



## ANNEX II

### **STANDARD FORMAT FOR PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION ON BEST PRACTICES**

1. Institution: The name of the institution that is implementing the best practice:

U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE)

2. Title: The name of the best practice, the topic it covers, and the subject of the Convention to which it is related:

The Institute for Ethics in Government (IEG) learning portal; ethics training; Article III, Paragraph 3 of the Convention (Instructions to government personnel to ensure proper understanding of their responsibilities and the ethical rules governing their activities)

3. Description of the best practice: Include a brief description and summary of the best practice, as well as the reason why it should be considered a best practice; expressing referring to its sustainability<sup>1</sup>:

The IEG provides educational opportunities to government ethics practitioners and makes these opportunities available through an online learning portal. Through the IEG learning portal, OGE announces courses for ethics officials, makes available a library of more than 80 on-demand learning tools, and shares research findings that can help ethics officials perform their duties more effectively. Located on OGE's public website, the resources of the IEG are readily accessible to all ethics officials and to the public. OGE has operated the IEG since 2013. Until 2018, direct access to the IEG was limited to Federal government employees; however, OGE provided public access to live recordings of on-demand training videos through OGE's YouTube webpage. In 2018, OGE moved the IEG interface into a public-facing application, accessible from OGE's website, which permits greater public access to most elements of the IEG. OGE also recently launched a research blog to summarize and operationalize research in the field of behavioral ethics. In 2013, the first year that OGE established the IEG, registrations for training increased 238%. By 2015, OGE saw an increase of more than 500% from the year prior to the introduction of the IEG, from 1,200 in fiscal year 2012 to 7,500 in fiscal year 2015. In 2017, OGE had 14,000 views of training products created by the IEG. Although OGE has not been able to assess additional value of moving the IEG into public access, we expect an increase in both agency and public interest in the IEG products.

4. Reasons/Importance: Reasons for pursuing best practice should be given. A description should be made of the situation in place before the adoption of the best practice and identification of the problem or problems it is to address:

In 2017, there were more than 7,000 government employees supporting the ethics functions of over 130 agencies in the executive branch of the U.S. government. These employees are located across the United States and around the globe. OGE has a limited number of fulltime staff dedicated to the development and delivery of education and training for ethics practitioners. Through the IEG, OGE has effectively leveraged these scarce resources by producing live video webcasts accessible to

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainability means that the best practice has been tested for a period of time that has made it possible to prove its usefulness and to ensure the continuity of its implementation. It is suggested that this time period be a year.



anyone with internet access. These webcasts provide training to ethics practitioners who otherwise would not be able to access OGE's training. These training resources, which cover the panoply of ethics laws and regulations, as well as program management, are maintained in a library for on-demand use by ethics officials. Through the IEG, OGE also provides instructor-led in-person training to ethics officials in very senior and critical roles.

5. Approach: What was the proposed design and methodology for applying the best practice? What was considered in its design and methodology? Were other countries' experience taken into account? Was a model law taken into account?

Learning portals are not a unique concept. Various U.S. government departments and agencies maintain educational websites where they provide training and educational offerings to their staff. OGE recognized that the professional development of ethics officials was not unlike any other professional development of employees. The ongoing demand required and requires that both new and veteran ethics practitioners have educational resources available when and where they need them. That demand could only be satisfied through a distance-learning framework. The United States did not take into account any model law when designing and/or implementing this practice.

6. Implementation: How is the best practice being implemented? What were the human and financial resources needed for its implementation?

OGE recently migrated the IEG learning portal from a password-protected platform accessible only to government employees to our public website. From the new website, OGE announces new course offerings, conducts registrations, houses live broadcasts, as well as provides a sortable library of more than 80 on-demand videos and course materials. For purposes of broadcasting, OGE uses the services of YouTube and maintains a YouTube channel where ethics officials can also access live and archived broadcasts. OGE maintains a basic studio, including a simple lighting kit, web cameras, microphones, and an audio mixer. Total costs (excluding personal computer) are less than \$1,000 USD. The substance of the IEG is predominantly created and maintained by two OGE senior ethics instructors, in coordination with other subject matter experts at OGE. The IEG is maintained in-house by OGE's Internal Operations Division on OGE's public facing website. The IEG website was created using free, open source platforms (Bootstrap and DOJO for Bootstrap), and the videos are hosted on YouTube.<sup>2</sup> The platform was developed and is maintained in-house. Although total cost estimates are not easily ascertainable for the IEG, the across-the-board costs to OGE, the ethics community, and the public are substantially lower than same or similar levels of in-person training. Moreover, OGE's use of open source code and free-to-use third-party sites limits the overall costs of producing and maintaining videos.

7. Outcome: What is the end result or expected end result of implementing the best practice? What are the benefits and/or success stories? Have they addressed the problems originally identified as necessitating a best practice to be implemented? What has been its impact?<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the creation of the IEG, OGE conducted only in-person live training primarily in Washington, DC and episodically, as budgets permitted, in other regions of the U.S. In FY 2013, the inaugural year

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<sup>2</sup> References to private companies is provided for informational purposes only. References should not be construed as express or implied endorsements of any person, enterprise, service, or product.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the practices that may generate a change in conduct of a person, population, or institution.



of the Institute, 4,249 ethics officials registered for OGE's courses, which is more than three times the number of registrations in 2012. In FY 2015, class size for live, in-person training in the metropolitan D.C. area averaged 23 participants per course offering. Regional symposia averaged 29 participants per offering. For that same year, the Institute offered 27 distance-learning events. Total registrations for those events were 7027 with an average of 260 participants per offering. Similarly, in FY 2016 the Institute began measuring the number of on-demand views of its products as compared with live views. For the period of October 2015-August 2016 there were 5833 live views of the IEG's course offerings and 13,084 on demand views. Now that the IEG is housed on OGE's public website, we anticipate that on-demand views will continue to increase.

8. Potential for Technical Cooperation: Can the best practice be adapted and used by other countries? Is it possible to provide technical assistance to other countries in implementing the best practice? Provide the point of contact for the entity that can facilitate technical assistance.

Yes. OGE anticipates that the IEG learning portal can easily be adapted to and used by other countries. OGE has been refining its ability to produce multi-media training resources over the last ten years. The cost of the tools necessary to produce online training of an acceptable quality has been reduced significantly over the last several years. At the request of the State Department, OGE can assist other countries by providing insight into the steps that were taken to establish and maintain the IEG, as well as what lessons have been learned.

Follow-up: Who or what groups will monitor the practice's implementation? How will its implementation be monitored? Will there be a Follow-up Report?

Government ethics practitioners who are the audience for and consumers of these resources are given multiple opportunities to evaluate all of the offerings provided through the Institute. Through course evaluations, and two executive branch-wide agency questionnaires OGE receives feedback from the ethics community about the effectiveness of the Institute's education resources, as well as the percentage of agencies that utilize them.

9. Lessons: What are some of the lessons learned in implementing the Best Practice? What are the challenges in implementing the best practice?

Countries seeking to replicate the distance-learning model should be aware that stakeholders may not initially see the value in a primarily distance-learning delivery system over in-person training. To ensure the learning portal met user needs, OGE sought the input of its stakeholders throughout the transition. Over time, stakeholders were able to appreciate the value of more frequent and more convenient training opportunities that a distance-learning model can provide. The IEG also has continued to offer less frequent but more targeted in-person workshops on seasonal and topical ethics issues.

With respect to challenges, as with any website or library, maintenance is critical and time-consuming. While the new platform for the IEG has simplified many of the administrative functions (registration, archiving, etc.) there is always a need to cull outdated material, maintain or modify taxonomies, and create new content. Similarly, OGE must maintain a "studio" with the technology that enables us to broadcast acceptably high quality video and audio.



10. Documentation: Where can further information be found regarding the best practice (e.g., Internet links)?

<https://extapps2.oge.gov/Training/OGETraining.nsf/IEGHome.xsp>

11. Contact: Who can be contacted for further information?

U.S. Office of Government Ethics (Patrick Shepherd or Cheryl Kane-Piasecki)