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INITIATIVE

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**IFAD HQ, Via Paolo di Dono, 44, 00142 Roma RM, Italy**

## **Paper 10: Revision of IATI Standard Upgrade Procedures**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This Secretariat paper was developed to clarify and codify the procedures to be followed in relation to upgrades of the IATI Standard. Consultations were undertaken with members after the first integer upgrade, during the 2017 TAG, and subsequently through the Discuss forum from 1-17 September.

The procedures laid out below are intended to replace existing ones and will be included in the IATI Standard Operating Procedures. Members are requested to approve these changes which will come into force at the completion of the 2.03 upgrade process.

#### **1. Underlying Principles**

- a. The Standard is a logical implementation of IATI's vision and mission
- b. The aim of the Standard is to enable the delivery of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking data on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance to all users of data concerned with development and humanitarian affairs
- c. The Standard needs to reflect the changing nature of development cooperation and humanitarian aid as well as innovations in interoperability and the information technology landscape
- d. IATI is a multi-stakeholder initiative and the Standard needs to reflect the needs of its diverse communities

#### **2. Components of the Standard**

- a. The Standard consists of two publishing frameworks: the Activity and Organisation Standards
- b. It consists of two components:
  - i. Schemas that define the logical structure, elements, syntax, format and codelists
  - ii. Additional rules and guidelines that are beyond the logical scope of the Schemas but are essential for the validation of data.

#### **3. Types of changes to the standard**

- a. The standard will adopt the widely-adopted [Semantic Versioning specification](#). (The impact of this is to change our naming of upgrades, adding version numbers to bug-fixing changes, and removing leading zeroes from version numbers.)

- b. This new system should be implemented at the next **integer/major** upgrade
- c. **Patches** (previously **Minor** changes) can cover backwardly-compatible bug fixes. Changes are carried out by the Technical Team under the approval of the Secretariat.
- d. **Minor (previously Decimal) upgrades** can cover changes that are optional and backwardly compatible. The Governing Board is responsible for initiating, overseeing and approving the upgrade.
- e. **Major (previously Integer) upgrades** can cover non-backwardly compatible changes. The Members' Assembly is responsible for initiating and approving the upgrade. The Governing Board is responsible for overseeing progress.
- f. **Version numbers** must take the form X.Y.Z where X, Y, and Z are non-negative integers, and must not contain leading zeroes. X is the **major** version, Y is the **minor** version, and Z is the **patch** version. Each element must increase numerically.

#### 4. Distinguishing between Content and Technical Implementation

- a. Upgrades will be conducted in two distinct phases: content (what) and technical implementation (how). This is a new distinction in IATI procedures.
- b. **Content** refers to the real-world use case. What problem will the change solve?
  - i. Consultations on content, free of syntactical jargon, should therefore be accessible to non-technical subject-matter experts and users.
  - ii. The content for an upgrade will be formally agreed BEFORE consultations on its technical implementation are begun.
- c. **Technical implementation** refers to the translation of the content into the syntax required by schema/codelist/rule. How do we solve the problem?

#### 5. Consensus

- a. Wherever possible decisions on changes to the standard should be reached by consensus
- b. Consensus means an absence of active dissent amongst those involved in the consultation process
- c. If consensus cannot be reached the matter will be referred to the Governing Board for its assistance in resolving the dispute
- d. The Governing Board, taking note of advice from the TAG Chair and the Technical Lead, may adjudicate on an unresolved dispute.

#### 6. Upgrade Procedures

- a. **Proposals**
  - i. Candidate proposals for inclusion in an upgrade can be submitted at any time by anyone in the [Modifications, Additions, Improvements](#) section of IATI Discuss.
  - ii. Candidate proposals must be submitted as use cases in natural language (see: 4b).
- b. **Initiation**

- i. The decision to initiate a **Minor** (Previously decimal) upgrade must be taken by the Governing Board, following advice from the TAG Chair and the Technical Lead.
  - ii. The decision to initiate a Major (previously integer) upgrade must be taken by the Members' Assembly, following advice from the Governing Board.
- c. **Timeline**
- i. The Governing Board will approve a timeline for the upgrade prepared by the technical team.
- d. **Phases**
- The timeline will consist of the following phases
- i. **Content consultation**
    - 1. Proposals are submitted and discussed by the community. (Consultations mentioned in all phases can be conducted on IATI Discuss, conference calls and meetings of the TAG.)
  - ii. **Content approval**
    - 1. The community attempts to reach consensus on the final content. ***Wherever possible this phase should take place at a full meeting of the TAG.***
    - 2. The final content is submitted to the Governing Board (**Minor**) or Members' Assembly (**Major**) for approval or resolution (as in 5.d. above)
  - iii. **Technical consultation**
    - 1. The Technical Team and community technical experts translate the agreed content into the syntax of the Standard
    - 2. Consultations take place on the technical proposals
  - iv. **Technical approval**
    - 1. The community attempts to reach consensus on the final content.
    - 2. The final content is submitted to the Governing Board for approval or resolution (as in 5.d. above)
  - v. **Technical Implementation**
    - 1. The Technical Team creates a new candidate version of the standard
    - 2. The Technical Team updates all utilities and services maintained by IATI to be compatible with the new version.
    - 3. The candidate version is made available to the community for publisher and user testing
  - vi. **Final Approval**
    - 1. The Governing Board, following advice from the TAG Chair, approves the final version and announces a Go Live date.

*Action: Members are requested to approve these changes which will come into force at the completion of the 2.03 upgrade process.*