

Guidance on Grand Bargain structures: Caucuses and Communities of Practice

November 2023

Introduction

This document aims to provide guidance on the Grand Bargain 2023-2026 supporting structures which were agreed by the Signatories in the framework as follows:

Caucuses

- Caucuses are timebound processes that can be activated to resolve political challenges, based on clear problem statements. They can be started by the Grand Bargain Ambassadors or individual Signatories. Caucuses generally involve a limited number of participants, ideally at Sherpa level, who are necessary to resolve the specific blockages to be addressed.
- Following successful resolution, the caucus champions and members are called upon to ensure that the caucus outcomes are shared, understood and accepted, as appropriate, in the Grand Bargain community through communication, presentation and constituency peer engagement. Implementation must be regularly monitored in the annual self-reports and followed-up.

Communities of Practice

- Communities of Practice can be established as a useful instrument to help progress on Grand Bargain commitments.

Caucuses

The guidance for the caucuses was agreed by the Facilitation Group in September 2021 and remains unchanged. Certain updates have been incorporated to align with the Grand Bargain 2023-2026 framework.

Introduction

The Grand Bargain achieved many significant results, but, as highlighted by the 2021 Annual Independent Review conducted by ODI, most of these have been at the technical level. Inputs from the constituency consultations, workstreams and individual agencies made it clear that the discussions in the Grand Bargain 2.0 need to be further narrowed down and elevated to a more political level to address the root causes of the issues and promote transformative change of the system. To this end, and based on inputs from constituency consultations and further refined by ODI, the Grand Bargain Signatories endorsed a new, more flexible model based on "caucuses", which involves relevant and concerned Signatories that agree to monitor,

drive, and encourage progress on specific commitments at the political level, in the spirit of quid pro quo. The concept is further described in the Grand Bargain 2.0 Framework and its Annexes which were endorsed at the Annual Meeting in June 2021. This document supplements these by outlining specific criteria and processes for the establishment of the caucuses. As part of the iteration of the Grand Bargain 2023-2026, the concept of the caucuses remains valid and has been updated to align with the current iteration.

1. Establishment of a caucus

In order to initiate a caucus, Signatories with a particular interest in or a commitment to a certain area take up specific actions from the Grand Bargain 2023-2026 framework and proactively and independently recruit other key stakeholders to work together in a closed format to allow for an open and frank discussion, exchange of views, analysis of bottlenecks and decision making on enabling priorities, outcome pillars or specific commitments. In this role, the Signatories become self-appointed “champions” of a caucus. Champions of the caucus should present a clear problem statement, demonstrating the importance of key issues that have a wider interest or buy-in among Signatories and potential solutions for consideration. The Facilitation Group members as representatives of the constituencies will provide feedback or ask the champions to revise the proposal if they think it does not meet these criteria or fit with the wider underlying structure of the Grand Bargain 2023-2026. Based on the information provided by the caucus champions, the Secretariat will regularly inform the Signatories of the newly established caucuses, and of the progress and developments of the caucuses in the bimonthly newsletter or ad hoc, as needed. The results of these discussions are brought back to constituencies to be adopted and actioned or emulated. Caucuses are not intended to be fixed structures – they should be flexible, adaptive, informal, and peer-to-peer, focused on shared interests and a common goal, which may be a specific shift or change, or something more far-reaching. Caucuses’ objectives are political and not technical, as such the involvement of key actors is key for success.

Any Signatory can be a champion and start a political caucus by communicating its elements as defined in the criteria for establishment of caucuses (see below) and inviting relevant stakeholders to the caucus. Among the proposed caucuses, the Ambassadors and the Facilitation Group will prioritise a limited number of strategic ones to support within their capacity (not more than three caucuses at a time), identified for their potential for collective change. Signatories are still welcome to pursue other parallel caucuses but will most probably not be able to benefit from strengthened support by the Ambassadors and the Facilitation Group, including attention from their Sherpas. However, in the spirit of collective ownership of the Grand Bargain 2023-2026 all caucuses are accountable to the Signatories and should communicate their establishment to the Secretariat.

Caucuses should collaborate with each other whenever possible, ensuring a more holistic approach to the Grand Bargain 2023-2026.

1.1 Criteria for establishing a caucus

- SCOPE

A caucus should be focused on very specific, elevated and political issues that have the following five characteristics:

1. Impasse, defined as a stalled challenge or trade-off among several stakeholders or constituencies that requires specific decision-making at senior level, rather than one that involves overcoming technical challenges
2. Collective relevance
3. Transformative potential
4. Explicitly linked to the two enabling priorities and the new focus area, which includes anticipatory action, cross-sector partnerships and innovative financing.
5. Remain within the scope of the Grand Bargain commitments and/or two crosscutting issues (risk and gender)

- PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVE

A caucus should identify a clear problem statement within the defined scope (see point #1) and define an actionable objective.

- TIME-BOUND

A caucus should identify the timeline, within which the objective will be achieved. According to its nature, the caucus may include a one-off level meeting, one or more high level meetings, supported by technical-level ones. This process should happen within the timeline. The duration is flexible for each caucus according to the topic and the needs, but it should be limited and defined.

- PARTICIPATION

- A caucus can be proposed by Signatories, interested in working together to resolve a specific issue. The Signatories who propose a caucus are self-selected champions and are also responsible for pushing the progress of the caucus, convening meetings and ensuring communication with the Ambassadors, Facilitation Group, and the Secretariat. The Ambassadors or Facilitation Group may appoint champions or co-champions if deemed necessary.
- Signatories who would like to participate in a caucus should demonstrate their interest or relevance for achieving the objectives of the caucus. To ensure efficient decision-making, the caucuses should be limited to a small number of active participants that play a key role on the topic or unlocking a bottleneck while ensuring sufficient information exchange through the Secretariat so that the Signatories are informed of the developments in the caucus. Participation is not by constituency, but by relevance. This means that in some cases all five constituencies will be involved, in others only relevant ones, according to the thematic. In cases when not all constituencies will participate in a caucus, sufficient information exchange should be ensured to allow the non-participating constituencies the opportunity of providing feedback, if any.
- Participation in caucuses is not restricted to Grand Bargain Signatories, as there might be non-Signatory key stakeholders needed to advance the progress, for example through an observer role.

- The participants should have a decision-making power in their institution. It is important that the participants in the caucus have senior-level buy-in and engagement from their institution and are prepared to action decisions. Depending on the nature and objective of the caucus, the participants might be at a Principal level, or Director/Sherpa level.
- MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The caucuses are accountable to the Signatories. To ensure accountability, caucuses are obliged to communicate through the Secretariat:

 - 1) The establishment of the caucus, including:
 - Problem statement, including how the issue fits the criteria of scope (see point #1)
 - The objective of the caucus
 - Planned timeline
 - Participation
 - 2) Progress as relevant
 - 3) Outcomes
- TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If technical work needs to be undertaken, the Signatories proposing a caucus should identify in what manner this will be pursued – e.g. through an ad hoc working group, or through existing entities (workstreams or IASC Reference Groups), in which case those entities must have been consulted and agreed to the work prior to the caucus being proposed.
- ROLE OF THE AMBASSADORS, FACILITATION GROUP AND SECRETARIAT

The Ambassadors and the Facilitation Group at Sherpa level do not have the capacity to follow in detail all caucuses. They will focus on a limited number of caucuses, selecting either from those proposed by the Signatories or by workstreams, identified for their potential collective change, but not more than three caucuses at the same time (see Par #1). Therefore, the role of the Ambassadors and the Facilitation Group with the remaining caucuses will be as follows:

 - 1) The Ambassadors and FG will be informed of the problem statement, timeline, progress and final outcome through the Secretariat by the caucuses' champions,
 - 2) If the problem statement is too vague or too technical, the Facilitation Group can ask the champions to improve it or address it through a workstream or another process (e.g., IASC) instead of activating a caucus. Technical work necessary for the political work in a caucus should be done elsewhere (e.g. Communities of Practice). The final decision to establish a caucus remains the responsibility of the champions, relying on the acceptance to participate by the other invited Signatories.
 - 3) Will not be responsible for ensuring the participation of the key actors to the caucuses, this is the responsibility of the champions.
 - 4) Will be regularly informed and updated on the work of the caucuses and review how the caucus outcomes contribute to the achievement of the Grand Bargain goals.

Introduction

The recent Annual Independent Reports showed that the Grand Bargain has most added value in unlocking political-level challenges, to which purpose the caucuses can be established.

However, it is acknowledged that informal spaces for working-level exchanges might be necessary as well, including but not limited to the following contexts:

- To provide technical input to the elaboration of clear problem statements, thereby ensuring linkages to existing technical work and practical experience at operational level;
- To ensure close interaction with respective caucuses and follow up on their outcomes, including to ensure accountability for the implementation, and the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt in implementation.

For such purpose, a light and agile informal space can be established in the form of a Community of Practice, following the guidelines below.

Principles for Community of practice

A Community of Practice should:

- Avoid duplicating existing discussions in the Grand Bargain or other fora.
- Be open to any Grand Bargain Signatory.
- Communicate regularly and transparently with relevant caucuses and the Signatories through the Grand Bargain Secretariat.
- A Community of Practice can be established by a Signatory / group of Signatories, caucus champions, or by the Grand Bargain Ambassadors with the support of the Secretariat.

How to establish and run a Community of Practice

1. Send a brief proposal (max 1 page) for establishment of a Community of Practice to the Grand Bargain Secretariat, outlining:
 - 1) Proposed topic for the Community of Practice,
 - 2) The list Signatories proposing it, and their role in supporting the Community of Practice,
 - 3) Brief assessment of why this is relevant for the Grand Bargain progress, and how it compares to the work in existing fora,
 - 4) What the Community of Practice plans to do, and the foreseen timeline.
2. The Secretariat will assess the proposal and provide a recommendation to the proposing Signatory on whether they should establish the Community of Practice, or whether they should rely on an existing forum / discussion space. Prior to the recommendation, the Secretariat will consult and inform the Ambassadors and the

Facilitation Group Sherpas, and where relevant, previous caucus champions and previous workstream Co-convenors.

3. If a Community of Practice is established, the proposal will be shared with all Signatories, who will be able to approach the proposing Signatories and join the Community.
4. The Community of Practice has to regularly provide updates to all Signatories through the Secretariat (once a month through one of the Biweekly updates). It is up to the Community members to decide who should be responsible for the communication.
5. The Community of Practice is self-organised – it is up to the proposing Signatories to decide whether they want to act as convenors of the Community and to decide together with members whether they establish a work plan or other kinds of guiding documents. It is strongly recommended to keep the Community a light and agile space that is not formalised.