

Draft minutes - Meeting of the IATI Governing Board Q2 2020

5-6 May 2020 - Virtual

Attendees: Dr. Sanjo Faniran, Henry Asor (Nigeria); Joseph Barnes (UNICEF); Melinda Cuzner (Sida); Narayan Dhakal (Nepal); Winnie Kamau (Association of Freelance Journalists); Theo van de Sande (Netherlands); Leo Stolk (Oxfam Novib); Annelise Parr, Margaret Thomas, Anna Whitson, Sarah McDuff (Secretariat, UNDP); Wendy Thomas, Petya Kangalova (Secretariat, Development Initiatives); Argjira Belegu-Shuku (Secretariat, UNOPS); Bob Fitch (Facilitator).

Notetakers: Sarah McDuff (UNDP), Anna Whitson (UNDP)

The IATI Governing Board met for the first time since being elected, through virtual sessions on 5-6 May 2020. The focus of the meeting was to build a shared understanding of the Board's role, goals, and preferred methods of working together; to provide updates on the ongoing work under the 2020 work plan; to onboard new Board members and establish focal point roles; to elect the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair; and to create a strong sense of teamwork amongst the Board.

The meeting was facilitated by an external Facilitator, Bob Fitch, of Fitch Consulting, following a decision made during the Q1 Board meeting to aid with the transition to a new Board.

These minutes focus on the essence of discussions by Board members and are accompanied by a [presentation](#) covering the two days of meetings containing updates from the Secretariat.

1. Standing Items

February 2020 Board meeting minutes had previously been reviewed and accepted by the Board and posted online [here](#). The Secretariat confirmed that outstanding action items had been addressed, with one action point remaining for attention by the Board - namely an addition that was made to the risk register around data sensitivity, particularly in fragile / humanitarian contexts, mainly focusing on security and location data. It was agreed to take this up in Q2.

The Board reviewed the **risk register**, updating previous entries related to COVID-19. No update was required to the **conflict of interest register**.

Action point

- Board to examine the question of data sensitivity during Q2. The Secretariat will support this work.

2. Election of Chair; Best Practices and Ways of Working

After a series of interactive exercises (summarised below) during which the Board introduced

their areas of expertise, ways of working and professional interests, a blind poll was used to appoint **The Netherlands** to continue in the role of IATI Chair with **Nigeria** as Vice-Chair for the next two-year period.

Board members used a tool called the Behavioural Assessment's Predictive Index to introduce themselves and outline their general workplace methods of interaction and cooperation to better guide how the Board will work together. This process and the particular tool was very much appreciated by the Board, which recommended that the Secretariat should also be encouraged to undertake the PI exercise, given the close working relationships necessary between Board and Secretariat.

A facilitated discussion on lessons learned from the 2018-19 Board cohort resulted in the following takeaways:

- Sharing of responsibilities through the Board Focal Point structure worked well, but setting out working arrangements from the outset is important. The Board identified focal point roles for different strategic priorities which can be seen in Annex below.
- It is especially important to distinguish more clearly between the role of the Board (strategic) and the Secretariat (operational). Issues appear to be more perceptual than there being a lack of written procedure (i.e. in the SOPs).
- It is not clear that the accountability framework has fully landed; there remains a distinction between what the Board *does* and what *members expect* the Board to do.
- Communication with members on what work is being implemented needs to continue to improve, with clear information on how decisions are taken to prioritise activities.
- The Board should strive to have multiple engagements with members during the year outside of the Members' Assembly.
- Physical meetings of the Board are preferable where possible to achieve intended objectives.

Action Points:

- Secretariat to undertake Predictive Index assessment to strengthen its work internally and with the Board.
- Secretariat to continually strengthen communications with members between formal meetings, and Board to engage regularly with members outside the MA.
- Secretariat to share information on what's worked well with focal points to set some initial guidance for interaction with new focal points.

3. Technical updates

The Board was updated on progress towards the **technical stocktake** that will review and strengthen the IATI technical estate; review IATI's overall system design; establish a forward-thinking strategy on technical tools, including publishing tools; and consider future steps in the best way to visualise data through tools such as d-portal. Work is underway with initial interviews currently being undertaken by an independent external consultant with key stakeholders including external suppliers. Preparatory work will lead to an actual Stocktake Roadmap series of meetings in June (now virtual).

As part of a broader update on implementation of planned Q1 activities, the Secretariat provided an update on the development of guidance for the publication of **COVID-19 data in IATI**, and subsequently guidance on **access and use** of the data on COVID-19.

Work by external suppliers has continued on the **new IATI datastore and Validator** with testing of integration of the tools underway, and full launch of both tools expected by the end of May. The Secretariat was asked to follow up on recent information that had come to light regarding new costs for smaller publishers using **Aidstream**, which would soon be offering a Pro version.

Action point

- Secretariat to contact Aidstream suppliers for more information on its Pro offer, and report back to the Board.

4. Partner Country Engagement, Analysis and Support

The Board heard an overview of work carried out since the previous Q1 meeting to **engage or re-engage with partner country members**, and ongoing work to maintain and strengthen engagement, including initial planning for a meeting of partner country focal points. The Secretariat is currently revising the approach and timeline for engagement activities considering challenges posed by COVID-19.

The Secretariat updated Board members about its ongoing **work to identify barriers to use** and identify data needs / gaps, which has included an extensive desk review / inventory of existing research and outreach to key stakeholders. A gap analysis and scope development are underway for four case studies planned for 2020, but outreach to potential case study countries has been delayed due to COVID-19, and further significant disruption to this plan is expected. As a result, the approach for conducting the case studies is being revised and options for remote engagement are being explored.

The Board was interested to understand more about **how “trust” in the data is being incorporated into the case study planning**, with the particular challenge being to combine system-generated data and a level of trust. While much of this work remains to be done on the publishing side, it is also important to make sure the data is well-packaged and consumable.

Action point

- The Secretariat will set up a dedicated presentation on this work for the Board

5. Data Use Task Force

Traceability work undertaken by EyeOpenerWorks under a Data Use Fund contract has recently been completed and visualisations generated from that work will be published online. A further contract to undertake **feedback mechanism research** (Catalpa International) is ongoing, to be completed during Q2. **Upcoming work** for the DUTF will be the launch of RFPs for an **inventory of data use guidance materials** within the IATI Community and for a **video on how to use the new Datastore Query Builder**. In the coming months the Task Force aims to conduct info sessions to encourage more diverse participation, focus on ways to better communicate its work, and transform from a “Task Force” into an official “Working Group”.

6. Communications and Outreach

The Secretariat is continually refining its Communications and Outreach Strategy in line with the evolving COVID-19 situation and is working to promote the new [guidance on publishing data on resources for COVID-19-related activities, accessing published data through d-portal, and using the Datastore Query Builder and API](#). Consultations are ongoing to evaluate the need for further updates to the guidance, to ensure that published data can be properly used to analyse resource flows. A data visualisation on COVID-19 resources has been developed through DI's Grand Bargain workstream, showing FTS and IATI data, and the link to this will be shared once launched. The Secretariat is encouraging major donors - both members and non-members (such as IMF) to publish IATI data on COVID-19 - and offering support to do so using the new resources.

7. IATI Community Event planning

The Secretariat provided updates on progress in logistical planning for the pilot IATI Community Event, which was originally slated to take place in person in November 2020. The Secretariat has been proceeding with planning for the meeting, while making all necessary risk mitigation efforts related to the evolving COVID-19 situation. The latest time for making a go/no-go decision for hosting an in-person event is in late July (for procurement purposes), and the Board encouraged the Secretariat to continue investigating alternative arrangements for the meeting in light of COVID-19, so that an early decision can be made to give clarity to members. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to continue actively investigating best practices for online conferences and service providers.

The Secretariat outlined possible alternative arrangements such as a scaled-down, virtual Members' Assembly in late 2020 with the official Community Event in early 2021, or a completely virtual Community Event in November. The Board noted that when making a decision on a 'virtual' versus 'in-person' meeting, the character of the meeting we are trying to create would be an important consideration; this is intended as a community-building event, and creating community is more difficult virtually.

In the context of planning for the event which had originally been foreseen as an opportunity to formally launch Working Groups and Communities of Practice, the Board agreed to a softer approach to such launch. Establishment of the Working Group for substantive planning of the event itself has been placed on hold until further decisions are possible. Launch of COPs will be dependent on the digital platform, delayed to Q3 while other COVID-related priority work was undertaken.

Action point:

- Secretariat to actively explore examples of best practice in running events virtually and provide an updated proposal to the Board as the basis for making an early decision on the 2020 IATI event.

8. Institutional Arrangements

The Secretariat pointed to an area of work for the Board in Q2 to address the increasing need for review of membership criteria and categories to support different levels of participation in

governance. This work should consider how to accommodate small organisations or individuals in the membership structure, and address concerns by some larger organisations around contribution levels.

Action point

- The Secretariat will work with Board focal points in Q2 to get this work underway.

The Secretariat presented the approved Strategic Plan and a reminder of the process of developing first a five year high level overview of activities, which in turn informed the development of the 2020 detailed work plan. In addition, a brief update was provided on the final stages and timeline for completing the Results Framework and establishing baselines and targets to guide implementation of the Plan.

The Secretariat walked the new Board through its project management and knowledge management tools, and provided an update on key financial data. A financial snapshot from 31 March (end of Q1), indicated that the initiative was in good financial shape, with projected income and funds carried over from previous years exceeding the approved budget of \$3.55m. As at the end of Q1, the rate of expenditure is around 88%, and the initiative is on course to end the year with a surplus of \$1.6m. This provides a buffer in the event that some membership fees do not eventuate in 2020 as governments prioritise domestic stimulus packages.

Action point

- Secretariat to present a budget revision to reflect adjustments foreseen as a result of COVID-19; this should be completed and available to the Board in good time for review at its next Board meeting.

The Board tentatively agreed to hold its next quarterly meeting on July 15th (TBC).

Annex - Board focal points

Workstream	Board focal point
1. Partner Country Engagement	Henry Asor Winnie Kamau
2. Data Quality	Narayan Dhakal Theo van de Sande
3. Data Use	Henry Asor Narayan Dhakal
4. Technical Core	Melinda Cuzner Leo Stolk
5. IATI Community	Leo Stolk Melinda Cuzner

6. Communications and Outreach	Joseph Barnes Winnie Kamau
7. Institutional Arrangements	Theo van de Sande Joseph Barnes
8. Other Thematic – Budget	Theo van de Sande Leo Stolk