

Members' Assembly 2020 virtual Q&A

This document responds to questions raised in the chat boxes of the Members' Assembly (MA) meeting platforms, where responses were not covered by presenters during the event either verbally or in the chat itself. The formal minutes of the meeting will follow in due course.

DAY 1 - 1 December 2020

Session 2: Strengthening the Standard

Question: When will the IATI Validator API be available?

Answer: As part of our overall work on the API Gateway we are looking at all our tools and APIs; we expect to have these available by summer 2021.

Question: Are there more details on the Semantic Data Layer?

Answer: The Semantic Data Layer (or d-Portal v2) will be a new, curated dataset that will provide IATI data in a format and presentation that is easier to use for those who do not want to work with XML. This will build on what d-portal currently offers. In order to ensure this meets the needs of all our users we will undertake a User Experience (UX) project to research this in 2021; this will be followed later in the year by work on draft designs, product specification and scope. We will continue to host, support and maintain the current d-portal throughout the process.

Question: Are there any plans for minor Standard upgrades between now and 2023?

Answer: There are no immediate plans for minor upgrades. These are initiated by the Governing Board based on good use cases in accordance with the [approved upgrade process](#).

Session 3: Improving Data Quality

Question: What is the difference between the Data Quality Index and the Aid Transparency Index?

Answer: The Aid Transparency Index is led by Publish What You Fund and assesses a limited subset of donors. The IATI Data Quality index will be looking at all IATI publishers and will incorporate revised and improved measures of IATI publishing statistics. Work

on publishing statistics will begin in 2021 and the community will be invited to participate in developing the methodology for the Data Quality Index.

Question: Will the functionality of the IATI Validator be further extended to check validity of actual identifier values, content of values - going beyond the formal compliance and rules of the Standard?

Answer: At the moment, the IATI Validator follows IATI rulesets and we intend to make improvements by adding guidelines that are relevant for all publishers. We don't yet have a set timeline for this, but this is indeed the long term vision for future improvement to the Validator.

Question: Would it be possible to avoid having consultations in the summer vacation months (or allow more time for these consultations)?

Answer: Yes, we will ensure there is sufficient time allowed for consultation and also welcome the suggestion to post a timeline with proposed publishing guidance consultations for 2021.

There was a discussion in the Zoom chat around interest in forming a working group to consider the Standard publishing guidance on location data. Members were encouraged to read the Standard [publishing guidance on sub-national location](#) and initiate discussions on this in the Publisher Communities of Practice (COP) on [IATI Connect](#). These discussions will help to determine whether this is an area where there should be a more formal consultation in 2021.

Session 4: Strengthening Data Use

Question: Is there further information on the Semantic Data Layer?

Answer: Response above addresses this question and news on other forthcoming technical work will be provided via a news post to be published in December.

Question: What is next for d-portal?

Answer: We will continue to host, support and maintain d-portal as we begin the Semantic Data Layer work in 2021.

Question: Will the same level of focus and priority be given to core IATI tools next year?

Answer: We will work to continuously improve IATI's technical estate. Both the Datastore and the Validator are core components of our future roadmap.

Question: Does the Semantic Data Layer = d-portal v2 procurement?

Answer: The first step for the Semantic Data Layer is user experience (UX) work in 2021 to make sure we have a solid understanding of users' needs and the ways in which those needs are best met. Any procurement would happen after this UX work is complete.

Question: Who is building a traceability tool, FCDO or the IATI Secretariat?

Answer: FCDO, which is looking at how IATI data may help them with delivery chain mapping.

Question: Can the Data Use Fund support the showcasing of data use cases to demonstrate how IATI data can be used?

Answer: The IATI Secretariat is always looking for new data use cases to document and share with the community, and is planning to do more of this in 2021. And the Data Use Working Group could certainly use some of the Data Use Fund to help in this documentation if this activity is proposed and agreed by the working group.

Session 5: IATI's response to COVID-19

Question: Is there a definition of a COVID intervention, particularly going forward dealing with its impact?

Answer: No, IATI does not provide a definition for COVID intervention. It is up to the publisher to decide if an activity or a single transaction is COVID-19-related.

Session 6: Communications and Outreach

Question: Can the new IATI Speakers' Kit be made publicly available?

Answer: In response to the several members who requested this at the Members' Assembly, the Secretariat will publish all five presentations of the new IATI Speakers' Kit on the IATI website while continuing to offer customised support to those who request it.

Question: Is there a plan to recruit more people on the communication team to achieve this plan and increase awareness? What about success stories in the field?

Answer: The Board is supportive of expanding Secretariat capacity on Communications and examining the best ways to do this. We will engage a consultant to assist with the Annual Report 2020 and others to work on different comms tasks within the workplan.

Session 7: Invigorating the IATI Community

Comments were received in Zoom around linking conversations of publishers with those of users to address “data needs and data problems” and avoid disconnect.

Presenters responded during the session, highlighting the role of the Community facilitator to make the connections between different constituencies and interest areas. Strong support was indicated for the multi-lingual function of IATI Connect, with a plea for a similar functionality in d-portal.org as well. The platform of d-portal currently allows users to select one of six languages (English, French, Spanish, Japanese and Chinese)

from the Setting button at the top right of the results pages. As we develop the Semantic Data Layer/d-portal v2 we will consider languages required.

It was further clarified in respect to the chat box conversation that came up in the Working Group session that **IATI Connect is open and available to all members as well as non-members**, and all are encouraged to engage with one another and use the new forum to keep in touch between physical and virtual events.

DAY 2 - 2 December 2020

Session 10: Monitoring the Strategic Plan 2020-25 : Results Framework

Chat comments and questions were addressed by presenters during the session.

Where comments flagged design and editing issues in the document, presenters took note of the specific points and confirmed these would be addressed before finalisation. One suggestion that will be taken up is to include the baseline year alongside each indicator, since some are taken from 2019, and others from 2020. In response to a comment on process and to comply with decisions from the 2019 MA, the Board agreed to a two week period for members to raise any 'red line' issues in the framework, after which comments would be considered by the Board in finalising the document, which would then be published as an annex to the Strategic Plan 2020-25.

Session 11- 12: Financial overview 2020 & Annual Work planning

Question: Why is there no activity budget for Data Quality in the IATI Workplan?

Answer: Our high level workplan only shows a budget for *activities* where there are specific funded projects, and not for work carried out by *personnel*, which is captured elsewhere. Certain areas of the Secretariat's work are ongoing and delivered by Secretariat staff, e.g. the support provided by our Business and Data Analysts whose primary work focuses on Data Quality. We have recently increased the size of that team from three to four this year to reflect additional resources required for this area of our workplan. It is also important to note that the workplan areas are interrelated—many of the activities in the Technical Core section (4) support Data Quality and Data Use.

Question: How do I find out more about the API Gateway?

Answer: We are delivering a new API Gateway to facilitate managing our API's across platforms, enable an integrated architecture and help us to understand service usage. This will involve mapping the journeys of our users across IATI services so that we fully understand what is needed for APIs, as well as the different products our users may need the IATI system to interact with. Once the mapping is completed we will engage

with tool providers and API users as we work on and agree the API Gateway's design. We aim to launch the Gateway later in 2021.

In relation to questions on management overheads, detailed activities and personnel with costs and quarterly breakdowns, members were reminded of the division of labour between Board and members, and assured that the Board has visibility of all of these details with which to make clear decisions on finalising the workplan and budget to deliver the approved Strategic Plan. The breakdown presented to members was for information, rather than decision-making.

Question: In 2018 the MA presented the budget for 2018 during the MA not in the budget year itself. When was it decided to push detailed budgets beyond the MA?

Answer: The 2018 MA considered recommendations from the Working Group on Institutional Review and agreed a recommendation to rebalance the division of labour between members and Governing Board. The Board is responsible and accountable for oversight and approval of the annual work plans and budget, and reports to members on progress. This was codified in SOP Update 5 and associated change record.

Regarding strengthening efforts to support new members at the MA a number of initiatives have been taken including a dedicated information-sharing webinar for new focal points covering both technical and policy matters in preparation for the MA, as well as a new Membership Pack pointing to IATI's key decisions, guidance materials and governance documents.

Session 13: Institutional Working Group

Constructive comments were shared in this session but no specific questions were noted. Feedback will be incorporated into the Members' Assembly 2020 minutes, which will follow in due course.