Public Expenditure Management
Peer Assisted Learning

SUMMARY REPORT ON THE PEMPAL CROSS-COP LEADERSHIP MEETING 1-3 JULY 2013

BACKGROUND

On July 1-3, the leadership of all three PEMPAL COPs (Budget, Treasury and Internal Audit) and their resource teams gathered for their annual cross-COP meeting in Bohinj, Slovenia. Participants included 17 government representatives from Ministries of Finance and Treasuries from 12 PEMPAL member countries, 10 resource team members, and 2 World Bank survey experts. The meeting was an opportunity for the leadership of the network to take stock of results achieved and launch preparations for the next plenary meeting of the whole PEMPAL network planned for May 2014. The network leadership also examined post event survey mechanisms to determine if feedback was being appropriately captured, reported and used to ensure the on-going effectiveness of the network in meeting member needs. The PEMPAL Secretariat arranged the logistics and administrative support including active participation in the meeting by the Secretariat's new Team Leader, as a resource person. The following decisions, outlined below, were made by the leadership.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

- COPs presented their activities for the next year, and identified areas of common interest and agreed to invite representatives to relevant events to ensure on-going cross-COP cooperation. They also shared how they used communication tools, how they consulted members on priorities to be addressed, what results were being achieved, and what type of knowledge products were being developed.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2014 CROSS-COP PLENARY MEETING
Themes and sub-themes

- After discussions on possible themes to be addressed at the next cross-COP plenary of all members in May 2014, it was agreed that the topic would be **fiscal transparency and accountability** given its importance in ensuring good governance, and its relevance to all COPs. The leadership examined a background paper on budget transparency and held extensive discussions in cross-COP groups and within COP specific meetings on what sub-themes within this theme would be of most interest to assist them in their work.

- Within <u>COP specific meetings</u> it was agreed that:

TCOP would like the following sub-themes to be addressed:	**BCOP** would like the following sub-themes to be addressed:	**IACOP** would like the following sub-themes to be addressed:
1) The role of IT 2) Accounting and reporting 3) Risks associated with budget transparency. Russia agreed to showcase its IFMIS under 1). TCOP will prepare a study on IT use in PEMPAL countries and organize a market place to share information. Cem Dener from the World Bank will also be invited to present the study of the impact of IT systems on budget transparency, with a focus on PEMPAL countries.	1) Transparency codes and standards 2) Comparative transparency assessment results 3) Analytical work by BCOP to be showcased. PEMPAL will liaise with IMF and OECD on the revised transparency standards suggesting Russia as a case study, given they participated as a pilot for the revised IMF code. BCOP will also prepare transparency comparative assessments and present on citizen's guides to the budget and budget portals.	1) Internal control, including internal audit as instruments to ensure budget transparency and accountability 2) Risk management, including assessment. IACOP can share its experiences in these areas but also recommends that an expert from a developed country be invited to the meeting. 3) Performance indicators IACOP would also like a booth to showcase its work, its wiki and its knowledge products.

- Within <u>cross-COP specific meetings</u> it was agreed that the following content would be considered within the themes and sub-themes:
    o Provision of definition of key concepts and terminology.
    o Relationship among different PFM institutions from a transparency perspective (MoF, SAI, internal audit, government, parliament, civil society).
    o Evidence of impact of fiscal and budget transparency on fiscal governance and sustainability.
    o Presentations on global standards/codes and surveys about transparency (eg present upcoming new OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency and IMF Fiscal Transparency Code).
    o Presentation of methodology of assessing transparency (eg Open Budget Index, PEFA, IMF Fiscal Rosc) and how PEMPAL countries perform. Transparency of budgets at the local level and availability of information on outcomes financed from budgetary funds (and public debt), at this level could also be covered. Someone from the EU could also present the results in the EU compendium on Public Internal Control.
    o Outline different standards for transparency for different purposes – reconciling accounting verses reporting standards across different methodologies (ie GFS, ESA, CoA, IPSAS.)
    o Examine how inclusion of non-financial data has been included in reporting (best global examples from South Africa, New Zealand, Austria). Include

information on results and on efficiency of budget spending at all stages of budgetary process.

- o Present the OECD Accounting and Auditing survey to determine if participation by IACOP and TCOP in the future could be useful. Possibility of conducting PEMPAL's own pre-event thematic survey could also be considered, or an update of existing transparency ratings (if feasible).
- o Showcase PEMPAL member countries performance and progress in the Open Budget Index and get those rated highest (top 4) to outline their progress and approach.
- o Methodologies and examples of citizen guides to the budget to be provided.
- o Impact of FMIS and IT solutions on budget transparency including showcasing innovative ways of how e-technologies can contribute to public awareness and increased public participation in budgeting. Country cases on e-budget, budget portals, and electronic public procurement systems could be showcased.
- o Results of BCOP participation in the OECD Budget Practices and Procedures survey (in COP booth or presentation) could be showcased.
- o COP specific presentations or booths showcasing the work of each COP could be considered. A video clip (business card) to be displayed by Secretariat at beginning of meeting to showcase PEMPAL.

Event Format

- It was agreed that the event should be ideally 2.5 days in duration. In addition, 0.5 days could be allocated for cultural program, and 0.5 days for the Steering Committee meeting (e.g. a total of 3.5 days for the main agenda). Additional COP specific meetings could be also attached to the main agenda. IACOP requested to plan **two** IACOP-specific days for working group activities immediately **before** the Cross-COP plenary.

- Representatives from each COP from the 22 member countries should be invited, along with resource team and international experts, giving a total of approximately 180 or more participants. For the first two days, the event should be comprised of general presentations in the morning of global overview and one to two country case studies, and in the afternoons, break into smaller technical discussion groups. The morning of the third day should be summing up and results. Country case studies could also be showcased through booths or posters.

- Presenters should be given clear guidelines on scope, presentation length and number of slides. A background note for each session should be prepared on best practices and what COPs do in relation to the subject (to be prepared by the COP Executive Committees and their resource teams).

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

- The leadership shared how they used feedback mechanisms across the network. A generic survey (originally prepared by the World Bank Institute) is modified by the COP Resource Teams to suit the nature of the event and then converted into electronic format. The Secretariat then circulates the survey link to all participants after each event, and the feedback is reflected in a report generated by an

independent source engaged by the World Bank. All COP Executive Committees examined these reports and together with their resource teams, implemented any suggested improvements. The Secretariat also reports on key data from the reports in its quarterly and annual PEMPAL performance reports which are shared with donors and all key stakeholders.

- After examination of the results presented by the World Bank of analysis of 18 of these surveys conducted by PEMPAL over the last three years, the leadership agreed that the survey mechanism was a valuable source of information to gather and analyse feedback from members, to identify improvements, and to monitor trends over time. During the last three years, these surveys were sent out to 949 participants, which included 549 representatives of PEMPAL countries. Overall survey results were very positive and the leadership was pleased with the trends identified (particularly with the average satisfaction rating across all events of 4.7 out of 5).

- There were opportunities for improvement, for example in the response rate, which averaged 58% across all events (although there were significant variations between events). From the analysis, it was found that more experienced participants felt that they can more readily apply the acquired knowledge in their work reflecting the time it takes to utilize the peer-to-peer learning approach in full. Discussions about how to more actively identify and mentor these new members were held which will form part of the on-going membership analysis and management being undertaken by the COP leadership and their resource teams.

- In response to the analysis, the leadership decided to more actively promote the importance of completing the post-event surveys to hopefully improve the response rate. They also decided that a set of standardized questions should be developed, to streamline the process and ensure that specific core questions were not deleted due to the iterative nature of the process. It was also suggested that in the opening invitation email containing the email link, an indication of the length of the survey (ie number of questions) and the time that it will take to complete the survey should be mentioned. Filters should also be implemented to distinguish the different types of respondents (eg participant, host country, resource person, secretariat). To provide feedback to participants, it was also suggested that the Executive Committee and/or resource team should summarize the content of the feedback report (sending out a link to the document) and highlight what actions will be taken in response to any suggested improvements from members. Questions

should also be added on the quality of the simultaneous and written translation. Lastly, a balance should be maintained between questions related to logistics and questions related to technical content.

- Approaches used by the COP leadership to capture feedback <u>during</u> events were also shared, and it was agreed that these were complimentary to the formal electronic survey mechanism and should continue if the COPs found them useful.

NEXT STEPS

- The COP Executive Committees will be kept informed of the preparations for the 2014 cross-COP plenary meeting through their nominated representatives and the feedback collected during the meeting will form the basis of preparations for the event. The first meeting of this Organizing Committee[1] will be held in September.

- As requested by the COP leadership, the post event survey mechanism will be reviewed. As part of the review, a standardized set of core questions for each type of event will be established by the Secretariat, in consultation with the survey experts and the COP resource teams.

Full event materials can be found on the PEMPAL website at the following link: http://www.pempal.org/event/read/86

---

[1] The Organizing Committee for this event had been constituted as the delegates of each COP, Ms. Aubrey as coordinator of content development, Resource Team members, and Mr. Bauchmüller representing the Secretariat