**Minutes**

**Meeting of civil society members on OGP, 17th May 2013, 11:30-13:00**

**Present:** Nat O’Connor, Denis Parfenov, Tom Stewart, Jane Suiter, Martin Wallace, Eamon Leonard, Peter McCanney

**Apologies:** Nuala Haughey

**1.       Minutes of previous meeting of *ad hoc* civil society OGP group [for agreement] and matters arising**

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising from the Minutes not covered in the Agenda.

**2.       Presentation on the OGP Partnership based on** [**http://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation**](http://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation) **[for information]**

Nat O’Connor presented the above webpage. Those present at the meeting agreed that the set of guidelines outlined on this page was an important reference point for Ireland’s participation in OGP.

**3.       Proposal to use the OGP Five Grand Challenges\* as a core organisational structure [for discussion and recommendation]**

It was discussed that we could use the Five Grand Challenges for the main Working Groups, in order to cover the bases and not lose sight of the wide range of aims under OGP. It was discussed that more specialised sub-groups could work under these five main groups.

The five main Working Groups will be:

·         Improving Public Services;

o   Health data sub-group

·         Increasing Public Integrity;

·         More Effectively Managing Public Resources;

o   Environmental working group (Aarhus Implementation Group)

·         Creating Safer Communities;

·         Increasing Corporate Accountability.

It was agreed to identify other existing groups and draw up a list of these.

**4.       Proposal that the purpose of today’s meeting is to agree a set of recommendations about how the Civil Society Network could work, not to make final decisions before the formal Network is established [for agreement]**

**5.       Proposals around corporate governance [for discussion and recommendation]**

The meeting discussed a range of principles and perspectives on how the Civil Society Network could work, including vision/direction, membership, participation, collaboration.

The meeting discussed whether a more formal structure was needed (e.g. legal framework, membership right). There was no consensus on doing this.

The meeting agreed that the role of the network was to facilitate engagement between the Government and wider civil society/the general public, but not a filter or block on this engagement. On the contrary, it was agreed that the network should funnel up ideas from wider society to Government.

It was agreed as important that other Government Departments and public bodies buy in to the OGP process, not just DPER.

It was discussed (but not formally agreed) that the civil society network could be loosely organised as follows:

·         The Civil Society Network could create at least five Working Groups (one per Grand Challenge) as well as sub-groups working on specific themes. One obvious sub-group would be the Health Data Policy group that is already up and running, which fits under the Improving Public Services group.

·         It was envisaged that each Working Group would maintain a transparent record of its activities online and that anyone from the general public/civil society can join in their meetings and/or comment online.

·         The Civil Society Network could create a Steering Group for the purposes of collating material from its working groups. The Steering Group could be composed of one or two members from each working group and possibly some additional members as a secretariat. The purpose of the Steering Group would not be to change or filter the desired actions suggested by the working groups, but simply to convey them to Government.

·         It was envisaged that the Steering Group provides the main point of contact with Government, with the assumption that the Government Reform Unit within DPER is the main point of contact on the Government side.

·         It was also envisaged that the Steering Group would provide the main point of contact with the consultant hired by DPER to facilitate the initial process of engagement between the Civil Society Network and the Government around the creation of Ireland’s first OGP Action Plan. It was suggested that the consultant should facilitate direct engagement between Civil Society Network and relevant Government Departments/public bodies.

·         It was discussed, without conclusion, whether the civil society network should have an independent chair.

In terms of process, it was agreed that we are working towards the aim of Ireland completing its first OGP Action Plan in October 2013 (the next international OGP conference in London).

It was noted that the OGP website gives guidelines for the national plans and envisages they should be approximately 8 pages long:<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-action-plan-template>

It was noted that the Dublin Web Summit in October, with 7,000 participants expected, was an opportunity for the launch of Ireland’s Action Plan or some other supportive publicity around OGP in Ireland. For example, there will be an open data panel discussion.

The possibility of various online platforms (e.g. Ideascape, LetItBit) for public access to information about OGP was discussed.

In terms of good practice, the Plain English guidelines of NALA were noted as a useful resource:<http://www.simplyput.ie/>

**6.       Proposal about how we word communications from the Network or steering group [for discussion and recommendation]**

It was agreed to use qualified statements such as “There was consensus among those present that…” or “The majority of those present agreed that…” rather than make any claim that meetings can speak authoritatively for the wider network of people interested in OGP.

**\* Note: OGP Grand Challenges:**

a.       **Improving Public Services**—measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services including health, education, criminal justice, water, electricity, telecommunications and any other relevant service areas, by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation

b.      **Increasing Public Integrity**—measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom

c.       **More Effectively Managing Public Resources**—measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources and foreign assistance

d.      **Creating Safer Communities**—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats

e.      **Increasing Corporate Accountability**—measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement

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