Members' Assembly Meeting 10-11 July 2018
UN City, Marmorvej 51, Copenhagen, Denmark
Day 2: 11 July 2018
Paper D: Raising the value proposition of IATI membership

The challenge

Whilst the number of IATI publishers has steadily increased and now approaches 800, the number of paying members is only around 10% of that number. The cost of providing service to an increasing group of publishers continues to rise, and is financially borne by a small group. Among members, 38 donor governments, multilateral organisations and foundations within the *Providers of Development Cooperation* constituency bear 63%[1] of the weight of financially resourcing the initiative.

The financial aspect is the easiest to quantify; however, the value proposition is not only a financial matter but also one of political support for IATI over the longer term. A more engaged membership producing better quality data leads to a stronger, more dynamic and thriving initiative, capable of achieving greater and more enduring success.

The Board believes unanimously in the importance of retaining the underlying premise that overall support to publishers should not be undermined as a means of increasing value for paying members. It seeks instead to come up with positive suggestions for making membership more valuable for existing members and attracting new interest.

Different values for different members

Membership brings different value for different groups, and it's important to consider all different outlooks and determine how to increase value for each member and organisation, both now and in the future. For some, publishing honours a political commitment (eg Grand Bargain signatories, UN agencies) or an organisational requirement (eg for UK, Dutch or Belgian government funded NGOs), and membership offers a way to shape the Standard and the initiative through voting rights; for others, membership is public pronouncement of transparency that may be linked with national development policy; some see membership as a networking and engagement opportunity offering commercial opportunities through attendance at MA or TAG meetings, and others are simply deeply committed to the ideals of IATI and open data as

---

[1] Based on income for Year 5 (Sep 2017 - Aug 2018, calculated at 31 May 2018) against Year 6 budget

a public good. With the October 2017 decision to include a new private sector constituency, this may pave the way to membership requests from new sectors for yet other reasons.

The Board wishes to engage all members to explore what membership means to each one of them, and in this way to work on raising the value of membership as a way to increase member numbers and thereby long term commitment to the initiative, in a way that is accepted as equitable and satisfying to all.

Against this background, the Board has outlined the following ideas as the basis for discussion in small groups at the 2018 Members' Assembly. These are not presented for approval or endorsement, but are rather intended to promote discussion among members and inspire new ideas which can be further studied by the Board and will feed into IATI's long term direction and broader outreach strategy.

Ideas to prime the discussion:

1. Greater visibility to members on the IATI website (through banners, links, references, members' pages highlighting showcases, visualisations and stories), in the Registry (through an additional flag on the dataset), and with a specially designed logo for use on their own websites.
2. Provision of fully-automated, active feedback to members on their dataset (warnings, observations, errors) as opposed to the current (passive presentation in the dashboard). This requires additional work on the validation process;
3. Developing a scheme of an additional higher level validation schema for members to achieve a 'premium' checkmark of quality for their dataset, with higher levels of achievement awarded for greater improvements each year; this could be combined with automated feedback in relation to errors, coverage, suggestions for improvement.
4. Spotlighting specific areas of the standard at different times (results, traceability, geolocations, humanitarian, timeliness, document links, others), in combination with the premium checkmark outlined above;
5. System of ranking of datasets according to their score on these varying specific areas, giving way to a type of IATI transparency commitment;
6. Introducing a system of 'personal' membership of the TAG, in which the 'contribution' is provision of one day of support in-kind. This support can be used on behalf of IATI in general (eg technical audit, contribution to mini-TAG.....) OR through support to other members (whether publishers or partner countries);
7. Rewards such as fee discounts for members introducing new organisations who subsequently join;
8. Starred status marked in the IATI website for timely payments received.

These are just a few ideas from Board members to broaden the scope of thinking around this subject, and is not intended as an exhaustive list of choices to be made.

Session outline and objective

The objective of this session is for MA members to work collaboratively to develop a membership proposition which speaks to all different types of members and includes the kinds of benefits they would wish to achieve through membership.

MA participants are therefore invited to discuss in small groups what value IATI offers for their own organisations or governments, and what measures can be taken to ensure membership is sufficiently rewarding for all constituencies, having in mind the different needs of partner countries, donor governments, CSOs and private sector members and observers.