**MINUTES OF BCOP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, May 14, 2019**

**Videoconference**

**Participated:**

1. Ruzanna Gabrielyan (Armenia)
2. Alija Aljovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
3. Marina Tikhonovich (Belarus)
4. Emil Nurgaliev (Bulgaria)
5. Mladenka Karacic (Croatia)
6. Anna Belenchuk (Russian Federation)
7. Ivan Rakovskiy on behalf of Nikolay Begchin (Russian Federation)
8. Naida Carsimamovic (BCOP Resource Team)
9. Iryna Shcherbyna (BCOP Resource team)

**Observers:**

1. Ksenia Galantsova (Secretariat)

**Agenda items:**

1. **Welcome and Agenda Overview**
2. **Acceptance of the minutes to the previous meetings** held in March 2019
3. **Nomination of new BCOP Deputy Chair and consideration of inviting additional countries with active member to join Executive Committee**
4. **Feedback from 2019 BCOP Plenary meeting –** overview of the report on post-event survey, discussions on what worked well and what are lessons learned for future BCOP planning
5. **Update on Working Groups:**
   * **Budget Literacy and Transparency Working Group**
   * **Program and Performance Budgeting Working Group**
6. **BCOP 2020 Action Plan and Budget** – overview of the draft table, discussions, and final decisions on the version to be submitted to PEMPAL Steering Committee
7. **Preparation for BCOP’s participation at the OECD SBO CESEE meeting and PEMPAL Cross-COP leadership meeting**
8. **Other business**

**Minutes:**

1. **Welcome and Agenda Overview**

Ms. Anna Belenchuk welcomed participants and gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

1. **Acceptance of the minutes to the previous meetings** held in March 2019

***Conclusion:***

* The Executive Committee accepted the minutes of previous meetings held on March 18 and 21, 2019 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

1. **Nomination of new BCOP Deputy Chair and consideration of inviting additional countries with active member to join Executive Committee**

Since Mr. Kanat Asangulov, former BCOP Executive Committee Deputy Chair, left Ministry of Finance of Kyrgyz Republic and thus BCOP, Ms. Belenchuk proposed that Ms. Marina Tikhanovich from Belarus Ministry of Finance takes the position of one of the two BCOP Executive Committee Deputy Chairs (in addition to Ms. Mladenka Karacic). Ms. Tikhonovic accepted and thanked Ms. Belenchuk for this opportunity.

In regard to inviting additional active BCOP countries to join the BCOP Executive Committee, Ms. Belenchuk reminded that the Executive Committee has already discussed potentially extending invitation to Mr. Vasile Botica, representative of Moldova. She noted that Ms. Botica was very active and contributed considerably to the plenary meeting held in Tashkent, and thus proposed that the Executive Committee invites him to become a member..

Ms. Belenchuk also stated that Ukrainian members have been active and proposed to invite Ukraine to join the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee and Resource Team members then discussed which of the two BCOP members from Ukraine specifically should be invited (Ms. Olena Mykhailenko or Ms. Nataliia Tolopylo), given that both have been very active in recent BCOP activities.

***Conclusions:***

* The Executive Committee decided to extend an invitation to join the Executive Committee to Mr. Vasile Botica from Moldova.
* The Executive Committee members will vote via e-mail on which of the two BCOP members from Ukraine should be invited to join the Executive Committee, after which the invitation will be extended to the members with most votes.

1. **Feedback from 2019 BCOP Plenary meeting –** overview of the report on post-event survey

Ms. Iryna Shcherbyna and Ms. Naida Carsimamovic gave an overview of the results of post-event survey of participants of the 2019 BCOP annual plenary meeting held in Tashkent in March 2019. The report with the detailed results was circulated to the members prior to this meeting and is also available on PEMPAL website. They highlighted high satisfaction rates for all of the aspect of the event, including relevancy of the topics, quality of presentations, quality of group discussions, quality of services provided by the Executive Committee, Resource team and Secretariat, as well as interpretation. In terms of feedback received from the participants for aspects that could be improved, suggestions for further increase time for group discussions, questions and answers, and group exercises were noted.

***Conclusion:***

* The Executive Committee noted the participants’ feedback and will take it into account when designing the future BCOP plenary meetings, including to plan for fewer presentations and more time for group discussions, questions and answers, and group exercises.

1. **Update on Working Groups:**
2. **Program and Performance Budgeting Working Group (PPBWG)**

Ms. Carsimamovic explained that PPBWB Lead, Mr. Nikolay Begchin, could not attend this meeting, but has provided feedback to the Resource Team on the agenda’s items related to PPBWG Since the March plenary meeting, PPBWG received an invitation from the OECD to present the results of the PEMPAL countries on the OECD 2018 Performance Budgeting Survey at the meeting of the OECD Health Systems Joint Network for Central, Eastern and South-eastern European Countries, held in Vilnius on April 25-26. On behalf of PPBWG, Mr. Ivan Rakovskiy attended the meeting and successfully delivered a presentation..

Further PPBWG activities will be focused on the development of a formal knowledge product on results of 2018 OECD Performance Budgeting Survey combined with the results of the BCOP’s pre-event survey in the part on spending reviews. After some delay, PPBWG received OECD’s report on results of the OECD Performance Budgeting Survey for OECD countries prior to this Executive Committee meeting, thus PPBWG will be working on this knowledge product in the upcoming period, including benchmarking of PEMPAL and OECD countries.

In terms of PPBWG activities in FY20, Ms Carsimamovic reminded that PPBWG did not hold a f-2-f workshop/learning visit on spending reviews in FY19 because of the PEMPAL budget constraints and that this event has been moved to FY20. PPBWG also plans to work on a knowledge product on spending reviews. She also reminded that within the discussions of the participants during the PPBWG day at the plenary meeting in Tashkent, additional suggestions for work of the PPBWG were proposed, including collecting and distributing specific methodological documents and reports on spending reviews from the countries that conducted them; as well as collecting additional data on program scope, definitions and coverage of government expenditures within programs and within performance indicators in PEMPAL countries, with additional focus on cross-cutting programs and indicators. PPBWG will consider these suggestions when planning its future activities.

1. **Budget Literacy and Transparency Working Group (BLTWG)**

Ms. Belenchuk explained that the focus of the BLTWG currently is on subtopic of participatory budgeting. BLWTH will be working on a knowledge product on participatory budgeting, to continue on the previously developed background paper. Currently, BLTWG leadership and the Resource Team are working on engaging an expert to assist the BLTWG on the design of contents and preparation of this knowledge product.

Moreover, Ms Belenchuk reminded that a videoconference meeting of the BLTWG is scheduled for May 22. The objective of that meeting is continuing and deepening the discussion about public participation in budget policy at the national government level initiated during the BLTWG day at the BCOP plenary meeting in Tashkent. BLTWG will discuss future activities of this group as well.

***Conclusion:***

* The Executive Committee noted the progress and plans of the two BCOP working groups.

1. **BCOP 2020 Action Plan and Budget**

Ms Carsimamovic reminded that the Resource Team has drafted and circulated to the Executive Committee members prior to this meeting a pre-draft of the BCOP FY20 Action Plan/Budget table, with different options of activities for the Executive Committee to decide. This was based on the discussions held by the Executive Committee in the previous meetings. She next gave overview of this pre-draft table.

She reminded that for FY20, PEMPAL SC has approved the initial COP FY20 budget allocations of US$250,000 for each COP, plus any carried over COP savings from FY19. COP activity plans for FY20 should be prepared/updated based on these amounts and be ready to be submitted to SC in June 2019, to be ready for SC’s review in their next meeting.

In terms of FY19 BCOP savings, she reminded that BCOP has been operating in continuous savings mode due to networks’ financial uncertainties and achieved around US$30,000 in savings in the first half of FY19 (as a result of being able to get low hotel rates for Portugal event, sharing some costs with co-organizer GIFT for the Portugal event, as well as somewhat smaller number of participants than planned in Moscow and Portugal events) to redirect to participation at the 2019 annual meeting of the OECD SBO CESEE. This meeting is taking place on July 4-5 in Minsk, Belarus, and thus will be included in FY20 BCOP budget. Based on the final actual costs of the BCOP plenary meeting in Tashkent from March, additional US$25,000 of savings were achieved in FY19 from the plenary meeting, as a result of hosts’ contributions and lower number of participants than planned. Thus, BCOP can plan for total of US$305,000 for FY20 activities.

In the pre-draft BCOP FY20 Action Plan/Budget table, US$30,000 is planned for the participation at the 2019 annual meeting of the OECD SBO CESEE in July 2019; US$150,000 is devoted to the FY20 BCOP plenary meeting; and US$15,000 is planned for costs related to development of knowledge products (including translation, design, and other costs) and translations connected to VC meetings. The remaining US$110,000 is divided among two working groups including attendance at OECD events. Specifically, US$65,000 is planned for the PPBWG and two options are proposed: Option A which would include a two-day workshop of PPBWG on spending reviews held back to back with the participation of PPBWG leadership at the OECD Network on Performance and Results meeting in November 2019 or Option B which would include a 2.5-day learning visit to a country advanced in spending reviews on spending reviews. In the case of Option B, the OECD Performance Network meeting would be excluded completely or, as potentially a small delegation could attend with members being self-payers. US$45,000 is planned for the BLTWG and two options are proposed: Option C which would include a one-day workshop of BLTWG held back to back with participation at annual OECD SBO CESEE meeting in May/June 2020 or Option D which would include a stand-alone face to face meeting/workshop of the BLTWG.

Ms. Carsimamovic invited the Executive Committee members to provide feedback on the proposed pre-draft options and to propose any additional options. Ms. Belenchuk thanked the Resource Team for preparing the pre-draft options based on previous discussions and noted that cooperation with the OECD and participation in OECD meetings is very important and useful for BCOP, given that topics discussed in the OECD networks with which BCOP cooperates largely overlap with the interest and priorities of BCOP countries and that BCOP benefits from experience of more advanced countries. She also informed the Executive Committee that Mr. Begchin reviewed the pre-draft options and that he considers Option A for PPBWG preferable to Option B. Ms. Belenchuk added that for BLTWG she believed that Option C is preferable to Option D. Mr. Aljovic echoed the note on importance of collaboration with the OECD and said that he believes that Option A for PPBWG and Option C for BLTWG are preferable to Options B and D. Ms. Tikhonovich, Mr. Rakovskiy, and Ms. Karacic agreed.

Ms. Shcherbyna thanked Executive Committee members on their feedback. Ms. Carsimamovic reminded that Serbia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan noted in the pre-event survey prior to the plenary meeting in Tashkent that their Ministries maybe could host the next plenary meeting. She explained that Serbia also inquired from the Resource Team more detailed information on what would be required from the hosts.

***Conclusion:***

* The Executive Committee endorsed the BCOP FY20 Action Plan/Budget table circulated prior to this meeting choosing Options A and C over Options B and D. BCOP Resource Team will based on this prepare the full BCOP FY20 Action Plan to be submitted to the PEMPAL SC.
* The Resource Team will reach out to BCOP members from Serbia to inquire on the decision of Serbian Ministry of Finance whether they would like to host the 2020 BCOP annual plenary meeting. If a negative answer is received from Serbia, the Resource Team will contact Georgia and Kazakhstan with the same inquiry.

1. **Preparation for BCOP’s participation at the OECD SBO CESEE meeting and PEMPAL Cross-COP leadership meeting**

Ms. Shcherbyna gave a short overview of the draft agenda for the OECD SBO CESEE meeting taking place in Minks on July 4-5, 2019. In addition to presentations of Belarus and Bulgaria that are being coordinated directly by OECD, OECD asked the Resource Team for assistance in arranging additional six presentations from BCOP. This included presentations by the BCOP Resource Team on capital budgeting and spending review status and challenges in PEMPAL countries and presentations of specific country cases BCOP members. Specifically, Russia has been asked to present on performance budgeting and key performance indicators, Bosnia and Herzegovina on capital budgeting, and Albania and Croatia on fiscal risks. Final confirmations from these countries are still pending.

Ms. Carsimamovic explained that the recent change in the PEMPAL policy for funding participation in the events of the representatives of EU member countries is still in force and that for this specific event, PEMPAL is unable to cover the costs of participation of representatives from EU countries regardless of whether they would present in the event. Thus, invitations to Croatia and Bulgaria from BCOP invite these countries to nominate two participants to attend this event, noting that they would have to be self-payers, unless their Ministry agrees on an arrangement with the OECD by which OECD would cover the costs. Ms. Karacic explained that this is still under discussion in her Ministry, while Mr. Nurgaliev explained that his participation in the event is arranged through OECD, in the context of the budget review conducted for Bulgaria by OECD.

In terms of PEMPAL cross-COP leadership meeting, Ms. Shcherbyna reminded that this meeting was originally planned for July 2019, however, it has been postponed. PEMPAL leadership is currently exploring a possibility of holding this meeting in Moscow in September 2019 (during the week Moscow Financial Forum, which is taking. Place on September 12-13, 2019) or to possibly postpone to calendar year 2010. Given that September is usually a very busy period in budget calendar, PEMPAL leadership needs the feedback from BCOP Executive Committee members on whether they or their replacement would be able to attend the cross-COP leadership meeting if held in September in Moscow.

As meeting is in Moscow, Ms. Belenchuk would be able to attend. Ms. Tikhonovich also said that she would most likely be able to attend. Ms. Karacic noted that this particular week in Croatian budget calendar is busier for budget users than Ministry of Finance, so she may be able to attend, but that would have to be confirmed. Mr. Aljovic and Mr. Nurgaliev noted that this period is quite intense and thus there are high risks associated with attendance, although they would try to attend or send a replacement. Ms. Gabrielyan said that she nor anyone from her department would be able to attend and travel in this period, due to budget preparation obligations.

***Conclusion:***

* The Executive Committee noted the progress on plans for participation at the OECD SBO CESEE meeting.
* The Resource Team will inform PEMPAL leadership about BCOP Executive Committee’s feedback on potential attendance of BCOP Executive Committee members at a cross-COP leadership meeting if held in the week of September 9, 2019 in Moscow.