**Fiscal Governance Program Portfolio Review Document**

**Public Budgets Portfolio**

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*April 2015*

1. **Introduction to Portfolio**

This portfolio review document assesses the Fiscal Governance Program’s (FGP) investment in the “public budgets” field, with emphasis on the decision in 2014 to substantially increase OSF’s core support to one grantee, the International Budget Partnership (IBP), as the program’s primary grant making strategy for having an impact in this field. In addition, the memo provides brief reflections on two other grants in FGP’s public budgets-related portfolio that have either been terminated or are winding down – Publish What You Fund, an international advocacy organization supporting aid transparency, and Fair Play Alliance, a Slovakia-focused anti-corruption watchdog group. This assessment does *not* review two other core investments currently housed in FGP’s “public budgets” budget line – the Open Government Partnership and the Transparency and Accountability Initiative – as we plan to assess these along with other cross-field multi-stakeholder initiatives and donor collaboratives during FGP’s next portfolio review in November 2015. It is worth noting that this portfolio began under the direction of Julie McCarthy, FGP’s Director, and is now managed by Mark De La Iglesia, with continued strategic support from McCarthy.

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| Grantee | Main Objective | Amount ($) | Term |
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| International Budget Partnership | General support grant to promote transparent, inclusive and accountable budgeting to improve the distribution and management of public resources, thereby advancing governance and service delivery. | 1,100,000 | 2013 |
|  | Same as above. | 3,000,000 | 2014 |
| Publish What You Fund | Program support grant to enable PWYF to help ensure that donors live up to their ambitious commitments to implement a common standard for aid information disclosure by the 2015 deadline, and to work through advocacy, data tools, and other mechanisms to ensure that this new information is used by developing country governments as well as civil society to promote more effective budget planning and development spending. | 400,000 | 2013-2014 |
|  | Same as above. | 300,000 | 2014-2015 |
| Fair Play Alliance | Project support grant given in the spirit of general support, to continue funding the non-lobbying elements of Fair Play Alliance’s innovative and effective civic watchdog work in Slovakia, and to enable FPA to hire consultants to help expand and diversify its fundraising sources. | 148,000 | 2015 |

1. **Background on the Public Budgets Field, and OSF’s Evolving Place in it**

Over the past 15 years, there has been a considerable shift in good practices associated with public financial management and more open, accountable budgeting and service delivery.  Thanks in large part to the work of the International Budget Partnership (IBP) and its local partners, the norm of budget transparency has gained wide acceptance as good governance practice by mainstream development actors in the last 15 years, and we have seen the growth of an increasingly sophisticated network of local budget monitoring organizations in more than 100 countries.

Almost all international institutions now promote extensive, timely, and accessible transparency of budget documentation throughout the budget cycle. In addition, many of the key multilateral financial institutions, including the IMF and World Bank, also encourage a stronger, independent role for legislatures, Supreme Audit Institutions, as well as the public in holding the executive to account.  There is an influx of donor interest and support for new approaches to service delivery monitoring and social accountability (e.g. citizens’ report cards, social audits) in low and middle income countries—although this work is often discussed as a silver bullet and supported as one-off, project-based engagements. Bilateral aid agencies like the Millennium Challenge Corporation and DFID have increasingly begun adopting explicit fiscal transparency conditionality in their assistance frameworks, although these standards are not consistent and there is some concern about missed opportunities for impact based on lack of coordination. The Open Government Partnership’s (OGP) inclusion of budget transparency as a key criterion for membership has had an incentivizing effect on a number of countries to make specific improvements on open budgeting (e.g. Tunisia, El Salvador) and we have seen a large number of countries make new commitments to fiscal transparency in their action plans (with varying degrees of ambition). In 2011, IBP helped seed and launch another central multi-stakeholder network, the Global Initiative on Fiscal Transparency (GIFT), co-led with the governments of Brazil and the Philippines as well as the World Bank and IMF. This initiative has provided an increasingly influential forum for southern countries to play a leadership role in helping define international standards and norms around budget transparency and participation, in ways that are actively shaping the policies of key multilateral institutions.

With early support from the Open Society Foundations and the Ford and Hewlett foundations, IBP has effectively created the global open budgets field as we know it today, and continues to play a central role in providing technical assistance, capacity building, networking, and financial support to an increasingly sophisticated global network of local budget monitoring organizations. Indeed, it is impossible to speak about the field of budget monitoring today without talking about IBP—which is perhaps both a good and a bad thing. Virtually all of the leading civil society groups in the field today received training, mentoring, organizational development support and re-granting from IBP during the early stages of their development, and a number of these institutions are now playing an increasingly important role as regional capacity-builders for their peers (e.g. Fundar in Mexico, FITRA in Indonesia, Public Service Accountability Monitor in South Africa, ISODEC in Ghana, Policy Forum in Tanzania, IBASE in Brazil, CBGA in India). IBP provides a platform through which emerging organizations connect to their international peers, share existing practices and methodologies, and receive training and other resources. IBP’s innovative Open Budget Index, which provides an objective (rather than perceptions-based) measure of budget openness that can be used to point to needed reforms—has become the central measure by which bi- and multilateral donors assess country performance on fiscal transparency (including likely in the Post-2015 targets).

While OSF continues to play a central role in cultivating IBP’s growth and leadership in the field, the fact that it is the only major global organization today with deep capacity, experience, and resources to engage on budget issues at the global, regional, and local level is also a risk. If leadership changes and IBP takes a strategic/organizational turn for the worse, it is not clear who would step in to fill the breach. IBP has no real competition in the global INGO landscape, although groups like Oxfam America, Action Aid, and Development Initiatives are supporting various advocacy, capacity-building and monitoring efforts on budgets and service delivery at the international and local level with varying degrees of sophistication. That said, IBP’s model is unique and somewhat “distributed” in that it relies on the most innovative and effective members of its loose network of partner organizations around the world to provide much of the training and mentoring for their civil society peers, so that there is no one “IBP” model about how to do social audits, gender budget analysis, or any other monitoring approach being disseminated as IBP gospel. There is a great deal of pluralism within the organization and its constituent parts in terms of methodology and strategic approach, and IBP recognizes and cultivates this as a strength.

To date, IBP has been the primary investment that FGP (and OSF before it) has made in the budgeting/service delivery field at the global level. We have supported global platforms like OGP that have helped drive policy reforms in this field in a number of countries, funded post 2015 advocacy that seeks to make fiscal transparency an integral part of the final framework, and advised on the creation of new initiatives like the Open Contracting Partnership that show promise in addressing fringe areas like procurement in a more targeted way—but, overall, our contribution to the field is represented almost exclusively by the growth and contributions of IBP. To that end, even our most recent effort to develop a $20 million challenge fund around stimulating greater government accountability for improved social outcomes is being co-designed with and implemented by IBP.

1. **FGP’s investment in IBP – Our Ambitions, Our Decisions and Our Work**

Decisions and Rationale

Prior to FGP’s creation, IBP had been receiving around $700,000 per annum from the President’s office for several years. They also had several concurrent, term-limited project grants for work in MENA and Latin America that have since ended. When FGP inherited IBP’s grant in 2013, McCarthy immediately upped their grant to $1.1 million per annum in general support, and in early 2014, McCarthy made the decision to increase FGP’s investment in IBP to $3 million per annum, with a commitment to continue this level of funding for at least the next three years. In doing so, FGP increased OSF’s stake in IBP to just under one-third of their total revenue (our closest donor peers at present, Hewlett and Ford, provide around $2 million per annum respectively), and McCarthy also took a seat on their Advisory Board—which, as part of their spin-off from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), recently transformed into a formal Governing Board. McCarthy’s overall ambition with these decisions was to scale up FGP’s investment in budget and service delivery monitoring work in low and middle income countries, through more substantially resourcing a single organization that she estimated to be the most effective, innovative and globally active in the field at that time.

When McCarthy assumed responsibility for FGP’s inherited portfolio of grants and an additional approximately $2.3 million in unallocated funds in early 2013, OSF was investing almost $9 million in revenue side work (through large grants to NRGI, Global Witness, ISLP, Publish What You Fund and Publish What You Pay), or more than 9 times what we were spending on expenditure-side concerns ($700,000). McCarthy felt strongly that FGP’s mission—to ensure that public resources are generated, managed and spent in ways that promote equitable development, democratic accountability and human rights—could not be realized if we didn’t bring greater balance to our investments across the public resource chain. Specifically, a large amount of work on the revenue side at that time (and up to present) involved helping governments increase their financial “take” from extractive investments, and/or providing reputational advantage to governments that increased revenue transparency (through mechanisms like EITI) while turning a blind eye to any “downstream” corruption or mismanagement that undermined development and democratic accountability. Without ensuring the presence of strong independent oversight actors to monitor and challenge government practices around spending allocation and execution, FGP and its partners were running the risk of simply helping corrupt government officials increase their “take” with greater political cover, while having no serious impact on governance and development in the countries we work in. As a response, the first decision that McCarthy made was to substantially increase FGP’s overall investment in the budget/service delivery field.

The second decision McCarthy made was around how much to invest. After “pruning” FGP’s overall portfolio, and setting aside a modest but not insignificant budget for nascent work on tax/illicit flows (an area where it was clear FGP would need to start slowly and demonstrate strategic insight and impact before convincing the global board to endorse more serious engagement), McCarthy decided to use the majority of the remaining available discretionary resources (around $2 million) to go towards this work. This decision involved significant budgetary tradeoffs for FGP in a fixed income environment. It meant that we could not do much in the way of new or different work on natural resources without scaling back on existing commitments to long-time anchor grantees; it likewise limited our ability in the near term to ramp up funding for tax/illicit flows work, to support more serious engagement around Post 2015 shared framework engagement, to invest more substantially in scoping potential engagement in the field of political finance corruption/state capture, and to invest more in cross-cutting knowledge generation and impact assessment research; and, it left virtually no discretionary funds for opportunistic work or unexpected developments.

The third decision point was how to invest the resources around budget/service delivery. In choosing to invest almost exclusively in IBP, McCarthy deliberately adopted a grant making strategy that focused on substantial support to one organization, rather than smaller grants to a larger number of groups either internationally or at the regional/local level. This decision meant that FGP would not have substantial additional resources to spend supporting other budget monitoring and service delivery work.

Alternative strategies that were—albeit briefly and with minimal research—considered and rejected at the time included: (1) identifying a number of IBP’s strongest partners at the regional and/or national level and providing them with additional resources to strengthen their engagement and sustainability; (2) taking some of the resources and investing them in other organizations in the field that included budget work as part broader fiscal governance policy advocacy and capacity-building strategies at the country level (e.g. Oxfam America, Action Aid); (3) targeting particular sub-fields of interest to other parts of OSF, such as education or health budget work, in particular geographies; (4) taking a large portion of the funds and investing them in other large-scale basket funding vehicles emerging at the time such as MAVC or GPSA; and (5) choosing countries where partners like NRGI were investing in revenue-side work and making complimentary local investments on the expenditure side.

Given limited staff and bandwidth at the time (McCarthy was FGP’s only staff member) to take on intensive scoping of new country level work (e.g., identifying which of IBP’s local partners it made sense to fund, why and how), as well as reservations about the effectiveness of basket funding vehicles (e.g.,MAVC, GPSA), and the reliance of other OSF regional and thematic programs (e.g. Public Health Program and Latin America Program) on IBP to support training, mentoring, and capacity-building of issue/region-specific budget groups in their fields, it ultimately made the most sense to McCarthy to invest all of the resources in IBP, versus pursuing the other alternatives.

The most tempting alternative for McCarthy was option (1) above, to provide more funding directly to promising national budget monitoring groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which IBP had helped cultivate and were struggling to find more secure and sustainable sources of donor support. Ultimately, she made the decision to fund IBP instead of going this route based in part on the staffing issues raised above, but also on the belief that deepening FGP’s engagement with IBP might help yield opportunities for FGP to work with regional programs and local OSF foundations to scale up their support for these same promising local organizations, in tandem with FGP’s increased core support to IBP.

McCarthy’s decision was also influenced by timing and the particular strategic moment that IBP was at in 2013—about to spin-off from their host organization, CBPP, into an independent organization, and undergoing a major programmatic transition as a large, five-year, Gates-funded re-granting and research program was drawing to a close. IBP was actively looking for a number of existing/new core donors to step up and help launch the new organization with a more ambitious agenda, and likewise find ways to continue funding the best of the work that Gates had helped seed. (Indeed, even though Gates still struggles to get high level buy-in around fiscal governance work and had originally not planned to continue any funding in this space after the first grant, they decided to continue providing several million dollars in multi-year program support for IBP to build on promising in-country work in Kenya, India and South Africa.) IBP needed at least one donor to step up and be willing to increase their own contribution, in order to challenge the others to increase theirs. Based on her faith in the organization and its work, McCarthy decided that OSF was well positioned to play this role, and that a shift from $1 to $3 million set the right tone and positioned IBP to leverage this commitment.

Finally, underpinning all of the above reasons, McCarthy’s decision was influenced by a fundamental belief in IBP’s leadership and strategic approach, including an impressive track record of country-level impact, a deep commitment to ongoing critical reflection/strategic evolution, and enduring partnerships with a wide range of local civil society actors that would all benefit locally from FGP increasing support to IBP centrally.

Assessment

IBP continues to be a central, highly effective actor in diffusing open budgeting norms at the global, regional, and national levels, as well as in networking and capacitating civil society organizations doing budget-related work today. Over the past two years they have gained increasing prominence on the international stage—for example, co-chairing the OGP, becoming a much-coveted core support partner of DFID, being asked to advise on the IMF and World Bank’s budgeting and participation guidelines, and having the Open Budget Survey adopted as a performance assessment tool by numerous major donors. At the same time, IBP has deepened its country-level engagement in places like Kenya, India and South Africa by beginning to engage a more complex range of partners including social movements, supreme audit institutions, parliamentarians and government reformers in budget work, focused specifically on improving social and economic outcomes for the poor. They have done so with a real attention to learning, reflection and dynamic strategic adaptation—including recognizing when long cultivated efforts have failed to resonate and need reworking (e.g. global budget transparency advocacy coalition or BTAP) or need to be spun-off and given wings of their own (the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency/GIFT). FGP continues to believe that decision to substantially invest in IBP as an anchor partner in the global budget field was worthwhile, given that they are able to support country-level work at an unmatched scale and consistent level of excellence.

That said, IBP’s relationships and accomplishments in the areas of technical assistance and capacity building are strongest with groups that do *national-level* budget *analysis* (i.e., think tanks) and *advocacy* (i.e., social protection groups pushing for increased health and education budget allocations). Its work further “downstream” in the public resource chain, to support groups *monitoring service delivery* in particular sectors, including at the *local level*, is newer and more experimental, and its impacts remain to be seen. The fact that IBP has designed its recent, more intensive work in three countries – South Africa, Kenya, and India – in part to test and improve its understanding of how budget-related work can best support service-delivery monitoring and advocacy efforts at the subnational level, is therefore encouraging, and reflective of IBP’s learning-through-action model. While more intensive work in these three countries is still fully ramping up, FGP has already had one indication where the local-level work was less effective than it could be, in South Africa. Through a report from the South Africa office of fellow IBP funder, the Ford Foundation, we learned that, while IBP had done highly effective work with a handful of service delivery monitoring groups in Cape Town and the Eastern Cape, its efforts to support a broader network of social accountability groups seeking budget-related support had fallen short, leaving several of them feeling under-supported compared to their expectations. This is in part a capacity-constraint issue on IBP’s part, but also seems to have resulted primarily from the actions of a relatively undiplomatic new staff member (who was subsequently fired). FGP will continue to monitor the situation, as it speaks in part to the question of whether IBP’s new country-level work is scalable beyond the one or two local partners with whom it engages intensively. FGP also plans to be open-minded in exploring how other impressive field actors, including the leading IBP partners in specific regions that were considered for support in alternative (1) above, might be able to deliver similar, or better, results in this crucial area.

Importantly, IBP intends for the lessons learned from their intensive country efforts to inform a scaling up of this work in the coming years through the forthcoming “Catalyzing Accountability” challenge fund that OSF and other donors will also be supporting. Initial donor interest and enthusiasm for working with IBP on the Catalyzing Accountability fund is one indication that their reputation and influence has continued to strengthen over the term of OSF’s support, and our willingness to work with them on the challenge fund has also indicated great faith in IBP on our part to our donor peers.

While IBP does not have any obvious peers in the field, it is important to recognize that they are not the only significant international player with strong local presence/partnerships doing expenditure-related work. For example, ActionAid and Oxfam America are also doing expenditure-side work at the country level related to specific campaigns, and while these organizations may not have IBP’s depth of budget-specific expertise, given their local offices and presence, they generally have stronger reputations for being able to harness broader and deeper national-level coalitions to support pro-poor budget-related reforms (e.g., increasing and monitoring funding for small-holder agriculture), and linking those reforms to international mechanisms, than does IBP. Likewise, anti-corruption organizations like Transparency International and their national-level chapters are more active and have more expertise on policy advocacy and monitoring around procurement – a key downstream step in the public resource chain. FGP plans to explore these and other groups’ work more carefully in 2015 to get a better understanding of how potential their comparative advantages might complement IBP’s work.

Moreover, IBP’s partnership model means that they have not yet developed their own broad brand awareness in many of the countries where they have been intensively involved—typically supporting other local organizations through funding, training and mentoring behind the scenes—and this is only beginning to change with the new country strategy approach. It’s not clear that they necessarily need or want to build a local brand in every instance—especially at the expense of local partners—and they are navigating this challenge carefully, while recognizing that at times a well-known and respected local presence can also open doors for partners and strengthen their ability to convene and build campaigns.

One area that FGP continues to actively explore is alternative (1) above, providing direct institutional support to some of IBP’s strongest partners in specific regions in order to do their work more flexibly and effectively, while also improving their capacity to cascade technical assistance and capacity building on budget-related work in specific regions. Many of IBP’s strongest local partners do not have substantial general support from a diverse range of donors—they work project-to-project, and therefore have trouble ensuring job security and retaining the human capital that IBP is investing so heavily in over time. Moreover, McCarthy is concerned that by continuously relying on INGOs as funding intermediaries, these local groups miss out on building relationships and having direct visibility with potential long term general support donors like FGP. While FGP would only ever have the staff and funding capacity to provide support to a small number of regional “leaders” over time, we could use our presence in the TAI donor collaborative to leverage additional support for these and other groups, and also engage interested local/regional OSF foundations as partners to help deepen the bench of country -level budget work and enhance its sustainability over time. While McCarthy had hoped to engage regional and local foundations directly during the 2014 period as potential allies in scoping and co-funding potential local partners, staff on boarding, maternity leave and other priorities diverted her attention. That said, it is clear that in certain countries, for example with PSAM in South Africa, our local foundations are already providing some ongoing support, and this is an area that De La Iglesia will prioritize exploring more seriously in 2015.

Through McCarthy’s presence on IBP’s Advisory and later Governing Board, she has helped guide the organization through a gradual process of spinning off from CBPP, in a stable and thoughtful manner that appears to have caused minimal disruption or uncertainty internally, and is set to come to completion in summer 2015. Through McCarthy’s recommendation IBP brought on an excellent new board member, Tim Dixon, formerly an economic advisor to the Australian Government and currently a social campaigns/new media executive at Purpose.com, who has already begun to make strong contributions on both programmatic and operational matters. We have helped advise on the creation of a financial reserve in preparation for the spin-off, achieved greater clarity in the format of financial reporting to the board, and McCarthy has been asked to sit on the Audit and Finance Committee with Bob Reischauer to help oversee their finances going forward. McCarthy (as well as George Soros) have also periodically encouraged IBP to take an interest in certain emergent political opportunities, such as the transitions in Burma and Ukraine. While McCarthy senses that they initially mobilized exploratory missions primarily as a courtesy to OSF, they have identified genuinely interesting and exciting opportunities for work in at least one of these countries (Burma) that align with their own interests and will now become a part of their core strategy.

McCarthy does not feel that she achieved her ambition over this period of increasing the amount of revenue and expenditure-side work that is actually co-located in the same countries. While ramping up OSF funding for IBP has helped strengthen support to groups in the field broadly (as well as comparative policy research and country performance benchmarking), over the time period considered here, NRGI and IBP each ended up choosing almost completely different priority countries to deepen their engagement in. This lack of overlap is all the more striking given that the forthcoming 2016 Open Budget Survey identifies nearly all resource-rich autocracies as (almost exclusively) the worst performers on budget openness and participation.

Finally, reflecting on McCarthy’s assumption that OSF’s stepping up its funding in late 2013 to $3 million might influence other donors to make similar increases, the results have been mixed. IBP believes that OSF’s increase did directly lead Ford to double its annual commitment from $900,000 to $1.8 million per year from 2014 onwards (the shame/encouragement factor, as they put it), while the other donors had already made their commitments at that time and were not subject to influence. It is not clear yet whether any other long term funders will ramp up this year, but FGP was also helpful during this period in encouraging Omidyar to come on board as a new donor, and will hopefully be able to introduce new bilateral donors to the organization’s work in 2015 through the “Catalyzing Accountability” challenge fund.

1. **The Aid Transparency Field and Publish What You Fund**

When McCarthy assessed FGP’s inherited portfolio in 2013, it was clear that in order to do any new work, cuts would have to be made to existing commitments. When she examined the portfolio and got to know existing grantees, OSF’s work on international aid transparency, which consisted exclusively of support to Publish What You Fund, became an obvious candidate for potential tie-off. The aid transparency field had evolved quite dramatically since the mid-2000s, thanks in no small part to the efforts of PWYF under its superb founding director, Karin Christiansen. Given the creation of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in Busan in 2011 and widespread donor commitment to implementation—commitment, while not without delays and hiccups, that was reiterated in high-level action plans at the 2013 UK-hosted G8, within the context of OGP action plans, and so forth—in McCarthy’s view, by 2013 the field had evolved to a place where the aid transparency argument had been won. While a number of challenges remain, including getting various US agencies to actually live up to their promised commitments, McCarthy felt that there were a number of committed donors (e.g. Gates, Hewlett, DFID, Omidyar) and a number of highly engaged institutions (PWYF, Development Initiatives, ONE, etc.) that were not going away and would continue their good work even if OSF stepped away from its $400,000 per annum commitment.

Additionally, McCarthy began to develop real concerns about the trajectory of PWYF itself as an organization, after meeting numerous times with its then Director, David Hall-Matthews, and speaking to various board members and funders. As noted in grant write ups from this period, PWYF’s CEO lacked real vision in McCarthy’s view. It was not clear how PWYF differentiated itself from IATI and appeared increasingly to be doing work that an IATI secretariat should be doing. PWYF was completely focused on open data and wholly disconnected from local groups in the field or broader questions of use and uptake of aid data to drive improved fiscal governance and development outcomes. The CEO had no real vision, ambition or strategy for diversifying a paltry donor base, and no matter how many ways McCarthy tried to prompt him to provide compelling counter-arguments to these impressions, she always left conversations with these negative views further reinforced. As it turned out, the board made the decision in late 2014 to let the CEO go for many of the reasons highlighted above (without any OSF involvement), and also apparently due to other management-related concerns. There is a new CEO as of early 2015 that FGP has yet to meet, but who fellow donors seem very excited about, which hopefully bodes well for their future as OSF winds down its support completely in 2015. McCarthy remains confident that exiting this field and winding down PWYF support was the right decision for FGP, although it will be important to follow the momentum and health of the field in the next few years to know whether or not her assumptions that PWYF and the aid transparency movement would be unharmed by OSF’s exit were actually true.

1. **Slovakia’s Fair Play Alliance**

The Fair Play Alliance (FPA), an anti-corruption watchdog group in Slovakia, has been a long-time OSF grantee, funded by HRI, the Think Tank Fund, the Information Program, and OSF-Bratislava since 2003. In 2014, FGP took over from HRI the funding of the last year of a three-year general support grant to FPA, primarily because HRI had stopped funding FPA as a result of a strategic shift away from government-accountability/ anti-corruption work, and FGP knew FPA to be among the most effective such groups working at the country level, and an innovator and a model in the way it translates fiscal transparency into concrete reforms and accountability.

In late 2014, FGP decided to renew its grant to FPA for one year and increase the amount by $15,000, to $148,000, in order to support FPA’s hiring of a consultant to help it expand and diversify its fundraising sources. This grant was, in essence, a stopgap measure to support the survival and transition of FPA to greater financial sustainability, while FGP determined whether or not FPA would make a strategic fit with our program going forward. In light of FGP’s strategy process so far in 2015, it has become clear that FPA’s work is not likely to fit with FGP’s strategy, given its almost exclusive focus on Slovakia—FGP’s work is global, but has a strategic focus on the Global South, primarily Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

While FGP itself is not likely to continue funding FPA at significant levels, it nevertheless considers FPA to be a highly effective civic watchdog group, and a model in its ability to translate transparency into real reforms and accountability. For example, FPA has taken advantage of Slovakia’s procurement disclosure laws to expose shady or unfavorable contracts, leading to their reversal or renegotiation at lower rates. FPA has a sophisticated and flexible approach to combatting the challenges of state capture – being willing, for example, to shift from working on procurement to judicial independence, depending on where threats and opportunities are most prominent. FGP views it role in managing FPA’s current grant, and in discussing any potential ramp-down grants in the future, as that of a thought partner, helping FPA to think through how it can expand and diversify its funding sources, including by seeking potential funding from other OSF programs—with the most likely candidate being OSIFE—as well as helping it to mature its governance structure given that the organization still lacks a governing board with participation from external actors.