

2023 Members' Assembly

13-14 March 2023, Copenhagen, Denmark

FINAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Agenda and documents circulated ahead of the meeting are available in English, French and Spanish on the IATI Website at the following link, along with links to presentations and participant lists: [IATI Members' Assembly 2023 - iatistandard.org](https://iatistandard.org)

13 March 2023: Caucus day and informational sessions

Session 1: Opening

1. Representatives from member organisations and invited observers met in Copenhagen for IATI's annual Members' Assembly (MA) meeting. One day of formal meetings of 117 delegates (86 in person and 31 virtual) was preceded by a day of caucus meetings and informational sessions; and followed by two days of Community Exchange attended by a further 60 participants from the wider IATI community.
2. The Governing Board Chair opened the caucus day, welcomed participants, introduced the Governing Board and thanked members and observers for attending the first in-person Members' Assembly in three years (due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Session 2: Governance overview of IATI

3. Representatives from Canada and IOM gave a short presentation to all delegates on the IATI governance structure, including the roles of members, the Governing Board and Secretariat; and a high-level overview of IATI's Standard Operating Procedures, in order to introduce new members and observers to their role in the IATI governance process.

Session 3: Looking ahead: IATI hosting decision and transition

4. The IATI Governing Board (GB) gave a short presentation to remind members of the inclusive process by which the Board, Institutional Working Group (IWG) and Evaluation Panel (EP) arrived at their recommendation for IATI hosting arrangements for the period 2023-2028, before the upcoming vote by members during the official MA segment on 14 March. The Governing Board reminded members of the background to the bid process and the comprehensive timeline for the bidding, assessment and clarification process stewarded by the IWG and the EP to inform the recommendations of the GB.
5. It was noted during the presentation that four bids were received by the deadline of 6 January 2023 from:

- a. Development Initiatives; for the Policy and Technology Services Terms of Reference (ToRs); however the Development Initiatives submission was not a direct response to the published ToRs but rather a list of reflections on and suggested improvements for the new hosting arrangements and so was not considered to have met the requirements for an official bid;
 - b. UNDP; for the Policy and Technology Services ToRs;
 - c. UNDP; for the Legal and Operational Services ToRs; and
 - d. UNOPS; for the Legal and Operational Services ToRs.
6. Bids were scored against evaluation criteria designed by the EP to critically assess the capability of each bidder to provide the best services to IATI in terms of quality and cost. Clarifications were sought from bidders where necessary to inform the final scoring by the EP.
 7. Based on questions from members, the Governing Board clarified that the overall scoring did not provide a quantitative metric for costing, but rather a qualitative assessment on whether the proposal was affordable given the available resource envelope. They also noted that UNDP's bid specifically excluded a proposal for financial services, so the EP could not assess or score this element as part of the wider proposal.
 8. On the basis of the evaluation criteria, UNDP's Policy and Technology Services bid received 74%; Without including the financial services component, UNDP's bid for Legal and Operational Services did not fully address the TOR requirements and did not therefore meet the minimum score for those TORs. UNOPS' Legal and Operational Services bid received 74%.
 9. On this basis, the EP assessed that IATI should enter into a Letter of Agreement (LoA) for **Policy and Technology hosting services with UNDP** as winning bidder; and similarly, an LoA for the provision of IATI **Legal and Operational hosting services with UNOPS**. Weighing all inputs, including the recommendation of the EP, the Board presented to members the following three options that represented a realistic range of possibilities for the next stage in selecting a host, ahead of the 14 March vote by members.
 - a. Option 1: Implement the outcome of the formal bidding and evaluation process for the new hosting arrangement by:
 - i) preparing and signing a letter of agreement for the provision of IATI policy and technology hosting services with UNDP; and
 - ii) preparing and signing a letter of agreement for the provision of IATI legal and operational hosting services to UNOPS.
 - b. Option 2: Further examine the viability of UNDP to act as sole IATI host for policy, technology, legal and operational services.
 - c. Option 3: Cancel the current bidding process to select new hosts and that the current hosting arrangements be extended for sufficient time to republish the terms of reference and undertake direct search, selection and negotiation with an

alternative host.

10. In relation to transition planning, attendees were advised that following the 14 March vote by members, the transition project plan would be reviewed and if necessary revised in light of the members' vote. The formal transition period is expected to continue until the end of Q2 (June) 2023 and the financial closure of the current Secretariat phase will conclude by the end of Q4 (December) 2023.
11. Representatives from UNDP and UNOPS expressed gratitude to the Board for including them within recommendations for future hosting, and for the trust placed in them to continue providing critical services to IATI given their wealth of institutional knowledge gained over so many years as part of the previous Secretariat arrangement. They noted that the introduction of the Executive Director role will further strengthen the accountability mechanism and support a stronger partnership amongst the two organisations, should Option 1 be chosen by members. Both organisations voiced their continued commitment to IATI, whether as a future host, member or both.
12. Questions were raised by several members around the process for soliciting bids and whether the resulting low number of bids met relevant procurement guidelines. The GB clarified that this was specifically *not* a procurement process, but rather a "search and select" process as directed by the members during the last Members' Assembly. The GB clarified that it conducted a robust outreach exercise to 15 possible bidders in advance of the bidding process. They also noted that given the specialized nature of support needed to service IATI, the GB was looking for strength of bids, not volume, and that the EP was largely happy with the quality of bids received. Several members acknowledged that though this was not a procurement process, in their own organisations the process would in fact satisfy their own procurement guidelines, as at least one viable bid was received after extensive outreach.
13. Members raised some questions on the recommendations and process, and the Board invited bidders UNDP and UNOPS to respond.
 - a. Regarding UNDP's consideration of partnering with another agency for financial services and not UNOPS, UNDP responded that an alternative arrangement was explored after rejection of the earlier bid placed by the current Consortium partners, together with the implicit desire for change communicated by the IWG's October 2021 report. Full details of those exploratory discussions could not be included in UNDP's proposal as they related to a potential partner who was required legally to remain neutral during a bidding process in which other UN entities might potentially be considered.
 - b. A number of members indicated they could not make membership contribution payments to UNOPS, given investigations in 2022 into misappropriation of resources within the organisation. UNOPS clarified that this incident was only related to a ring-fenced set of activities and that third-party reviews have already taken place, with the UNOPS Executive Board already agreeing on a response plan (which is publicly available online). It was confirmed that for those unable to make payments to UNOPS, it will be possible to make membership payments to UNDP instead with appropriate financial controls in place to manage such contributions.
 - c. Responding to questions on reporting lines and relationships between UNDP and UNOPS should Option 1 be selected, the GB clarified that should Option 1 be selected, a formal cooperation agreement would be established between UNDP and

UNOPS. The ED would be on a UNDP contract for operational purposes, but would be a representative of IATI, not UNDP, and would report to the Governing Board. All IATI staff, from both UNDP and UNOPS, would be accountable to the ED.

Session 4: Caucus Meetings

14. Members then broke for a caucus meeting according to their constituency: providers, partner country governments and CSOs and others. The focus of the caucuses was generally to prepare for the vote on hosting arrangements on 14 March.

14 March 2023: Members' Assembly

MA Session 1: Opening

15. The Governing Board Chair opened the official Members' Assembly segment and introduced high-level remarks by Luc Bagur, Director for Sustainable Development Policy and Coordination, from the European Commission's Directorate-General of International Partnerships; and Engr. Nebeolisa Anako, Permanent Secretary of Budget and National Planning, from the Federal Ministry of Finance Budget and National Planning of Nigeria.

MA Session 2: Members vote on IATI hosting options (2023-2028)

16. Oxfam Novib raised a point and sought clarification on which organisations were eligible to vote. In this regard, the Governing Board assured members that the Secretariat has worked diligently to update the records of which member organisations were in good standing in advance of the vote, with those organisations having paid their membership dues or requested a waiver of fees (partner country governments only) by 14 February 2023.
17. In accordance with IATI SOPs, an online vote took place using industry-standard election software, Election Buddy, and a single individual from each eligible institution joining virtually or in person had a 30 minute window to cast their online vote.

MA Session 3: Membership decision on IATI hosting options (2023-2028)

18. Following the vote, the IATI Governing Board, the Transition Manager and members of the Secretariat met to record the results of the election. Governing Board members then presented the results to members; 69% of eligible institutions cast their vote, with 56 ballots submitted from 81 eligible voting organisations. Option 1 received 33 votes, Option 2 received 21 votes and Option 3 received 2 votes. As such, Option 1 was recorded as having been selected by members (joint hosting arrangements by UNDP and UNOPS).
19. The Chair opened the floor for a discussion on the outcome of the vote. Members were generally very appreciative that a clear outcome had been reached, also noting that the future success of the initiative is not dependent only on the Governing Board and Secretariat, but also on the engagement of the members themselves. Publish What You Fund requested that the election results be shared for further analysis and were informed

that all results were available to eligible voters in Election Buddy using the voting link. The Governing Board committed to address any remaining concerns raised by members during the next steps of negotiation with selected hosts in establishing an LOA and cooperation agreement and in the transition work plan. UNDP and UNOPS representatives expressed their gratitude for the trust placed in them by members, and the continuing commitment of each agency to provide excellent quality policy, advisory and operational services to IATI.

20. The Governing Board Chair set out the next steps to formalise the hosting arrangements, and took a moment to express appreciation and give thoughtful tokens of gratitude for the work of the outgoing Secretariat from UNDP, UNOPS and Development Initiatives.

Action points:

- *The Governing Board will:*
 - *prepare a letter of agreement for the provision of IATI policy and technology hosting services with UNDP for the period 2023-2028;*
 - *prepare a letter of agreement for the provision of IATI legal and operational hosting services to UNOPS for the same term, both working under the IATI Executive Director who reports to the Governing Board; and*
 - *support the drafting of a Cooperation Agreement between UNDP and UNOPS.*
- *Election results will be made available to eligible voters via Election Buddy.*

MA Sessions 4 (agenda overview) and 5: Implementation update (2022)

21. A written update on progress in 2022 was included in the package of papers circulated ahead of the MA. Governing Board focal points for each portfolio area presented the work undertaken by IATI in 2022 around the different workstreams to deliver the Strategic Plan 2020 - 25, namely improving data quality; supporting systematic data use; strengthening the technical estate; and the cross-cutting work of outreach, communications and community support.
22. Members expressed appreciation for the written and verbal updates and for the good work of the Secretariat supporting publishers and users in different ways, including strengthening the functionality of both Datastore Search and the IATI Validator. Partner country members in particular commended the progress in 2022 to support systematic use of the data, referring to the development of the Country Development Finance Data (CDFD) tool and the three in-person data use workshops, and called for more training and peer learning opportunities. They also underlined the need to continue improving IATI data and the IATI Standard to make it more fit for purpose at the country level. Several reiterated the importance of having resources available in French, Spanish and Portuguese to enable their active participation.
23. In regard to data quality, members discussed the need to find synergies and ensure there are no redundancies between the Aid Transparency Index and IATI's forthcoming Data Quality Index. A clarification was made on the status of d-portal v2, which was put on hold due to the transition arrangements. There was a request from Canada to make the

simplistic terms used in IATI Publisher available more widely within the IATI community and suite of tools. The GB took note of these different comments and requests for action in updating the work plan for the remainder of 2023 and into 2024.

MA Session 6: Financial Overview and Institutional Arrangements

24. This session began with the preliminary presentation of results by the GB for monitoring of the Strategic Plan Results Framework results for 2022, for those indicators where data is already available). These preliminary results reveal that publisher improvement in data quality is negative (a three-year trend); but that there has been strong progress overall in improving systematic data use; and community engagement has deepened and broadened. It was noted during this presentation that changes to indicators proposed by the Results Working Group will be taken up during the Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan slated for 2023. The Governing Board called on all members to fill out the Results Framework annual survey, a key source of data for monitoring the Strategic Plan, to be shared with members in the coming weeks.
25. The session continued with a clear and well-received presentation of the initiative's financial overview, with the GB noting that overall in 2022, the project income received from membership and voluntary contributions amounted to USD 3,325,139. The total project surplus from 2022, which includes the carry over from the previous year plus the income from membership and voluntary contributions and interest accrued, amounted to USD 7,261,044. The project expenditure for 2022 was USD 3,324,379, which means that the estimated project cash balance as of 31 December 2022 is USD 3,936,665, including the contingency reserve of USD 1 million. The GB noted that in 2022, there was an increased effort to follow up on membership contribution payments from IATI members.
26. Compared to 2021, income in 2022 slightly increased, however mostly within the CSOs and Others constituency. In 2021 (Y8), membership contributions of a few IATI members amounting to USD 288,000 were received in late 2021 but were recorded in the UNOPS system in 2022 due to a system error. Some members paid their dues for 2021 in 2022, which resulted in higher recorded income in 2022.
27. Members inquired why and by what process the contingency reserve amount has changed; as well as clarification on how it can be drawn down. The Governing Board clarified that the contingency reserve amount changed to a set USD 1 million to simplify accounting, as the previous contingency amount was set at a percentage of the funds available at the time the reserve was agreed. The process for drawing down the reserve is based on a demonstrated need and is outlined in the IATI Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Action points:

- *Members are kindly requested to fill out the Strategic Plan Results Framework annual survey when circulated by the IATI Secretariat, soon after the Members' Assembly.*

MA Session 7: Membership discussions on institutional policy

28. During this session, the Governing Board outlined the need to address a host of issues around membership management, as outlined in the background paper for Session 7. Many of the questions raised in the background paper have implications on the status of membership, as well as on the rights and obligations of members, Secretariat and GB respectively, and therefore will benefit from the inputs of a group of representative

members to ensure all perspectives are taken into account. The Board proposed to establish a time-bound Membership Working Group to develop recommendations on these issues for inclusion in the next update of IATI's SOPs.

29. After discussing the need for a more holistic overhaul of the SOPs to address necessary updates such as the transition to new hosting arrangements, members agreed that the Working Group should expand its scope to tackle comprehensive SOP updates. It was noted that while the timing for the next MA was not yet determined, SOP updates may need approval by members via written procedure.

Action points:

- *The Governing Board will develop and publish ToRs for this time-bound Working Group, to be circulated amongst members along with a call for participation, in line with the SOPs for Working Groups.*

MA Session 8: IATI Consortium transitional arrangements and 2023 workplan

30. During this session, the plans for transitioning out of current Secretariat and in for new Secretariat were presented to members by the IATI Transition Manager. It was noted that the transition out work is well advanced and is expected to be finalised on schedule by the end of June. The Transition Manager committed to actively and regularly updating members throughout the transition process, including through a project dashboard in the members' space on IATI Connect.

31. In closing, given the possible complications for some members in paying membership fees to UNOPS, it was also requested that the way forward for collecting fees by a third-party entity should be identified and in place (and included in the transition plan) before further contribution agreements are shared by UNOPS.

- a. Update 5 May: In notifying bidders UNDP and UNOPS of the outcomes of their respective bids, the Board indicated that in regard to the situation of certain member states being unable or unwilling at present to enter into new partnerships with UNOPS, the Board intends to seek to codify provision within the UNDP LoA for the establishment of membership agreements and collection of membership fees from a specific sub-set of members.
- b. Accordingly, members were requested through the April Chair's Bulletin to contact the Chair so that appropriate measures could be established for a small number of members to make membership payments to UNDP instead with appropriate financial controls in place to manage such contributions.

Action points:

- *The Transition Manager will provide regular progress updates to members throughout the transition process.*
- *The transition plan should be updated to include the proposed way forward for UNDP to collect membership fees in place of UNOPS, for a small number of members.*