**IATI Civil Society Organization (CSO) Working Group**

**Terms of Reference (September 2013)**

***Background***

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) aims to make information about aid spending easier to access, use and understand. Launched during the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in September 2008, it has become a widely accepted standard for sharing aid information by donors. Other actors, including foundations, universities, training and research institutions, and CSOs have also begun adopting this standard - either voluntarily or to comply with new donor requirements. The ultimate goal of IATI is to attract all types of aid and development flow providers, as well as recipients, to publish data compatible with the IATI standard.

The IATI CSO Working Group was originally created in September 2011 as part of the IATI Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to ensure that CSOs’ perspectives were adequately represented. The major activity of the working group at this time was to develop a protocol concerning the implementation of IATI by CSOs. In November 2012, the working group submitted this protocol to the IATI Steering Committee for endorsement. Though the protocol was positively received, it was not officially endorsed by the Steering Committee.

***Goal***

The goals of this newly revitalized working group are to represent CSO perspectives on IATI, to discuss the application of the IATI standard to the work of CSOs, and to present practical proposals on CSO-specific approaches to publication of IATI compatible data.

This group’s focus is specifically on IATI, but its work is guided by the [Istanbul Principles (IP)](http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/final_istanbul_cso_development_effectiveness_principles_footnote_december_2010-2.pdf) and the [International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness (IF)](http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/international_framework_open_forum.pdf), which are an expression of CSOs’ commitment to transparency and accountability. This group will coordinate closely with other groups working on CSO transparency, particularly around points of complementarity between IATI and other CSO transparency initiatives.

***Objectives***

1. To increase awareness of IATI among CSOs, not only in terms of publication of IATI data but also in terms of the use of this data.
2. To provide CSOs with up-to-date information on IATI debates and developments that are relevant to them.
3. To establish a feedback channel with IATI that allows CSOs to take some ownership of the process, in particular related to CSO issues of concern.
4. To identify and attempt to address challenges faced by CSOs implementing IATI, including through the development of guidance materials, for example. Given that many other actors are engaged in similar efforts, the working group may largely play a coordinating role in this area.
5. To serve as a forum for information exchange for organizations encouraging the use of or publishing to IATI.
6. To contribute to the evolution and development of the IATI standard, to ensure it reflects ways of working of CSOs (for those publishing), as well as CSO information needs. This could include potential extensions to the IATI standard.

Note: Wherever CSOs are referenced above, this means current and future members of this working group and their constituents.

***Governance and logistics***

* The IATI CSO Working Group is led by two CSO representatives (co-chairs), elected by members of the current working group. Co-chairs will serve for one year, with the possibility of re-election for a second one-year term.
* The working group will make use of virtual collaboration tools and conference call facilities for the majority of its work.
* The working group may choose to establish sub-groups to carry out specific areas of work.
* It is envisaged that face-to-face meetings will be held at least once a year, and will coincide with existing NGO, IATI or other related meetings.
* All meeting minutes and outputs from the CSO Working Group will be made publicly available on the IATI Knowledge Base, except under exceptional circumstances.

***Membership Criteria***

The IATI CSO Working is open to any CSO or non-governmental organization:

* Publishing or planning to publish to IATI;
* Increase awareness of IATI among CSOs;
* Advocating for the use of the IATI standard among CSOs;
* Providing technical support to CSOs on implementation of the IATI standard; or
* Working to facilitate the use of IATI data by CSOs. This includes efforts to increase awareness of IATI as a source of information, build organizations’ capacity to use aid information, develop tools to make IATI data more accessible, etc.

For-profit organizations engaged in IATI may join the group on an invitation basis only.

**How to Join:** Individuals wishing to join the working group should submit a request by completing this [form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1D64hmofWCKQjtYC54b2t2GayVB83MIqM-H70_xQe2Bk/edit). The co-chairs of the working group will review the request and approve/deny membership in the group based on the membership criteria listed above. If the request is approved, the organization or individual will be added to the list of members posted on the IATI Knowledge Base, as well as to the group’s email list.

Multiple individuals from the same organization may join as members. However, when decisions need to be made, each organization will only get one vote.