



IATI Newsletter



August/September 2009

Autumn 2009 is a key period for the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)

Autumn 2009 will be a very busy period for IATI. We are aiming by December to reach agreement on the core set of information that donors will agree to publish under IATI and the Code of Conduct governing implementation. A whole series of meetings are planned throughout the autumn to consult with IATI members and other stakeholders on the draft proposals. For details, please see below and the IATI website at www.aidtransparency.net or contact r-greenhill@dfid.gov.uk.

IATI Steering Committee Meeting, 30 September, 11.30 – 17.30 BST

The third IATI Steering Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 September from 11.30 – 17.30 UK time. The meeting will be held at DFID's London office, with an option to join by VC or phone. It will review zero draft proposals on what will be published and the Code of Conduct, before these are shared more widely at the IATI Conference. As usual, the meeting will be open to all IATI members and interested parties to observe. Please contact eleri-jones@dfid.gov.uk if you would like to participate.

IATI First Annual Conference, The Hague, 20 and 21 October

Preparations for the IATI conference on 20 and 21 October in The Hague are in full swing. The conference will be opened by Bert Koenders, Dutch Development Minister, and John Rwangombwa, Permanent Secretary of the Rwandan Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Ministers from Brazil, Nepal and (tbc) Montenegro are also expected to speak. The conference will provide an important opportunity to share feedback from the regional partner country and CSO consultations, and to discuss draft proposals for the IATI standards. For more information and full details of the programme, please see <http://aidtransparency.net/progress/> or contact eleri-jones@dfid.gov.uk.

Update on the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The TAG has been busy throughout the summer in preparation for the TAG meeting to be held at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London on 2 and 3 September. The meeting will discuss draft proposals on the Scope of IATI and the Code of Conduct, as well as feedback from the consultations.

ODI is leading Workstream 1 and has produced consultation papers on results, procurement & traceability, and criteria for deciding the scope of IATI. Alex Gerbrandij (EC) and Henri Valot (Civicus) have produced a zero draft of the Code of Conduct. These documents are now available for comment on a consultation website for TAG members. Other readers who would like access are welcome to contact Hannah Glanville (Hannah@devinit.org).

There have now been three donor fact finding missions: to UK, World Bank and Netherlands. Two others are planned: to Germany (10 and 11 September) and Denmark (end September). A country pilot to test IATI needs started in Malawi on 19 August. A second pilot will start in Burkina Faso in mid September. Conclusions of these missions and pilots will be shared with the TAG and IATI members.

The TAG is now producing a periodic newsletter. The first one—issued at the end of July—can be found at <http://aidtransparency.net/news/>.

Growing Demand and Interest from Partner Countries in IATI

In the period from June to September 2009, the IATI Secretariat with support from UNDP is holding consultations with partner countries from across the globe. The first workshops were held on 29-30 June in Kigali, Rwanda for Southern and Eastern African countries; on 6-7 July in Budva, Montenegro for Europe and CIS, and on 12-13 August in Amman, Jordan for the Arab States region. The upcoming consultations are on 27-28 August in Bangkok for the Asia and the Pacific, on 8-9 September in Accra, Ghana for West and Central Africa, and on 16-18 September in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic for countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region.

The main objective of the consultations is to hear from partner countries on the challenges they face and the needs they have in accessing and obtaining up to date, timely and accurate information on the ODA flows to their countries. Some common trends and recommendations have emerged from the three regional consultations held thus far:

- Partner countries consider that IATI has the potential to improve significantly the aid information and transparency required in the partnership between donor and recipient countries as envisaged in the Paris Declaration and AAA. However, IATI should not impose a “one-size-fits-all” approach on partner countries, but rather should be flexible enough to allow for the adjustment of the aid information standard to local development contexts and priorities.
- The initiative responds to real needs of partner governments to access and collect more comprehensive and timely aid information, which in turn will support better alignment of aid with national development priorities, better planning and budgeting, as well as results monitoring and reporting.
- Partner countries consider that they also have to improve their national systems and strengthen public financial management in order to reach the objectives of better aid information and transparency and mutual accountability.
- Partner countries wish that the IATI standard includes provisions for up to date and reliable information on ongoing and future aid flows. In agreement with the requirements identified in the IATI Scoping Paper, experts from the countries consulted consider that more detailed information is needed on where aid is spent, when and how aid is spent and on what, as well as in which sectors.
- Partner countries also expressed support for a robust Code of Conduct, which would ensure donor compliance with the IATI standard and will contribute to the attainment of the Paris Declaration’s goals and the commitments on aid transparency and mutual accountability made at Accra. A soft approach will defy IATI’s purpose.
- Partner countries hope that more donor governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies at the global and regional levels will sign up to the IATI Accra Statement. It is a concern for partner countries that a number of OECD/DAC donors and non-DAC donors, which locally provide a significant share of ODA, remain outside the initiative.
- Partner countries will contribute to IATI through signing up to the IATI Accra Statement, participating in the governing and other mechanisms of the initiative, such as the Technical Advisory Group, and directly inputting into the proposals on the IATI standard and Code of Conduct. To this end, they wish to be fully engaged and involved in the process and to be consulted on a regular basis. This includes better representation of partner countries in the IATI Steering Committee. There is a need for IATI to engage with partner countries beyond the regional workshops in 2009.

For more information on the regional consultations in Kigali and Budva, please see the reports from the meetings at <http://aidtransparency.net/consultation-workshop-materials/>. The report from the meeting in Amman will be posted later this month. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Danila Boneva, IATI Partner Outreach Coordinator at danila.boneva@undp.org, tel. +1 212 906 6510.

Meeting of the WP-EFF Cluster C (Transparent and Responsible Aid), 7- 8 July

Romilly Greenhill and Brian Hammond attended a meeting of Cluster C of the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) on 7-8 July. It was agreed that IATI’s work will contribute to the Cluster’s mandate to examine aid transparency issues. IATI was asked in particular to bring in ideas on standardisation and to help facilitate harmonisation across the various initiatives in aid flow data and management. The considerable expertise of the DAC Working Party on Statistics (WP-STAT) will contribute to this task.