IATI Q2 Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 26 June 2025
Time: 12:57 PM EDT
Location: Virtual
Chair: Thea Schepers

Attendees	**Agenda**
• Thea Schepers, Government of the Netherlands, GB Chair • Charlie Ngounou, AfroLeadership, GB vice-chair • Siem Vaessen, Zimmerman • Motai Ramokoinihi, Kingdom of Lesotho • Zainab Al-Azzawi, UNICEF • Mohamed Gele, Federal Republic of Somalia • Yemesrach Workie (UNDP), IATI Executive Director • Steven Flower (ODS), IATI Technical Lead • Annelise Parr (UNDP), IATI Manager, Policy and Technology • Adriel Dutra Amaral (UNOPS), IATI Financial Manager **Absent** • Anand Nair, Fields Data	1. Opening Remarks & Agenda Confirmation 2. Risk Register Review 3. Financial Sustainability Working Group Report 4. Strategic Plan Presentation 5. Q2 Work Plan Progress Review 6. MA Proposal & Event Planning 7. Break 8. Working Group Updates (Standard, South-South Cooperation, SOP) 9. Evaluation Management Response 10. Closing Reflections

1. Opening Remarks

Thea Schepers opened the meeting, thanking members for accommodating the date change to allow full review of the Financial Sustainability Working Group (FSWG) report. An updated agenda was agreed, giving additional time for this item.

2. Risk Register Review

Yemesrach Workie highlighted updates in the risk register, noting the closure of the risk of IATI not being recognised in FFD4 (lack of recognition of IATI in the 2025 follow-up to the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda). She shared the text of the inclusion of IATI in the FFD4 Sevilla outcome document later in the meeting, in the context of the Strategic Plan direction paper.

Workie flagged three elevated risks, the first being the relaunch of the ATI Index and potential that IATI members may choose to fund either IATI or PWYF, and not both. She noted that there is a distinct difference between the offers of IATI and PWYF but also complimentarities. She outlined the risk management plan, referring to the work underway since January to update the

back end of the IATI Dashboard and publisher statistics pages as a robust tool measuring data quality. Workie admitted that communication with members on the extensive work in this area had been insufficient and needed to be stepped up. She indicated that members would be consulted in shaping the next steps on the dashboard and that further information on this matter would be circulated on the status and plans in the July newsletter. Communications with members would highlight IATI's inclusive approach on measuring data quality on an ongoing basis and not just once every two years.

The third risk Workie referred to was on the concerns over member perception of IATI's value proposition, indicating that the answer lies in the strategic direction paper, updated based on Board input following its Q1 meeting. She urged that this paper be approved by the Board in order to open up discussion on the value for money proposition and remain engaged with IATI.

Siem Vaessen emphasized the importance of establishing and clearly agreeing internally the 3-5 points on IATI's USP (unique selling proposition), and speaking about these often, supported by Schepers who noted the need for cohesion in messaging and stronger member engagement.

3. Financial Sustainability Working Group (FSWG) Discussion

The Board Q2 meeting had been delayed to give time to fully review and discuss the FSWG's report, with a focus on necessary cost reduction measures and sustainable income strategies. In opening this item, Schepers referred to the process leading to this point, including the recent members' drop-in call and conversations with the ED. She noted the members' reluctance to agree to a rise in member contributions in 2026, especially on short notice for next year, and stated that this reluctance is stronger than the Board and probably the FSWG expected. Given this feedback from members, cost reductions are even more important, and it is the Board's view that this is urgent enough to avoid delays, also because it involves staff contracts.

However, there also seems to be confusion on how serious the situation is, based on the numbers. She requested Vaessen to share financial analysis he had undertaken on the basis of the Secretariat's analysis. Ms. Workie highlighted that the analysis was done by the Secretariat and most board members might not have seen or understood the full set of scenarios which were shared together with the Secretariat response to the FSWG, Workie suggested the Secretariat make the presentation, which was agreed.

i. Presentation of Financial Scenarios

Yemesrach Workie presented five scenarios, outlined below from least desirable to most desirable. She noted that there were a lot of assumptions built into these scenarios (membership retention with no major dropouts; Contribution increases to be phased or explored starting 2026 or 2027; and manageable cuts to the budget):

- Scenario 1: Status quo, no member fee increase, no cost cuts → large projected deficits ($350K in 2026, ballooning thereafter).
- Scenario 2: $400K cut in 2026, assuming no members leave in 2026, no member contribution increase → balances one year, allowing key functions to be run in the year ahead but afterwards it is unsustainable. This however has the advantage of allowing enough time for the Board and Secretariat to secure the membership contribution increase with sufficient time for discussion. It also allows enough time for the Secretariat to transition to achieve efficiency gains. A combination of this approach with an increase

from 2027 could be the most optimal composition that can be modeled for the Board consideration.

- Scenario 3: $1M cut in 2026 with a member fee increase → long-term sustainability, including rebuilding reserves. This will have significant consequences across the Secretariat and each entity will need to come back with proposals on what services to cut to achieve this which is unlikely to be viable. Already the two hosting agencies and technical providers expressed their concern over deep cuts.
- Scenario 4: $500K cut with member contribution increase → positive trajectory with less immediate reduction pressure which might allow key services to be delivered and ensures longer term sustainability. Notably this assumes membership increase in 2026 which may not be the case.
- Scenario 5: $500K cut with added reserve replenishment from 2027 to 2030 as well as increase in membership contribution immediately→ most robust scenario but the increase in membership contribution in 2026 might not be feasible.

Respecting the work done by the FSWG and the Board, Workie requested the Board to indicate the funding envelope and permit her as Executive Director to revert with a proposal within that funding envelope. As the Secretariat had not been involved in the consultations of the FSWG, its entities seek the opportunity now to review the services delivered by each, and to revert with a proposal on services that can be delivered within the new funding reality.

Schepers responded, indicating that the Board wanted to decide now without delay or lengthy process, as had been discussed before. Deciding now would make us financially stable by the end of 2026, which is important for members, and it would avoid months of insecurity for staff. The Board had agreed which cuts it wished to decide on today, to achieve these goals. There was also the assumption that we could move forward with the written procedure about the rise in member contributions, which turns out to not be feasible. .

Adriel Amaral conveyed on behalf of UNOPS senior management that having only seen the report once it was circulated to members, he was not in a position to agree to any cuts whatsoever today on behalf of UNOPS. He pointed out that UNOPS' budget was based on the services it delivers, and budget cuts would result in cuts to services, that needed to be addressed with surgical precision. Schepers mentioned that the Board was planning to decide on the UNOPS cuts under the condition that the workload can also be reduced, because the Board is aware of the UNOPS situation.

Workie indicated that this is also UNDP's position, adding that senior management of both entities were willing to work with the Board to arrive at the optimal cost efficient model for IATI and continue to support it during this difficult financial time. Steven Flower added that he was equally supportive of efforts to find reductions, but noted that he had not been contacted by the FSWG or given any opportunity to offer any clarifications on services or possible adjustments. Workie referred to the process of change management underway at both UNDP and UNOPS and requested six months to deliver a revised proposal, following due process and in line each organisation's own rules and regulations, as part of the 2026 budget development.

Zainab Al-Azzawi recalled that the two solutions of reducing expenses and generating more resources go hand in hand and need to be considered together by looking more holistically at where changes could be made. She referred to utilisation of less traditional methods of working to find cuts, as is happening in the private sector. She further pointed to the need to agree urgently on the level of increase in membership contribution, because failure to do so would lead to a requirement for even greater cuts.

Amaral sought clarity on the figure to be cut, questioning whether too much weight was being given to the recommendations of the FSWG. $750,000 as a quarter of the 2025 budget is unrealistic. A more realistic approach would be to reduce costs by $400,000 for 2026 to carry the initiative through that additional year, and buy time to develop a plan for 2027. This was the proposal in Scenario 2. Schepers responded that $750,000 would be the minimum, given that the other side of the proposal - more income - is uncertain. It was also decided earlier in the process that a lengthy two-step process is not what IATI needs at the moment.

Schepers responded the Board is open to alternatives, but warned that the situation is serious and the Board will need to take its responsibility on the budget, as is its role. Several Board members argued that six months for making changes was too long.

It was requested for the Secretariat to revert within one month with a revised proposal, taking into account the recommendations of the FSWG report, and including positions, salary levels, types of contracts, functions. Any further lengthy transition process should be avoided.

Workie requested that as Executive Director she should be given a budget, and the opportunity to work within her team within the parameters set by the Board and to take a more holistic approach looking across the Secretariat including ODS. This is the work of the Secretariat and she wishes to lead her team to do this work, on the basis of strategic guidance from the Board. It is within the remit of each organisation to determine what is needed with their own staffing and abiding with their own policies.

Vaessen and Al-Azzawi agreed that the way forward was to provide the Executive Director with parameters in line with the recommendations of the FSWG, and receive a proposal that the Board could further consider. Further discussion was needed on raising membership contributions, in a more gradual way over a longer period. Al-Azzawi suggested setting targets for resource mobilization as another pillar.

On the income side, it was decided to rise member contributions more slowly. Details to be discussed alongside the costcutting proposals after the 27th.

Action: *Secretariat to return within one month (July 27th) with proposals for cuts of $750,000 which will make IATI sustainable by the end of 2026, within the hosting arrangement as agreed by the Members' Assembly in 2023*

4. Strategic Plan Update

Yemesrach Workie gave a presentation on the changes made to the draft Strategic Direction paper, and requested approval of the Board to circulate it for review by members. She reminded the Board that the report synthesized the consultation of over 100 people including Board members, and had been updated to incorporate further feedback from the Board during its June 2nd seminar. In line with Board feedback, there is increased focus on demand-driven engagement with a country focus, and ambition has been dialed back where it was felt too high. Five core criteria have shaped this revision, namely: responding to a changing global landscape; evolving IATI's model and mission; meeting partner demands and closing the usability gap; leveraging IATI's unique value; aligning with global agendas and cooperation systems. In the revision, a context analysis was undertaken to identify opportunities and threats including digital transformation, increased private sector engagement, alignment with global policy frameworks and growth in climate and sustainable are countered by the threats of shrinking aid budgets, geopolitical and economic instability, fragmentation of reporting systems

and underutilisation by private finance actors. Workie went on to the organisational analysis undertaken as part of the consultation, sharing some thinking of stakeholders on IATI's future, along with strengths (established, credible, technological progress, multistakeholder governance, timely, granular data, capacity building and technical support) and weaknesses (increasing financial challenge, limited data use and visibility, stagnant standard and limited relevance to new finance, perceived complexity, under-leveraged membership and partnerships, and missed strategic positioning).

Workie shared a refreshed vision ("IATI helps build a world where transparency in international cooperation strengthens mutual accountability and use of valuable evidence to generate better outcomes for people and planet.") and enhanced outcome areas 1 (enhanced data use) and 2 (accountable and effective international cooperation). She further shared a refreshed mission (IATI champions transparency and accountability in international cooperation through more usable, relevant and higher quality data and more effective data-use systems, decision-making and policy that contribute to international cooperation.", with action areas A. Strengthening country data-use systems; B. Enhancing IATI infrastructure to increase quality and usability of data across systems; C. Championing transparency and accountability for effective cooperation; and D. Promoting the use of IATI data to inform policy dialogues. She went on to describe in more granular detail the key points from these four actions areas as included in the updated document.

The final part of Workie's presentation was on resourcing of the plan, and set out steps for a business model review, new partnership and resourcing strategy and technology architecture assessment leading to a model of continuous improvement to 2030. Workie requested approval of the Board to release this revised document urgently for consultation with members, and to begin writing a first draft strategic plan for Board review in Q3/2025, followed by a Strategic Results Framework in Q4 2026.

In providing feedback, Vaessen expressed gratitude for the clarifications and transformation of the document based on the Board's earlier feedback. He indicated his support for this updated version, seeking - and receiving clarification - that IATI should not directly build national systems, but partner with others who do. Al-Azzawi also expressed appreciation for the additional work done, adding the potential value of leveraging existing networks like UN agencies for greater country-level engagement and extending coverage. She added the importance of clear targets and indicators for monitoring. Gele referred to the challenges of aligning financial and technical relevance, while thanking the team for excellent work.

In responding to the feedback provided, Workie pointed again to the importance of partnerships and advocacy, based on a renewed and strengthened value proposition.

Schepers placed on record her earlier feedback that a return to a focus only on country governments was perhaps unwise, given that we have done that for the last 10 years, sometimes against the strategic plan, and it has not yet brought us the breakthrough in data use and name recognition we need. Nonetheless she recognised this as a minority opinion and urged maintaining a wider focus at least in our communications, to include NGOs, INGOs, press and civil society, also because the data will be very useful to these actors as well. In response to the issue of CSOs, Workie clarified that across the four action areas IATI will work with CSOs and other stakeholders and reconfirmed this is the case in the document.

Action point: *Board agrees to read the document and revert with approval to circulate it.*

5. Q2 Work Plan Progress

As agreed during the Q1 Board meeting, no presentation was given on the implementation of the work plan, however a detailed implementation report had been shared in advance of the first date scheduled for the meeting, noting progress across standard development, tools, and outreach. The Board had no substantive concerns and accepted the document.

6. MA Proposal & Planning

Workie gave an overview of the proposal for an in-person Members' Assembly (MA) in Nairobi in December 2025, aligned with earlier requests of the Board Chair. In the context of budget cuts and travel restrictions across many organisations, she asked the Board to reconsider the optics of holding an in-person meeting this year. There was also discussion of bringing the date of the event forward from the December 4 currently planned, to give time for members' input on key decisions such as budget in a timely way. A budget of approx. $200,000 is proposed, with support for 25 travel-funded participants, plus board and secretariat. Workie further requested the board to reconfirm if the event should continue to be in person or virtual, considering the financial situation of the initiative and the optics of this within the wider community. The Board on confirmed a preference for an in-person MA, albeit a lean one in a cheaper location than usual, given that the last in-person MA will by then be 1.5 years ago and it has proven essential for members to meet in person, and this is an important year discussing a new Strategic Plan. Board members will self-finance wherever possible. The Board raised concerns that the December timing is tight, indicating a preference for late November to avoid the holiday period, with emphasis on lean attendance, voluntary funding by Board members, and regional travel efficiency. On the importance of dynamics of bringing people together for networking especially this year, Workie reminded the Board that key meetings had already taken place in-person in Brussels and Abidjan.

Action: Proceed with planning and logistics for in-person MA as per proposal. Secretariat to explore November dates and maintain a lean approach. 25 funded travellers, plus Board, unless they can support their own travel. Future MAs taking place earlier in the year, to be explored.

7. Working Group Updates

ED Workie provided updates from active working groups, beginning with the **Standard Stewardship WG**, referring to the various email directions provided by the Chair, and urging the Board to approve the approach set out in the paper shared earlier with the Board on updating the Standard through pilot testing and consultation with the community. Steven Flower reiterated that this work plan activity was urgent and referred to the plan he'd provided earlier to undertake a pilot to test the process of making changes to the Standard, talking with the community about the changes; this plan is aligned with the recommendations of the SSWG, and according to Flower, had 100% endorsement of Vaessen (no longer in the call). Schepers referred to her request to re-establish a Technical Working Group as the right body to oversee changes, and said she would share TORs she had found in her files.

***Action**: Schepers to share her version of TORs for a Technical Working Group. Secretariat to share the ToR to the Board.*

A detailed status report on the **South South Cooperation (SSC) Working Group** has been shared with the Board. In summary, it has met three times, one of these occasions as an open meeting attended by UNCTAD (stewards of the conceptual framework on SSC), and TOSSD,

with both external parties giving presentations on their areas of work. Workie flagged that this WG lacked strong leadership and engagement of members, and encouraged the Board to assist with promoting this for the remainder of its planned work, throughout 2025. The next meeting is planned for July.

Action: *For further discussion with Chair and ED in their next regular catch-up call.*

Workie presented a **SOP Working Group** proposal together with draft TORs. She explained that this would be a continuation of the work of the earlier SOPWG, reconvened to take up new governance matters. She pointed to a number of the examples requiring update, as set out in the proposal, drawing the Board's attention to questions of updating to add a new constituency category; adding a new category for paid publishers; clarification on registration processes for new members; new membership contribution levels if these have been set by the end of the year; TORs for the Members Assembly, drawing upon the FFD4 outcome document and enabling members to be the custodians of that delivery; suggestions on including stronger conflict of interest language, and enhancing the composition and chairmanship of the Board and its accountability to members. Schepers agreed there were a number of matters to examine both minor and major governance-focused, possibly through a number of working groups, including finally looking at the question of an independent secretariat.

Decision: *to be taken at the Board's next meeting.*

8. Evaluation Management Response

Workie presented the management response prepared by UNDP to the independent evaluation of IATI. She explained that it was organisational policy of UNDP and across the United Nations to provide a management response to each recommendation made in every evaluation, as a measure of how seriously evaluations are regarded. The response indicates whether the recommendation is agreed or not, and the action intended, with timeline, for each one. She indicated that the organisation found all recommendations to be reasonable, and were accepted. Without going through each in detail, Workie outlined the key recommendations from the report, on financial sustainability and business model that generates revenue, strengthening governance and political buy-in by engaging board membership chrome country levels at senior political roles (ministerial or deputy ministerial levels). Next is a focus on strengthening the value proposition for members (also addressed in the SP update discussion); deepen our work at country level on data use, and do more to be present in global platforms, such as FFD4 and COP. Greater role in the global standard ecosystem, working closely with other standards and frameworks and building on existing country engagements, will also be key. The management response will be logged in UNDP's corporate system, and updated annually.

In relation to the evaluation management response, Schepers pointed out that some responses may be superseded by Board decisions (e.g. on financial sustainability). With no other substantive feedback on the evaluation management response, Workie considered it ready for upload in UNDP's portal as one of the criteria for the organisation's evaluation policy. Further feedback would be welcomed.

Summary of Action Items

Action	Responsible	Due Date
Proposals from UNOPS & UNDP for Board consideration	Secretariat	27 July 2025
Finalization of technical WG TOR for approval by the Board	Secretariat	12 July 2025
Revised MA dates and logistics	Secretariat	End July 2025
Evaluation response to be uploaded to portal	Secretariat	TBC
Board seminar on its roles, responsibilities	Secretariat	Date TBC