



Inter-American
Social Protection
Network



OAS | IASPN

PEER-TO-PEER TECHNICAL COOPERATION ROUNDS

Methodology for Peer-to-peer Technical Cooperation Rounds

What are the Peer-to-peer Technical Cooperation Rounds?

The Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) was created in 2009 –after the **Fifth Summit of the Americas**– with the purpose of promoting the exchange of experiences and knowledge on social protection to advance the reduction of poverty and inequalities.

Within the framework of this Network a series of initiatives have been promoted to strengthen institutional capacities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies on the matter of poverty and inequalities; among which are included the “**peer-to-peer technical cooperation rounds**” of the institutions responsible for social protection policies.

For the development of the rounds of cooperation and technical assistance, the Department of Social Inclusion (DSI/OAS), in its role as Technical Secretariat of the IASPN, supports the coordination and execution of the rounds of cooperation using the methodology developed –and widely tested– by the Department for Effective Public Management (DEPM/OAS) through the **Inter-American Peer-Review Mechanism on Effective Public Management (MECIGEP)**. This regional institutional mechanism facilitates dialogue among peers, the exchange of experiences, and horizontal technical cooperation that supports the achievement of objectives and priorities of the OAS member states.

These rounds of technical cooperation are **voluntary** and, through their participation, the **beneficiary countries receive non-binding recommendations relevant to the design, implementation, and evaluation of social protection policies**, considering the specific challenges, capacities, and interests of each applicant.

How do member states benefit from participating in these technical cooperation rounds?



Access to **successful experiences and proven solutions** implemented in other countries. This helps avoid common mistakes and adopt innovative approaches that have proven effective in similar contexts.



Officials from the state’s beneficiary institutions **receive training from their peers**. This helps them **acquire new skills, strengthens institutional capabilities**, and improves efficiency and effectiveness in implementing and managing public policies.



The Intergovernmental technical cooperation may be conducive to transferring **advanced tools** such as methodologies and/or technological resources. This allows for improved data collection, monitoring and evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making.



The beneficiary institution can gain knowledge to **adapt and innovate** their social protection policies and programs so that they are more relevant and effective in their local context. Collaboration with international specialists can inspire new ideas and approaches that better fit the needs and realities of the host country.



The sessions create an avenue for **identifying cooperation needs and challenges for the reform, adaptability, and modernization** of social policies, in light of the lessons learned by other countries in the region.



The initiative promotes and enables further horizontal and multilateral cooperation between OAS member states, **increasing the opportunities for support from international donors.**

How do the Peer-to-peer Technical Cooperation Rounds work? ¹

1. Formal Request for Technical Assistance

The interested country presents a formal request to the DSI/OAS to create a round of cooperation between peers to work on a social protection policy, program, or initiative of interest. The application note must include:

- the **policy/program/initiative** that will be the subject of the cooperation.
- the **goal of the cooperation** -what results and/or products are expected to be achieved.
- the contact of the person within the national social protection institution that will act as **the main point of contact.**
- countries and/or experiences from which technical assistance is of interest (maximum two).

Ideally, the subject of the cooperation round should be a public initiative in the design or reform phase so that it can incorporate the resulting recommendations during the implementation phase.

It is suggested to attach to the application a maximum of four (4) **reference documents** on the policy, program or initiative to be analyzed (informative documents of a conceptual/methodological nature, progress/evaluation reports, links to websites, among others).

2. Convening of the International Experts Panel that will Provide Assistance

In partnership with the requesting country, the OAS is responsible for putting together a *panel of technical specialists* -officials from the social protection institutions of the countries that will serve as the providing parties in the cooperation- :

- **2 (two) specialists** who will provide the technical assistance -individuals with extensive experience and a track record in the selected topic- that will be responsible for carrying out the substantive analysis of the policy/program

1. Based on the methodology of the Inter-American Peer-Review Mechanism on Effective Public Management (MECIGEP) by the Department for Effective Public Management (DEPM/OAS). For more information on MECIGEP, visit the following link: <https://www.oas.org/ext/en/democracy/mecigep>

- **2 (two) OAS specialists** for general project coordination purposes

The Technical Secretariat identifies and requests officials from the cooperating countries to participate *ad honorem* in the cooperation round. For the contributions to be relevant, the invited specialists must have **an appropriate professional background**, including **experience managing teams and extensive experience in the implementation of initiatives similar to the subject** of the cooperation round.

3. Pre-On-Site Visit Preparation

The main purpose of the pre-on-site visit preparation is to allow the specialists to obtain prior knowledge about the initiative in question, its current status, the institutional context and the objectives of the cooperation, before their arrival to the beneficiary country. To this end, the experts who will assist with the cooperation, review **the reference documents** provided by the requesting country and prepare a questionnaire of **technical questions that allow them to learn more** about the policy or program that is the subject of the cooperation. This questionnaire will be answered by the technical team that leads the policy or program at the beneficiary institution. The questions asked by the experts must be clear and the answers precise, thus contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the face-to-face exchange and subsequent recommendations.

This stage also includes the consolidation of the **final agenda** and the **international** (Technical Secretariat/OAS) and **local** (beneficiary country) **logistical arrangements for the visit**.

4. On-site Visit (3-5 days)

At this stage, **a group of international experts makes a 3-5-day visit to the beneficiary country**, per the agenda determined by the responsible local national authority and with the support of the Technical Secretariat/OAS. The purpose of the visit is to gain in-depth knowledge of the targeted initiative through the exchange of information and experiences with the officials of the beneficiary institution, as well as with other relevant actors (key partners: linked social actors, direct beneficiaries of the policy/program, etc). It is important to note that **the experts** are not expected to merely present their country's experiences and work on the subject, but rather, **based on their experiences, contribute concrete ideas for the analysis of the targeted initiative** of the cooperation.

The **agenda** for the on-site visit shall include:

- an initial protocolary meeting
- a presentation of the target initiative by the beneficiary country
- presentations of similar experiences led by experts from the cooperating countries
- working meetings focused on the target initiative
- in-depth interviews with key partners, civil society members, and beneficiaries, among other relevant actors
- internal sessions of the panel of international experts.

The **working meetings will be technical** and will be focused on identifying specific findings and challenges that can inform, in a precise and relevant manner, the development of the policy/program for the beneficiary country and help offer concrete recommendations.

The level of visibility of the activities conducted during the cooperation round –for instance, press coverage– is up to the discretion of the beneficiary country.

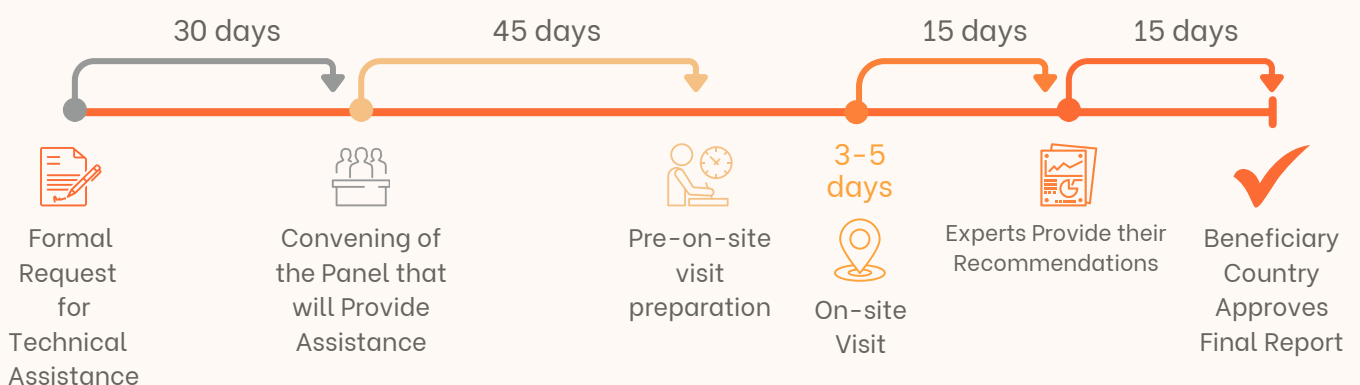
5. Completion and Approval of the Final Report

This stage includes a summary of the internal work that the panel of international experts underwent before the on-site visit. During this stage, **a short executive report (maximum 20 pages)** is prepared to describe the state and development of the target initiative in the requesting country. The report is systematized by the Technical Secretariat based on the contributions from the panel of experts.

The *preliminary report* is **submitted to the beneficiary country for review and final approval**. The final report will then include a brief description of the cooperation round, a summary of the findings derived from the peer exchange, a set of practical recommendations for the implementation of adjustments, reforms, or innovations, as well as guidance to identify further needs and opportunities for cooperation.

The beneficiary country may decide whether to make the final report public or keep it as an internal working document. Should the choice be to make it public, the Technical Secretariat, with written authorization from the beneficiary country, will publish and disseminate the *Final Report*, in coordination with the corresponding institutions.

Timeline for the Peer-to-peer Technical Cooperation Rounds





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Information, Contact and Requests

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