

EIP News: 2015 Annual Meeting
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What happens when you tell members of the Effective Institutions Platform to “get off the platform and into the train”? During the 2015 Annual Meeting (Singapore, 17-18 November) we tried it and as far as the dynamics of the meeting were concerned, the EIP train has left the station.

2015 saw the EIP refine its thematic pillars, increase its membership and complete an important milestone – a study on peer learning which provided the foundation for the new [EIP Peer-to-Peer Learning Guide](#). The Annual Meeting took stock of ongoing activities, discussed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provided a platform for exploring partnership and collaboration among EIP members.

With participation of 40 members from government institutions (ministries of finance/planning, civil service commissions, supreme audit institutions and parliaments) of over 35 countries, as well as from civil society and development partners represented, the multi-stakeholder nature of the EIP was made evident as heard in the enthusiastic opening remarks of Co-Chair Neil Levine (USAID) who underscored this unique character of the EIP. As a practitioner platform that enables honest conversations about successes and failures among a diverse set of stakeholders, the EIP is a potential solution to get reform and change processes unstuck. The experience sharing through *multi-stakeholder dialogues* (at country level) and international *learning alliances* of core issues of institutional effectiveness, are the two promising EIP approaches that the membership is pursuing through the various initiatives discussed during the meeting.

As our new EIP Co-Chair, Prof. Margaret Kobia (Kenya Public Service Commission) emphasized the need to keep in mind the end-goal of institutional effectiveness – improving the quality of life for citizens. She emphasized that the preferred characteristics of effectiveness should be defined and that “public trust” would be a vital component which – if missing – can hamper the ability of institutions to keep their focus on developmental goals. The EIP is currently supporting [Country Dialogues](#) on “Using and Strengthening Local Systems”, in Senegal and Bangladesh. This EIP activity convenes a wide range of institutions and serves not only as a platform to gain a better understanding of bottlenecks and opportunities, but also builds trust among key stakeholders. Lessons learnt will inform EIP knowledge products – both on process and potential significance of multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Many participants of the Annual Meeting highlighted the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) for the work of the EIP, particularly Goal 16 which is dedicated to: *the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels*. The potential role of the EIP in supporting the implementation of Goal 16 and in promoting the importance of the goal within the overall SDG framework was recognized by many of the delegates. It was agreed that the ideas for EIP activities developed during the meeting would be taken forward by members with support from the

EIP Joint Secretariat. Ideas included Learning Alliances on the measurement of progress against Goal 16 at country-level and on strategic foresight in the Pacific which would facilitate the localization of the SGDs through resilient national strategies and plans. While the global process towards an implementation and monitoring framework continues, the EIP will continue to flag the importance of effective institutions to the success of the 2030 Agenda and will seek donor support to fund an active engagement of the EIP. These and other ideas across all of EIP's thematic areas were developed during the course of the 2 day meeting. They will need further exchanges and discussions among members who are called upon to continue developing them into actionable proposals. Please refer to the [full meeting report](#) for details on the proceedings.

A mix of interactive breakout sessions, presentations and discussions kept the EIP train going strong. One highlight was the [presentation](#) of Dato Sri Idris Jala (CEO, Performance Management and Delivery Unit, Malaysia): “While Governments are good at developing beautiful strategies and received the wisdom of a multitude of experts, they often fail to implement and deliver”, he said. “Like an airplane that must descend from 30,000 feet, a strategic vision must make a landing!”. His message of bringing institutional change and transformation to the level of 3 feet to make implementation work, was well received and referenced repeatedly. This and other examples of successful change and reform processes will keep inspiring the work of the platform and will provide us with inspiration and shared experience that can catalyse success in our respective contexts.

The feedback received from participants makes us at the Secretariat feel encouraged that the EIP train has indeed left the station, that we can leverage the immense potential of this stakeholder platform and make a significant contribution to having effective institutions for sustainable development. Until we reach the next station – the Annual Meeting 2016 – we look forward to an action packed and collaborative year ahead.