IATI Q3 Governing Board Meeting (Virtual)

Date: October 6, 2026

Attendance and agenda

Attendees

- Jack Lightley, FCDO (Chair)
- Horia Sohir Debbiche, AfDB (Vice-Chair)
- Abie Elizabeth Kamara, Sierra Leone
- Craig Hammer, World Bank (Technical Seat)
- Charlie Ngounou, AfroLeadership
- Yemesrach Workie (UNDP), IATI Executive Director
- Annelise Parr (UNDP), IATI Secretariat
- Adriel Dutra Amaral (UNOPS), IATI Financial Manager

Partial

- Motai Ramokoinihi, Kingdom of Lesotho
- Anand Nair, Fields Data

Agenda

- Declarations of interest
- Approval of GB Q2 meeting minutes
- Review of Q2 action list and risk register
- Q3 implementation update and Executive Director forward look
- 2026 Members' Assembly agenda
- Q3 financial update and MVSP outlook
- Working groups and post-2028 hosting arrangements
- Draft 2027 work plan and budget
- Any other business

Summary of key decisions and follow-up actions

Decisions of the Board

- Q2 Board minutes formally approved as circulated.
- Approval of the Members' Assembly agenda for 10 December 2026, retaining the Assembly as a focused governance and consultation meeting, with a separate Community Exchange Day to be arranged in early 2027.
- Agreement that the Secretariat should prepare a first draft of revised SOP provisions for consultation by the SOP Working Group, rather than await complete working-group inputs before drafting; the Q4 Board and Members' Assembly will review the resulting package, with final approval of remaining provisions expected through written procedure in early 2027.
- Agreement to retain the current MVSP controls pending a formal Q1 2027 paper on whether and how to exit MVSP, taking account of both the financial thresholds and the Secretariat's policy and operational assessment.
- Approval of the draft 2027 work plan and budget, subject to incorporation of Board comments, confirmation that personnel costs are correctly reflected, circulation to members not present for the full discussion to provide any final comments, and preparation of a measurable implementation-monitoring mechanism.
- Agreement that a dedicated paper on IATI Standard governance, including the SOC's relationship with the Board, decision and escalation routes for Standard changes, and the technology roadmap, should be brought to the Q4 Board meeting.
- Agreement to add the issues of uncertainty around membership contributions and technical infrastructure expenditure to the risk register, alongside the governance risk associated with changes to the IATI Standard.

1. Opening and Standing Items

The Chair welcomed members to the Q3 meeting and noted that the principal decision sought was approval of the 2027 work plan and budget. He requested focused interventions given the full agenda and the need for some members to leave early.

The Chair invited declarations of interest. In this context he confirmed that the FCDO contract with Open Data Services Co-operative, which had given rise to a declared conflict at the Q2 meeting, had ended and that the conflict no longer applied. No other conflicts were declared.

The Q2 2026 Governing Board minutes were approved without amendment. The Secretariat confirmed that the Board action log had been updated, that actions due had been completed or annotated, and that monthly financial information had been shared for July, August and September alongside regular quarterly reporting.

The Secretariat reported that the standing risk register remained up to date and that no new risks had yet been entered. The Board requested that uncertainty around membership contributions and technical infrastructure expenditure should be captured as risks. The technical representative additionally requested that governance risks arising from Standard changes, including the absence of a clear Board escalation route, be recorded and regularly reviewed.

2. Q3 Implementation Update and Executive Director Forward Look

The Executive Director shared progress across the four strategic action areas, noting that delivery had continued at pace despite MVSP controls, the summer period and the relocation of the Secretariat from New York to Madrid. The Board commended the Secretariat for maintaining delivery under these constraints.

On country data use, the Secretariat reported that the 2026 mapping exercise had identified 27 governments using IATI data. The validation exercise undertaken in August confirmed the finding that limited awareness was not the principal barrier in many cases, but that the capacity to integrate and apply the data was a more significant constraint. The mapping report grouped countries by their stage of use, allowing for the development of more tailored technical support and “accelerator” approaches for 2027. The Chair asked whether the study demonstrated growth over the preceding 12 months. The Secretariat clarified that the survey had not been designed to distinguish recent from longer-standing use, although it had surfaced previously undocumented users, including Chad and Yemen, as well as countries seeking deeper support.

On infrastructure, data quality and usability, the Secretariat reported substantial Q3 progress on the data quality dashboard, which was now ready to move into a six-week publisher feedback period. Work had also progressed on a consolidated data quality report and separately on interoperability with CRS, TOSSD and the Financial Tracking Service, in line with the intention to enable publishers to publish once and allow their data to be reused across systems through crosswalks and related services.

The Board welcomed the interoperability work but requested a clearer statement of the intended end state, dated milestones and decision points. Board members cautioned that interoperability should not be treated solely as a technical exercise: methodological differences, risks of double counting, incomplete identifiers, diverging eligibility definitions, confidentiality issues and the wider policy environment need to be considered. The technical representative offered to share relevant learning from the World Bank’s internal review of the TOSSD methodology currently underway, and the Vice-Chair offered AfDB as a possible case study. The Board requested that the Q4 interoperability paper focus on milestones, risks, resource implications and a clear business case rather than restating the general value proposition.

Regarding the FTS work, the Secretariat explained that agreement had been reached in principle on a reporting approach under which publishers would remain responsible for the data submitted to FTS through IATI. Detailed discussion on delivery and timing remained to be finalised, although visible results were intended in 2027. The work would proceed only if the anticipated supplementary contribution from Denmark was confirmed and would be delivered on a cost-recovery basis. This work will be pursued in full alignment with the Strategic plan, SPA commitments of IATI and integrated approach as per the guidance of the Board in Q2 in relation to any tool or service development.

The Secretariat reported that the new IATI website remained on schedule for a Q4 launch. The core build, including an impact section with approximately 100 use cases, country activity maps and integration with IATI Connect, had progressed at substantially lower cost than the original allocation. Under MVSP, redesign of the elements of Standard presentation, developer documentation updates, additional data-use content and proposed AI-enabled indexing had been deferred. The Board noted that the launch timeline remained unchanged, although the scope of functionality had been reduced.

On partnerships and membership, the Secretariat reported that UNCDF and Côte d'Ivoire had joined during the quarter and that BADEA had confirmed its support in writing. The Board reiterated its readiness to support targeted membership outreach and recognised individual Board members' contributions to specific engagements. The Executive Director indicated that such support would continue to be sought where Board relationships could help advance prospects.

The Executive Director's assessment highlighted four recurring constraints: limited staffing, dependence on non-core funding for some strategic work, continuing uncertainty around membership income, and risks associated with technical infrastructure expenditure and oversight. The Board agreed that the first and second were important operational considerations, while membership uncertainty and technical infrastructure expenditure warranted explicit inclusion in the risk register.

3. Working Groups, Technical Governance and Members' Assembly

The Board discussed the continuing difficulty of securing sustained participation in governance working groups. Members observed that repeated outreach had produced low attendance, and that the same small group of individuals was carrying much of the burden. Suggestions included replacing standing working groups with more flexible surveys and consultations, recognising in-kind contributions, examining whether participation should be compensated in limited circumstances, and inviting structured input from observers as well as members.

The Chair suggested that the SOPs should allow the Board and Secretariat to select the most appropriate consultation method rather than requiring a traditional working group model in every case. Within the specific context of the SOP update, he also supported consideration of in-kind contribution arrangements and a broader review of CSO membership fees, while cautioning against changes that would weaken income whilst MVSP remains activated. The group noted the importance of revitalising the CSO constituency and ensuring that governance arrangements better reflect data users as well as producers.

The technical representative reiterated his call to formalise the relationship between the Standards Oversight Committee and the Board. He requested a clear decision flow, escalation criteria for Standard changes, greater clarity on the role of the Gazette and regular Board consideration of technical governance. The Board agreed that a dedicated IATI Standard governance paper should be prepared for Q4 with input from the technical representative, and that the associated risk should be added to the risk register.

The Secretariat reported that only two working group members had attended the most recent SOP Working Group meeting. The group had nevertheless begun substantive review and considered that the December Members' Assembly should serve as a consultation point rather than the point at which a fully revised SOP would necessarily be approved. Several areas were progressing, while others required Board direction, including on what constituted urgency in the context of Board decision-making provisions, contribution arrangements and simplification of the process for periodic updating of administrative elements of the SOPs, such as membership contribution levels where MA decisions are clear.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft revised SOP provisions for the working group's review, reversing the sequence of consultation and drafting in order to make pragmatic progress. The package should be brought to the Members' Assembly for consultation, with final or remaining approvals expected through written procedure in January or February 2027. The Board emphasised that the working group should be afforded the choice as to whether to accept this approach.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to keep the Members' Assembly date of 10 December 2026 and approved the agenda for the meeting. The Board further agreed that the virtual Members' Assembly should remain focused on essential governance decisions and consultation which should include an agenda item on lessons learned from the MVSP and reference to the work on SOC governance and links

with the Governing Board. A separate, more interactive Community Exchange Day should be scheduled in early 2027 to enable broader discussion of data use, interoperability and other community priorities including the launch of the new website.

4. Q3 Financial Update and MVSP Outlook

UNOPS reported that approximately 85% of the value of expected 2026 membership contributions had been collected. Most higher-paying members had either paid or were actively processing payment, and the remaining collection risk was concentrated among smaller contributors. UNOPS clarified that the 85% figure referred to the value collected rather than the proportion of members that had paid.

UNOPS' assessment was that the financial outlook had improved substantially. The projected 2027 income was approximately $3.6 million and the anticipated year-end unspent balance was reported in the range of $1.2 million (actual) to $1.6 million (includes advance payments from members for 2027). The Board noted that the forecast remained dependent on outstanding and advance contributions and therefore requested continued caution and, where possible, a scenario-based presentation rather than reliance on a single full-collection assumption.

The Secretariat identified continuing risks among some UN entities and CSOs. UNEP had indicated that it expected to leave IATI in 2027. The Board agreed that Q1 2027 would be decisive for assessing whether expected contributions materialise and whether the strengthened position is durable.

The Board recognised the Secretariat's financial discipline and compliance with the MVSP controls. It agreed that exit from MVSP should not be treated as an automatic consequence of crossing a numerical threshold. A Q1 paper should distinguish the financial test from the broader policy and operational judgement, consider the full-year runway, reconcile actual and projected expenditure, and address the relationship between the runway trigger and the $1 million contingency reserve.

Board members queried inconsistencies in the financial papers, including an incorrect link to the August update and a table showing zero operational inflow for September. The Secretariat undertook to correct and recirculate the relevant tables and links. The Board also requested refinement of the newly introduced monthly reporting method so that actual spending patterns, projected monthly expenditure and runway calculations could be clearly reconciled.

The Executive Director confirmed that Madrid-based salary scales had applied from September 2026. Based on the current estimates, the annual UNDP staffing cost was expected to be approximately $218,000 lower than the New York cost base, while noting that exchange rates, office costs and any future cost-of-living revision could affect the final amount.

5. Post-2028 Hosting Arrangements

The Executive Director presented an indicative timetable for decisions on post-2028 hosting arrangements, prepared at the request of the Chair. She stressed that the timetable should not pre-empt the working group's recommendation, which could include extension or renegotiation of the current arrangement, a revised model or a new competitive process. It was intended to show the time required if a new tender became necessary and to preserve space for a second round should the first process fail.

The indicative primary timetable assumed decisions by the end of 2026, preparation and approval of terms of reference in January and February 2027, a two-month bid period in March and April, evaluation and award in May and June, negotiation through the third quarter, agreement of transition arrangements in Q4, and implementation of the transition from January to May 2028. A contingency timetable could reopen bidding from July to September 2027, although this would compress the time available for evaluation, negotiation and transition.

The Chair observed that the initial timetable already appeared likely to slip because substantive decisions on the SOPs and hosting approach would probably not be finalised by December. The Board agreed that the timetable should be adjusted realistically while protecting sufficient time for competition, negotiation and transition. Board members stressed the importance of active outreach to potential bidders at national and international levels and of mobilising the wider membership to identify capable organisations.

The Executive Director confirmed that UNOPS had expressed positive interest in continuing, while UNDP's position had yet to be confirmed. She cautioned that the previous hosting process had imposed substantial uncertainty and workload on the Secretariat and that the 2027 plan should explicitly recognise the resources required for any new process. The Board noted that evaluation criteria would need detailed consideration and that the process should remain neutral among options and potential bidders.

No decision on the future hosting model or approach was taken. The Board noted the indicative timetable and requested that the hosting workstream, including workload and resource implications, be reflected clearly in the final 2027 work plan.

6. Draft 2027 Work Plan and Budget

The Executive Director presented the draft 2027 work plan as a conservative bridging year plan. She explained that it was designed to stabilise the initiative, protect the Standard, publishing infrastructure, data services and member support, and allow deeper country support and convening after a potential mid-year exit from MVSP. The proposal comprised 24 workstreams across the four strategic action areas and institutional performance.

The proposed core budget was $2.7 million, rising to approximately $3.2 million when confirmed and anticipated non-core funding was included. The Executive Director explained that the plan continued the downward expenditure trajectory of preceding years. Approximately 74% of planned spending was concentrated in institutional performance and infrastructure, reflecting the cost of the core technical delivery arrangement, staffing, governance and the proposed in-person Members' Assembly and Community Exchange.

For country data use, the plan proposed regional engagement, four country accelerators and peer learning. For infrastructure and usability, it protected maintenance, Helpdesk and platform operations; planned further data quality dashboard work; and included CRS and TOSSD interoperability deliverables. Advocacy and partnerships focused on visibility, strategic partnerships, non-core resource mobilisation and membership growth. Policy dialogue activities remained more dependent on external funding. Institutional performance covered governance, legal agreements, SOP revisions, hosting readiness, financial management and Governing Board and Members' Assembly support.

The Chair found that the work plan broadly aligned with the strategy and was clear, comprehensible and easier to monitor than previous versions. He sought assurance on four points: whether current staffing was sufficient; whether the budget could flex if contributions declined; whether reliance on non-core funding put strategic objectives at risk; and whether the reduced technology envelope adequately mitigated infrastructure risks.

The Executive Director confirmed that the work plan had been developed collaboratively across the Secretariat and she considered it to be deliverable. A six-month technical specialist assignment was anticipated from mid-year, alongside support to be secured through internships and fellowships; however, she flagged that an engagement specialist position remained unfunded and the absence of that capacity would continue to limit member engagement and resource mobilisation. In a point of clarification, Chair requested that the personnel tables be checked because the narrative showed equal quarterly staffing costs and did not visibly reflect the proposed mid-year addition. He also cautioned that recruitment should be considered in light of the June 2028 end date of the current hosting arrangement.

The Executive Director explained that the gap between anticipated core income and the proposed $2.7 million budget provided room to absorb contribution shortfalls or begin rebuilding financial resilience. She acknowledged that reliance on non-core funding for country data use was not ideal and should be revisited if the financial position strengthened. On infrastructure, the Secretariat stated that the 2027 provision carried forward the tested MVSP maintenance model and that reductions had been implemented progressively with technical providers ODS; any emerging risk would be reported through the MVSP lessons-learned paper.

The technical representative welcomed the clearer line-by-line funding status overall in the 2027 plan but requested earlier and more granular information on the technology envelope, including service area, time commitment, deliverable, asset and account ownership, and implementation plans. He considered this necessary for value-for-money oversight, the LTA horizon and the hosting process. The Executive

Director agreed to provide more detail. In the context of the service catalogue, after some miscommunication in the meeting it was generally agreed that this may require substantive revision, particularly as it reflected a staffing model that had never fully materialised.

The Board discussed consultancy expenditure. The Executive Director clarified that the costs listed under consultancy included the ODS LTA and UNOPS service arrangements, or ring-fenced BADEA and EU work. A limited core allocation of approximately $20,000 was proposed for specialist country data-use accelerator support. The Chair emphasised that any use of another provider for technical work be supported by a clear rationale, given ODS's institutional role as part of the 2023 Letter of Agreement signed by the Board with UNDP and UNOPS. He added that formal institutional documents such as the service catalogue should be revised through an explicit process rather than treated as obsolete by assumption.

The Vice-Chair requested clearer visibility of in-kind contributions, a distinction between activities assured through core funding and those dependent on additional resources. The Executive Director agreed to work on improving visibility of these items. She further suggested that the SOP review should address flexibility for partial contributions, in-kind contributions and constituency definitions.

The Chair requested a monitoring dashboard derived from the work plan and Integrated Results and Resources Framework, with measurable deliverables and regular reporting to the Board and membership. The Executive Director agreed, noting that the underlying framework already linked strategy indicators, workstreams and resources and could be transitioned from Excel to a more accessible online format.

The Board approved the 2027 work plan and budget, subject to incorporation of the comments offered during the meeting, verification of the personnel cost profile, circulation to members who had left or were unable to participate in the final discussion, and finalisation of the monitoring arrangements. The Chair confirmed that the majority decision already provided the approval needed for year-end contractual planning, while allowing remaining comments from absent members before the document was finalised and shared with members.

7. Any Other Business and Close

The Chair informed broadly about FCDO restructuring in which some decisions are still to be finalised. He emphasised that FCDO remained committed to IATI membership and engagement.

No further items were raised. The Chair thanked the Secretariat and UNOPS for the detailed papers, continued delivery and financial discipline. He acknowledged that the period ahead would remain demanding given the number of competing priorities and circumstances discussed throughout the session, and closed the meeting.

<u>Follow-Up Actions for the Secretariat</u>

- Update the risk register to include uncertainty around membership contributions, technical infrastructure expenditure and governance risks associated with Standard changes.
- Prepare a technical governance paper for GB Q4 with input from the Board's technical representative, which should cover the SOC / Board relationship, escalation criteria and decision boundaries for Standard changes, regular Board touchpoints and the relationship to the technology roadmap.
- Set out the Q4 interoperability paper with clear end-state outcomes, dated milestones, methodological and policy risks, resource requirements and a business case; incorporate available learning from members and partners.
- Correct and recirculate the August financial update link and the September operational inflow table, and continue refining monthly reporting so actuals, forecasts and runway calculations can be reconciled.
- Prepare a Q1 2027 paper on potential exit from MVSP, distinguishing the financial threshold from policy and operational considerations and addressing the contingency reserve and full-year runway.

- Continue with planning for the virtual Members' Assembly on 10 December 2026; finalise its agenda based on the comments provided by the Board and arrange a separate Community Exchange Day in early 2027.
- Extend the offer for the Secretariat to prepare the first draft of revised SOP provisions for consultation by the SOP Working Group; If accepted, bring the package to the Q4 Board and Members' Assembly, with remaining approvals expected through written procedure in early 2027.
- Revise the hosting arrangements timetable to reflect realistic decision dates, preserve a contingency for a second bidding round, and reflect the staffing and resource implications in the 2027 work plan.
- Confirm UNDP's institutional interest in the post-2028 hosting options and continue preparations without pre-empting the working group's recommendation on whether bidding was necessary or whether extension was more appropriate.
- Finalise the 2027 work plan and budget by incorporating Board comments, verifying the costs associated with the technical specialist anticipated mid-year and quarterly personnel profile, making core/non-core and in-kind contributions more visible, and circulating the revised version to absent members for final comments.
- Develop a measurable implementation dashboard aligned with the IRRF and the 2027 work plan, allowing for regular reporting to the Board and membership.
- Provide a more granular breakdown of the 2027 technology envelope and review whether the service catalogue and related institutional documents require formal revision.