



Minutes of the BCoP Executive Committee Video Conference Meeting (May 15, 2013)

PRESENT:

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| 1. Gelardina Prodani | (Albania – Chair of BCoP ExCom) |
| 2. Olga Tarasevic | (Belarus – Member of BCoP ExCom) |
| 3. Elena Zyunina | (Russian Federation – Member of BCoP ExCom) |
| 4. Maya Gusarova | (World Bank – Resource team) |
| 5. Naida Čaršimamović Vukotić | (World Bank – Resource team) |
| 6. Deanna Aubrey | (World Bank – Resource team) |
| 7. Nikolai Petrov | (Interpreter RUS-ENG) |
| 8. Tamara Maisuradze-Simic | (CEF – PEM PAL Secretariat) |
| 9. Robert Bauchmuller | (CEF – PEM PAL Secretariat) |

Mr Krityan and Ms Karačić will provide feedback based on the minutes of this meeting.

AGENDA of the meeting:

1. Past activities

- Summary of feedback from post event survey
- CoP leadership report by Beverly Trayner
- UK Study Tour
- Georgia Study Tour

2. Future planning

- OECD survey participation and workshop June 25-26, Latvia
- OECD SBO workshop June 27-28
- Cross-CoP Executive Committee meeting, July 1-4, Slovenia
- Feedback for future events for Action Plan 2014-16

3. Steering Committee meeting briefing

- Overview of discussions and decisions of the Steering Committee meeting held in March 2013

4. Next meeting

- Riga, Latvia on 29 June 2013 (after the SBO meeting), followed by another meeting in Bohinj, Slovenia on 3 July as part of Cross-CoP ExCom meeting.



1. PAST ACTIVITIES

- **Summary of feedback from post event survey**

Ms Prodani summarized the feedback from post-event survey in Tirana. Overall, the rating of the event was positive. Participants suggested more time dedicated in the agenda for Q&A sessions and expressed preference to have more time devoted to working groups. They appreciated country case studies (e.g. Austria case), and small group discussions. Good level of administration was pointed out. Main dissatisfaction was with the Agenda being somewhat packed with long hours every day, so the suggestion is to provide fewer sessions in the future, which was also noted and already discussed and agreed by the Executive Committee in their post-event meeting in Tirana and again reinforced in this Executive Committee meeting .

Some other suggestions for future events included: providing more time to enable participants to give feedback and to engage in discussions by reducing the number of presentations; extending the duration of plenary meetings; and to try to mix participants from non-neighboring countries within the discussion groups in order to broaden experiences rather than grouping the people of neighboring countries together. In the connection to this last suggestion, the Executive Committee discussed the language constraints caused from lack of simultaneous translation facilities and resources to accommodate multi-language discussion groups without the use of consecutive translation which disrupts the flow of the discussion. In addition, it was noted that the preference for grouping members by one-language group for break out discussions must be carefully planned to manage both language constraints and different preferences of the membership.

- **CoP leadership report by Beverly Trayner**

Ms Aubrey provided an overview of the contents of the draft CoP Leadership report. Ms Trayner was engaged to provide a one day coaching session for the Executive Committee to assist them to strengthen BCOP and she stayed on to observe the plenary meeting held in Tirana immediately after. Ms Trayner has assessed BCOP as more of a 'service network model' whereby a series of events are arranged largely by the resource team. Whereas a 'community of practice' operates more as an ongoing partnership with more reflection by members on how they are engaging as a community or how they are making progress on common challenges. As a 'service network model' Ms Trayner thinks BCOP is doing very well. However, in order to strengthen BCOP to act more as a community of practice (i.e. a group making progress on shared issues), Ms Trayner provided three potential scenarios or strategies for the Executive Committee to consider to move the community forward:



(1) provide more social learning opportunities – through more group work, less powerpoints, more specific focused topics. Ms Trayner noted that this was the easiest strategy to implement and that from her observations, BCOP was moving towards this direction anyway.

(2) part implementation of CoP approach – identify specific challenges and scenarios being experienced by members and give substantial time in the agenda to address them; have more targeted invitations to those people experiencing same issues and take a record of those issues.

(3) full implementation of COP approach – this includes a combination of the first and second scenarios. Includes a plenary on a broad topic with sub-group meetings on aspects of this topic. Challenges are identified in the plenary and this shapes the future agenda. A single shared memory is created like through wiki where all work on challenges, problems and solutions are shared. This last approach is the hardest to implement and represents a dynamic learning partnership.

Ms Trayner's overall recommendation is to stimulate a conversation between the Executive Committee and the Resource Team about the challenges and opportunities of each scenario. From these discussions, they should come to an informed strategy on how to develop the community.

The Executive Committee decided to discuss this item in more detail at their next meeting (in Bohinj), as it is easier to discuss such issues face to face..

- **UK Study Tour**

Ms Gusarova explained that this study tour was a success and complimented everyone on the organization of the event. The visits to institutions in London (HM Treasury, Department for Education, Department of Business Innovations and Skills, Office for Budget Responsibility), were particularly useful, which gave the group a comprehensive and valuable coverage of the reforms.

The resource team has prepared a report summarizing the key discussions from the study visit including the input from participants on the status of reforms in their countries. Ms Zyunina added that she is also preparing a report on this visit, which she believes will be useful for her colleagues as well.

Ms Prodani stated that the whole delegation was satisfied with the covered topics on this visit. It included not only presentations, but also valuable comments, sharing of experience, etc. The model and approach used in the study visit could also be used to inform the planning of plenary meetings in the future, with more time for discussion and questions and answers. This would in a way refresh the plenary structure, and would lead to better results and broader coverage of topics.

In line with the discussions under the previous two agenda items above, Ms Prodani used the discussion on the UK Study Visit to compare the format of this Study Visit to the format of the Tirana plenary meeting, pointing out insufficient amount of time allocated in the plenary meeting in Tirana for active



discussions with the presenters. Ms. Prodani underlined that for the future plenary meetings, speakers should be more interactive with the participants. Such interactive presentations can be planned in advance, by assigning one or several countries to give verbal feedback for each of the sessions.

Ms Tarasevich agreed with Ms Prodani and also stressed the need for more time for working group meetings and the necessity of more practical work to be incorporated into the plenary meeting format.

- **Georgia Study Tour**

Ms Čaršimamović Vukotić explained that this study visit was also very successful. According to the post-event survey, average satisfaction was maximum. The hosts provided well-qualified speakers and detailed presentations, while the participants were active, despite the fact that majority of them were first-timers to a PEM PAL event (this was partially a result of the fact that this Study Visit was targeted not only for budget planning staff, but also for IT staff, so several participants were of IT background). Ms Karačić from the Executive Committee took part in this Study Visit and actively contributed to the experience exchange, since Croatia also presented their IT System for Budget Planning in detail to the participants and to the hosts, who also found it very useful to compare their model to Croatian one.

All materials will be uploaded shortly. Once participants submit their comments on the Report it will be available online. The necessity of translating parts of additional material from Georgia and Croatia received on the basis of participants' interest during the Georgian Study Visit will be further discussed in Bohinj (this includes documents such as Georgian Budget Documentation and Croatian template for tables connecting strategic documents with budget request).

Overall the group was impressed with the Georgian case, especially in developing an in-house IT system for budget planning and connecting it to all other public finance related IT systems.

2. FUTURE PLANNING

- **OECD survey participation and workshop June 25-26, Latvia**
- **OECD SBO workshop June 27-28**

Ms Aubrey noted that the OECD Survey had been launched on Monday to the 11 countries which indicated an interest to participate. Questions and issues regarding the survey will be clarified in the Riga workshop. The draft agenda of this workshop (June 26) has been circulated. According to the responses, a total of 15 PEM PAL countries are participating in the survey (which includes Russian Federation, Ukraine, Turkey and Albania who are currently participating already). Those countries who are already participating in the survey will play a key role in assisting others at the proposed workshop. OECD experts will provide assistance during the workshop.

BCoP ExCom members will participate in the SBO meeting (June 27-28) being held after the workshop. Other PEM PAL member countries are welcome to express interest in participation (some of the



countries already have). For reporting purposes, participants must consult with the Senior Budget Officials from their countries who are attending this meeting, to coordinate preparation of any expected inputs. OECD SBO agenda will be translated into Bosnian language as well (English and Russian versions already exist). Discussions were held regarding expected inputs to the SBO to ensure BCOP members are prepared and can actively participate in the agenda.

- **Cross-CoP Executive Committee meeting, July 1-4, Slovenia**

Since Cross-CoP meeting is planned back-to-back, the trip must be carefully planned. BCoP ExCom members expressed their preference to travel from Riga to Ljubljana on Sunday, June 30.

The resource team will draft a 20-minute presentation on specific issues of relevance to BCoP for reporting at the cross-COP meeting. The Chair will provide comments and advice on this presentation which she will present at the cross-COP meeting.

There will be two Executive Committee meetings held face-to-face during the Riga and Bohinj meetings. Discussions were held on the distribution of issues between these two meetings and both ExCom meeting Agendas, for June 29 in Riga and July 3 in Bohinj will be drafted shortly.

Ms Tarasevich informed the Executive Committee that she will not be able to participate in Riga events (she confirmed her participation in Bohinj events only). For Riga workshop, another representative from the Budget Department of MoF Belarus who participated in filling out the survey will be delegated.

- **Feedback for future events for Action Plan 2014-16**

Ms Čaršimamović Vukotić briefly summarized drafted updated BCoP Action Plan and Budget for the 2013/2014 fiscal year. It is based on the draft Action Plan adopted by the Executive Committee in 2012 now updated with the different options of potential topics of events based on country responses from Tirana meeting regarding priorities of potential topics for future events. Two options were suggested for the next plenary meeting, four options for the study visits (including the topic not chosen for the plenary meeting), and four options for knowledge products/working groups.

It was decided that the Executive Committee members will review the drafted updated BCoP Action Plan and decide on their preference in terms of the event topics. The BCoP Action plan and Budget for 2013/2014 will then be discussed in more detail and decided on in the next Executive Committee meeting in Riga. Current BCOP budget execution (for year 2012/2013) will be analyzed in Riga as well.



3. STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING BRIEFING

- **Overview of discussions and decisions of the Steering Committee meeting held in March 2013**

Ms Maya Gusarova presented a summary of the last Steering Committee meeting to the Executive Committee. Ms Salome Steib from SECO left the position of chair of the Steering Committee and the role will be taken by Mr Marius Koen as an interim measure. Starting in January 2014, the Russian Federation will take over this duty.

Topic of discussion was the Rules of Operations and the guidelines. In principle this has been approved by the Steering Committee, however final approval of the version will be required given legal input was gained on the content.

The next Cross-CoP plenary meeting is planned in Russia on May 12-14, 2014. This will be further discussed at the Cross-CoP ExCom meeting in Bohinj in July, including the decision on the topic of the meeting. BCOP and the Russian Federation have put forward budget transparency as a cross-COP topic and further input about sub-themes and format will be gained at Bohinj.

The PEM PAL annual report of 2012 will be published shortly, which will provide useful insight and transparency to all recent PEM PAL activities.

The issue of PEM PAL membership for the non-ECA countries was raised, in light of interest by Afghanistan to join BCoP. This will be further discussed in Bohinj at the proposed Steering Committee meeting.

4. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting takes place in Riga, Latvia on June 29, followed by another meeting of the Executive Committee in Bohinj, Slovenia on July 3 as part of Cross-CoP ExCom meeting.

Prepared by: PEM PAL Secretariat and BCoP Resource Team