



INTERNATIONAL
AID
TRANSPARENCY
INITIATIVE

Members' Assembly Meeting 03-05 October 2017

IFAD HQ, Via Paolo di Dono, 44, 00142 Roma RM, Italy

Paper 2B: Report on implementation of Year 4 workplan (Sept 2016 - Aug 2017)

Introduction

At the June 2016 Members' Assembly, members approved a new strategy, vision and mission for IATI and requested the Secretariat to incorporate these into its work over the next two years. During the same meeting the Governing Board called for an increase in membership fees, outlining several key areas in which IATI needed increased investment following three years of falling income levels. The specific areas of new work and investment were the following:

- Develop a new data use strategy (output 1)
- Provide more support for publishers on data quality (output 2)
- Simplify and strengthen complex technical infrastructure (output 3)
- Support World Humanitarian Summit IATI commitments (i.e. the Grand Bargain transparency commitment) (outputs 2 and 3)
- Build a new website (output 4)
- Update IATI's branding (output 4)
- Support new institutional arrangements and long-term sustainability (output 5)

A fee increase was approved for a period of two years from September 2016 to undertake these activities, and the Secretariat was requested to update the workplan to ensure it was aligned with the newly agreed vision and mission. Following a reminder by the Chair encouraging members to prioritise payment of fees, income began to flow only in Q2 (December 2016 - February 2017). Up to this point consortium organisations were able to continue operations through their in-kind support, but with core funds now received, the Secretariat was able to scale up and begin to undertake the new activities in the workplan.

Activities in the [Year 4 work plan](#) have been completed or are ongoing where they relate to regular technical support, and details of specific progress due to this increased investment can be found in the output areas below.

The workplan is aligned with the agreed strategic direction and supports achievement of IATI's vision and mission.

- Vision: *Transparent, good quality information on development resources and results is available and used by all stakeholder groups to help achieve sustainable development outcomes.*

- **Mission:** *The IATI community works together to 1) ensure transparency of data on development resources and results; 2) ensure the quality of IATI data is continually improved and responds to the needs of all stakeholders and 3) facilitate access to effective tools and support so that IATI data contributes to the achievement of sustainable development outcomes.*

Output 1: Promoting Data Use

1A – Encourage use of IATI data

The Secretariat has completed the following scoping work necessary to develop a data use strategy.

- Development Initiatives' report, [Reaching the Potential of IATI Data](#)¹
- Detailed research on the status of [data use by partner countries](#) undertaken by the Secretariat through UNDP
- Extensive consultation and research by the Secretariat together with an external communications agency, WeAreSnook

Based on this research, the Secretariat has produced a **data use strategy supported by a costed workplan** detailing how the funds allocated for this activity will be applied. Delivery of the draft strategy is behind schedule and should have been completed by May 2017 for sign off at a June MA meeting. The strategy and detailed workplan is however now available and a full presentation on the recommended activities and anticipated results will be made at the October 2017 MA, together with a discussion on the shared responsibilities of Secretariat, Board and the IATI community for achieving those results.

The enhancement of data use tools including extensive work on d-portal is reported within Output 3A below.

1B – Enhance collaboration of technical experts on IATI

Community activities such as localised workshops and MiniTAG events have created opportunities to expand the pool of IATI experts to provide peer support and advice to new publishers. Members from the Secretariat's technical team have supported and attended many of these events.

1C – Improve guidance to data users

The Secretariat is ready to support bilateral donor members of IATI in developing and implementing a plan to enhance understanding of IATI and use of IATI data by their staff in donor country offices. Several donor members attending the recent bilateral meeting in London agreed to work on an initiative to a pilot exercise in up to five countries to draw out common lessons that can be applied across different contexts.

¹ This research and the resulting report was provided as an in-kind contribution to IATI by Secretariat member, Development Initiatives, based on its commitment made at the June 2016 Members' Assembly.

Activities in Output 4D around the IATI brand and new website underpin broader data use improvements, enabling specific tools to be found and used by many more user groups. The new website will be previewed at the MA and launched incrementally early in Y5.

Output 2: Improving IATI data quality, breadth and depth

2A – Contribute to good quality data supply with support to existing and new publishers

Capacity has been strengthened in the technical team with the recruitment and training of an additional Business and Data Analyst in March 2017 to support publishers and data users.

112 new IATI publishers in Y4 have brought the total number to 582, an increase of almost 25% on the total at the end of Y3. The technical team received 1402 requests for support, up from 1180 in Y3 (an increase of 19%). Of these, 243 were resolved by a third party² (up from 172 in Y3, or an increase of 41%). With increasing demand year upon year for IATI helpdesk services, the medium-term strategy to address this demand is to improve the website to provide more and clearer guidance on both publishing and using IATI data, so that more organisations will in the future be able to resolve their queries simply using online guidance.

The technical team has worked to improve data quality by focusing on 100 target publishers, principally bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations and large CSOs, and to take into account the commitment to publish humanitarian data made at the World Humanitarian Summit. Each 'top 100' publisher has a lead contact in the IATI technical team to work directly and proactively with them on a regular basis to discuss improvements to their data and resolve errors, as well as to ensure they are using the most appropriate tools and approaches to publish. This concierge approach has been successful, leading for example to publication by the UN Development System of information on [UN pooled funds](#) to IATI for the first time, shining a light on some \$1.7bn (7-8%) of the total funding for all the UN's operational activities in areas such as humanitarian interventions, peacebuilding, development and climate change, which are not earmarked to a specific UN agency.

2B – Building a pool of technical experts on IATI

This activity is aligned with 1B and is ongoing. When required, Secretariat members prepare and update relevant materials, attend and provide support to community events, acting as a repository and broker of knowledge to build the community of technical experts. This community is vibrant and active both online and face to face, and support will continue in Y5.

2C – Improve support and guidance to publishers

The Secretariat has carried out extensive consultation among the IATI to determine the specific needs for guidance on publishing IATI data and use of different publishing tools. It is now working to develop this new guidance which will be launched in phases from autumn 2017. This is part of the website development project (Output 4D).

² Bond, AidStream or Viderum (provider of the IATI Registry). These three organisations have a 'seat' each on the IATI Helpdesk, enabling the technical team to assign tickets to them and monitor whether they have been resolved.

The new [org-id.guide website](#), funded by IATI and others, was launched by Open Data Services in August and provides a look-up tool for known registration agencies globally, enabling publishers, users and those who support them to publicly access curated information on registration agencies across a range of sectors and locations.

Output 3: Maintaining and strengthening IATI systems

3A – Technical infrastructure

Capacity within the technical team has been increased by the recruitment and training of an additional Developer in November 2016 to work on improving technical infrastructure and tools.

In terms of **data use tools**, substantial work has been done this year to improve [d-portal](#), based on feedback from users. New and improved functions include:

d-portal search function enhancements

- Filters and free text search
- Multiple searches on all filters; ability to select multiple publishers/sectors/countries etc from the dropdowns, giving much more detailed, refined searches
- Search for a single activity ID
- Sort by CRS code/alphabetical
- Donor filter has been removed (the same result can now be achieved by choosing multiple publishers); filter for Activity Status has been added.

Other d-portal enhancements

- Developed tool to preview xml in d-portal format, so organisations preparing to publish can view and check their data before it goes live
- Added detail to single activity pages including much more information on Results, more detailed dates and including planned-disbursement data
- Backend upgrade to allow quicker and more efficient searching, and to enable d-portal to better handle increasing amount of data (nearly 700,00 activities now)

Work to improve the IATI Datastore will be prioritised in Y5, following completion of work to improve the basic foundations and infrastructure for all IATI technical products.

A roadmap for the development and maintenance of core IATI technical systems and tools was presented to the community at the TAG in March 2017 and is also available [online](#) for further comment and consultation. The technical team is implementing this roadmap towards the deadline of August 2018, while also addressing urgent infrastructure challenges as they arise.

In Y4 the technical team has undertaken a range of **maintenance activities** on existing products. These have included:

- [Updates and management of Non-Embedded Codelists](#)

- Start of migration of products to HTTPS. Some, such as [Discuss](#), have been migrated, others are at various stages in the pipeline
- Resolution of a range of issues with products including the [Dashboard](#), [Standard Website](#), [Query Builder](#) and [Registry](#)
- Major review of internal processes and coding standards; this has led to greater efficiencies, freeing capacity to move beyond maintenance and make progress on new areas of work.

In January, the team reviewed the state of IATI architecture at that point and [posted plans](#) to improve it. Work to begin implementing the base architecture, formed initially around 'PylATI' the IATI [Python Library](#)³, is now nearing the first phase of completion. Primary work has centered around the [core module](#) to act as a reference implementation of the letter (rather than the undocumented 'spirit' (that varies from person to person)) of the 'Standard'. Version 2.02 of the Standard has been used in the first instance for this, and the work will soon extend to other versions.

The team has also [undertaken](#) work to perform dataset validation within the Schema. A proof-of-concept implementation for validating a dataset against IATI Codelists and Rulesets has been demonstrated.

Work has also recently begun on additional parts of the Python Library, such as [iati.fetch](#), which aims to offer functionality to download data and updates to the Single Source Of Truth content using a network connection.

In addition to these maintenance activities, the technical team will be undertaking the following three major projects between now and the end of 2017:

- **Validator:** The team aims to release developer functionality (with accompanying user guidance) that will enable datasets to be validated against more of the IATI Standard than just Schemas – for example, that the correct values from a related codelist have been used.
- **2.03 Standard Upgrade:** Once proposals have been finalised and agreed upon, these will be implemented in the Schema, and tools will be updated to support the new functionality as appropriate.
- **Architecture Design and Development / Web Project:** The team will continue work on the Python Library to provide the base of a sustainable architecture, also using it in practice during work to understand and significantly improve the experience of those using IATI's websites. The scope of this project will be confirmed over the coming weeks before implementation begins in the Autumn.

3B – Manage the IATI Standard

³ The Python library is a collection of reusable software components that the IATI Technical Team is building to help us to improve the underlying structure of existing tools. The library will act as a base for common tasks and is being built in an extensible way. Therefore, it is intended that the library will make it easier to use IATI data by removing the need to reinvent the wheel before moving onto implementing innovative functionality, performing analysis of data or simply accessing data for data visualisations. [More information here.](#)

The decimal upgrade to version 2.03 of the IATI Standard is currently nearing the end of its consultation phase and will go live on 3 October 2017. The full timetable is available [online](#). Version 2.03 will, in particular, ensure that IATI data is interoperable with UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and help humanitarian actors meet the transparency commitment made as part of the Grand Bargain. It will also enable the better publication of results data.

TAG Standards Day was a key activity contributing to Standard evolution and a [paper outlining proposed changes to the IATI Standard upgrade process](#) has been presented to members for their review ahead of the Members' Assembly.

Output 4 – Communications and Outreach

4A – Outreach and 4B - Engagement

The Secretariat undertook several activities around the **Second High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (HLM2)**. Ahead of HLM2, the Secretariat published a [briefing on IATI's role in achieving Effective Development](#). At a side event with high level speakers Helen Clark (then UNDP Administrator) and Charlotte Petri-Gornitzka (then newly appointed DAC Chair) and others, PWYF moderated a panel discussion on the theme of "[Transparency in development cooperation: Much done, much left to do](#)". These activities and sustained advocacy work with the drafting team ahead of the meeting resulted in a renewed commitment to IATI in the [Nairobi Outcome Document](#). The document endorsed IATI as an open data standard that development actors can rely on, and emphasised the need for an increase in data use. The Secretariat developed and launched an [information video about IATI in English and French](#), and held a stand in the marketplace at HLM2. These activities served to increase IATI's visibility significantly among the development community and led to several follow up queries and new memberships.

The Secretariat worked closely with the **Inter-Agency Task Force working on the Financing for Development (FFD) Follow-up IATF report**, resulting in the inclusion of lengthy positive progress updates on IATI in two key sections of the annexes [Development Effectiveness](#) and [Data, Monitoring and Follow-up](#).

In July 2017 the Secretariat attended and jointly participated with Publish What you Fund, InterAction and Oxfam America in a range of sessions at the **African Open Data Conference** in Ghana in an event that sought to showcase the thriving open data community on the continent. The Secretariat published a [blog outlining some key findings](#) - among these the keen desire for more data and awareness-raising of IATI, particularly at the local level in-country where projects are actually being delivered.

The IATI Secretariat was invited to participate in two workshop meetings at the **COP22** in Marrakech by the UNFCCC as it works to modernise the reporting mechanism for climate financing and reporting progress in relation to the Paris agreement. The IATI standard and the CRS++ format were compared and presented as two widely used standards that could meet the identified needs. Initial studies presented at the workshops suggest that the IATI standard includes all currently required components for the reporting on climate finance, and in some cases most of the data is already being published through IATI. The new reporting mechanism is to be implemented by 2020, and the Secretariat will continue to support this work, for

example through Sweden which proposes to present its pilot work visualising climate financing using existing IATI data - at the COP23 in Bonn in November 2017.

4C – Communications

The Secretariat developed and published its [2016 Annual Report](#) in March 2017 in English, French and Spanish, with some savings made possible by carrying out the work in-house. These savings were applied to the development of the [What Is IATI informational video](#) prepared ahead of HLM2. The video has been viewed more than **1500** times on YouTube since its launch in November 2016.

The Secretariat communications function has regularly published news stories and blogs in support of events, activities and new memberships (nearly **100 stories** published since MA 2016), and has built up a significant and active Twitter following (over 6,000). The team has also developed content and published bimonthly TAG newsletters and Chair's Bulletins to keep the IATI community informed of progress and technical consultations.

4D – Website and 4E – Branding

The Secretariat has been working with external communications agency, WeAreSnook, to conduct research to gain insight and inform work to **refresh and renew IATI's brand**, in line with the decision made by members at the December 2015 Steering Committee meeting⁴. At the request of the Board, members were polled on their views on IATI's acronym and the possible use of a strapline to describe what IATI is and does; the results of that poll will be used to deliver a refreshed brand identity in time for the Members' Assembly.

WeAreSnook is also supporting the Secretariat to **develop a new IATI website** with a single url to unite all current IATI sites, based on insights gained through research with more than 100 members of the IATI community.

Output 5: Institutional arrangements

5a – Effective Governance

The Secretariat has **organised Board meetings (14)** at approximately bi-monthly intervals via teleconference, with consultation and decision-making between meetings via UNDP's shared online platform, Yammer. Written financial and narrative updates are prepared by the Secretariat ahead of each Board meeting together with all discussion papers, and minutes are posted on the IATI website. Minutes and updates from Board meetings can be seen [here](#). (5A.1)

The Board decided to **delay the 2017 Members' Assembly meeting** from its usual early summer slot to allow for progress to be made by consultants on Institutional Review, retained only in early May through a contract managed by Canada and with consultation and translation managed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat has put in place logistical arrangements for a

⁴ See p.3 of the [minutes](#).

three day MA meeting with support from IFAD staff, following a generous offer from IFAD to make its premises in Rome available for the Members' Assembly. (5A.2)

With funding provided by DFID, 137 participants from 36 countries attended the **largest ever TAG meeting** and the first in the region, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Participants discussed ways of enhancing data use and took part in an election process for the TAG Chair, when the incumbent TAG Chair was re-elected for a further two year term. Building on the momentum of the March TAG, a “**miniTAG**” was held in London on 28 June, with a focus on traceability using IATI data and several show & tell presentations; 30 TAG members from different constituencies attended that first miniTAG, paving the way for other similar focused events. (5A.3)

In terms of **fundraising**, implementation of the new higher membership fees met with some challenge and delay, with the result that fees began to flow in to the IATI Trust Fund only in early 2017 (Q2,Q3). The budget was nonetheless exceeded, in part due to membership fees received from (10) new members in 2017; these are WHO, IOM, Synergy International Systems, Akvo, Oxfam Novib, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, AICS (Italy), AFD (France), IFC and Guinea. In addition to these regular membership fee contributions, the Secretariat also developed targeted packages for members interested in making specific voluntary contributions (ie funding for the TAG which was supported by DFID, and funding for the MA which was supported by the EC, together with contribution of the venue and event support from IFAD). (5A.4)

The Secretariat continued to coordinate its work primarily through weekly virtual team meetings, with separate coordination arrangements led by DI for the technical team and helpdesk. Secretariat member organisations provided specialist support in kind for certain workstreams including [Theory of Change](#) work (UNDP), support for implementation of the Grand Bargain (DI) and the [IATI Data Use Report](#) (DI). In July 2017 Secretariat members gathered in Stockholm for focused workplanning sessions. (5A.5)

5B – IATI Transition for hosting and new business model

Funding was not yet available to support this work in Q1 and given the need to expedite this work a decision was subsequently made by the Board to fund and manage the process. The Secretariat drafted [Terms of Reference for consultation with members](#) in July 2016 and Canada in its role as Board Chair subsequently established and managed a contract with Powered by Data for an institutional review of IATI and development of a report on future hosting arrangements. The Secretariat established a secondary contract aligned with Canada's primary contract to allow for consultations with members and attendance by the consultants at the 2017 MA. The Secretariat prepared documents and contact information to support the desk review by consultants. Work began on May 4th (Y4-Q3) led by Canada joined by Board sub-group PWYF and Bangladesh. The Secretariat stands ready to contribute to the establishment and implementation of transition arrangements once the future direction becomes clear. (5B.1-2)

Action requested of members: Take note.