



## Meeting of IATI Steering Committee Members and Observers UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark 2014

### Paper 4: Proposals on membership and observer status

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#### INTRODUCTION

The [Standard Operating Procedures](#) (SOP) adopted by the Steering Committee in October 2013 codify previous Steering Committee decisions and make it clear that, going forwards, membership of IATI is contingent on the payment of membership fees (SOP 2.1.1), subject to the exception set out in SOP 2.3.6 which proposes that a small, fixed fund should be established from voluntary contributions to assist partner countries and CSOs for whom payment of membership fees represents a barrier to participation. SOP 2.1.5 confirms that publishers who choose not to join IATI will not have a stake in the governance of the initiative, but can participate in the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and attend Steering Committee meetings as observers. The SOP also identifies some other groups and individuals who may attend the Steering Committee as observers (SOP 3.2.2 and 3.2.3), but does not adequately outline the purpose(s) and status of observers. This paper sets out options for consideration with regard to non-fee paying eligible<sup>1</sup> members in each category, and for clarifying observer status, some of which would require a decision to amend IATI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

#### 1. Options for providers of development cooperation

The central question the Steering Committee needs to resolve with regard to members in this category is whether eligible members who fail to pay their fees for a second year should continue to be regarded as full members or not and, if not, what other options – if any – should be open to them with regard to their future participation in IATI, (bearing in mind that this includes one third of the eligible members in this category). The Secretariat outlines the following options:

- a. No action should be taken against non-paying members at this point in time as their participation remains critical to IATI.
- b. Members who do not pay their fees for a second year in succession should no longer qualify as full members but can still attend IATI Steering Committee meetings as observers.

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<sup>1</sup> The SOP confirms that all organisations previously engaged in the IATI Steering Committee are regarded as eligible members.



- c. Members who do not pay their fees for a second year in succession should no longer qualify as full members and would not be invited to attend IATI Steering Committee meetings as observers either.

## **2. Options for partner countries and CSOs**

The participation of partner countries and CSOs has been fundamental to IATI's success and it is vital that this engagement is maintained. Exclusion of all non-paying members from IATI Steering Committee meetings would currently exclude all but one partner countries, so is not a viable option. But at the same time, IATI's status as a truly multi-stakeholder initiative rests on all members making a contribution of some kind. The following options could be considered:

- a. No action should be taken against partner countries or CSOs that do not pay their fees at this point as their participation remains critical to IATI;
- b. In future, all partner countries and CSOs should be expected to make a financial contribution to IATI, however small (e.g. distinctions could be made between MICs and LICs, and between international NGOs and Southern CSOs);
- c. For partner countries and Southern CSOs that cannot pay membership fees themselves (either because they cannot afford to do so or because there are legal barriers that prevent them from doing so), the cost of membership will be covered by others (e.g. perhaps regional development banks, or willing donors, who could establish a pooled fund as suggested in SOP 2.3.6);
- d. Partner countries and CSOs that cannot make a financial contribution could make a contribution in kind instead. As examples, they may:
  - i. Contribute time and expertise to IATI country pilots;
  - ii. Contribute to Steering Committee sub-groups or TAG working groups;
  - iii. Promote IATI at regional or international meetings;
  - iv. Lobby donors to provide high quality IATI data.

## **3. Clarifying observer status**

One of the options set out above proposes that eligible members who do not pay their membership fees should be still be allowed to attend IATI Steering Committee meetings as observers. Irrespective of whether the Steering Committee selects this option, it would be helpful to clarify the purpose(s) and limitations of observer status in the SOP. At present, the only difference between members and observers is that observers are not able to vote. In addition to ex-officio members (covered in SOP 3.2.3), there are potentially three different kinds of actors who may attend IATI



Steering Committee meetings without being fee-paying members. These are set out below, with options for consideration.

- i. Technical experts and other non-members with an interest in IATI, including the Chair of the Working Party on Statistics, plus AIMS providers such as Development Gateway and Synergy – these are effectively covered by SOP 3.2.3, which makes it clear that they cannot vote (but by implication, they can speak).

**Proposed action:** Confirm that technical and other experts can speak on all agenda items relevant to their expertise, whilst making it clear that they cannot contribute to governance and funding discussions and decisions, which are reserved for fee-paying members.

- ii. Potential new members. It has become IATI's custom to invite potential new members to its Steering Committee meetings as observers, in order for them to learn more about IATI from its members, and equally for IATI to learn from the experience of those who are currently outside the initiative. This has proved to be a useful form of outreach – for example, representatives from South Korea attended the March Steering Committee as observers, and have subsequently announced their intention to join in 2015.

**Proposed action:** As below at (iii)

- iii. Eligible members who have not yet paid their fees. If the Steering Committee decides that going forwards, non-paying eligible members are regarded as observers (one of the options proposed above), it is important to clarify what this means in practice.

**Proposed action:** If potential new members and non-paying eligible members are regarded as observers, it should be on the basis that they can take part in all information-sharing, networking and show-casing activities, whilst making it clear that they cannot contribute to governance and funding discussions and decisions, which are reserved for fee-paying members.

**The Steering Committee is also asked to consider whether:**

- a. Potential new members and non-paying eligible members can attend IATI Steering Committee meetings as observers indefinitely; or



- b. Potential new members and non-paying eligible members can attend IATI Steering Committee meetings as observers for a maximum of two meetings (one year) before making a decision on whether to become full members.

**Action requested**

Steering Committee members are invited to consider the options outlined above and to agree upon the best direction, keeping in mind that the spirit of IATI is one of openness and inclusivity and the potential risks associated with exclusion. Steering Committee members are also invited to clarify the purpose and status of observers. Decisions made by the Steering Committee will be reflected by making the appropriate changes to the SOP after the Steering Committee meeting.