**Minutes of the IATI Steering Committee meeting, 13th March 2013 at the OECD, Paris**

**Present:** Mehdi Hussain - DFID (Chair), Alasdair Wardhaugh (IATI Secretariat), Bill Anderson (TAG), Annelise Parr (IATI Secretariat), Sohir Debbiche and Olivier Shingiro - African Development Bank, Talia Melic - Australia, ?? - BetterAid, Arastoo Khan - Bangladesh, Amadou Diallo - Burkina Faso, Yohanna Loucheur - Canada, Juanita Olarte Suescun - Colombia, Guillaume Delalande - Development Gateway, Yvon Mombong - DRC, Judith Randel – Development Initiatives, Timo Wilkki – EC, Julie Vaille - France, Samuel Aggrey - Ghana, Hector Corrales - Honduras, Brian Baldwin – IFAD, Beris Gwynne – INGO Charter Company, Niall Morris Ireland, Isaora Zefania Romalahy - Madagascar, Twaib Ali -Malawi, Ivana Pajevic - Montenegro, Theo Sande - Netherlands, Bhuban Karki - Nepal, Vicki Poole - New Zealand, Hanne Thonstad - Norway, Suzanne Steensen, Jolanda Profos - OECD, Andrew Clarke – Publish What You Fund, ?? - Spain, Linn Ohlsson, Anna Sundström - Sweden , Philippe Besson – Switzerland, Craig Fagan – Transparency International, Mark Cardwell and Nils Boesen - UNDP, Otto Reichner - UNWFP, Pontus Westerberg and Kenneth Kamau UN-HABITAT, Cillian Domhnall O’Cathail and Katrin Lichtenberg - UNOPS, Joan Atherton and Kimberly Smith – US, Alma Kanani and Astrid Manroth – World Bank, Aleem Walji – World Bank Institute.

**Joined by phone:** Brian Hammond - TAG Chair, Amy Lewis - IADB, Julie Anne Thompson – UNOCHA, Claudia Hiepe – Germany, Bjorn Soren Gigler – WB Institute, Morag Patrick – UK, Neil McKie – IATI Secretariat, Kim Borrowdale – IATI Secretariat, Carolyn Culey – IATI Secretariat, Ole Jacob Hjollund and Frank Madsen - Denmark, Heidi Pokki – Finland, Paula Nolan and Carina Connellan - Ireland

1. **Introductions**

Opening the meeting, the Chair proposed acceptance of the revised agenda circulated the day before, with the hosting discussion moved back to the afternoon to allow colleagues experiencing travel difficulties to arrive and take part. The majority agreed so this was accepted.

1. **Update from the Partner Country Caucus**

Hector Corrales (Honduras) gave an update from the Partner Country Caucus meeting the previous day (transcript attached). In response to questions, he clarified that no new data collection at partner country level is required in the transition to using IATI data, although the support of development partners will be necessary in the verification and reconciliation of data.

1. **Transparency Indicator**

TAG Chair Brian Hammond and Bill Anderson (DI) introduced paper 6 which set out some key principles for the Global Transparency Indicator - these have been agreed by the ad hoc group on the common standard. It was noted that the Global Partnership secretariat has circulated draft guidance on the overall Busan monitoring framework and that IATI has an important role to play together with the Global Partnership in developing the transparency indicator within this framework.

The Steering Committee was invited to endorse these key principles, including the view that the target should be full implementation of the common standard and that (in the interests of simplicity) measurement should be based on a subset of components rather than all IATI fields.

In the ensuing discussion, it was confirmed that:

* IATI, through the TAG Chair is already in discussion with the Global Partnership support unit ensuring that the views of this forum are considered;
* Further data collection at country level for the indicator will not be required; the indicator will measured at global level because that is how data to the common standard are published;
* In addition to understanding whether the data are useful for partner countries (usability) a measure of use – by non-state actors as well as governments – should be developed and included;
* There is substantial evidence already available from previous work with local NGOs that can and should be used to inform the indicator;
* With regard to components, the Annual Report process can be used to refine these and the focus should be on measuring publication of timely, forward-looking and comprehensive data.

**Summing up the discussion, the Chair noted the Steering Committee’s endorsement of the principles in the paper. He asked the Secretariat to take on board comments made on the components, noting the links to the Annual report. He noted support for continuing engagement with the Global Partnership whilst recognising that the Global Partnership will be linking to non-IATI actors as well. Finally, he noted the need for closer engagement with INGOs.**

1. **IATI Annual Report**

Bill Anderson (DI) gave a short presentation (attached) drawing attention to those adjustments in the report that had been introduced as a result of comments made at the previous Steering Committee meeting. Rather than scoring, the Annual Report will simply publish statistics on who is publishing what, using existing information from IATI, with the signatory page allowing publishers to comment on each of their components. There are new tick-box tables that give an overview of what is being published now and what will be published in 2015 (based on implementation schedules), and new sections have been added on partner countries and CSOs.

Members generally welcomed the changes made. There were specific queries and comments concerning the methodology applied to some components such as recording percentages on economic classifications/budget identifier, since no one is publishing these at present. Concern was also voiced regarding the logic applied to publication in local languages, with the view that publication in a country’s official language should be recognised and scored accordingly. CSOs asked, and members agreed, that next year’s Annual Report should include financial data on IATI. There was also a request from Canada for a version of the report to be published in French.

**Summing up, the Chair noted these comments, and reminded members that the deadline for final comments was 22ndMarch, media briefings would be sent out to members on 25th March and the Annual Report would be launched on 8th April.**

1. **Presentation: Delivering on Transparency in the UN System**

Mark Cardwell (Chief of Online Communications for UNDP) gave a presentation (attached) providing an update of UNDP’s work in implementing IATI and building on the standard for accessibility. He emphasised that in UNDP’s experience, transparency improved data integrity itself. Several participants complimented the tool with partner countries noting that the availability of these kinds of tools was extremely beneficial for streamlining reporting processes at the country level. The presentation was welcomed especially by the many members currently going through a similar implementation process, and UNDP was asked to share further information on its data clean-up tool. Invitations were extended to UN system colleagues to join a knowledge-sharing workshop on IATI implementation taking place in Geneva the same week.

1. **Governance and Funding**

Alasdair Wardhaugh (IATI Secretariat) introduced the papers on governance (paper 3) and funding (paper 4), reminding the Steering Committee that the Secretariat had consulted on drafts of both of these papers, and the versions now presented to the Steering Committee reflected the comments received. In particular, the feedback on the composition of the Steering Committee was that people liked and valued the arrangement currently in place, and were concerned that a more bureaucratic, less inclusive model might create practical difficulties. The paper therefore set out two options for consideration – the Secretariat favoured the first option, as representing the majority view in the group, but wanted to offer the Steering Committee a choice.

Members noted that IATI was in a period of transition and had reached a transformational point; institutional arrangements must underpin this transition, and encourage broader participation including from emerging economies. With regard to the composition of the Steering Committee, the majority supported option A, retaining two open plenary meetings a year, but with ad hoc sub-groups to take forward specific pieces of work, and a standing sub-group to monitor and guide the Secretariat’s implementation of the work-plan and budget. Members requested clear Terms of Reference (TORs) for the latter. There was concern at the proposal that ex-officio members would be unable to speak; it was agreed that they should have the right to speak, but not to vote.

The proposals in the paper on chairing (a single chair and a vice-chair, both elected for one year renewable terms by the Steering Committee) and on decision-making (by consensus, and in exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, by a ‘supermajority’ – i.e. two-thirds or three-quarters) were accepted, (subject for some delegations, to final approval by their respective Capital) provided these were clearly articulated;. With regard to the role of the TAG and TAG Chair, members asked for TORs on both, and clarity on who would be able to vote for the TAG Chair, given its open membership, which members were keen to retain.

The issue of membership, and the link between membership and fees, proved more difficult to resolve. Some members required greater clarity on the decision-making process, including which decisions might be made by the Steering Committee as opposed to the sub-group(s). Donors generally supported the move towards a funding model based on membership fees, but many felt that these should apply to all members, albeit at a much lower level for partner countries and CSOs. Some donors indicated that they would be unable to pay fees immediately as these were not budgeted for, whilst others would need to seek instructions from capitals. Whilst some donors felt they would be able to find funds for voluntary contributions, the need for stability/predictability with regard to future membership fees was emphasised, for budget purposes. There was a clear view against asking publishers to pay for technical services, as this was seen as a barrier to access.

Whilst a small number of partner countries indicated that they would be able to pay membership fees and/or self-finance their participation in IATI meetings (and potentially even that of others), others explained that internal regulations would prevent them from travelling outside their countries unless their travel was funded from external sources. They were keen to emphasise that they contributed in other ways, for example through supporting implementation and use of data at country level, often at significant financial cost. Partner countries wished to have more clearly defined roles in this forum, and called upon IATI to continue to maintain the philosophy of inclusiveness that characterised IATI from its inception and was called for at Busan.

Most CSOs opposed fees for themselves, and urged that commitment should not equate with fees, noting that many donors had not yet made a financial commitment to IATI. Other members were concerned about how CSO membership should be defined if they did not pay fees, and were anxious that advocacy NGOs would be excluded if CSO membership was based on implementation. Several members also expressed concern that based on the proposal in the governance paper, implementing NGOs would automatically become members and would swell the numbers to a level that would influence decision-making processes unevenly.

It was agreed that the language in the paper on governance and funding needs clarifying, moving forward on the basis of members having different responsibilities, and that the proposal should capture all of those who can pay.

**The Secretariat leader said that IATI should move to new arrangements quickly, with further clarifications to be provided by the Secretariat in some areas. There was broad agreement to separate membership from participation, to avoid barriers to participation; and on proposed chairing arrangements. The Secretariat also committed to providing greater clarity to the Steering Committee around the composition and TORs of the standing committee on budget and workplan. Broadly, donors accept the proposal for donor fees but asked for predictability – this could perhaps be achieved through the establishment of a ceiling. In addition, some donors signalled that they were not able to finalise a funding structure until clear membership and governance rules were confirmed. The Secretariat will do further work on this, and on the link between fees and governance. The Secretariat will also reflect on the contribution that partner countries are already making and include reference to this in the next Annual report. Partner countries should for their part commit to use the data. He reminded participants of the risk of undermining IATI unless members moved quickly to provide the necessary funding, noting that the new hosts would need to work out the budget in detail.**

1. **Future Hosting**

The Secretariat leader summarised the background and outlined the process undertaken by the hosting sub-group. He introduced their report, which made a clear recommendation whilst asking for clarity on some points. He commended the subgroup’s work and hoped for consensus on their recommendation so that the transition to new hosting arrangements could be made quickly.

There was a wide-ranging debate and a number of different views were expressed on points such as avoiding duplication, and ensuring economy, inclusiveness, efficiency, links with existing processes and retaining the multi-stakeholder nature of the initiative. A minority of donors spoke in favour of the OECD’s bid, a few advocated for a merger of the two proposals, whilst the majority of donors plus partner countries and CSOs supported the sub-group’s recommendation of the consortium’s proposal. Several speakers supportive of the consortium proposal noted the importance of collaboration with the OECD with regard to implementation of the common standard, as had also been highlighted amongst the next steps outlined in the sub-group’s report. Some members expressed concern about ensuring synergies within the consortium.

Seeking consensus, the Chair proposed that the Steering Committee should take forward the recommendation of the subgroup, but taking particular note of the need for clear processes for working with OECD on the common standard.

The Secretariat leader outlined the process going forward if a decision was reached by the committee today to follow the recommendation of the evaluation sub-group. As a next step, DFID would write offering the hosting role to the consortium. In its communication DFID would raise the issues identified by the evaluation sub-group around collaboration between the parties on the common standard, and on the specific roles of Sweden and Ghana. The transition will take a few months, with new arrangements to be in place by the middle of the year.

There was a second round of discussion during which those who supported the OECD proposal reaffirmed their views but indicated that they would not be opposed to a decision for the consortium in view of the strong support for it, , and with the understanding that the link with the OECD would be made clear and explicit.

**Summing up, the Chair indicated that whilst he noted these opposing views, the consensus of the meeting was to adhere to the sub-group’s recommendation to accept the Consortium’s bid and adhere to the recommendations on “next steps.’ DFID would write to the Consortium asking for clarification on the points raised as ‘next steps’ in the report of the evaluation sub-group, as well as acting on those points recommended to DFID itself. In consultation with the Consortium, the Secretariat would set out a timeline for the transition, including updated proposals on governance and funding, in advance of the next Steering Committee meeting. There was no objection to this proposal.**

1. **Presentation: Transparency and Accountability in Development: where do we stand?**

Craig Fagan from Transparency International and academic colleagues from the US and Germany gave a presentation based on their research examining the policies and practices of five donors in four partner countries (attached). The research showed the actual and potential added value of improved transparency.

1. **Presentation: Open Aid Partnership: Enhancing Aid Transparency for Improved Results**

Aleem Walji and Bjorn-Soren Gigler from the World Bank Institute gave an update on the work of the Open Aid Partnership, and how striking visualisations can complement/enhance IATI’s work at country level (attached).

**AOB**

As it was their last meeting, the Chair thanked Brian Hammond, the TAG Chair, and Alma Kanani, the World Bank Representative, for their respective contributions to IATI since its inception.