

Members' Assembly Meeting 10-11 July 2018
UN City, Marmorvej 51, Copenhagen, Denmark
Day 1: 10 July 2018
Paper C: IATI Technical Priorities

Purpose

This paper addresses the issue of prioritisation of activities of the IATI Technical Team and seeks the support of members for a technical audit to further guide the development of a detailed roadmap for the next 18 month period.

Analysis: What are IATI's core technical assets?

When the IATI Standard was launched the Secretariat was solely responsible for all technical work. As the initiative has matured, not only has the size of the technical team grown, but so too has the number of products and services developed by the IATI community, both commercially and non-commercially. This raises questions as to which of IATI's products should be seen as permanent assets, and which should be transitioned into the marketplace as and when applicable.

The view from the secretariat is that the Technical Team - at this point in time - remains primarily responsible for the maintenance of the Standard and the supply of quality data. This involves:

- The Standard and registry
- Validation and data quality
- Publisher support
- A data service

It is envisioned that publisher support and data services could at some point in the future drop off of this list. Note also that this does not include information products or the promotion of data usage (now being handled by the Data Use Task Force).

Issue

The planning of the technical team's work has, until two years ago, been subject to budgetary and staffing uncertainty. As a result, long-term work plans have never been established and priorities have been influenced by short-term needs. These circumstances have also led to substantial technical debt - where products have been developed to meet relatively short-term needs at the expense of robustness and sustainability. These circumstances have also led to a perceived lack of accountability between the team and its governing structures.

An eighteen-month work plan for the technical team

With funding now on a more sustainable footing and a well established governance structure including a strong and focused Board and Secretariat, the time is right to work with these bodies to map out the work of the technical team for the next eighteen months, putting in place a transparent roadmap with clear deliverables.

Maintaining existing services and responding to user needs and requests takes up a substantial portion of the team's time. This work needs to be reviewed and priorities need to be set. The team see the following items as priorities for new work:

- Ongoing development of the new integrated website with a focus on the maintenance of the Standard, improved data use resources and increasing automation of publisher support;
- Building validation procedures and services into the registry;
- Redevelopment of the dashboard and publisher statistics (tracking publisher progress over time) to more effectively serve data quality efforts;
- Overseeing the development of a new data store.

Recommendation

Whether these are indeed the most important priorities should, we believe, be the subject of an **independent technical audit**, to be carried out as soon as possible. Based on this audit the Secretariat and Board will be in a better position to establish priorities with clear milestones and deliverables within reasonable timelines. This approach will improve accountability to IATI's governing bodies, and thereby ensure that expectations are clear to all and achievable within the resources available.

Members are invited to:

- Mandate the Governing Board to appoint a panel of experts to conduct a technical audit which will examine all of the core elements outlined above and draw up a coherent plan for the next eighteen months to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Based on this plan, the Governing Board will oversee the development of a revised budget and detailed work plan to the end of 2019, which gives clarity on the management, staff and resources required to deliver this.

These actions will enable the Governing Board to consider how these core technical products and services are managed in the longer term.