



“Our aim is to bring together donors, partner countries and civil society to enhance aid effectiveness by improving transparency.”

Technical Advisory Group Newsletter

July 2009

Welcome to the first edition of the IATI Technical Advisory Group (TAG) newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide members of the TAG with an update on the progress of work being carried out by the group and to create discussion around various TAG issues.

General IATI news

Switzerland signs up to IATI

Switzerland has become the seventeenth donor to join the International Aid Transparency Initiative. We are also pleased that a growing number of partner countries are endorsing the initiative.

New IATI website

Keeping track of progress with IATI should now be easier after the launch of a much expanded IATI website, which can be accessed at www.aidtransparency.net.

Consultations

Partner Country

The first partner country consultation took place in Kigali in Rwanda on 29th and 30th June. There was a good turnout from partner country governments (about 20 participants from 10 countries) plus a good number from Rwanda, UNDP and CSOs. The consultation explored the commonality of data issues with aid management systems, identified that IATI could help with state building in post-conflict situations and agreed that the code of conduct could be a useful tool to improve access to comprehensive and timely data. For an initial report about this consultation please follow this link www.iati-tag.projectsaces.com/documents/ (for a reminder on how to access Project Spaces please see the bottom of this newsletter). A second consultation was held in Budva, Montenegro on 6th and 7th July. A UNDP report on both consultations will issue in due course.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

IATI held a half-day consultation with European CSOs in Brussels on 3rd July which was attended by 22 NGO representatives. The aim of the meeting was to ensure that CSOs had an opportunity to make suggestions on the categories of information that are most important for donors to publish and the code of conduct. Top priority was given to more timely information covering where, how and in what sectors aid is spent, as well as detail of aid agreements and conditions. In common with the partner country consultations, there was a wish to cover non-aid spending too. A report on the outcome of this consultation can be found on the TAG Project Space www.iati-tag.projectsaces.com/documents/.



Update on Workstreams

Workstream 1 – Scope of IATI standard

This workstream is now underway, led by Overseas Development Institute (ODI). TAG members can expect consultation to take place throughout August via teleconference, email or the TAG online collaboration platform, Project Spaces www.iati-tag.projectsaces.com/. This will be followed by a draft proposal for comment before the September TAG meeting.

Workstream 3 – Code of Conduct

This workstream is being co-led by Henri Valot from Civicus and Alex Gerbrandij from the European Commission. They are currently in the process of drafting the code of conduct, which will also involve consultation throughout August, and a draft proposal by 21st August for comments before the September TAG meeting

Workstream 4 – Donor fact-finding

The donor fact-finding missions began on 22-24 June with a visit to DFID to investigate how potential IATI standards might impact them. DFID's disclosure policy and the new ARIES system makes them well placed DFID to meet most of the information categories that have been suggested for the standard. The team made a second fact-finding mission to the World Bank on 13th-15th July; initial findings were also encouraging. A report synthesising the results of all the fact-finding missions will be completed and the results shared by September. Further fact finding missions are planned for the Netherlands (29th to 30th July) and Germany (start of September), as well as a partner country pilot in Burkina Faso from 14th Sept, and plans for a one in another country.

Upcoming events

2nd-3rd September – TAG meeting in London to discuss the draft paper on Scope of IATI and Code of Conduct

8th-9th September – Donor fact finding mission in Germany

March to October – CSO consultations (for more details refer to Project Spaces)

June to end September – Partner country consultations (for more details refer to Project Spaces)

6th October – High level briefing on IATI in Istanbul (limited participation, so no involvement of TAG members expected)

20th-21st October – IATI conference in The Hague

3rd or 4th December – Steering Committee meeting in Paris