**2017 Workplan & Funding Proposal for the**

**Open Government Partnership Fiscal Openness Working Group**

**OVERVIEW**

Objectives

The Fiscal Openness Working Group (FOWG) aims to support the implementation of the budget transparency and public participation in fiscal policy commitments of governments that are members of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The FOWG, co-anchored by GIFT, and with the support of the OGP Support Unit:

1. Provides a platform for peer-to-peer sharing and learning among OGP members on fiscal openness;
2. Offers OGP members efficient and coordinated access to international good practices, tools, norms, assessments, and technical expertise on fiscal openness;
3. Supports the efforts of OGP-members to implement their fiscal openness commitments, and develop even more ambitious goals and good practices;
4. Motivates additional governments to become champions and models of fiscal openness.

Outcomes

* Four countries define and adopt commitments on fiscal transparency and participation in the national action plans (NAP) in 2017;
* The FOWG provides assistance to four countries in the implementation of their on-going fiscal transparency and participation commitments; and
* The FOWG engages with governments and civil society organizations that contributed to Collective Action 7 of the Paris Declaration; and
* The FOWG engages in common activities with one OGP working group.

**KEY ACTIVITIES**

This year, the FOWG has planned several activities and peer to peer workshops to continue providing technical assistance to countries formulating their National Action Plans, as well to countries that are in the process of implementing their fiscal transparency commitments; promoting peer-to-peer learning; and creating synergies with other OGP working groups, as described below.

Technical Assistance for National Action Plans

The GIFT network will continue providing assistance to various countries that will be working on their National Action Plans in the first semester of 2017. The goal is to get countries to define and adopt commitments on fiscal transparency and simultaneously sign onto principles on fiscal transparency and public participation. This assistance seeks to generate a conversation with governments, based on the FOWG’s experience of engaging OGP countries in technical assistance and peer-to-peer learning continuously over the last couple of years, that leads to improved action plans, with practical commitments to implement the High-Level Principles on Fiscal Transparency, as well as the Principles of Public Participation in Fiscal Policy.

GIFT is in a position to offer deeper support to national public finance authorities in the development and detailed design of fiscal openness commitments in their next Action Plans and to move further up-stream with this support. This support would take the form of technical inputs, drawing on the expertise and cross-country experience in the GIFT network, and/or facilitating interactions with in-country CSOs working on budget transparency. In 2015 and 2016, the FOWG provided comments on the fiscal transparency commitments of several draft National Action Plans, but this was at a late stage in the development of the Plans. Experience suggests that technical inputs at an earlier stage will be more useful and effective, and that peer learning and networking can support this assistance. GIFT has expressed this concern to OGP’s Support Unit and is looking forward to discuss a mechanism that allows an earlier collaboration in the NAP drafting process.

The FOWG can provide inputs on any aspect of fiscal transparency, participation, and accountability. The specific areas on which FOWG workshops and cross-country activities have been focusing on recently are:

1) Public participation in the development and implementation of fiscal policy and budgeting.

2) The dissemination of fiscal data in open data formats and visualizations

3) Fiscal Transparency Portals and Citizens Budgets (popular dissemination of budget information)

The following countries working on their NAP this year are of particular interest for the FOWG: Argentina, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Croatia, France, Jamaica, Liberia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, the Philippines, and the United States.

GIFT will seek to engage Argentinian and Colombian Ministries of Finance in the May Paraguay workshop; and Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia will be included in the May regional workshop in the Balkans. In the case of Burkina Faso, the FOWG will try to work together on the Francophone Africa event involving Cote D’Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Benin (not an OGP country yet), organized with IBP and other GIFT stewards. With respect to the Philippines, the Department of Budget and Management is a GIFT Lead Steward, and the national government has committed to Collective Action 7 on Transparency and participation in budgets and fiscal policies, among other actions through the Commission on Audit’s (COA) commitment to institutionalize the implementation of Citizen Participatory Audit and issue additional policy enhancements.

On-Going Investment in National Action Plans

GIFT and the FOWG network will provide specific recommendations on what countries can do in terms of fiscal openness, drawing on the 2015 Open Budget Survey’s recommendations for each country on priorities for reform, as well as the International Budget Partnership's in-country network of Budget CSOs. Where appropriate, EITI and Open Contracting Partnership reports encouraging fiscal transparency may also be drawn upon.

The network has been providing on-going support to its members, through technical assistance or peer to peer learning activities for the implementation of their fiscal transparency commitments, as is the case with Mexico, Guatemala, Paraguay, Tunisia and Uruguay. GIFT will continue actively engaging with these governments. In particular, the Government of Paraguay has endorsed the Paris Collective Action 7 by sharing “one interactive website/app that will foster citizen interaction for the following and monitoring of the budget design, execution of the budget, salary payrolls, public debt, public investment and land registries. The Paraguayan Government will share the methodology for the creation of a National Catalogue of Action and Audit Plans related to the National Action Plan 2030, which have a direct impact on multi-year budget design.” Similarly, the Government of Indonesia has committed to promote transparency and public participation in budget and fiscal policies. Specifically: (i) [they] commit to continue improving fiscal openness through the publishing of information in the fiscal transparency portal and encouraging its use. This commitment is also part of 2016- 2017 Indonesia NAP. (ii) [they] will share [their] best practices with other OGP countries through the Fiscal Openness working group. Additionally, in endorsing the Paris Collective Action 7, “the Government of Uruguay, in collaboration with civil society organizations, will develop a budget transparency portal with detailed information on the planning and implementation of public resources, including non-state public entities. The Government of Uruguay will share its learning and good practices in open budget experiences.” This is a process that GIFT has been supporting since 2016.

Peer learning networks (first semester 2017)

As described below, during the first semester of 2017, GIFT will organize a series of FOWG events in three regions of the world (Americas, Asia and Europe).

Americas:

* + - 1. April - Colombia: Responding to a collaboration with OGP’s Legislative Openness Working Group, GIFT will participate in the regional workshop Parliamentary Integrity: Anticorruption Measures and Open Budgets to Build Trust. GIFT will organize a panel with experts on public participation in fiscal policy and in the Open Budget Survey (5 international participants)
      2. May- Paraguay: In collaboration with the Planning & Development Secretariat of Paraguay and the World Bank, GIFT will host a Fiscal Openness Working Group workshop followed by a pubic seminar in Asunción. The agenda will focus in promoting access to information, fiscal transparency, proactive publication of fiscal and budget information in open data format, and public participation, by reviewing international experiences that serve as practical examples. The FOWG will seek to include Argentina and Colombia (both countries working on their new NAP). (12 international participants)
      3. Date to be defined – Uruguay: GIFT plans to support its Steward, the Office of Planning and Budget, in launching their new fiscal transparency portal (5 international participants)

Asia:

* + - 1. Date to de defined – Sri Lanka: In collaboration with the OGP Support Unit, GIFT will lead the organization of a FOWG workshop, seeking to also include representatives from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Mongolia to discuss access to information and proactive disclosure of fiscal information. GIFT is working to bring in the World Bank, as well as CSO colleagues. (15 international participants)

Europe:

* + - 1. May- Slovenia. GIFT will co-host with Slovenia’s Court of Audit a FOWG Balkans/Central Europe Regional Conference on Participatory Budgeting. Participating countries will include Croatia (new GIFT steward) and Bosnia & Herzegovina, with NAP coming up this year; as well as Georgia, given the GIFT’s high interest in knowing and eventually documenting their public participation in fiscal policies experience (15 international participants)

Africa:

* + - 1. To be defined: a FOWG regional meeting, maybe focusing on Francophone countries, to support the efforts of Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Morocco and other countries (Benin, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali, etc) in fulfilling the eligibility criteria in the budget transparency conditions. (15 international participants)

Activities for the second semester will be planned in the following months. They may include additional meetings in Guatemala, Paraguay, Croatia and Ghana.

Working with other OGP working groups

The FOWG will continue to look for opportunities to join efforts with other OGP Working Groups, in order to collaborate on projects where the groups can logically overlap and increase impact on issues, research, and workshops. An example of this is GIFT’s engaging with the Legislative Openness Working Group in the regional event in Colombia described above, aiming to promote the adoption of public participation mechanisms in the legislative.

## Proposal for Funding

The six workshops and meetings planned for 2017 at the moment include the participation of over 60 international participants. This is a proposal to the Open Government Partnership from the Fiscal Openness Working Group requesting $38,250 to help fund travel and accommodation costs for 30 participants at the various regional workshops on fiscal openness in OGP countries and the implementation of Open Government Partnership commitments, to be held during the first semester of 2017.

| **Costs for 20 Regional Participants** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Description** | **Estimated Cost per person** |
| Travel | Air or ground costs from home location to workshop | $700 |
| Lodging | Overnight accommodations | $400 |
| Local ground transportation | Modest funds to cover airport transfers and other local transportation | $100 |
| Meal allowance | Meals outside of workshop | $75 |
| Total for 30 participants ($1,275x20) | | *$25,500* |

The FOWG will also seek an additional support in the sum of $12,750 (10 participants) from the Support Unit’s Peer Exchange Fund in order to complete its planned activities.