

## Initial meetings of the TAG – Brussels, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009

### Meeting Record

#### Session Two – TAG Workstream 3– Led by Alex Gerbrandij and Henri Valot

##### Attendees:

Alex Gerbrandij	Europe Aid
Anjula Garg	EC Joint Research Centre
Brian Hammond (TAG chair)	
Eric Swanson	World Bank
Hannah Glanville	Development Initiatives Poverty Research
Henri Valot	CIVICUS
Karin Christiansen	Publish What You Fund
Rob Tew	Development Initiatives Poverty Research
Rob Hicks	PLAID
Simon Parrish	Development Initiatives Poverty Research
Stephen Davenport	Development Gateway Foundation
Vincent Carton	EU/EuropeAid

#### 1. Examples of existing code of conducts – presentation by Henri Valot

*This PowerPoint presentation accompanies these notes*

- The standard is very much part of the code of conduct which will not just be based on principles. The monitoring and compliance will be a key part and will need a degree of independence from the code of conduct.
- The questions remains of who will be the monitoring body?
- We need to make sure that we tackle the ‘how’ of following the standard and not just the ‘what’ is included in the standard. Workstream 2 includes the technical how.

#### 2. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

##### Discussion and Clarification:

Examples of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms:

- **Peer reviews** - monitoring might be addressed as part of the DAC peer reviews, although they are only every 4-5 years. Another example is the prior notification mechanism used by export credit agencies.
- **Binary checklists** - The more of the code of conduct that is binary the better as there is less room for manoeuvre. The secretariat would review a self-assessment checklist.
- **Feedback loops** - enforcement mechanism should be based on transparency, and could rely on feedback rather than peer review which can be costly. Bulletin board - somewhere that people can post their queries about the data to be answered.

- **CSO compliance validation** - Official monitoring tools could be used in conjunction with informal evaluation carried out by CSOs that would validate the compliance of signatories.
- **Self reporting** - or a similar annual review through self reporting

The aim is to create a willingness to disclose rather than a rigid enforcement mechanism. However in order to monitor effectively we need to ensure that the scope is clearly defined.

Monitoring data quality is much more difficult. An example would be a quality certificate for data sets. This is, however, a labour intensive process and so much more costly.

**Action point:** further investigate the 'Arrangement on officially supported export credits' ([www.oilis.oecd.org/oilis/2009doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00000BE6/\\$FILE/JT03259737.PDF](http://www.oilis.oecd.org/oilis/2009doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00000BE6/$FILE/JT03259737.PDF)).

### 3. Scope

#### Discussion and clarification:

- Clearly defining which parts of the code of conduct are 'mandatory' and which are 'best practice' is essential. This can then be used to monitor compliance. In others words to be compliant you must abide by the mandatory parts.
- For some of the multilaterals and smaller bilaterals there is an argument for having a tiered code of conduct. For example, a lighter compliance mechanism for some groups depending upon their capabilities and longevity. TAG should provide a toolkit to support people who are willing to comply with the standard.
- At the start of the code of conduct there should be instructions to signatories about what is expected of them, clearly stating that the level of best practice attained should rise over time as improvements are made in transparency. Ability to show progress will be important.

### 4. Who is the code of conduct aimed at?

#### Discussion and clarification:

- While partner countries might not be expected to conform to an IATI code of conduct, they should at least follow reporting standards to ensure accessibility of information.
- We have to ensure that this does not constitute a form of conditionality. The aim of the IATI code of conduct should be to provide better information to partner countries.
- IATI should try to be ambitious with those who signed up to it in the first instance and then see how far we can go with other donors who are members of the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF).
- Need to involve CSOs and foundations as they were also part of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and are represented on WP-EFF. Requiring IATI compliance through the supply chain will bring NGOs on board.

- The cost benefit analysis will include looking into the number of reporting systems to which in country donors are providing information in order to show how IATI could solve this problem. Any changes to the CRS would have to be approved by the DAC Working Party on Statistics (WP-STAT).
- We need the engagement of more southern players - and need resources to help fund this.
- This workstream needs to link closely with the southern consultations being run by UNDP and Reality of Aid.
- We should make use of existing meetings where possible to run ideas about the code of conduct past as many stakeholders as possible.

**Outstanding issue:** Should CRS be at the core of the IATI standard or overlap with it? In other words, the IATI standard will be broader than CRS, but are there CRS elements that do not need to be in the IATI standard?

**Action point:** Colour code the flow chart to show what is already included in CRS (for workstream 1).

## 5. Buy-in

### Discussion and Clarification:

- Some donor countries that are members of WP-EFF are unlikely to sign up to IATI. Their willingness to do so, as well as compliance by signatories, will depend on how rigid we are. A way round this might be to set a minimum level of compliance linked to the objectives of the AAA.
- For donors who are sceptical of IATI, we need to explain that we are building on CRS standards and remind them of what they agreed in the AAA, as a minimum.
- It would also be important to make partners aware of what donors have signed up to. Having a quorum of donors complying with the code of conduct will encourage others to do so.
- WP-EFF Cluster C is also a very important group to engage with, as they also have an objective to set a transparency standard. We need to ensure that we avoid working on parallel tracks and see if Cluster C can sub contract this work to IATI.

**Action point:** Pursue formal link to Cluster C (since been agreed that TAG Chair should co-chair Cluster C network on transparency).

## 6. Content - Based around recommendations 5 and 6 of the scoping paper.

What should be included in the code of conduct?

- **Preamble/statement of resolve** - Start with a statement of resolve with an aim to have an incremental effect. To include the why and scope, the potential for evolution, and ultimate aim being universal. Clarity on the position of IATI in relation to CRS.

## 7. Implementation

- Phased implementation for IATI signatories with a tiered level of compliance for non signatories who could follow a more relaxed implementation strategy.

## 8. Retrospective information

### Discussion and Clarification:

- Need to avoid a trade off between current and historical data; therefore make it a good practice to provide more historical data if it is available.
- The aim would be for donors to follow the standard from 2011 for active projects. We do not need the complete data set before reporting can take place.
- Timeliness is key. The time at which you publish information will depend on the type of information.

## 9. Validation of data

### Discussion and Clarification:

- Should the information be officially validated or is it alright to publish non-validated information?

**Action point:** Examine how IMF's General and Special Data Dissemination Standards handle this and other aspects of good practice in data dissemination.

## 10. Thresholds

### Discussion and Clarification:

- Many donors operate thresholds for approval, with commensurately less information for lower value projects. It was felt that ideally all project detail should be published, but need to examine the minimum threshold for each information area on a case-by-case basis

**Issue for consideration:** Does IATI need all projects to be available? For example, DFID projects under £1million have less detailed documentation.

**Action point:** Minimum thresholds to be investigated further with the donor assessments. Development Gateway will share information on minimum thresholds.

## 11. Exemptions on disclosure

### Discussion and Clarification:

- Need to be very concrete on exemptions; otherwise there is the risk that everything can become exempt.



- If a document has not been published, then a donor needs to specify why so that people do not think donors are non-compliant.

**Action point:** Need to look into the freedom of Information to identify the rules on exemptions. Involve the CSO Article 19 (<http://www.article19.org/>) who has done a lot of work around this.

## 12. Licensing

### Discussion and Clarification:

- There are a lot of legal issues which need to be investigated. Details of this will be covered in workstream 2, but the code of conduct will set out principles.
- Maybe a registered list of published information.
- Publishing on the web would be a minimum and this is where some donors may need help. Development Gateway can help with open licensing.

**Action point:** Group to look into Global Commons licensing.

## 13. Making information available

### Discussion and Clarification:

- IATI will support aggregator databases to pool the data whilst creating a registry to show where the information is available. PLAID and AIDI would support this.
- In the code of conduct a requirement of donors could be to make their information accessible in a way that it can be used by the aggregator databases and is therefore accessible to partner countries. The Joint External Debt Hub provides an example of an aggregator database using SDMX – Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange ([http://devdata.worldbank.org/sdmx/jedh/jedh\\_home.html](http://devdata.worldbank.org/sdmx/jedh/jedh_home.html)).
- For donors with multiple agencies it could be stated as good practice to have a central database on a website that pools the information from all the agencies.
- In the information standard we could consider the inclusion of non-ODA military spending to be included and then apply a filter to ensure that ODA can be drawn out of the information.

**Issue for consideration:** Still need to look into how to transform data into meaningful information.

### Action points:

- Create a demonstration platform for October conferences to provide an example of IATI in practice.
- Look at the definition of ODA for the standard. OECD is examining the reporting of contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.

#### 14. Crowd sourcing

##### Discussion and Clarification:

- The code of conduct should include a clause that states that if someone is convinced that the information is wrong then a representative of the donor must respond within a certain amount of time to the request or query.
- In general, there should be a maximum timeframe for donors to respond to feedback and questions
- The information registry could have a feedback loop. In this way reporting would create dialogue around information.

**Issue for consideration:** Do we need to establish a formal systematic mechanism to provide the feedback loop?

#### 15. Process for maintaining standard

##### Discussion and clarification:

- The monitoring could be carried out by an independent body, Perhaps the secretariat should be made independent once the standard has been created.

**Action point:** Steering Committee to consider the process for monitoring compliance.

#### 16. Timetable for workstream 3

- For future meetings the TAG should try to link up with the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Cluster C.
- Try to arrange video conferencing participation in the Wider TAG meeting in September.

##### Action point:

- Send draft 0 of code of conduct to core group,
- Send draft 1 to wider TAG group.
- Arrange a conference call at the beginning of July to discuss the document Draft 0.