

Members' Assembly Meeting 3-5 October 2017 IFAD HQ, Rome

Minutes

IATI members and observers met to review progress since the last IATI MA in July 2016 and to make strategic decisions on future direction. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the IATI Governing Board, Stephen Potter (Canada) and Aftab Ahmad (Bangladesh) chaired the meeting, supported by members of the IATI Governing Board.

Day 1, Tuesday 3 October 2017

Session 1 - Opening by Governing Board Chair

The Members' Assembly was opened by IATI Chair Stephen Potter, who welcomed members to Rome. Minutes from the 29-30 June 2016 MA were agreed and the agenda for the 3-5 October 2017 MA was adopted. The Chair gave an overview of the agenda for the three days of meeting, highlighting the key topic of IATI's long term institutional arrangements.

Papers: [Minutes of previous meeting, 29-30 June 2016](#); [Paper 1: Agenda for the 3-5th October meeting](#) (updated version).

1a. Opening remarks by IFAD President Mr Gilbert Hougbo

Mr Gilbert Hougbo, President of IFAD, made opening remarks, noting that transparency provides a strong incentive for better data quality, more efficient use of resources, more careful monitoring, better policy compliance and benchmarking. He indicated that IFAD management will be presenting a comprehensive Action Plan to increase transparency for consideration of its Executive Board in December 2017.

Paper: [Blog by Mr Gilbert Hougbo](#).

1b. Report back from caucus meetings

Rapporteurs from the morning's separate caucus meetings (Roderick Besseling for CSOs and other organisations, Martin Akerman for providers of development cooperation and Zefania Romalahy for partner countries) highlighted some of the priorities in the opening session. Many of these themes were further explored in more depth during subsequent plenary sessions.

Session 2 - Financial overview and workplan implementation, chaired by Aftab Ahmad

2a. Financial overview

As financial trustee for IATI Katrin Lichtenberg from UNOPS outlined the financial position including funds received and disbursed for programme delivery in Year 4 (Sept 2016-Aug 2017) with the positive news that Y4 (2016-17) was the first year in which income (US\$2.53m) had exceeded budget (US\$2.46m). It was noted nonetheless that delays in receipt of the membership contributions well into the second and third quarters had impacted delivery. An under-spend on data use was noted (explored in later plenary sessions), and representatives of multilateral development banks recommended looking at a new funding structure to ensure long term sustainability. Members sought additional information on the allocation of funds across and within workplan areas of work. UNOPS confirmed that membership fees are not pro-rated for any member but due in full once per financial year.

Papers: [2A - Financial Overview Y1-4](#); [2C - Payments by members Y4](#); [2D - Y4 Costs and Expenditures by Output](#); [2E - Interim Financial Statement 31 Dec 2016](#); [2F - Certified Financial Statement 30 June 2017](#).

2b. Workplan implementation

Annelise Parr from UNDP outlined progress made against the Y4 (Sept 2016-Aug 2015) workplan.

Paper: [2B - Workplan Implementation review Year 4](#).

Session 3 Data Use Strategy, chaired by John Adams

TAG Chair John Adams and Carl Elmstam from the Secretariat gave a presentation on the Data Use Strategy clustered around four objectives – namely Objective 1: raise awareness of IATI as a source of aid data and create momentum amongst existing and potential data user groups, with feedback loops designed to further improve data quality; Objective 2:

Improve existing tools and develop new, user-friendly tools that help multiple actors use IATI data; Objective 3: Improve guidance, training and support for specific user groups; and Objective 4: Promote integration of IATI data into partner country aid systems and processes. The creation of a Data Use Fund was also proposed to enable those with relevant expertise to apply for funding to deliver specific pieces of work aimed at overcoming identified barriers to use, or solving real-world problems experienced by current or potential data users. A Data Use Task Force would manage the proposed strategy and Data Use Fund.

Members agreed generally with the objectives although some argued that data quality underpins efforts around data use and should be a separate objective. Specific needs identified by partner countries included more languages to appeal to more South American countries, in the spirit of SDG17 on partnerships for the goals; awareness-raising workshops and capacity development at country level (including for national CSOs) for data analysis; effective import modules, and better guidance and peer-learning around how to access and use IATI data even before it's integrated into country systems. The country footprint of UNDP should be leveraged further in promoting data use.

The business case for using IATI data should be more clearly defined as a way to encourage use by different groups such as media and other government agencies. Medium term objectives such as measurement of the SDGs are necessary and would more clearly demonstrate value to new groups.

Other technical needs were noted such as for better query tools and visualisations, and focus on the specific needs of different user groups, for example media, and different government agencies.

The Secretariat was requested to address specific clarifications around the available budget for this work by updating the approved Y5 budget and workplan, making clear that the remainder of the unspent funds allocated to data use in Y4 were to be rolled over. Members also sought greater clarity on the governance of the proposed Task Force and data use fund.

All feedback received in plenary will guide the work of refining the data strategy, and members were asked to volunteer for the Data Use Task Force that will finalize the strategy and oversee its implementation. The Secretariat will incorporate the new data use elements into the existing Y5 workplan to form a single document. The updated strategy and revised Y5 workplan will be reviewed by the Board and approved by members through written procedure on a no objection basis.

Actions: Establish a Data Use Task Force (TAG Chair) to update the data use strategy (November 2017); Prepare integrated Y5 workplan (Secretariat); Review and forward for virtual acceptance by members (Board, January 2018)

Papers: [Data Use Presentation](#)

At the end of the first day, all members were invited to attend a reception at the venue.

Day 2, Wednesday 4th October 2017

Session 4 - Updated budget and workplan 2017/18, chaired by John Adams

As a two-year workplan and budget was approved by the MA at the previous meeting in Copenhagen in June 2016 this session focussed specifically on a work plan and budget for data use and did not examine other elements of the approved two-year work plan and budget.

This was presented by TAG Chair John Adams and members were invited to approve it. Rather than examining detailed aspects of the work plan, the session was used as a further opportunity to gather feedback from members on elements to be included in the updated strategy, and the outcome was an agreement on the establishment of a data use task force which would operate as a working group of the Governing Board. The task force would be led by the TAG Chair and would carry out its work urgently, reporting to the Board which would in turn seek approval of members through a written procedure. Volunteers were sought during the course of the meeting and agreed to meet within one month to consult and develop updated strategy by the next (November) Board meeting; once strategic elements are agreed, the workplan will be updated as an integrated document for the subsequent (January) Board meeting.

Paper: [4 - Data Use Workplan and Budget](#)

Session 5 - Communications, chaired by Sarah Johns

With a comprehensive written update provided on the past year's activities in Paper 5, the presentation by Rohini Simbodyal from Development Initiatives and Carl Elmstam from SIDA focused on revealing the new logo developed for IATI. When polled in September 2017, a majority of members favoured retaining both acronym and name, and this decision guided the development of a new logo. The beta website home page was also revealed. Members were invited to provide feedback which will be used to create an entirely new website which will provide a significantly improved user experience and address many of the website

accessibility and data use challenges identified through extensive user research. Members provided feedback relating to trademarking of the logo, accessibility through careful use of fonts and other languages, and avoiding confusion with other existing logos. A key concern was to ensure that the title page uses language that describes immediately what IATI is and does.

Actions: Develop new website taking feedback from MA and online form into account (Secretariat, Nov 17-Mar 18)

Paper: [5 - Outreach and Communications update](#).

Session 6 - Community showcases - part 1, chaired by Romalahy Mande Isaora Zefania

Members were invited to take note of presentations from the following agencies headquartered in Rome:

- FAO, Sangita Dubey: Proposal on Addressing Gaps in OECD-DAC CRS Classification System
- IFAD, Ursula Wieland: Progress in the transparency agenda and steps ahead
- AICS, Mario Beccia: OPENAID 2.0 – Improving transparency and access of public aid information

Presentations: [IFAD Progress in the transparency agenda and steps ahead](#); [FAO Proposal - Addressing Gaps in OECD-DAC CRS Classification System](#); [AICS: OPENAID 2.0 – Improving transparency and access of public aid information](#)

Session 7 - Institutional Review part 1, recommendations in category A, chaired by Stephen Potter

The Board led discussions over three plenary sessions examining points raised by findings and recommendations presented in the report on institutional arrangements authored by external consultants Powered by Data. Handling the recommendations in different categories, the Board described the rationale followed in suggesting particular actions in relation to each. The full list of recommendations can be found at **Annex E**.

The first session focused on Category A recommendations, which were considered by the Board as uncontroversial and not requiring lengthy discussion. Members commented on the need for further strengthening of the language of the code of conduct to avoid Board members' organisations from benefitting directly from contracts awarded by IATI; and the potential negative impacts on CSO groups of changes in the technical support arrangements to prioritise support to members. Members agreed the following actions on these recommendations:

Category A recommendation	Decision
1 - Assessment of the feasibility of prioritizing technical support for members	<u>Accepted</u>
2 - Approving a clear value proposition statement for the website	<u>Accepted</u>
3 - Updating the code of conduct for Governing Board members	<u>Accepted</u>
5 - Options for a partner country member to pay either a fee or cover its own travel to one meeting per year	<u>Accepted subject to additional work by UNOPS on the criteria for any waiver</u>
6 - Fee waiver for partner country members experiencing exceptional financial difficulties	<u>Accepted subject to additional work by UNOPS on the criteria for any waiver</u>
8 - Management by partner countries of their budget line on travel	<u>Rejected as unworkable within the current management arrangements</u>
12 - Selection of Governing Board Chair	<u>Accepted</u>

Papers: [7 - Institutional Arrangements by Powered by Data](#); [8 - Board recommendations on Institutional Review](#).

Session 8 Institutional Review part 2, recommendations in category B, chaired by Stephen Potter

Members heard further presentations from the consultants on recommendations described as Category B, together with the approach recommended by the Board in relation to each. These discussions were lengthy, and the agenda was adjusted to allow for an additional concluding session in the morning of Day Three.

In open discussion on the Category B recommendations, members sought clarity on the basis for many of the significant changes recommended by the consultants' report. Members asked why a fifth option around continuation of the current consortium arrangement had not been included in the report; what were the specific problems motivating the significant changes recommended in this report; and what added value the proposals might bring. In response to this first round of general comments, the consultants outlined a view that promoted tight and clearly accountable management by a new Executive Director to promote greater efficiency as IATI matures and its focus shifts from supply towards demand for data.

Members noted that the report did not include sufficient analysis of the costs and risks of the recommendations, and failed to acknowledge the political dimension and inclusiveness of IATI, nor the legitimacy gained through association with the UN System. Several UN agencies spoke of the potential legal barriers preventing a UN agency from sitting on the Board of an independent entity such as an NGO and paying fees to any new, external organisation. While some members agreed that greater efficiency and clearer accountability could be achieved by creating an Executive Director position, others pointed to the practical and financial benefits of retaining the existing arrangement, and suggested that streamlining and improved governance could be achieved through careful adjustments to the current arrangements. Other members challenged the assertion in the report that IATI had achieved, or would soon achieve, financial sustainability.

Acknowledging the many different viewpoints and questions that were still outstanding, the Chair brought the session to a close and requested an amendment to the agenda to add a further session the following day to conclude these discussions.

Papers: [7 - Institutional Arrangements by Powered by Data](#); [Paper 8 Board recommendations on Institutional Review](#).

Session 9 Update on the Grand Bargain, chaired by Timothy Takona

Liz Steele from Development Initiatives gave an update to members on progress towards meeting Grand Bargain (GB) commitments. IATI has been identified as the basis for a shared, open-data standard. Nearly half of signatory organisations are members of IATI and nearly three-quarters are already using the Standard to publish some open data on their activities and funding. The challenge now is for organisations to publish more and better-quality humanitarian aid data, and for that data to be used by the humanitarian community to improve the collective response to crisis-affected populations. IATI members can play a key role in reaching out to their humanitarian colleagues and partner organisations to support them in the publication process.

Presentation: [Development Initiatives: Update on the Grand Bargain](#)

Day 3, Thursday 5th October 2017

The agenda for day 3 was updated to allow further discussion on the institutional arrangements, and the updated version is attached.

Session 8 Institutional Review part 2 continued, chaired by Stephen Potter

The Chair briefly recapped discussions from the earlier session. Recognising that many questions were unanswered by the consultants' report, he sought and received approval to establish a working group to look into the outstanding issues raised by members. This working group will examine costs, risks, benefits, ability to deliver on IATI's mission, legal implications and trade-offs associated with the different hosting options under consideration. Review of the membership funding structure should also be included, as a factor in future financial sustainability.

Members agreed on a list of principles to guide the assessment; these are noted in Annex A to this document. The assessment would also consider the factors outlined in the Governing Board's paper and members' feedback at the MA. This work should not delay the ongoing core work of IATI, and members agreed that Secretariat arrangements and membership fee structure should be extended for one year, until August 2019, to cover the transition period to new arrangements.

Members also approved a proposal by the Board to replace the "fee" terminology with a term that would better reflect the fact that funding for IATI is not a fee-for-service, but a contribution to support a global public good and asked the Secretariat to suggest the most appropriate term. Agreed language should clearly differentiate between the minimum contribution amount and any additional voluntary contribution.

Recommendations and decisions are listed in the following table, with detailed actions below.

Category B recommendation	Decision
4 - Adding a new membership category for private sector members	Accepted with additional work by the Board on the definition of 'private sector', and on how this constituency should be included in a progressive fee structure
7 - Review of the fee structure to make it more progressive, ensuring there is sufficient time for consultation with all constituencies on the review.	No decision was made on recommendations 7, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14.
9 - Decision-making within the Governing Board; requirement for one supporting vote by each of the three key constituencies for any decision to be accepted (to be reflected in the SOP)	Members agreed to establish a Working Group to carry out further work on these recommendations, and requested volunteers for the Working Group.
10 - Enlarging the Governing Board from 7 to 10 members, with quorum to be agreed by the Board itself.	The Board proposed a series of four principles (legitimate, accountable, useful, sustainable) to guide the actions of the Working Group, in addition to the criteria presented in Paper 8, Governing Board paper for Members' Assembly - Long-Term Institutional Arrangements.
11 - Creation of a position of Executive Director, with responsibilities and lines of accountability to be decided by members in accordance with institutional arrangements	The four principles to guide the working group are presented in more detail in Annex A to this document.
13 - Future hosting arrangements for the Secretariat, focusing on options 3 (Standalone, independent Secretariat) or 4 (Independent Secretariat, but supported).	
14 - Location of a future Secretariat, with recommendation for selection rather than seeking expressions of interest.	

Actions: Establish a working group of members (Nov-March) to bring forward fully worked recommendations for future hosting and transition for further consideration at a subsequent MA (tentatively June 2018); The Board will develop Terms of reference for the working group and share these with members for information. Assessment by the working group should be guided by the agreed principles (Annex A) and take into account the factors outlined in the Governing Board paper, with scope of work to include costs, risks, benefits, ability to deliver on IATI's mission, legal implications for (1) IATI as a multi-stakeholder initiative (including Board member liability) and (2) the IATI Secretariat, and trade-offs associated with future hosting arrangements. Specifically, the working group should present recommendations regarding Secretariat structure, hosting and location, fee structure, board structure and working methods, and transition plan to the recommended option. SOP modifications to be developed to provide options for partner countries' contributions and criteria for any waiver, and to create a new constituency for private sector members. The current Secretariat is requested to extend under the same terms for a further period of one year until August 2019, with the agreed fee structure and levels to remain in place for the same period.

Session 11 Community Showcases part 2 (i), chaired by Timothy Takona

Members took note of presentations from UNICEF/Development Initiatives and Development Gateway on a joint fellowship initiative currently underway to understand and address the challenges of data use by partner country governments where UNICEF is present. Fellows in Madagascar and in Senegal have been placed in government offices to work in liaison with DG, DI, UNICEF. These fellows have been trained in using the guidance and tools available for accessing and using IATI data, and a curriculum has been developed for their activities over a six-month period. This pilot allows knowledge sharing around the different strengths, capacities and user needs of all parties. All materials developed as part of the pilot will be available and shared openly for scaling to other countries.

Session 12 Update from OECD chaired by Stephen Potter

Ms Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Chair, OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) shared with members the strategic priorities around which the DAC is reforming itself to

become a better partner in Agenda 2030, by focusing on effectiveness and impact, recognizing the complementary values both IATI and the DAC bring in improving data as a means of strengthening development outcomes. Ideas were exchanged around ways that IATI could potentially solve challenges of double-counting in the TOSSD framework and resolve issues of classification such as earmarking and cash transfers together with the WP-Stat.

Paper: [Blog from Ms Petri-Gornitzka](#).

Session 11 Community Showcases part 2 (ii), chaired by Timothy Takona

InterAction presented a case study to show the extent to which IATI can currently help with the planning of a project (agricultural) and described some of the challenges encountered. These included a lack of clarity around what exactly IATI data is; lack of forward-looking budgets, lack of granularity, and lack of tools available to distinguish between a donor and an implementer. While there are examples of excellent data, the main challenge which could not be overcome with existing IATI data tools was project level analysis. The project is supporting the technical community to address the challenges identified, by developing tools to improve project-level data and make it really useful at a granular level.

Sessions 10 Standard Updates part 1 Upgrade to Version 2.03 (progress and timeline) plus Session 13 Standard upgrade process, chaired by John Adams

Bill Anderson proposed a new - semantic versioning - approach to upgrades. In future patches will be versioned and upgrades will be referred to as minor (previously decimal) and major (integer). The decision-making process will also clearly separate the issues (content) from technical implementation to enable MA to meaningfully contribute to decisions. This was accepted subject to a requirement for clearer messaging at the initial stages of minor upgrades. He also presented the timeframe for the release of Version 2.03 (8 January 2018).

Paper: [10 - Proposed revisions to the standard upgrade process](#)

Session 14 changes to the SOP on the basis of decisions made by the MA, chaired by Stephen Potter

With the agenda updated to allow additional time for discussions around the institutional review, this session was cancelled. The Secretariat is requested to update the SOP based on decisions from the MA for review by the Board at a subsequent Board meeting and approval of members by written procedure.

Session 15 Wrap up of day 3 and closing remarks by the Chair

The Chair presented a brief summary of actions agreed during the three days of meetings. He went on to acknowledge the exceptional contribution from the staff and management of IFAD for providing the venue and strong support to the IATI Secretariat in preparing for the meetings. He extended further thanks to the European Commission DEVCO for underwriting the full cost of the meetings.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all participants and announcing that the next MA was expected to return to an annual summer schedule and should take place in June 2018 (TBC).

ANNEX A - Principles to guide Working Group on the future institutional hosting of IATI

- **Legitimate.** IATI is a multi-stakeholder initiative, which derives its legitimacy from the commitment of all its members, and the value of the data it produces. Its legitimacy is enhanced by its role in global processes and the United Nations system.
- **Accountable.** IATI's Governing Board needs to be accountable to its members, and IATI's Secretariat needs to be accountable to the Governing Board. This accountability will be facilitated by clear lines of reporting and responsibility, including the appointment of an Executive Director.
- **Useful.** IATI is not interested in transparency or standardisation for its own sake. The Board believes that IATI's value is primarily derived from the use of the data it produces, and recognises that this may require making a priority of particular use cases.
- **Sustainable.** IATI's funding model needs to be adequate to the task, and scale with the number of members and the demands placed on the Secretariat. IATI membership should be structured to encourage participation, and IATI data should be free to use and re-use.

Annex B - List of participants

Annex C - Updated agenda

Annex D - List of materials and presentations

All annexes and papers listed below are available as a single pdf document at the following link:<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cijpmXwrOm1uFnxwNwFJzogFdAe7a9yr?usp=sharing> and on the IATI website at the following link:
<https://www.aidtransparency.net/governance/members-assembly/annual-members-assembly-meeting>

Session 1	Minutes of previous meeting, 29-30 June 2016; Paper 1: Agenda for the 3-5th October meeting (Updated version). 1A - Blog by IFAD President Mr Gilbert Houngbo
Session 2	2A - Financial Overview Y1-4; 2C, Payments by members Y4; 2D, Y4 Costs and Expenditures by Output; 2E, Interim Financial Statement 31 Dec 2016; 2F, Certified Financial Statement 30 June 2017 2B - Workplan Implementation Review Year 4
Session 3	Data Use Presentation and 2016 Data Use Pledges
Session 4	4 Data Use Workplan and Budget
Session 5	5 Outreach and communications update
Session 6	Community Showcases: FAO: Proposal - Addressing Gaps in OECD-DAC CRS Classification System IFAD: Progress in the transparency agenda and steps ahead AICS: OPENAID 2.0 – Improving transparency and access of public aid information
Sessions 7, 8, 9	Paper 7 on Institutional Arrangements by Powered by Data. Paper 8 Board recommendations on Institutional Review
Session 11	Presentation by UNICEF/Development Initiatives and Development Gateway
Session 12	Blog from Ms Petri-Gornitzka
Sessions 10, 13	Paper 10 on Proposed revisions to the standard upgrade process

Annex E - List of Recommendations from Powered by Data Report

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1	The IATI technical team should assess the feasibility of prioritizing technical support for members over non-members, subject to a consideration of all other factors, as a way of providing a modest incentive for non-members to join the initiative.
2	The Members' Assembly should approve a clear value proposition statement for the website. This statement should be amended if the incentives are changed.
3	IATI should amend the current Code of Conduct for Members of the IATI Governing Board in the Conflict of Interest section to specifically require that Board Members recuse themselves from any board discussion in which an actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest arises. The IATI Governing Board should make a strong collective commitment to upholding the recusal practices.
4	A separate category of private sector membership should be spun out from the "CSO and other" category in the short to medium-term. Relevant private sector actors should be encouraged to join the initiative as members and to serve on the board. A decision by IATI to follow this recommendation would generate governance consequences, namely a need to represent the private sector on the Governing Board.
5	Each partner country should be provided with the option to either pay for its own travel or pay the annual fee. Payment of EITHER an annual fee or travel to one meeting in a year would deem that country in good standing.
6	A partner country experiencing financial difficulties may write to the Chair of IATI and request that the board waive its annual fee for that year, providing an explanation of the financial difficulties it is encountering. The board should in all cases waive the fee if it is reasonable to do so under the circumstances.

7	The IATI Governing Board and Members' Assembly should review the fee structure with a view of making it more progressive; raising or reducing the lowest fees to reduce barriers to entry and/or transaction costs, but also respecting the principle of ability to pay. The consultation phase of the review should be long enough to ensure that all constituencies have ample opportunity to voice their views about the fee structure.
8	To ensure predictability in the annual budget, partner country travel should be a separate budget line that is funded at a set amount per annum. Partner countries as a group should manage this budget and determine the best way to allocate it to maximize partner country travel.
9	IATI's SOPs should be amended to include the principle that for Governing Board decisions taken by vote, a certain level of support by each of the three key constituencies (partner countries, assistance providers, and civil society) is required. This could be effectuated by requiring at least one vote from each constituency.
10	In the short to medium-term, the Governing Board should be enlarged from seven members to ten members, composed of three providers, three partner countries, two civil society organizations, and one private sector member, plus the Chair of the TAG. The quorum should be set at five or six participants, in accordance with what is determined to be the most workable and appropriate by the Members' Assembly.
11	The position of Executive Director should be created. The position's precise responsibilities and lines of accountability should be determined in accordance with the institutional arrangements decided by the Members' Assembly, but generally, they should set out toward a strong level of accountability to the Governing Board. A competitive salary and generous benefits should be offered to help attract the most qualified candidates.
12	The current model of chair selection via election of a board member should be retained in the short-term. We recommend that the Members' Assembly revisit the question of an external chair in the medium to long-term, for example, in five years' time, particularly if it decides to implement a completely independent, standalone secretariat.

	At that point, a determination could be made as to whether the potential benefits of an external chair would likely outweigh any risks.
13	All things considered, we recommend Option 3 or 4, which we believe represent the options most likely to help IATI succeed in meeting its medium and long-term goals. IATI has an important mission, a challenging agenda, but a very strong and committed community. A streamlined secretariat with capable and entrepreneurial staff, a governance system which consolidates authority, clarifies accountability, and facilitates action, and a dependable revenue flow for years to come will help IATI move from vision to action with greater speed and clarity.
14	We do not recommend that IATI solicit expressions of interest from governments. We recommend instead that IATI select a city which most likely favours a successful secretariat, taking into account all factors.