

## The Effective Institutions Platform's Guide to Peer Learning: How can peer learning support the implementation of SDG 16?

*By Emilie Gay and Tom Burton*

The Effective Institutions Platform (EIP) launched its [Guide to Peer Learning](#) during the OECD's [Integrity Week](#). Peer learning's innovative approach to development seeks to find solutions to problems that older pre-defined supply-side technical practices have struggled to address. The added-value of peer learning comes from its strength in addressing the more political dimensions of change—or 'tacit' knowledge. The politics and coalition building of institutional reform are much better addressed by peer learning style initiatives than the traditional supply-side technical practices.

The [EIP's Guide](#) is intended as a 'tool' for practitioners looking to benefit from the EIP's 'peer learning alliances'. The EIP is currently running several of these structured peer learning alliances. Peer learning is already used in several public sector spheres like Public Financial Management (PFM) and anti-corruption (see p9 of the [Guide](#)). The EIP places a strong emphasis on the accountability and anticorruption space with an ongoing EIP peer learning alliance amongst Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in Latin America.

EIP Peer learning alliances are structured through a [four-step process](#): (i) foundational peer group engagement (ii) achievement of sustained contact between individuals (iii) achievement of learning outcomes (iv) and then learning applied at scale.

The EIP has encountered a continued demand for the structured facilitation of 'triangular' or 'south-south' peer learning alliances. At the Integrity Week event, [Renato de Oliveira Capanema](#) gave a clear story of a successful structured peer learning alliance between Brazil and El Salvador that was facilitated by the US. El Salvador learned how to run a Brazilian style transparency portal; the Brazilians clarified their strategies in the process of sharing their ideas.

The unsung story of the quiet revolution in Brazilian anticorruption institutions is a case ripe with potential for peer learning. The world's media have fixated on Dilma Rouseff's impeachment and Brazil's economic woes. Yet the real anticorruption story is that the [new obstruction of justice laws](#) have allowed a [small group of prosecutors](#) to unearth a Petrobras corruption scandal involving a cartel of construction firms and high-level politicians.

Normalising multiple prosecutions of white-collar criminals in a middle income country like Brazil would represent a pivotal institutional transition—if momentum can be sustained.

Peer learning is a powerful mechanism, yet more can be done to truly generate learning and change at scale: peers must have a substantive ‘theory of change’ and a common driving problem to produce results. Then the biggest barriers to success are: avoiding a bias towards best practice and formalised products, and then actually scaling-up learning in peer’s host organisations.

Brazil’s story should remind practitioners of one of the many windows of opportunities for structured and innovative peer learning initiatives in the anticorruption and accountability system.

*We look forward to any comments or engagement on this issue that you may have. Please also see our revised Peer Learning Guide (‘Draft for consultation’) [here](#). Any feedback or comments would be welcomed: [effectiveinstitutions@oecd.org](mailto:effectiveinstitutions@oecd.org)*