



IATI Community of Practice and IATI Connect FAQs

Last updated: 7 January 2021

Note: this document has been edited to address comments received from members during the 2020 Members' Assembly and the launch of the Communities of Practice / IATI Connect.

1. What are IATI's new Communities of Practice?

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)'s newly-established Communities of Practice (COPs) are open and freely accessible communities around areas of thematic interest to the IATI community – initially, these will be based formed under three broad headings - Data Use, Data Publishing and Technical IATI issues. Within these, if there is sufficient demand, subgroups based on constituency, thematic interest, etc. can be formed. With the help of the IATI Connect Facilitator who is a member of the IATI Secretariat, the membership of the COPs will decide on the design, future activities and key focus areas for each COP to ensure that it meets the needs of its members. For questions or suggestions on COPs or sub-groups, please contact connect@iatistandard.org.

2. Who can join a COP?

COPs are open to anyone with an interest in aid transparency or development cooperation data. You do not need to be an IATI member or publisher to join a COP. Everyone is welcome!

3. Why should I join a COP?

Participating in an IATI COP allows you to share your expertise and exchange views with peers in the open data and transparency fields on the issues you care about most. Furthermore, you can expand your professional network with other data publishers and users, transparency advocates, open data experts and technical specialists. You may also help shape the future of IATI, for instance through participating in online consultations that will feed into changes to the IATI Standard, guidance products and tools, as well as other matters such as engagement opportunities or broader policy discussions.

4. How do these COPs differ from IATI's Working Groups?

COPs are informal communities with a focus on shared learning, experimentation and increased engagement amongst the IATI community. The focus areas and activities are determined by the COP membership itself. This is different from an IATI Working Group, which is a time-bound group, mandated by IATI's Members' Assembly or Governing Board. Working Groups are advisory in nature and they report to the Governing Board on specific tasks or objectives. See IATI's [Standard Operating Procedures](#) for more information.

5. What is the relationship between the COPs and IATI's governance process?

COPs are not an official part of the IATI governance process and are intended to be more informal in nature. However, COPs may wish to voluntarily draft or submit position papers, recommendations, etc. to IATI's governing bodies, to be considered as an input to relevant processes or consultations.

6. Do the COPs have 'official' decision-making power?

While the COPs are not a part of the official IATI governance process, they are a crucial part of ensuring that IATI's data and tools continually improve to meet the needs of end users. IATI will continue its principle of consulting with its community on key decisions through Secretariat-sponsored consultations on IATI Connect, and COP members will have the ability to contribute to these open discussions around improvements to IATI's tools or guidance, and broader questions of open data, transparency, interoperability with other data standards and more.

7. What is the IATI Connect digital platform and how can I get started?

[IATI Connect](#) is a user-friendly platform housing the IATI COPs and fostering engagement amongst the IATI community. Visit the '[About Connect](#)' page to learn more about the COPs, IATI Connect and how to engage more broadly, and to find a [quick-start](#) and [more detailed](#) user guide. In addition, you may wish to contribute to consultations on individual [COP Charters](#), which are active through **15 January 2021**.

8. How can I join the COPs and / or register for IATI Connect? Do I need to be a member of IATI?

You do not have to be a member of IATI to join a COP or IATI Connect. The COPs and platform are open and freely accessible to anyone and you can [find all COPs here](#). By clicking on the community of your preference, you will be redirected to the homepage for that COP where you have the option to join.

9. What kind of features does IATI Connect offer me?

IATI Connect is a multi-functional platform that allows users to engage with peers in a multitude of ways. The platform already contains spaces for all IATI COPs, e-discussions and consultations, relevant upcoming events and a Resource Library. Over the first half of 2021, the platform will add additional features, which will be announced in due course. The platform is freely accessible by anyone with internet access. It provides automatic translation into 100+ languages and is mobile-friendly even with low bandwidth. [Find a helpful user guide here](#).

10. How can I share my thoughts, resources or events on IATI Connect? Can I start a discussion within a COP to engage with others?

You can already start sharing your thoughts or resources via IATI Connect. Post a 'discussion' to engage and encourage conversation within a specific COP, or share other relevant resources by posting a 'topic'. Visibility settings can be easily changed to post content to the public, to the IATI Connect community or to a specific group. Find more information in our [IATI Connect User Guide](#).

11. Where can I post a message to the entire IATI community?

Once you're logged in to IATI Connect, you can post a comment in the [Message Board](#), located in the side-bar on the right-hand side of the homepage. You can also post a community-wide message in the comment box under the 'Latest Activities' block on the homepage.

12. How can I learn more about how to use IATI Connect?

The IATI Secretariat is organising quarterly IATI Connect ‘Crash Courses’, where you can learn more about the platform’s key features. Each ‘Crash Course’ session will be announced via [the event page](#) and through IATI’s social media channels.

13. What happened to Discuss (the previous IATI discussion forum)?

The Discuss platform is now in ‘read-only’ mode. All content (live and archived) has been transferred from Discuss to IATI Connect and current users of Discuss will smoothly transition with as little change to their user experience as possible. All previous Discuss users have a pre-arranged profile on the new platform. Sub-categories previously found on Discuss are now listed as ‘tags’ on IATI Connect, which users can easily add to their new discussion posts. [Find the Discuss Archive here.](#)

14. Can I still propose changes to the Standard or contribute to Standard management discussions on IATI Connect?

Yes! Suggestions for changes and enhancements across the Standard are welcomed from all stakeholders. The IATI Connect forum then allows for a public exchange to take place on the merits of each proposal. You can add a proposal to the [Standard Management group](#) by posting a new discussion in the group. While the platform may be new, the policy on Standard upgrades remains unchanged from that agreed by members previously, and can be found [here](#).

15. Where can I find information about upcoming community consultations?

All current community-wide consultations can be found on IATI Connect’s [Consultations dashboard](#). Future consultations, and a timeline for engagement, will be listed on a monthly engagements calendar, posted on the [homepage](#) of IATI Connect (from late January 2021).

16. How can I create a new group or sub-group in IATI Connect?

To avoid fragmentation or duplication on the platform, at this time only the IATI Connect Facilitator (a member of the IATI Secretariat) can create new groups within IATI Connect. However, anyone can propose the creation of a group by emailing the IATI Connect Facilitator at connect@iatistandard.org. In the meantime, community members can already post ‘topics’ and ‘discussions’ in the current COP spaces. For more information on how to do this, please see the [IATI Connect User Guide](#).

17. Where can I provide feedback on IATI Connect?

You can post your comments on how to improve IATI Connect via the [Feedback Forum](#) or by e-mailing us at connect@iatistandard.org. If you have specific feedback regarding the migration of the Discuss content, you may add any comments to [this discussion thread](#).