OGP

Dear OGP civil society colleagues,

It is my pleasure to share with you the Steering Committee response to the letter that we receive from Helen Darbishire (Access Info Europe) and Moisés Sánchez (Alianza Regional), on behalf of 66 CSOs from the OGP community, in late April.

We very much value the analysis and suggestions you have made to strengthen the Partnership, as well as the leadership and ownership you have shown towards OGP during the last five years.

We want to particularly thank Helen and Moisés for initiating the letter, and in turn, amplifying this ongoing conversation on the OGP we want (and need) to see, and more important, on the way forward to collectively achieve it.

We look forward to welcoming Helen onto the OGP Steering Committee in September, so she can help us to make these changes happen from the inside.

Personally, I am very much looking forward to continue this conversation with all of you.

Yours sincerely,

Alejandro González Arreola

Executive Director of GESOC

and OGP Civil Society Lead Chair of the Steering Committee

29 July 2016

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In late April you wrote to the OGP Steering Committee outlining some concerns about OGP,

including concrete suggestions to address these concerns and strengthen the partnership in the

future. As the Governance and Leadership subcommittee of OGP, we are replying on behalf of

the Steering Committee.

We appreciate the leadership and ownership you have all shown - and continue to show –

towards OGP by sharing your collective concerns and proposals.

The letter is extremely timely. As we approach OGP’s fifth anniversary, and fourth Global

Summit in December, the Steering Committee agreed at its last meeting, in Cape Town in May,

to undertake a strategic refresh which will set a vision for the next five years of OGP. This

refresh will examine how well OGP has worked in the first five years and will include a review of

the basic rules of the game. The Cape Town discussions recognized the need to improve the

quality of the national co-creation processes, further strengthen the design and uptake of the

IRM and improve our own transparency and accountability as a Steering Committee. We

recognize that as a partnership that promotes the principles of participation, transparency and

accountability we need to practice what we preach.

We value the analysis and suggestions you have made, and wish to assure you that work is

already underway on some of the specific proposals outlined in the letter. For example, OGP’s

Criteria and Standards subcommittee is developing revised co-creation guidelines that aim to

improve both the quality and ambition of the government/civil society partnership that is at the

heart of OGP. These will be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting in September

and then be released for public comment.

The civil society Steering Committee members - responding to explicit civil society demand -

have experimented with a more transparent and inclusive selection of the newest batch of

Steering Committee members. This included full transparency on selection criteria and scoring,

as well as public webinars with shortlisted candidates. They have also agreed to act on some of

your suggestions by asking the Support Unit to include small biographies, contact information

and the details of their ‘seconds’ on the OGP website as soon as possible. Furthermore they will

start sharing notes from their monthly calls over the civil society mailing list.

We would welcome further input from the community into the strategic refresh process that will

be organised by the Support Unit, overseen by us, the Governance and Leadership

subcommittee. We intend for this process to be highly inclusive and consultative, particularly

drawing on the knowledge and experience of national government officials and civil society

organizations who are implementing open government reforms day-to-day.

The refresh should also surface a set of strategic choices for OGP to consider as it enters its

sixth year, including decisions related to the institutions of OGP such as the Steering Committee

and Support Unit. Throughout the process we will inform and engage the broader community as

much as possible. More details on the strategic refresh process and timeline can be found in the

annex to this letter.

The Steering Committee has discussed the need for more regular engagement with the broader

OGP civil society community as a way to share decisions and perspectives from the inside, and

to be informed and inspired from the outside. Your letter and the ‘strategic refresh’ process

present an immediate opportunity to do this. The civil society members - both current and

incoming - will facilitate a set of group conversations with the community to co-create civil

society OGP priorities for the coming years. The Support Unit will facilitate this process and will

make sure it mirrors as much as possible OGP’s principles and guidelines on engagement and

co-creation, including: using multiple off and online channels, proactively sharing details on the

planned conversations and making sure conclusions are documented and fed back to the civil

society community. These conversations will also be reported back to the full Steering

Committee. On July 22 the first conversation took place at the OGP Asia Pacific Regional

Dialogue in Manilla. Details on other opportunities will be shared with the civil society

community by mid August.

As the Governance and Leadership subcommittee of OGP we feel that a thorough process of

reflection and strategizing, involving many of the most active OGP participants from both

government and civil society, and leading to both a refreshed strategy and a political agenda

that addresses some of the key concerns in your letter, is the best response possible to the

concerns you raise. We are committed to strengthening OGP over the next five years, to ensure

we deepen our impact and use OGP to deliver transformative change for citizens around the

world.

With the deepest respect,

Alejandro Gonzalez Arreola

Executive Director

GESOC, Gestión Social y Cooperación A.C.

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Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration,

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Sanjay Pradhan, CEO, OGP

Overview of 2016 OGP Strategic Refresh

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In just five years OGP has grown from eight founding governments to 69, and from nine founding

civil society leadersto 1000s of civil society organizations. Collectively over 2500 individual reform

commitments have now been made using the OGP platform. The momentum and scale of actions

has been impressive. Now OGP faces a test: how do we collectively deepen our impact so that in the

next five years and beyond OGP is used to deliver evermore transformative change for citizens? To

date only 12% of OGP commitments are assessed to be potentially transformative and only 6% are

potentially transformative and completed; these percentages represent an overarching challenge

and need to be raised significantly over the next phase of OGP.

The OGP Steering Committee agreed at its May Cape Town meeting that OGP should undergo a

strategic refresh, building on the existing strategy to outline a vision for greater impact in the next

five years. The refresh will be led by the Steering Committee, including a vital role for the principals

such as OGP ministers and civil society leaders. As such the strategic refresh will be an opportunity

to set out how OGP can be reinvigorated at the political level. The Support Unit will organize the

process of the refresh under the guidance of the Governance and Leadership (GL) subcommittee of

OGP, and will ensure an inclusive consultation, including with national government officials and civil

society organizations who are implementing open government reforms day-to-day. The refresh

should also surface a set of strategic choices for OGP to consider as it enters its 5th year, including

choices related to the institutions of OGP such as the Steering Committee and Support Unit.

This strategic refresh will be completed for the Paris summit in December, and will also form the

basis of a renewed approach to OGP funders. The initial discussions of the Steeri ng Committee in

Cape Town, as well as subsequent conversations within the Governance and Leadership

subcommittee, and consultations with government points of contact and civil society leaders in

regional and global forums (e.g., Africa and Americas regional OGP meetings, London Anti-

Corruption Summit), have highlighted several proposals for key strategic directions for the next

phase of OGP. The planned consultations will inform and enrich these directions forward. The key

areas that have emerged thus far include:

● Improving the support offered to participating governments and civil society, with an added

emphasis on countries that offer new windows of opportunity for transformational impact (e.g.,

new OGP entrants or new administrations);

● Increasing thematic leadership within OGP, so that across a set of priority issues governments

and civil society organizations are working together to raise their collective ambition to solve

common challenges and learn from each other;

● Moving to genuine co-creation between government and civil society, and strengthening efforts

and incentives to protect and enhance civic space;

● Broadening the sectoral focus of OGP (e.g., across SDGs), and complementing the emphasis on

government transparency and disclosure with a greater focus on soliciting citizen feedback and

government responsiveness to that feedback, for instance on service delivery;

● Broadening the collective buy-in and enthusiasm for OGP across line ministries in Cabinet and

across a broader range of civil society actors, and attracting new actors into OGP who have a

pivotal role to play, such as subnational governments, parliaments, youth and the private sector.

● Providing stronger capacity building support for the co-creation and implementation of OGP

action plans, including through collective leadership workshops on OGP for Cabinets, civil society

organizations and multi-stakeholder coalitions, and through financial support from multilaterals

and a multi-donor trust fund, positioning OGP as a key platform to be supported by financing

institutions.

● Ensuring that OGP events and summits are fully leveraged to become action-forcing moments

for policy change and peer learning, and OGP is positioned as an integral instrument for

delivering on global agreements such as the SDGs and the London Anti-Corruption Summit

commitments;

● Addressing the challenge that ‘OGP is the most interesting thing no one has heard of’ with a

much more compelling value proposition of OGP for key stakeholders (governments, civil

society, multilaterals/aid agencies) and a big push on strategic communications.

A key goal of the strategic refresh will be to identify the relative roles of the OGP principals

(participating governments and civil society organizations), partners (e.g., bilateral and multilateral

institutions), and the Support Unit to support the emerging strategic directions. Given a number of

political transitions among the founding countries and civil society organizations, as well as the rapid

growth of OGP, an overarching imperative is to refresh and mobilize the collective leadership of OGP

principals to lead a dynamic global movement on open governance, demonstrate transformative

impact in their countries, support other countries to do the same, and galvanize other countries and

partners to join the OGP movement.

Core inputs for the strategic refresh:

● A critical input into the strategic refresh will be the mid-term review of OGP’s current strategy,

which is aiming to produce interim findings in November. The review will examine OGP’s theory

of change, and what is working and not working. It will examine OGP’s country level

engagement, global work and thematic leadership. The main findings of the mid-term review will

inform the key directions of the strategic refresh to be launched at the Paris Global Summit in

December 2016, while more granular implications will be taken up in an Implementation Plan to

be developed in early 2017. The review will also examine OGP’s ‘rules of the game’ and assess

whether policies like the eligibility criteria, response policy and consultation guidelines are

working as intended. These implications will be reviewed and decided upon by the Steering

Committee in the months following the Global Summit in December 2016. The mid-term review

is being carried out by external consultants to ensure its independence, guided by an evaluation

committee including Steering Committee members.

● Interview and group conversations with members of the OGP community with provide vital

inputs to the strategic refresh. This will include questions both on the retrospective mid-term

assessment and prospective strategic direction. This would consist of:

○ Group conversations with members of the OGP civil society community and other

stakeholders;

○ Interviews with a targeted group of OGP thought leaders and practitioners, including:

(Former) Steering Committee members; OGP Ambassadors; A sample of IRM

researchers; A sample of OGP civil society organizations; A sample of OGP governments;

A sample of OGP’s funders; Support Unit and IRM staff.

● Synthesis of recent IRM reports.

● Analysis of OGP National Action Plans.

Support Unit team:

A core Support Unit team will support this Steering Committee led process, for both the strategic

refresh and the mid-term review. The Support Unit core team will provide process support and

integration for both tasks, for example by helping recruit external consultants for the mid-term

review. The Support Unit will also ensure an integrated consultation process for both tasks with key

stakeholders, for example the planned group conversations with the civil society community led by

Steering Committee members. The team will consist of Joe Powell, Munyema Hasan, Tinatin Ninua,

under the overall direction of Sanjay Pradhan.

● May-June: Governance and Leadership subcommittee discussion on overview of the refresh.

● June: Launch of OGP mid-term review process.

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analysis of the theory of change and the first 5 years of OGP.

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session in Paris at the fourth global summit.

● January - April 2017: Steering Committee considers recommendations from the mid-term

review and potential changes to the ‘rules of the game’; Support Unit - IRM develop an

implementation plan for the strategic refresh.

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