

Civil Society Steering Committee

Monthly Call | 19 March 2025

10:00-11:00 EST / 16:00-17:00 CET

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Anabel Cruz, Barbara Schreiner, Cielo Magno, Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans, Laura Neuman, Natalia Carfi, Steph Muchai, Zuki Kota, OGP Support Unit (SU)

Apologies: Blair Glencorse, Doug Rutzen, Eka Gigauri

1. Introduction - 2 min

- a. Civil Society Co-Chair Cielo Magno opened the meeting and previewed the call agenda.

2. Readout from the Leadership Subcommittee Meeting - 10 min

- a. Incoming Civil Society Co-Chair Steph Muchai provided a readout of the Subcommittee meeting, which took place in Madrid on March 10-11.
 - i. The meeting focused on discussions of OGP's political and financial response to current geopolitical and funding shifts, as part of the broader Support Unit (SU) work plan for 2025-27. This included strategizing to maximize the impact of the OGP Global Summit agenda, aligning the current and future co-chair agendas to support these efforts, and conducting an in-depth analysis of country opportunities and risks for coordinated action.
 - ii. The Subcommittee also discussed key governance issues, including revising eligibility criteria for governments to serve on the Steering Committee (SC) and addressing Afghanistan's membership in OGP. Resolutions on these issues are forthcoming for final SC approval.
- b. Regarding the upcoming SC transition on October 1, 2025, members suggested streamlining the process for Civil Society SC selection, particularly for those seeking a second term. Three current civil society members will complete their first terms on September 30, 2025.

3. Preparation for March 20 Full SC Meeting- 30 min

- a. Members discussed the SU 2025-27 Work Plan and related topics to prioritize in the full SC meeting.
 - i. **Responding to the moment:** Some members proposed centering the work plan on a broader and bolder approach to meeting the current moment of geopolitical and funding challenges, emphasizing the need to "future-proof" the work plan. Others expressed the importance of remaining focused on OGP's core mission. Members also asked about how the SU will adjust the budget in response to specific shifts in revenue sources. The work plan and corresponding budget include a focus on scenario-planning to ensure adaptability to changing circumstances.

- b. **OGP Global Summit:** Civil society members broadly agreed that the 2025 OGP Global Summit should serve as a celebratory moment for the open government community, despite current geopolitical challenges. While accounting for financial constraints, it is important that the summit still serves as an uplifting moment of solidarity for the community. Members also raised the importance of engaging civil society with careful consideration in preparation for the summit, given the funding and capacity challenges civil society currently faces globally.
- 4. Reflections from Community Sessions - **15 min**
 - a. On March 6, 7, and 12, two civil society SC members, Anabel Cruz and Laura Neuman, moderated OGP community sessions to provide a space for open government community members to share their experiences of the current geopolitical and financial volatility. The moderators shared insights from the sessions:
 - i. The sessions were participatory and productive— many partners shared thoughtful insights on the impact of the current moment for the broader open government agenda. Participants also shared advice with peers on how to best counter closing civic space and democratic backsliding.
 - ii. Moderators noted that the situation impacts individuals and regions differently, some through the defunding of democracy assistance, and others through soft power politics.
 - b. Members discussed a range of possible next steps, including conducting workshops on how to build resilience, hosting trainings on how to craft value propositions that resonate in the current moment, and organizing an open forum for civil society at the OGP Global Summit focused on defending civic space.
- 5. AOB - **3 min**
 - a. Members shared which open government-related events they will attend in the next several months to coordinate action with the SU and fellow members.