

IATI Members' Assembly

Minutes of Meeting
24.04.2024 – Bogota, Colombia

<p>MA Session 1: Opening IATI Members Assembly</p>	<p>Link to MA presentation (</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The outgoing IATI Chair expressed satisfaction with the progress IATI made over the last year and especially highlighted the secretariat transition and his confidence in IATI's future role in monitoring SDG progress. He stressed Nigeria's continued commitment to transparency and to supporting IATI. - DANE's Deputy Director General highlighted Colombia's commitment to transparency, open data and its pride for hosting the 5th UN World Data Forum and leading open data ambitions and reforms in the region. - The UN Resident Coordinator thanked DANE for hosting the IATI community and stressed the importance of monitoring SDG progress in the critical, final period of the agenda. - The newly elected IATI Chair, Thea Schepers, Government of the Netherlands, expressed her gratitude for her election into this new leadership role and introduced the new IATI board members: Anand Nair (Fields Data); Charlie Martial Ngounou (AfroLeadership); Mohamed Gele (Government of Somalia); Motai Ramokoinihi (Government of Lesotho); Siem Vaessen, (Zimmerman - technical seat); Zainab Al-Azzawi (UNICEF). 	<p>Henry Asor (Nigeria) Piedad Urdinola (DANE) Mireia Villa Forner (UNRC) Thea Schepers (Netherlands)</p>
<p>MA Session 2: Tracking progress towards IATI's Strategic Plan Objectives (2020-2025)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Strategic Plan implementation progress review found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SP objective 1 (data quality) needs attention. Data literacy and capacity for data use has been strengthened. Yet, overall the quality of data has not improved significantly, and 2021 witnessed a drop in terms of dashboard ratings (data quality performance). New publishers in particular need to improve the quality of their data. ▪ SP objective 2 (data use) is on track and the annual survey indicates increase in satisfaction with IATI tools. ▪ SP objective 3 (re-invigorated IATI community) was found to be largely on track. 	<p>Joseph Barnes (UNICEF)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Feedback from the members</i> included a statement by Netherlands MFA, itself a frequent data user, that data quality has in fact greatly improved. From this it seems clear that the way data quality is measured is a major factor in the findings of the progress review. However, data quality must remain a key priority. It was further noted that the dashboard treats all publishers equally, potentially masking differences in data quality between large and small organizations. - Presentation of the proposed roadmap for the 2026 – 2030 Strategic Planning process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April: Kick-off and consultations throughout the summer ▪ Nov/Dec 2024: first draft for circulation ▪ 2025: further consultations, drafting SP and results framework ▪ Sep 2025: zero draft ▪ Oct 2025: final document to be approved. - <i>Feedback from the members</i> included the need for assessing the external context and integrating IATI into the wider transparency/open data environment; a clearer reflection on past activities in the roadmap; a stronger focus on environmental and climate change-related data; including outreach objectives in the new SP for a more outward-looking approach and to engage beyond the IATI community for meaningful strategic planning. 	<p>Zainab Al-Azzawi (UNICEF) Joseph Barnes (UNICEF)</p> <p>Action items: - <i>External environment analysis to be conducted early in the strategic planning process</i></p>
<p>MA Session 3: 2023 Secretariat Implementation Update</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the transition of technical infrastructure in 2023 emphasized smooth cooperation between teams and the focus on understanding user needs. PWYF briefly presented its work funded by IATI during the 2024 Aid Transparency Index cycle. ODS highlighted measures taken to enhance products and services, including improving data quality through small, iterative steps. The team has also provided responsive support, though challenges remain in managing increased volume of queries. - <i>Questions from the members</i> arose about the absence of the executive director during the transition, with concerns about its impact on planning and management. The Secretariat agreed this had impacted the work planning process and in consultation with the Board, had agreed to develop shorter term work plans enabling the ED, once in post, to contribute and further shape longer term plans. UNDP explained that the new Executive Director has been appointed after a lengthy recruitment process, and will commence with IATI at the start of June. 	<p>Annelise Parr (UNDP) Steven Flower (ODS) Gary Forster (PWYF)</p>

MA Session 4: Building momentum for IATI: Presentation of the 2024 Work Plan

- Presentation of the work plan for 2024, which builds on the strategic plan, hosting terms of reference, and service catalog published in April. The service catalog describes all activities supporting the goals of IATI, with specific scopes like the data standard and technical infrastructure.
- ODS highlighted the importance of distinguishing between “business as usual” work and “projects to enhance IATI”. "Focus areas," tangible goals for practical improvements, such as access to data, communications, insights and analytics, publishing, and guidance/documentation were introduced. These areas aim to address real challenges such as confusion among users as to which tools to use and where to find them, and data quality issues. The need for clear guidance and documentation to support users in implementing IATI effectively was highlighted.
- UNDP emphasized the importance of effective communication and storytelling to showcase the value of IATI data, attract new members, and keep existing ones engaged. In this context the recent shift to the SDG Integration Group within UNDP provided access to organizational expertise in this field.
- The importance of community involvement, encouraging feedback, sharing data use stories, and participating in working groups was also emphasized. Overall, the presentation underscored the ongoing efforts to improve IATI's infrastructure, communication, and support mechanisms to better serve its users and stakeholders.
- *Feedback and comments from the members* focused on various aspects of data management, tools, prioritization, communication strategies, and budgeting.
 - Data Management and tools: discussions centered on the challenges of using the dashboard and d-portal, particularly for non-expert users. Suggestions to create more user-friendly dashboards for global areas like gender and climate were made. Additionally, there were concerns about data quality and the need for clearer communication about data policies and standards.
 - Service Model and prioritization: members raised questions about the (support) service model, prioritization of tasks, and transparency in decision-making. There were suggestions to consider self-service options and capacity-building to optimize resource allocation.
 - Communications and storytelling: improving communication strategies, particularly through storytelling and use cases, was

Annelise Parr (UNDP)
Steven Flower (ODS)

<p>emphasized as a way to engage stakeholders and highlight the impact of IATI. The importance of strategic communications in achieving organizational goals was acknowledged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budget and work plan: Participants had queries about the underlying detail within the work plan, since the paper presented made it difficult to understand where specific initiatives or human resourcing would be captured in the context of IATI’s strategic objectives. The Secretariat committed to providing a clearer presentation and to make this available on the IATI website. ▪ Translation and accessibility: the importance of translation and accessibility of tools and standards was highlighted, especially for reaching a (geographically) diverse user base. There were discussions about leveraging technology to improve translation processes and ensure broader usability. ▪ Community engagement and collaboration: participants discussed the need for collaboration between data users and providers to address data quality issues and fill gaps in publishing. Suggestions were made to enable secondary publishing and provide publishing support. <p>- Overall, the discussions spanned several aspects of data management, communication strategies, resource allocation, and community engagement, all of which highlighted the complexity of managing a global data initiative like IATI.</p>	<p>Action items: - Provide a clearer presentation of the work plan and budget allocation for members.</p>
<p>MA Session 5: Financial Overview: Ensuring financial viability and scalability for the Initiative</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The session began with a review of the financial status for 2023, focusing on the opening balance, total income, and expenditure. - Financial summary 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The \$1 million contingency fund was fully utilized. ▪ Membership contributions decreased compared to 2022, with late payments in previous years affecting current records. ▪ Budget revisions were approved three times during the year to reflect changing needs due to the hosting transition. ▪ The budget utilization rate was lower than in 2022, though expenditure was higher due to funds allocated to UNDP and disbursed in advance for recruitment and contracting of staff, as required by UNDP’s financial rules. - Member contributions and financial agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of multi-year agreements as a means to reduce administrative burdens and improve financial planning. Flexibility for single-year agreements will remain. 	<p>Adriel Amaral (UNOPS)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ End of year cash forecast (\$1.2m) is based on the expectation of receiving all member payments in good time. ▪ Strategy to replenish the contingency fund is proposed to take place over time, impacting the amount of carry-over into 2025. ▪ The possibility for customizable financial agreements was discussed, with the caveat of the need for legal approvals which would result in an additional administrative burden for both UNOPS and members. <p>- <i>Questions and comments from members</i> included queries about the multi-year contributions needing clearer communication, concerns about clarity in financial tables (specifically regarding variations in expenditures by workstream), discussions around the automatic transfer of unspent funds to the contingency fund, with no formal decision yet taken. Members once again expressed the importance of having more consistent financial reporting to enhance comparability for members. The new IATI Executive Director's role in undertaking an assessment to ensure long-term financial stability was highlighted.</p> <p>- The session concluded with an acknowledgment of the challenges faced in 2023 and the strategic measures being put in place to ensure financial stability and operational efficiency going forward, based on Hosting Terms of Reference and subsequent proposals of UNDP and UNOPS.</p>	<p>Action items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Improve communication and documentation regarding multi-year financial agreements.</i> - <i>Address clarity and transparency in financial reporting</i>
<p>MA Session 6: Stewarding the IATI Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The session addressed the urgency and concerns around the IATI standard which has not been upgraded since 2018 when there were 600 publishers. This number has now tripled, emphasizing the increased reliance on and usage of the standard. Previous upgrades were noted, particularly the significant changes in 2014, suggesting a precedent for frequent updates which has since stalled. - There is a notable hesitation regarding updates, due to the potential impact on a now much larger community of users. Issues identified through tools like the Validator show parts of the standard that are outdated or ineffective. The discussions indicate a strong interest in potentially moving to a networked version of the standard. - The need for proper governance and clear processes for updates was a central theme, with discussion as to whether this update process is more about technical adjustments or governance. The establishment of a time-bound working group following the model of the Standard Operating Procedures WG was recommended, 	<p>Steven Flower (ODS) Siem Vaessen (Governing Board, Technical Seat)</p>

<p>tasked with making recommendations to the Governing Board, not the Secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Feedback and questions of the members</i> included how members outside of the working groups could be involved in final approvals, reflecting on past practices like a full day dedicated to approving changes; other successful data standard initiatives (e.g., 360 Giving) that could provide lessons for updating the IATI standard were pointed out. The importance of starting updates soon, especially “patches”, was underscored to avoid long periods of inactivity and ensure the standard remains relevant and useful. Discussions about integrating these changes into future Member Assembly (MA) timings were brought up, with suggestions like scheduling an online MA to discuss results. The necessity to update references on the IATI website and prepare for potential major updates was also noted. - The session clearly outlined the community's apprehension yet acknowledged the need for an updated, more effective governance of the IATI data standard. Establishing clear process, engaging the community in the update mechanisms, and leveraging past experiences with data standard modifications were identified as crucial steps toward achieving these updates. 	<p>Action item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Establish Standard Upgrade Working Group</i>
<p>MA Session 7: Strengthening Institutional Governance: SOP Working Group (SWG) insights and recommendations</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This session saw extensive discussions around a proposed revision to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to financial standing and waivers. This followed the work of the SOP Working Group constituted to update issues around waivers, good standing, and practices that were outdated following the change of institutional (hosting) arrangements. - Discussion focused on setting clear and equitable parameters for waivers and defining "good financial standing." The amendments aimed to make waivers accessible to all member categories meeting explicit criteria and to establish clear, comprehensive principles to be applied uniformly across members. - The motion to approve SOP Revision 8 was extensively discussed, with UNEP as SOP Working Group Chair detailing the principles behind the proposal on financial good standing and the rationale for extending waiver accessibility. These changes were intended to maintain transparency and ensure equitable governance. - <i>Questions from the members</i> were raised about the Board's role in granting waivers, potential conflicts of interest, and the mechanisms for reporting on waivers. It was clarified that the Secretariat would be responsible for monitoring criteria and 	<p>Joseph Barnes (UNICEF)</p>

<p>reporting annually on waivers, enhancing transparency. Several participants expressed concerns about the clarity of the proposal when compared to the actual text in the SOP revisions, particularly around the procedures for non-payment and the timing of membership fee payments, with members flagging the importance of ensuring that the text for approval accurately reflected the intended changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was considerable debate about whether to endorse the SOP revisions immediately or allow more time for review. The discussion highlighted the need for a careful balance between progressing with necessary updates and ensuring all members fully understood the implications of the changes. It was finally decided to allow the Working Group two more weeks to make changes to the document and then allow the Members' Assembly two weeks to decide on the approval. This approach aimed to reconcile the need for prompt action with the necessity for thorough member review and input. - This synthesis around the SOPs underscores the complexity and importance of transparent governance practices within IATI, highlighting the need for clear communication, equitable standards, and thorough member engagement in procedural updates. 	<p>Action item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working Group to revise the working version of the new SOP within 2 weeks after the event and share the document with the MA for feedback/approval through written procedure
<p>MA Session 8: From Transition to Transformation – Collaborative growth for enhancing the network of IATI as a 'Initiative' (Interactive – small group work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the beginning of this session exploring potential ideas for the next Strategic Plan (2026-30), a Mentimeter exercise was conducted to get the members' feedback on the current "fitness for purpose" of IATI's three main core objectives—Data Quality, Data Use, or Technical Core/Community. While the exercise did not lead to a clear result, it stimulated a discussion and responses that imply concerns over aspects of Data Use and Data Quality, given the emphasis on engaging new and non-traditional data users and ensuring the reliability of data. - In regard to engagement during the strategic planning process, Members expressed a desire for outreach to a diverse group of stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13 votes for a plan to engage new and non-traditional data users, suggesting a need to broaden the scope of data use. ▪ 8 votes for outreach to China, recognizing the importance of including data from significant global players like China to close gaps in the global aid dataset. 	<p>Anand Nair (Fields Data)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggestions to enhance IATI's relevance focused on integrating broader and more strategic areas of work in the next SP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South-south cooperation (14+ votes): Identified as a crucial area that is under-represented. The current focus on traditional North-South financial flows is seen as limiting, with a call to expand the view of developing countries as providers of knowledge and assistance, not just aid recipients. ▪ Gender and climate change: These areas are mentioned as strategic gaps, especially in making the data comparable and reliable. The U.S. expressed skepticism about the comparability of data on gender programs. ▪ Outreach to non-reporting countries (10 votes): Highlighted as essential to making IATI more comprehensive and inclusive. ▪ Concerns about the reliability of data, with 7 votes expressing interest in ensuring that data is based on real numbers rather than just policy intentions. - Discussion highlights and reflections following the Mentimeter exercises underscored a broad consensus on the need to evolve IATI's strategic focus to include more diverse geographical outreach and thematic areas like gender and climate change, while also enhancing the initiative's governance and operational effectiveness. 	
<p>MA Session 9: Closing of 2024 Members' Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new Governing Board Chair thanked the organizers and hosts of the event and the Member's Assembly for their engagement, looking forward to the upcoming Community Exchange; - The Chair highlighted the need for the IATI community to regularly come together and discuss important strategic issues, with an emphasis on assuring that processes allow for all voices to be heard, through a combination of virtual and in-person engagements, and reminded members that MFA Netherlands had agreed to organize a brainstorming with members for this purpose. 	<p>Thea Schepers (IATI Chair)</p> <p><i>- Board and Secretariat to organize brainstorming session among members to discuss outreach strategies</i></p>