




<p>Date: January 16, 2025 Time: 09:00-12:00 EST Location: Online Meeting Chair: Thea Schepers</p> <p>DRAFT Minutes</p>	<p>Resources shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  MA Slidedeck_16Jan25 Shared  #Revised IATI Work Plan 2025 MA Final  MA Paper 3.1 (ENG) - IATI 2025 Work Plan a...
<p>Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thea Schepers - IATI Governing Board Chair, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yemesrach Workie - IATI Executive Director, UNDP • Steven Flower - Open Data Services Cooperative • Adriel Amaral - Financial Manager, UNOPS 	<p>Agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks 2. Review of 2024 Achievements and Financial Status 3. Work Plan and Budget for 2025 4. Strategic Plan Process 5. Questions and Discussions 6. Closing Remarks

Summary

The virtual meeting brought together 63 participants from IATI member organisations, together with Secretariat representatives and invited guests (active consultants and observers). Live interpretation was provided in French and Spanish. Key messages were around the delivery achieved over the past year, with the launch of a new publication for the initiative. Other important information shared was on the financial situation of IATI, with encouragement for members to be actively involved in the new Financial Sustainability Working Group, and to ensure timely payments of membership contributions. The meeting also outlined the content and process for development of the 2025 work plan for IATI, the 2025 budget, and the strategic planning process for the organization. Other topics covered were the financial sustainability of the initiative, the importance of data quality, and the ongoing independent assessment of the current strategic plan. On the political side, reference was made to the work towards ensuring IATI is mentioned in the Financing for Development 4 outcome document, including through engagement in different preparatory committee meetings, and the planned side event to take place in February 2025.

Session 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The IATI Members Assembly commenced with a warm welcome to all attendees by Thea Schepers as Governing Board Chair, in which she underscored the importance of this gathering for the community. The event also marked the official launch of IATI's 2025 report, titled **Powering Transparency: IATI's Role in Enhancing Accountability and Driving Impact**, which highlights the collective achievements of IATI.

Schepers' remarks emphasized IATI's significant role in promoting transparency and accountability in global development. With over 1,700 organizations publishing data on nearly one million activities, amounting to 3.5 trillion dollars in aid, IATI's impact is substantial.

The discussion then turned to the current challenges in development aid, noting the budget cuts by countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany. These changes necessitate a renewed commitment to aid transparency to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources.

Schepers reflected on the progress and achievements of 2024, including the addition of new member countries like Gambia and Senegal, strengthened partnerships, new tools and initiatives, and ongoing consultations for the Strategic Plan 2026–2030. She expressed gratitude to the Secretariat and the Governing Board for their efforts and encouraged everyone to renew their commitment to IATI's mission. Schepers ended with an overview of the day's agenda, featuring updates from the Executive Director and discussions on plans for 2025. She further encouraged members to read, share, and promote the report to reinforce its key messages. The report is available on the IATI website at the link below, following the official launch.

Powering Transparency: IATI's Role in Enhancing Accountability and Driving Impact, available here: <https://iatistandard.org/en/news/powering-transparency-iatis-role-in-enhancing-accountability-and-driving-impact/>

Session 2. Delivery 2024 and Financial Status

- **Presenter:** Yemesrach Workie, IATI Executive Director
- **Presenter:** Steven Flower, Open Data Services, IATI Technical Delivery Partner
- **Presenter:** Adriel Amaral, UNOPS (financial overview)

Workie presented progress and updates, drawing upon the 2024 Implementation Update paper shared in advance of the meeting. She emphasized the importance of continuous engagement and updates for the IATI initiative. She highlighted the progress made in governance and accountability, including the implementation of the roadmap for the new strategic plan and the establishment of a financial sustainability working group.

Workie also introduced Steven Flower representing Open Data Services, the technical delivery partner for the IATI Secretariat who provided an update on the technical infrastructure, noting the successful maintenance of services and the introduction of a design system to improve user experience. He mentioned the ongoing work on the IATI data standard, including the translation of the standard into French and Spanish.

Flower discussed some of the achievements of the past year, on the technical infrastructure and support for publishers. He highlighted the introduction of modern documentation, streamlined support processes, and the development of a data policy. Steven also mentioned the work on integrating tools like IATI Publisher and AidStream, and the work towards introduction of a single sign-on system to simplify access to IATI services.

Workie then discussed advocacy, engagement, and communication efforts, including the launch of the new report and the engagement with policymakers and partners. She mentioned the ongoing work on the external landscape analysis and the preparation of policy briefs, and reporting, including the quarterly reporting on finances since July. These were introduced to respond to requests of members during the Bogota MA in 2024.

In the discussions that followed, Elise Egan (USAID) appreciated the progress made in governance and transparency of the initiative itself and congratulated the Executive Director for these achievements in a short space of time. She suggested that it would be helpful when it comes to evaluating future years' budgets to include some more reflection in subsequent implementation updates on the nature of the challenges faced, that had resulted in planned activities not being delivered. Additional information should also be included that would make it easier to identify changes in scope, year on year. Herman van Loon (Netherlands) added his appreciation for the clarity of the financial information presented, which could be further enhanced with

the presentation of multi-year budgets and forecasts, and the addition of a separate line showing cash carryover.

In response, Workie acknowledged the suggestion to add deliverables that are not fully achieved and the challenges to be well elaborated in the implementation update. With regards to budgets by scope and the difference over the years, she highlighted significant structural transition in hosting, which led to high budgets in 2023 and depleted resources over the past years, while there was some stability in the following years. The reforms implemented over the years, among others, led to significant increase in expenditure while income remained the same with no increase in the levels of membership contributions, posing significant challenges in the sustainability of the initiative.

Mary Brophy (Irish Aid) noted the importance of ensuring any change to the IATI Standard that might affect compatibility, is communicated early, particularly for those publishers for whom significant internal system changes might be needed.

Financial Overview for 2024, Adriel Amaral (UNOPS)

Workie invited Adriel Amaral (UNOPS) to present the financial situation of IATI, in which he highlighted that 2025 will be a challenging year financially due to a depleted contingency fund and a need to ensure sustainability moving into 2026, including by engaging new as well as existing members. In detail:

1. Expenditures:

- Total expenditures for 2024 were slightly above the previous year's by \$307,000, representing a 7.5% increase.
- When considering the global inflation rate of 5.8%, the real increase in expenditures was only 1.7%.
- The expenditure rate for 2024 was 91% of the initially allocated amount, compared to 71% in 2023.

2. Cost Categories:

- Expenditures were grouped by cost categories in addition to by scopes for better alignment with members' expectations.
- The main cost categories included personnel, third-party service contracts, and IATI subscriptions and applications, and the analysis shows that personnel and service contract cost category continues to be the major areas with high levels of spending.

3. Income and Contributions:

- In 2024, IATI received just under \$3 million in contributions, slightly higher than initially reported due to late contributions.
- The total income for 2024, including the unspent balance from 2023, was \$5.6 million.
- After expenditures, the carry-forward balance into 2025 was close to \$1.3 million.

Financial Projections for 2025

1. Expected Income:

- The expected income for 2025 is \$3.2 million, including pending 2024 contributions and the voluntary contribution from the EU.
- Combined with the carryover from 2024, the total envelope for 2025 is just over \$4.4 million.

2. Budget and Expenditures:

- The approved budget for 2025 is \$4.2 million.
- If fully executed, the year-end cash availability will be approximately \$200,000, which is insufficient to sustain operations into 2026 even after the average USD 3 million income

from membership fee is added. This implies the urgency of looking into innovative ways to raise income and lower expenditure.

3. Contingency Fund:

- The 2025 budget does not include the replenishment of the \$1 million contingency fund that was fully spent in 2023.

Financial Sustainability Plan

1. Working Group:

- A financial sustainability working group has been formed to discuss and add innovative recommendations to the financial sustainability plan.
- The group aims to complete its work by June, with measures requiring formal approval to be implemented by July.

2. Resource Mobilization:

- Steady efforts are being made to engage new members and secure additional contributions.
- Members are encouraged to sign multi-year agreements to ensure financial stability.

3. Prompt Payments:

- Members who have not yet signed the 2024 agreement or paid their contributions are urged to do so promptly.
- The Secretariat will approach members to sign amendments for 2025 and beyond, and payment requests will be sent to those who have already signed for 2025.

Action points:

- *Secretariat to add reflections on deliverables that are not achieved and challenges into future implementation updates.*

Session 3. Work Plan and Budget for 2025, Yemesrach Workie

Workie presented the development of the 2025 work plan for IATI, highlighting key factors that influenced the process. She noted that 2025 marks the end of the current strategic plan and that IATI has not achieved all of its results. She also mentioned the ongoing internal reform in the Secretariat and the transition from one board to another which had taken place in 2024. Workie emphasized the importance of enhancing engagement with the membership and stakeholders, and the need for financial sustainability. She described the work plan's five priority areas for 2025, including governance, accountability, and strategic planning; improving data quality; enhancing IATI's infrastructure; strengthening strategic engagement and visibility; and showcasing IATI's global value through coordination, efficiency and impact. She also shared plans for a side event at the Financing for Development Prep Com in February and the development of an overarching communication strategy. Details can be found in resources linked at the top of these minutes and publicly available on the IATI website.

Detailed 2025 Work Plan Activities

Workie highlighted the importance of prudent management and resource mobilization. The team discussed the financial sustainability of the initiative, with Herman van Loon (Netherlands) suggesting a multi-year outlook and Otto Reichner (WFP) expressing concerns about the current expenditure levels. Elise Egan (USAID) and Reichner asked for more detailed information on the factors driving cost fluctuations and potential cost savings. Workie assured the meeting that these details would be explored in the upcoming financial sustainability working group.

Governance, Accountability, and Strategic Planning:

- Conducting the annual Members' Assembly in-person (week of December 4th, 2025, TBC) and governance activities.
- Quarterly board meetings, with two in-person and two online to minimize costs.
- Supporting IATI working groups and implementing financial sustainability recommendations.

Improving Data Quality:

- Introducing a state of data review and quarterly data quality briefings.
- Conducting downstream partner mapping and localization work.
- Providing tailored guidance for publishers and enhancing publisher tools.

Data Use:

- Building on the brainstorming session and strengthening data use efforts.
- Partnering with the African Development Bank for in-person training.
- Rolling out IATI policy and improving infrastructure for data use.
- Raising awareness and providing training through online and in-person sessions.

Advocacy, Engagement, and Communication:

- Elevating IATI's engagement at political and policy levels.
- Organizing a side event for the Financing for Development (FFD4) in February.
- Focusing on membership growth and retention.
- Developing a communication strategy to amplify messages and improve digital presence.

Coordination, Efficiency, and Impact:

- Deepening partnerships with UNOCHA and FTS team.
- Harmonizing reporting between IATI and FTS.
- Supporting thematic engagements with various groups.
- Organizing a workshop in Geneva to bring together thematic groups.

Budget Overview for 2025

By Scope Areas:

- Governance, Accountability, and Strategic Planning: 33%
- Improving Data Quality: 25.8%
- Advocacy, Engagement, and Communication: 21%
- Data Use Support: 13.5%
- Coordination, Efficiency, and Partnerships: 6.2%

Discussion on the 2025 budget

In the discussion that followed, speakers expressed their pleasure with the clarity and level of detail provided in the work plan and financial information that had been shared ahead of the meeting. Rafael Roaletti (WHO) inquired about the potential activities and strategies in place to ensure proper staffing of the Secretariat and technical team. Elise Egan (USAID) requested more information on what drove certain cost savings or cuts, and what led to increased expenditures.

In responding, Workie explained the challenges in staffing due to financial constraints and highlighted ongoing efforts to secure funding and second staff from member organizations. Together with Amaral, she provided insights into the factors influencing budget changes, including internal reforms and cost-saving measures.

Action Points:

- *Secretariat to create a crosswalk between scope areas and objectives in future work plan documentation.*
- *Secretariat to implement quarterly data quality briefings and state of data reviews.*
- *Secretariat to organize webinars/clinics on gender markers and data quality with UN Women's support, and to consider these topics to produce a focused data story.*
- *Secretariat to work on advancing partner identification and network mapping.*
- *Secretariat to follow an inclusive process and consultation as work advances on the IATI dashboard updates including the ATI test linking this with data quality.*
- *Secretariat to engage with publishers on a quarterly basis to understand support needs for more regular publishing.*
- *Secretariat to ensure early announcement of any IATI Standard changes to give publishers sufficient time to plan for any changes.*

Session 4. Strategic Planning Process

Presenter: Yemesrach Workie, with input Jonathan Glennie, Consultant, IATI Strategic Plan

Workie referred to the current SP evaluation and the new strategic planning process as mutually supporting. She shared the roadmap which envisages a four-phase process, which includes knowledge documentation, inclusive consultation, drafting, and sharing. She referred to the implications of emerging trends such as political polarization, fragmentation of development finance, and the digital revolution, suggesting that IATI could play a significant role in promoting transparency and accountability, particularly in the context of the SDGs and climate finance.

Workie explained the timeline for the strategic plan through late 2024, with ongoing consultations and an evaluation this year. Jonathan Glennie has joined as a consultant to help develop a visionary new strategy for 2025-2030. Participants acknowledged the changing landscape, stressing IATI must demonstrate value to retain members and publishers. Workie urged members to actively engage in shaping the new strategy, as IATI cannot afford business as usual given funding pressures.

Questions from Participants:

In the discussions that followed, Elise Egan (USA) enquired how members should expect to be approached to contribute to future consultations. Workie outlined multiple ways of consultation, including online platforms, in-person workshops, and bilateral conversations. Saliou Diop joining from Senegal (with weak connection) enquired whether the evaluation would be conducted this year, and whether it would be independent. Workie confirmed that the evaluation is in the process. It is being conducted independently and will be completed by March. Mark Brough (Emergently) emphasized the importance of linking the strategic plan to fundraising efforts and engaging large actors including international NGOs not currently involved in IATI. Navin Haram (UN Women) raised the importance of data quality, in areas such as gender tagging and quarterly publishing. Gary Forster (Publish What You Fund) raised the issue of a lack of quality benchmark for publishers, which Workie acknowledged as a gap. Flower emphasized the need to move from singular data quality to data qualities, matching data to use cases.

Action points:

- *Secretariat to organize online consultation and other bilateral meetings with selected members to seek their inputs on the strategic planning process.*
- *Members were encouraged to respond and provide their inputs to the ongoing current strategic plan evaluation.*

6. Closing Remarks

IATI Governing Board Chair Thea Schepers closed the meeting by acknowledging the hard work of the Secretariat. She emphasized the importance of continued member engagement, adding the need for visible results and strategic focus in 2025. She encouraged members to provide input on the strategic plan and respond promptly to financial agreements.