Open Government Partnership (OGP)
Overview of the Openness in Natural Resources Working Group
Updated September 2015

Rationale

This Working Group is established in recognition that good governance in the natural resource sector is critical to the welfare of the people and sustainability of the environment. A wide array of countries has made significant advancements in transparency and accountability. By sharing lessons learned and good practice, we can leverage the OGP to advance our collective understanding of how greater openness can bring greater benefits to citizens and governments and encourage action at the national level.

Aim

The Openness in Natural Resources (ONR) Working Group aims to advance the collective understanding of how greater openness and participation in decision-making can improve the management of natural resources, transform quality of life of the people for the public good and mitigate environmental and social impacts by:

- Inspiring governments to take up commitments in this critical sector; contributing to a global norm on openness in natural resource management.
- Supporting OGP participating governments to design and implement commitments that are concrete, impactful, ambitious and targeted to the specific context.
- Sharing information and technological and diagnostic tools such as the Resource Governance Index, the Environmental Democracy Index, The Environmental Performance Index, Global Forest Watch, the Natural Resource Charter, and Governance Indicator toolkits and expertise on key standards such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the United Nations Environmental Program Principle 10 Bali Guidelines.
- Supporting participation and collaboration efforts between key stakeholders, extractive industry and environmental oversight agencies, networks, private sector partners, civil society and academics in OGP Natural Resource and Extractive dialogues.
- Providing a forum for peer-to-peer sharing and learning on good practices and innovative approaches, including how to strengthen government data systems, and turn open data into informed debate about the governance of the sector.

This Working Group is successful when the quality and quantity of commitments in the area of national resources transparency of each member country is improving and being implemented.

Definitions

This working group adopts the following definition of natural resources:
"Natural resources are natural occurring assets that exist in the natural environment that are can provide use benefits through the provision of raw materials and energy used in economic activity (or that may provide such benefits one day) and are subject to quantitative depletion through human use based on their scarcity. They are subdivided into four categories: mineral and energy resources, soil and water resources, air and biological resources."[1] Natural resources shall therefore include, but are not limited to, forests, water, land, air, biodiversity, minerals and fossil fuels.

Governance

The **co-anchors** of the Working Group are currently the Government of Indonesia[2] with the Natural Resource Governance Institute and the World Resources Institute. A second government co-anchor will be identified. The co-anchors will facilitate the main components of the activities undertaken by the Working Group. The co-anchors' meeting agenda and follow-up minutes will be made available to members of the working group and the public.

The **working group membership** will be open to governments and national and international civil society organizations, with an attention to balance across stakeholder groups. It will also benefit from the engagement of the private sector multilateral institutions such as The World Bank, UNDP and UNEP and complementary multi-stakeholder initiatives such as EITI. In addition, international organizations and private institutions interested in collaborating with the Working Group may join working group discussion and support its efforts as appropriate.

The **OGP support unit** will provide support for fundraising, maintaining the WG's webpage and by compiling and updating a listserv of the WG's membership and other interested parties. Furthermore, the OGP Support Unit shall act as a conduit between the working group and OGP countries thereby providing outreach support to ensure that countries are aware of the work being done by the working group.

A Focused Approach

A review of the Open Government Partnership Working Groups conducted in 2015 revealed that the most successful groups focus on a limited number of countries and on one particular issue area in which countries are encouraged to develop "peer commitments." This enables a shared experience of developing and implementing the commitments, and creates a tipping point effect around critical issues, promoting quality and quantity of commitments. The Working

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[1] Adapted from OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms
[2] Following the recent election, the Government of Indonesia is reviewing the appropriate focal point.

Group on Openness in Natural Resources is piloting this more concerted approach to inform peer learning and support efforts and to advance the objectives of the working group to increase the quality and quantity of commitments.

Focus Issue

The Working Group recognizes that while significant progress has been made in the disclosure of information related to the natural resource sector, there remain persistent areas of opacity. The Working Group seeks to **promote disclosure of contracts, beneficial ownership and environmental policy, management and compliance data**. These areas of focus are not limited to the natural resources sector, but do align with the advances in the sector, such as through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), who will be a key partner in this effort. OGP participating countries have already made progress on many of these fronts. The UK announced a publicly accessible central registry of company beneficial ownership information in 2013. Mongolia has committed to develop a central information database of land tenure, minerals and oil license owners, open to the public. The Working Group will seek to capitalize on that momentum and broaden the number of countries and commitments promoting disclosure in these key areas.

Disclosure of this information will only be made meaningful if countries adhere to **open data standards** that promote accessibility and usability by a range of stakeholders. The Working Group members have experience and expertise to share in how to use spatial data, maps and portals effectively to ensure disclosure advances transparency. There are more than thirty commitments focused on the creation of natural resource information portals: for example, Indonesia has created an OneMap portal for forest management. The Working Group will leverage this and other experiences to draw lessons on good practice in the release and organization of information.

Focus Countries

Focus countries were selected on the basis of a rigorous review seeking to leverage the experience and expertise of the co-anchors, the Government of Indonesia, the Natural Resource Governance Institute and the World Resources Institute. The Working Group undertook an analysis of countries that had commitments related to disclosure or open data and data standards through OGP or through the EITI, countries where NRGI and WRI had knowledge and experience on the ground, and countries that had expressed interest in the Working Group to date. On that basis, we further reviewed for geographical balance and came to a list of ten countries for focused engagement over the next year: Indonesia, Colombia, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Philippines, Ghana, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States of America. In addition the Working Group will continue to respond to requests for technical assistance from OGP countries on action plan creation and implementation.

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