develop and implement more ambitious commitments.

a. *Case studies*: Produce or commission case studies on: 1) innovative open government reforms implemented by OGP countries; 2) effective mechanisms for consultation with civil society and 'co-governance' of OGP implementation.

b. *Impact Research*: Commission research to study and document the interim results and longer-term impact of open government reforms implemented by OGP participating countries.

c. (TBD) *Online Knowledge Exchange*: The new OGP website could integrate a user-friendly, searchable platform to serve as a repository for open government case studies, impact research, and other learning resources for OGP countries.

Who should be tasked with providing this support?

To date, Global Integrity has led the OGP Networking Mechanism, which was originally conceived as a resource to provide expert referrals to OGP participating countries (see 1b above). Over the past 6 months, the Networking Mechanism has taken on two additional, significant responsibilities: 1) partnering with the WBI to organize monthly OGP webinars, which have been steadily increasing in popularity (2b); 2) supporting the organization of a peer exchange event at the OGP regional meeting in Croatia and committing to support similar events at upcoming regional meetings in Africa and Asia (2a). Although it was not an explicit part of their mandate, the NM team has also provided critical support to supplement the Support Unit's capacity on real-time tracking of country developments (1a) and coordinating multilateral engagement (1c). As a result, the NM currently has the best rolodex when it comes to OGP country contacts. Finally, the Networking Mechanism recently partnered with the Civil Society Coordination team to support the government of Costa Rica in organizing a civil society consultation event.

Moving forward, we need to build more capacity within the Support Unit to coordinate – though not necessarily implement – all three types of support described above. However, we also need a transition plan during 2013, since the Support Unit will not have a dedicated staff person for Country Support and Peer Learning until at least June of this year. Even then, that staff person will need time to get up to speed and is unlikely to be able to manage all of these tasks. To put this in perspective, the Networking Mechanism currently has the equivalent of 2 full-time staff working just on the activities detailed above (referrals, webinars, supplementing SU capacity on real-time tracking, and a limited set of peer exchange events). We are proposing a fairly significant expansion of this strategy in this memo, and at present we only have one full-time staff person included on the Support Unit's 2013 budget.

The recommendations below would: 1) gradually transition some of these functions to the Support Unit; 2) renew OGP's partnership with Global Integrity, focused primarily on facilitating peer exchange; and 3) consider adding additional staff to the Support Unit and/or developing new partnerships to expand our ability to provide all three types of support in the future.

Direct Country Support
As the central hub connecting various OGP stakeholders (Steering Committee, IRM, civil society coordinator, participating governments, multilateral institutions, etc.), the Support Unit is best

positioned to facilitate direct support to OGP countries. We would therefore recommend that the Support Unit build its capacity to assume the role of 'general contractor' in brokering different types of technical assistance to a subset of priority countries. That said, at least through the end of 2013, it may make sense for Global Integrity to continue to serve as a resource for one-time referrals in response to requests from all OGP countries.

Peer Exchange
We would recommend that the Support Unit, with input and oversight from the Peer Learning and Support subcommittee, develop and coordinate OGP's peer exchange strategy. However, for several reasons, the Support Unit should continue to work with a variety of outside partners to implement each work stream. First, the Support Unit will continue to have limited in-house staff capacity, and organizing events is particularly labor-intensive. Second, it is useful to bring in those with specific expertise in organizing interactive workshops. Third, and perhaps most importantly, we don't want to lose the network model that has been so critical to OGP's success. OGP has grown quickly thanks in part to the buzz, momentum and creative ideas that come from having a diverse network of champions *outside* of OGP's formal structures, and we should seek to maintain and expand this network moving forward.

Global Integrity has been a critical leader within this network and has supported OGP's growth in innumerable ways. We also share space with them at the OpenGovHub in Washington D.C., and we benefit significantly from their understanding of tech solutions and familiarity with tech providers (for example, as we seek to improve our knowledge management systems at the Support Unit).

We would recommend that Global Integrity continue to lead on the organization of peer exchange workshops at OGP regional events, and that this role be clarified and potentially expanded in the renewal of their contract with OGP (see below). We would also recommend that GI continue to partner with the WBI to organize OGP webinars, since this model is now well established and seems to be effective. In June 2013 we will need to renegotiate our agreement with Global Integrity. This will allow us to agree on the exact parameters of these two sets of activities, as well as the shorter-term 'transitional responsibilities' outlined in the table below.

In terms of the proposed thematic working groups, the OGP Support Unit will need to lead in the set-up phase, but we should only pursue working groups where there is a committed, expert NGO (or multilateral) partner that is willing to staff and manage the working group. This partner should also have – or have the ability to secure -- the necessary resources to play this ongoing facilitation role. A good example is the Global Initiative on Fiscal Transparency's offer to organize and staff an OGP working group on fiscal transparency issues.

Learning and Impact
This area of work is the most challenging, since very little has been done to date, and there are no resources allocated for it on the current budget. We would therefore recommend working with the Peer Learning and Support subcommittee to explore several types of partnerships to

take this forward. The list below is a notional list, as we do not currently have the capacity to explore these potential partnerships in more depth. However, this could be top priority for the new Peer Learning and Support Program Officer (seconded from DFID) who will join the Support Unit in June or July.

1) Transparency and Accountability Initiative: focus on resource materials, e.g. how-to guides (e.g. Opening Government 2.0) and case studies
2) Corporate Partner – compile brief, accessible open government case studies (both innovative reforms and mechanisms for consultation)
3) Academic Research Partner – more in-depth case studies and/or impact research
4) Steering Committee member governments – could be asked to produce a 2-3 page case study on a successful OGP commitment as part of their self-assessment report
5) World Bank Institute and/or T/AI: online knowledge exchange?

In the near-term, we could consider engaging a consultant to conduct desk research and interviews to begin generating content for a library of OGP case studies. We would coordinate this with the Civil Society Coordination team, which is also working to generate more case study material.

The table below provides a detailed breakdown of the proposed strategy by activities, as well as ownership responsibilities.

Timeframe	Short: Through 07/2013	Medium: 07/2013 – 12/2013	Long: 2014 – 2015
Tailored TA (OGP In Country Support)			
Real-time tracking	Global Integrity	Global Integrity + Support Unit	Support Unit (including extended team)
Multilateral Support	Support Unit + Global Integrity	Support Unit + Global Integrity	Support Unit
Referrals	Global Integrity	Global Integrity	Support Unit?
T/A missions	-	Explore options	SU + corporate partner?
OGP Peer Exchange*			
Global/regional Workshops	Global Integrity (with input from SU & CSC)	Global Integrity (with input from SU & CSC)	Global Integrity (with input from SU & CSC)
Webinars	Global Integrity + World Bank Institute	Global Integrity + World Bank Institute	Global Integrity + World Bank Institute
Thematic working groups	Explore options	Support Unit + Expert Partners	Expert Partners (with oversight from SU)
OGP Learning and Impact			
Case studies	Global Integrity + consultant	Research Partner	Research Partner
Impact research	-	Explore options	Research Partner
Online Knowledge Platform	-	Explore options	SU + partner (WBI, T/AI?)

ANNEX 1:
Breakdown of Networking Mechanism Activities
(led by Global Integrity)
2012-2013

Current state of play

Global Integrity is currently executing its revised strategy for the Networking Mechanism through June 2013. The current strategy involves a mix of discrete networking/brokering activities (e.g. one-to-one matchmaking) along with creating peer exchange and knowledge exchange forums and content (e.g. regional networking events). The NM is also developing a small number of case studies to highlight successful OGP reforms, as well as collaborating with the World Bank Institute on the OGP webinar series.

Category	Purpose	Activities
Events	Open spaces for engagement between governments and open government experts.	• Networking workshop on Access to Information issues at Regional Outreach Meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia on October 4 – 5, 2012 • Peer exchange meeting in London, UK on December 5, 2012 • Regional Outreach Meeting in Santiago, Chile on January 10 – 11, 2013 • Planning the Africa Regional Outreach Meeting for May 29 – 30, 2013 • Representing OGP and the Networking Mechanism at various international fora.
Light networking/ brokering	Act as an agent of introduction between governments and open government experts as well as share examples of open government solutions.	• The Networking Mechanism has connected OGP governments to open government experts and examples of open government solutions across the Partnership to support country action plan drafting and implementation efforts for Liberia, Armenia, Albania, Moldova, Philippines, Israel, Croatia, Brazil, Canada, Lithuania, Dominican Republic, Russia, Serbia, Chile • Continue building a roster of more than 90 open government experts
Technical Assistance	Provide technical assistance to countries drafting or implementing action plans.	• Placement of technical experts in Costa Rica to assist with action plan drafting • In the process of brokering introductions for technical assistance to Peru and Columbia under existing IDB technical cooperation agreements • Initiating conversations with Honduras and El

Category	Purpose	Activities
		Salvador; likely consultant placement with Honduras courtesy of the World Bank.

Peer learning/ Knowledge sharing	Act as a bridge for knowledge exchange and peer learning across as the Partnership.	• Host monthly webinars on priority open government issues in partnership with the World Bank Institute:
		  o E-Petitions, March 2013
		  o Proactive transparency, February, 2013
		  o Independent Reporting Mechanism, February 2013
		  o Codes of practice on consultations, January, 2013
		  o Grievance Redress Mechanisms, December, 2012
		  o Measuring Implementation of Access to Information Legislation, November 2012
		  o Open Budgets, April 2012
		  o Citizen Engagement using ICTS, March 2012
		  o Citizen Budgets, March 2012
		  o Public Participation February 2012
		
		• Producing three light case studies to document open government solutions pursued by OGP member countries
		
		• Collaborating with the Transparency and Accountability Initiative on revising the Opening Government publication to integrate it more tightly with the peer learning goals of the Open Government Partnership.

ANNEX 2:
Lessons learned by the Networking Mechanism

1. **Peer learning is an incremental process; there is no Big Bang approach to facilitating government-to-government learning.** In the current OGP context, peer learning is occurring slowly and organically across the partnership. In our calls with Points of Contact from various countries, there have been informal exchanges of information between governments and civil society, often initiated and sustained by regional outreach events. Webinars and case studies, while useful, have yet to catalyze disruptive change.

2. **Building a traditional "community of practice" for OGP that is dedicated to open government issues will require a significant investment of time and resources.** Moreover the process will need to be owned and championed by a single entity that drives and sustains peer learning activities and outcomes. As contemporary examples, the Open Contracting, GIFT, and TA/I Learning cohort program are all led by dedicated full-time teams that have access to substantial financial resources to pay for consultants, facilitators, and extensive travel. If OGP wants to go the route of a full-on open government Community of Practice, it cannot execute that vision on the cheap.

3. **Direct methods of engagement—including meetings, workshops, video conferencing, and phone calls—work best**. While labor intensive, these methods should be emphasized over electronic means (listserves and online discussion forums) as this is the preferred mode of communication among governments and will likely be more impactful.

4. **Multilaterals are increasingly involved with assisting low- and middle-income OGP countries in drafting and implementing action plans.** Currently, multilateral institutions are engaging through their country offices based on *ad hoc* requests for assistance or under the auspices of existing technical cooperation agreements. We continue to believe that dedicated multilateral points of contact and a shared framework that allows these institutions to identify opportunities for assistance and coordinate resources with OGP are needed.

5. Based on feedback from country POCs, **regional events with a carefully designed agenda can be effective vehicles for networking and peer learning**. Themed face-to-face networking sessions should be replicated across regions based on a needs analysis of regional OGP action plans and priorities.

6. **The OGP website needs to communicate clearly to governments the schedule of events and major process deadlines related to action plans and the IRM.**