

Final IATI Governing Board Meeting Minutes Q3 Y7 - 15 July 2020

Attendees (Virtual):

Theo van de Sande (Chair); Henry Asor (Nigeria); Joseph Barnes, UNICEF; Melinda Cuzner (Sida); Narayan Dhakal (Nepal); Piper Hart (UNDP, Nepal - invited at the request of the Nepali government); Sanjo Faniran (Nigeria); Winnie Kamau (AFJ); Leo Stolk (Oxfam Novib); Annelise Parr, Margaret Thomas, Sarah McDuff, Anna Whitson (UNDP, Secretariat); Wendy Thomas, Kate Hughes (DI, Secretariat); Argjira Belegu-Shuku (UNOPS, Secretariat); Dan Hughes (Wittj Consulting - Technical Stocktake consultant).

1. Standing Items

The Board reviewed and made no further additions to its Q2 meeting minutes (approved previously via Yammer), risk register, conflict register. The agenda for the Q3 Board meeting was accepted. In his opening remarks, the Chair encouraged engagement on and use of Yammer by Board members in order to maintain regular discussion between quarterly Board meetings.

The Board received a Secretariat staffing update, hearing that Alex Lydiate and Alex Miller have joined the Secretariat at DI as developers, and Sander Hees has joined the Secretariat at UNDP as the Community Facilitator (to concentrate on developing communities of practice and the digital platform).

The Board received an update on IATI's financial situation, which is in good standing. There will necessarily be some reprogramming of resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for those in-person activities which can no longer be delivered. The Board agreed a process of written procedure and a timetable for a budget revision which will be finalised to incorporate Q3 Board decisions. Budget revision documents will be shared with Focal Points within four weeks following the Q3 Board meeting, and a final budget revision is to be shared with Board members (on a non-objection basis) via Yammer within six weeks.

Action point: *On the basis of discussion and decisions made during the Q3 Board meeting, a budget revision will be circulated to the board within six weeks of this meeting.*

2. Highlights of 2020 Workplan Implementation

The Secretariat provided a written briefing on implementation of the 2020 workplan and a verbal update which included the following highlights:

Partner country engagement: strategies for partner country engagement and partner country analysis have necessarily been adapted due to COVID-19. Virtual meetings to support partner country focal points will take place in Q3/Q4. A mixed method approach to the planned country analysis will examine country cases to answer the key research questions.

Data quality: using COVID-19 as a starting point for improving data quality, further webinar consultation on IATI publishing guidance have been led by the Secretariat; and analysis on published data has been shared through several web pieces to highlight areas to be improved and provided support to publishers to do so.

Action point: *There was a commitment to put together a holistic data quality implementation plan (i.e. what is needed beyond technical support), to be shared with the Board Focal Points working on data quality.*

Data use: the Data Use Task Force (DUTF) continues to grow in number and strength with Andie Vaughn from USAID as Chair. Two Requests for Proposal (RFPs) have recently been published (and closed) including to create guidance materials on data use for civil society actors in partner countries; and a series of explanatory / training videos for the new Datastore. A report on strengthening feedback mechanisms within the IATI community has also recently been completed and the Secretariat will work on an implementation plan for recommendations to be presented to the DUTF in Q3.

Technical Core *[please note: additional updates are provided under the dedicated Technical Stocktake session]:* the externally developed Validator has now been brought in-house, within the IATI repository, and is available for use. The senior IATI developer has worked to make it more fit for purpose, by removing unnecessary components. Completion of the Datastore is the subject of continual delay and the Secretariat is awaiting the supplier to deliver one last requirement. The Secretariat is aware of community frustrations with the Datastore delivery and given that much of the delay is down to the external supplier, will be working with the supplier to communicate about the delay and plans for completion, via a Discuss post.

Action item: *the Secretariat will work with suppliers developing the Datastore to prepare a post for Discuss regarding its availability and launch.*

IATI community *[please note: additional updates are provided under the dedicated Community Event session]:* The Secretariat has focused in Q2 on preparing analysis for the Board to propose a way forward for the Community Event (see dedicated session notes). In addition, the Secretariat has onboarded a dedicated Community Facilitator to support development of the community of practice structure and the digital platform as a step towards implementing the new structure of WGs and COPs agreed at the 2019 Members' Assembly. Procurement of the digital platform is now underway, with plans to launch before the 2020 Members' Assembly.

Communications: two major products were delivered in Q3: the IATI Speakers' Kit and the 2019 Annual Report. Closing out the project to migrate all content from the old IATI websites to IATI's new website, all remaining reference pages have now been shifted to iatistandard.org where all IATI tools and resources are available through a single user interface.

Outreach

Action point: *the Secretariat is preparing a revised outreach strategy given the complications with COVID-19, to be delivered to Board Focal Points in Q3.*

Institutional arrangements: Luxembourg has joined as the latest IATI member.

Action point: *the Secretariat will follow up with Mr. Dhakal (Nepal) after the Board meeting to ensure he has access to planning tools available to the Board in Smartsheet.*

3. Technical Stocktake

In a significant step towards achieving Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan (*Strengthen the IATI Standard by consolidating its technical core*), Q2 2020 technical work included a Technical Stocktake which was undertaken by an external independent consultant, Dan Hughes (Wittj Consulting). IATI Technical Lead Wendy Thomas presented an update on this process involving wide ranging consultation with key IATI stakeholders. She introduced Mr Hughes who presented the recommendations from the exercise, as

outlined in the [Board paper](#) shared in advance of the meeting. He provided clarifications to Board members where requested. All recommendations were accepted by the Board, with the following observations.

- **System design recommendation**

Board members approved the proposal to move toward an integrated system architecture to improve efficiency and provide a more unified user experience, bringing consistency and eliminating redundancies that currently exist within the system. As a next step, the Secretariat will flesh out options for implementation to be shared with Board Technical Focal Points for review. The Board agreed as a general principle that implementation should be taken forward in the same inclusive and transparent manner as the Stocktake itself, and the Secretariat should have the discretion to engage external support as necessary to ensure timely implementation of the planned changes.

Action point: Secretariat to develop detailed implementation plans (mid-October 2020)

- **Hosting publisher XML files**

The Board was reminded that different parts of the current system already host publisher XML files but do so separately in each tool (datastore, validator, dashboard/stats and d-portal) and not make this cached data publicly available for users if a publisher's site goes down. The proposal is for IATI to store a copy of raw, published XML and provide an access point. The Board approved the proposal for IATI to host and make publicly available XML files, emphasising that this needs to be accompanied by a clear set of policies and rules on data storage, removal and operational processes to make these changes.

Action point: Secretariat to develop policies for consideration by the Board as a first step towards implementing this change.

- **Semantic data layer**

Recognising the urgent need for IATI to provide accessibility to IATI data for users unfamiliar with XML, the Board approved the proposal to develop a new curated dataset that makes IATI data more usable for data users who are not experts in the IATI Standard. The level of transformations applied would be determined through user persona and story analysis and could include field format and selection, mapping taxonomies, using understandable terms vs. codes, and currency conversions, as examples. The Board encouraged the Secretariat to carefully consider what transformations are made and ensure that there is transparency on how these transformations are applied to the data.

Action point: Secretariat to develop (as part of the broader implementation plan) a clear approach for creating a new semantic data layer, ensuring that decisions around development are informed by the needs of data users.

- **Storing historical data**

The Board agreed on the value of IATI retaining a historical record of all published data to be able to see changes over time, but given the implications of shifting away from the current approach in which publishers have full responsibility for their own data, the Board agreed that a wider consultation with publishers, the technical community and the DUTF must be undertaken as an essential first step. The added value of IATI storing historical data needs to be clearly articulated ahead of such consultation.

Action point: Secretariat to clearly articulate the added value of storing historical data and based on this, to undertake a consultation with the IATI Community. The consultation should consider what should be stored and clear rules and processes for how long historical data should be kept and operational processes for having data removed or corrected by the publisher.

- **Options analysis for a publishing tool**

The Board approved the conduct of an options analysis to assess potential approaches to a publishing tool that would take into account options for small as well as large publishers; Consideration should be included for an IATI-owned publishing tool among options, to reduce reliance on externally-provided tools. While the Board received a brief outline of some options to be considered, Board members called for a detailed outline of pros and cons for the different options to be presented, including how to address the challenge in the short and long term.

Action point: Secretariat to provide an implementation plan for carrying out an options analysis into future publisher tool options.

Next steps and implementation of Technical Stocktake recommendations

The Board was appreciative of the transparent and thorough process undertaken by the external consultant resulting in a set of strong proposals as laid out in the [Board paper](#). Board members provided guidance that a) next steps should be to engage with the wider community, beyond just the technical community, in consultations and decision making; and b) external support could be used to help support this work and ensure that it can be moved forward as a priority so that it can be concluded and presented to members at the next MA.

4. IATI Annual Meeting

Two proposals on the way forward for the timing of the Members' Assembly and Community Meeting were presented to the Board (option A: a mixed in-person/virtual event and option B: a fully online event). The Secretariat presented in-depth analysis in support of option A and the Board agreed to hosting a virtual Members' Assembly in November 2020 and postponing the Community segment to 2021 (likely Q3). In addition, it was decided that a (virtual) advocacy event will be held back to back with the MA to launch the communities of practice and digital platform, to help bridge the gap between in-person IATI meetings. The Board also expressed a desire to quickly constitute an Expo Working Group to support preparations for the Community segment. Terms of Reference for this Working Group were already approved in the Q1 Board meeting, but should be revisited to ensure the objectives remain relevant. There was also a desire to reassess the proposed dates of the MA given this new approach.

- Action point: Secretariat to reassess best dates for 2020 MA and communicate the new approach and dates if changed, to the wider community.
- Action point: Secretariat to review Expo Working Group Terms of Reference and propose any changes to the Board, before moving forward to constituting the group.

Board work planning 2020

The Board established the following work schedule for the remainder of 2020, drawn from the risk register and previous Board meeting minutes and outlined in a [Board Paper](#):

1. Establish a policy on data sensitivity (Secretariat UNDP to lead this work together with Board Data Quality focal points Narayan, Theo)
2. Initiate contact with governments mandating IATI publishing, to streamline requirements. (Secretariat DI Wendy to support this work with Board technical focal points Melinda and Leo).
3. Updating IATI's policy on membership (Secretariat UNDP and UNOPS to support governance focal points (Theo, Joseph) in this work.
4. Review of mid-year budget revision (UNDP and UNOPS working with Governance focal points Theo and Joseph)

In closing the meeting, the Chair set a tentative date for the next meeting of Tuesday, October 20th.