
MA Paper 7: Recommendations to the Board on the SOP WG (Reference Document)

Note: This document was originally prepared as a reference paper for the Governing Board’s Q2 2025 meeting and is reproduced here to provide additional background for ongoing governance discussions. It reflects the Secretariat’s initial recommendation to reconstitute the SOP Working Group.

I. Purpose of the paper

This paper proposes topics to be examined by a governance working group on Standard Operating Procedures and sets out a process for convening the SOP Working Group (SWG).

II. Summary of decisions for the Board:

Decision point	Board Decision (Y/N)	Comments / follow-up
Request reconstitution of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Working Group, by approving updated Terms of Reference: #BOARD Draft ToRs: IATI SOP Working Grou...		

III. Context and setting

According to the [IATI Standard Operating Procedures Revision 8 \(August 2024\)](#), the purpose of Working Groups (WGs) within the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is to Provide expert advice to the Members’ Assembly or the Governing Board; address specific areas of development, such as updates to the IATI Standard or institutional reviews; and support the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the annual work plan. Working Groups are specific and time-bound groups established by the Governing Board or IATI members.

Governance-related working groups are created in response to strategic or operational needs, and are open to any IATI member - including Governing Board members - provided no conflict of interest exists, with the understanding that they would step down if a conflict arises. Terms of Reference are drafted by the Secretariat under Board direction and define the group’s goal, outcome, timeline, and whether it is technical or governance-related. Selection is transparent and considers expertise, regional and constituency balance, and

gender. WGs are typically limited to 8–10 members for effective functioning, and members are generally expected to serve on only one WG at a time. Each WG elects a Chair responsible for setting agendas, maintaining a digital log of activities, monitoring risks/conflicts of interest, and reporting progress to the Governing Board. Upon completion, WGs submit a closing report with findings, lessons learned, and recommendations, and these reports are made public on the IATI website. WGs are advisory in nature and receive light support from the Secretariat. They conduct their work virtually and if approved by the Board, may meet in person for one session.

In 2024, the SOP Working Group came together to review a range of matters flagged by the Board and Secretariat that required clarification, or that were previously not covered in the SOP. The group worked on updates to reflect the change in hosting arrangements, and made recommendations to the 2024 Members’ Assembly on two substantive matters, namely Waivers of Financial Contributions and Good Financial Standing. Taking feedback from members into account, the SOP was updated and published in August 2024 as Revision 8.

The WG acknowledged that there were a number of matters that still required to be updated in the SOP, and recommended that these additional topics be taken up by the SWG at a later session.

This paper is prepared for the Board’s endorsement of a set of topics to be addressed by a reconstituted SOP Working Group, expected to conduct its work for a limited period between March and June, to report to the Members’ Assembly in Q42026.

IV. Topics for consideration in 2026 WG

The following is a list of topics flagged for attention by the Secretariat, identified as having an impact on day-to-day engagements with members. Lack of clarity in any of these areas leaves open the possibility of different interpretations, whereas the Secretariat needs certainty to apply the same criteria for all situations.

Current SOP	Topic	Issue / proposal
	Preamble	Addition of clear text as an introductory paragraph and to update references to the new Strategic Plan 2026-30 throughout the SOP as relevant.
Para 2.1	Commitments of Member Constituencies	Consider updating and adding new constituency categories; the current categories do not adequately reflect the range of current or potential new memberships.
Para 2.1	Commitments of Member Constituencies	Consider a new category of membership for publishers, giving a stake in governance to a wider group.
Para 2.2	Registration process for new members	Recommend to include a section on the due diligence process following a request to join.

		Add language to clarify different steps in the process of registration as a member, including what is meant by Observer status during the registration process.
Para 2.3	Annual Membership Contributions	Review of entire section 2.3 on levels of membership contributions. Consider what is the appropriate formula / tier / absolute level of contribution for members for 2026 and beyond, to incorporate factors such as inflation; and contribution amounts for large private sector entities for which no level has yet been set. Based on lessons learnt, reconsider the contribution from partners country and local CSOs. Add reference to regular monitoring and analysis of income by UNOPS through a publicly available dashboard. Incorporate FSWG recommendations, if relevant/ready.
Para 3.1	Terms of Reference for the Members' Assembly	Addition of reference to FFD4 language as may be appropriate to update the introduction text to situate IATI in the context of the aid effectiveness agenda and development cooperation architecture.
Para 3.2	Responsibilities of Members' Assembly	<p>Introduce language on how the MA ensures accountability by the Board, enabling the MA to monitor and guide strategic direction of the initiative in line with the priorities (to be) established in the new Strategic Plan 2026-30.</p> <p>Drawing upon the recommendations of the IATI SP 2020-25 independent evaluation, to strengthen the role and commitments of members within the Board election process; language to be mirrored in 4.2 Governing Board election process, and Annexes IV Election Process for Governing Board and VI Nomination Statement for Board Elections</p> <p>Update references to the new Strategic Plan 2026-30 throughout the SOP as relevant.</p>
Para 4.1	IATI Governing Board - IATI Composition and Chairmanship	WG to examine including private sector membership on the Board (currently within a single CSO & Other category); Expanding the Board and strengthening provisions on absences; consideration of a cap on number of terms served; Inclusion of reference to Board's role under focal appointment arrangements (Data Publishing, Data Quality, Data Use, Technical Core, Institutional, Community/Comms etc.). Other similar initiatives experience and independent evaluation recommendation should be considered in the revision to elevate the Board strategic level.
Para 4.1	IATI Board Members -	Board members travel related provisions to be

	specifically Chair and Vice Chair travel to MA to be self sponsored.	assessed.
Annex 2	Process for Updating the IATI Standard	Updating this section to incorporate recommendations made by the Standard Stewardship Working Group on the process for consultation and approval of major and minor upgrades. Addition of new references to guidance on standard upgrades on the IATI website.
Annex 7	Conflict of Interest Policy	Updating of language around the use of the Conflict of Interest policy as it applies to different members, drawing upon detailed recommendations by the legal team of UNOPS.
3.4.2	Decision-making by the Members' Assembly	Undertake a review of the existing written procedure protocol as currently stipulated in the SOP to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This should include clarifying when written procedures may be invoked, strengthening language on timelines and thresholds for decision-making

V. Process

In line with Working Group practices as set out in the current SOP, the SWG is expected to set its own agenda and prepare consultations on each key topic or group of topics to seek input from members. Consultation outlines are expected to be completed by November 2025 for presentation during the December 2025 MA. Feedback should be incorporated during the remainder of Q4 and published in Q1 2026.

VI. Resource implications

It is anticipated that no in-person meetings of the group would be funded from the IATI budget. Interpretation costs would need to be budgeted to support meetings for non-anglophone WG members.

VII. Risk management

The Board may wish to discuss with the SWG its capacity to deliver within the timeframe, and accordingly prioritise key aspects.

VIII. Management and monitoring arrangements

Light secretariat support would be offered by the IATI Secretariat through the provision of meeting logistic arrangements, and note-taking. The SWG Chair would be requested to make a report to the Board on progress at their Q3 (mid-September) meeting.

IX. Proposed next steps

The Board is requested to approve attached Terms of Reference for immediate circulation among members to identify participants to constitute the SWG.

X. Annexes

[Standard Operating Procedures Revision 8, July 2024](#)

Draft TORs for reconvened SOP Working Group:

[#BOARD Draft ToRs: IATI SOP Working Group - 2025 reconstitution](#)