

Members' Assembly Meeting 10-11 July 2018

UN City, Marmorvej 51, Copenhagen, Denmark

Final Minutes

All IATI members were invited to attend the 2018 Members' Assembly and 82 participants met in UN City Copenhagen. Formal meetings on 10-11 July 2018 were preceded on 9 July by separate caucus meetings and meetings of the Institutional Working Group and the Governing Board.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Theo van de Sande (Netherlands) as Chair of the IATI Governing Board, and supported by the other Board members and the Secretariat. The Chair introduced the new IATI Governing Board, welcomed new IATI members and thanked the outgoing Governing Board Chair, Mr. Stephen Potter (Canada) and Board Member Rupert Simons from Publish What You Fund for their service over the previous two years. He further thanked the EC for providing generous support to co-fund the MA meeting.

This document contains references to the following annexes, available at the links below:

- Annex A: [IATI Member's Assembly Agenda](#)
- Annex B: [Overview of papers and presentations](#)
- Annex C: [List of participants](#)

The agenda followed the sequence of the IATI Year 5 work plan and sessions were presented within the functional workstreams.

Workstream 1 – Data Use (Session 3 & 4)

TAG Chair John Adams (DFID) provided an [overview of the implementation](#) of the [Data Use Strategy](#) and updated participants on the implementation of the IATI Data Use Fund (DUF) with procurement actions undertaken by UNDP. Data Use Task Force members had worked together to identify challenges within each of the strategic objectives and prepared Terms of Reference for activities to meet these challenges. He announced the award of the first four contracts under the DUF, targeting awareness raising, improving IATI tools and strengthening the integration of IATI data into Aid Management Systems, adding that after a review of the process and an assessment of the lessons learned, new requests for proposals would be published in fall/winter 2018.

The TAG Chair then gave an update on the current process of procurement of the new IATI Datastore, which foresees selection of a service provider in September to begin work soon after.

In discussion, participants emphasized the need to further strengthen data use among both governments and various civil society groups including journalists, academics and parliamentarians. Other suggestions were around the need for institutionalized training for IATI publishers, and investment in improving capacity and knowledge around the use of IATI data for SDG progress monitoring.

Access and use of data were among issues discussed in small groups and the challenges highlighted by the attendees included data quality, data aggregation and disaggregation, as well as

data gaps. Participants were emphatic on the value of [d-portal](#) as an important tool for supporting outreach, communications and data use activities, advocating for it to remain a core offering of IATI that should be updated in order to be more comprehensive and more user-friendly.

IATI community members were then invited to showcase their work on data use; this session included examples such as a jointly organised training for journalists at the World Press Freedom Day by the Association of Freelance Journalists and UNDP; the African Development Bank's Projects Data Portal (MapAfrica), an overview of findings from the US Foreign Assistance Study conducted and presented by Publish What You Fund, events around data use in Uganda organized by Oxfam America and by Plan International in the Netherlands; and a presentation by Sweden on the use of IATI data for visualizing UNFCCC climate finance reporting.

Actions:

- *Investigate the feasibility of adding a usability dimension to the dashboard;*
- *Discuss and determine the future of the d-portal as part of the technical audit (Session 7);*
- *Strengthen capacity regarding the use of IATI data for SDG monitoring.*

Workstream 2 – Data Quality (Session 5)

Development Gateway and USAID made a joint [presentation on IATI data use in country systems](#), building on pilot projects implemented in Senegal and Madagascar by UNICEF and in Bangladesh by USAID. The pilot projects, reported initially at the October 2017 MA, sought to reduce the burden of data collection and reporting, increasing the timeliness of reporting and improving the quality of published data to ease integration into national systems for planning and monitoring purposes. A full report including country-specific reports, Q&A, training guides and blogs is available at www.developmentgateway.org/iatiaims.

The presentation was followed by small group work through an exercise designed to encourage data publishers to understand in detail the quality issues standing in the way of systematic data use.

During a separate lunchtime session, a [presentation was given by the Belgian CSO federations](#) on the process followed in Belgium to support 85 NGOs to publish, following a decision by the government for this to become a mandatory reporting requirement there. They shared the lessons from their first publication conducted in 2018.

Workstream 3 – Standard, Systems, Tools (Session 6 & 7)

Deprecation of Standard v.1

TAG 2017 participants agreed on the need to deprecate old versions of the Standard. Accordingly a [proposal](#) summarizing the key factors was shared ahead of the MA, and the TAG Chair and technical lead made a [presentation summarizing the case for deprecation](#).

While a small number of publishers are still using version 1, no major concerns regarding deprecation of this version were expressed, provided support was available for those publishers to make the move.

Outcome and Action:

- *Members agreed on deprecation of version 1 of the Standard. A timetable and plan for the implementation will be developed and agreed at the TAG in November 2018.*

Technical Priorities and Long Term Technical Vision

Session 7 addressed the need to prioritize activities of the IATI Tech Team. A [paper](#) summarizing the key issues and suggestions was shared ahead of the meeting and a [presentation summarizing the IATI technical priorities](#) was provided by the technical lead.

Members highlighted priorities such as the responsibility to supply good quality data and to provide support to publishers. At its core, IATI understands itself as a data service, and not an information service. The [IATI website](#) is a key platform for the delivery of core services. In the future, the Registry will provide feedback to publishers on their data quality and the aim is that validation services will be improved for all tools. The Datastore will be the core responsibility of the tech team, while the responsibility for [d-portal](#) was currently not clearly defined and the technical team lead gave the view that it should not necessarily be the responsibility of the IATI Secretariat. In this context however, participants reiterated calls for further development and improvement of d-portal which they believed should also be considered a core offering by IATI.

The lack of a long-term technical vision and strategy has been indicated through the process of institutional review; this has been compounded by budgetary uncertainties in the past, and needs to be addressed by the Board. As input to this process, a proposal was made for the conduct of a technical audit to guide the development of a detailed roadmap of technical activities over the next 18 months. This would also help to develop a common understanding of what should and should not be a core product of IATI, provide input to the development of the tech team's annual plan for 2018-19, and feed into long term strategic planning.

Outcome and Action:

- *The Members' Assembly approved the proposed technical audit and mandated the Governing Board to establish an expert group drawn from members of the IATI community with the possibility to engage an independent external consultant. The audit should be completed by the end of September 2018.*
- *The technical audit shall include a review of the value of d-portal (or an alternative information service).*

Workstream 4 – Communication and Outreach (Session 8, 9 & 10)

New IATI Website

The new IATI website www.iatistandard.org was launched and new key features presented and explained to participants. This is a key tool underpinning all other data use, communications and outreach activities, bringing together information previously distributed across a number of different websites. The current version will be further updated over the next months. Additional language options will be explored and IATI aims to translate the content gradually, depending on available resources, with priority given to French. Members provided very positive feedback on the new design of the website and expressed appreciation for the consultative manner in which it was developed and populated.

Value Proposition for Membership

The Secretariat circulated [Paper D](#) on raising the value proposition of IATI membership which sought to identify different perspectives on what constitutes value of membership for different members and constituencies. Members then had the opportunity to discuss in small groups some of the challenges and opportunities around membership. Different groups identified value in different ways, including the value of peer-to-peer exchange; service provision by the tech team - which could potentially be extended through analytical capacities available to members only; increased visibility on the IATI website; increased visibility by representing IATI at selected events (supported through the Secretariat); ability to participate in the governing processes of IATI and providing thought-leadership in the area of data transparency, as well as the value of engaging in an international, multi-stakeholder forum.

Further proposals and ideas on how to increase the value of IATI membership included lowering the barriers to entry for non-members by offering reduced membership rates, as well as imposing sanctions for members failing to make their agreed membership contributions in due time. The question of the added value of a larger membership community from a governance perspective was also considered and further examined during the subsequent session on outreach and engagement priorities.

Outreach and Engagement Priorities

Subsequent to the discussion on the value of membership, the focus shifted to consider outreach and engagement priorities for IATI in short and medium term (6-12 months). In addition to [Paper E](#), the Secretariat made a [presentation](#) overviewing the shift in focus from gaining recognition and political support at the start, to increasing the volume of data collected, to improving quality and supporting efforts to increase data use. Feedback and suggestions from the participants following group discussion included a focus on South-South Cooperation and Grand Bargain signatories, and focus on increasing the volume of aid published rather than simply increasing the number of publishers. Priorities should include increasing awareness of IATI not only to stakeholders in partner country members but to potential new partner countries and national NGOs; increasing awareness regarding the benefits of data use among partner country governments, including high-level decision makers, CSO and media, academia and end-users (citizen, local activists, etc.). The IATI community at large should seek to influence global initiatives and agendas and ensure that potential synergies and cooperation opportunities are identified and used to benefit IATI.

In general, the focus of outreach activities should prioritize stakeholders in partner countries. One approach to gain more members in this constituency could be to focus more on showcasing how data can be used to convince new members/publishers to join. Several other specific proposals were put forward including the use of a slogan such as “Powered by IATI data” to be used to advertise the brand “IATI”; these were collated and will form the basis of the outreach strategy for review at an upcoming Board meeting.

Workstream 5 – Governance (Sessions 11, 12 & 13)

Institutional Review

Based on the outcomes of the 2017 Members’ Assembly, an Institutional Review Working Group (sub-group of the Governing Board) was mandated to present options for a future governance and

management structure of IATI at the 2018 MA. The group contracted consultants to carry out an independent review and provide analysis to the Working Group to develop its recommendations for sustainable and operable options for the future of IATI.

The consultants (“Universalia”) produced a [diagnostic report](#) which was provided to members ahead of the MA, and [Paper F2](#) presented recommendations of the Working Group. Institutional Review Working Group members presented their recommendations (recommendations in brief below and produced in full in Paper F2) which gave two clear options, seeking clear approval on the proposed way forward.

The two options presented for IATI’s future management and hosting arrangements were¹:

- 1) IATI remains hosted within the UN system in New York City, or
- 2) IATI becomes an independent organization based in Amsterdam.

Whilst the recommendations were binary in nature, the Working Group did highlight some areas in which analysis had pointed to a need for clearer lines of responsibility and accountability throughout the governance structure, and requested the Governing Board to work with the Secretariat on measures to address these questions.

Members were in broad agreement around the reflections shared by the Institutional Review Working Group and agreed on option 1, that IATI will be hosted in a UN environment, with UNDP in the lead, for a further period of three years.

UNDP spoke on behalf of the Secretariat consortium members indicating its agreement with this recommendation if accepted, and committing to develop a strategic plan for future arrangements (medium and long-term).

The Governing Board was mandated by members to undertake further work on the details in close consultation with the Secretariat, while consulting with members and developing a three-year strategic plan for approval at the 2019 MA.

Outcome and Action:

- *The Members’ Assembly agreed to the recommendation mandating the Governing Board to elaborate the details of the transition and develop a three-year strategic plan; This should be undertaken in close consultation with the Secretariat, with UNDP leading this work; the plan should be ready for presentation to members at the 2019 MA;*
- *Immediate actions should be proposed by the Secretariat to improve its accountability to the governing bodies, to be implemented within the current extension period (to August 2019).*
- *Members were invited to share written comments to the Board with any concrete suggestions for taking the Institutional Review work forward.*
- *Any amendments required to the SOP in relation to the proposals will be submitted to members for their approval².*

Operational Questions

Session 12 presented the status of implementation of the Year 5 annual plan, noting that the implementation period continues up to August 31st. A [financial overview](#) of Year 5 and [budget](#)

¹ These options represent a streamlining of the original four options produced in the previous institutional report from 2017.

² The same applies to any other SOP adjustments required as a result of this MA.

[proposal](#) for Year 6 were also presented. Since the decision in 2016 to shift to a financial model in which the full budget was to be financed from membership contributions (relying no longer on voluntary contributions), UNOPS reported that this objective has now been achieved, in part due to the increased number of paying members. The significant increase in members' contributions, combined with postponement of both Year 4 MA and TAG meetings into subsequent financial years, as well as unanticipated voluntary contributions, have resulted in an unexpected financial carry-over from Year 5 to Year 6. The Secretariat has taken this opportunity to propose a realignment of IATI financial years to calendar years, and the Board sought approval for the Year 6 budget to cover a 16 month period (September 2018 - December 2019).

The importance of predictable and stable financial planning was nonetheless highlighted by UNOPS and in this regard, members were encouraged to submit their contributions in a timely manner to avoid delays of crucial recruitments and consequent delays in implementation of the annual plan.

Outcome and Action:

- *Members agreed the proposal for a 16-month Year 6, with the budget revisions to be presented during the period September - December 2018 to include technical adjustments arising as a result of the technical audit, and recommendations from the Institutional Review including any Secretariat realignment;*
- *Particular attention will be paid to budgetary provision for d-portal based on discussions during the 2018 MA.*

Conclusion

In concluding, the Chair thanked Sweden and Ghana for their Secretariat support which comes to an end in August 2018. He further invited members to retain the spirit of openness and interaction seen at the MA and to remain engaged throughout the year through email and other means.

Recommendations of Institutional Review Working Group (full paper can be found here: [Paper F2](#))

1. Recommendation 1: IATI should retain its UN-based, hosted institutional arrangement for an additional 3-year period after August 2019
2. Recommendation 2: IATI should develop a strategic plan to define its medium-term strategic direction and inform the accountability and institutional arrangements starting immediately after the 2018 Members' Assembly.
3. Recommendation 3: IATI's governance should be restructured to resolve governance ambiguities.
4. Recommendation 4: The value-for-money proposition for membership should be revisited.