



MSG meeting 2023#7

Teams Meeting

September 6th, 2023

13.05- hrs – 15.02 hrs

MINUTES

Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

MULTI STAKE HOLDERS GROUP

SURINAME

EITI Suriname

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Certification of quorum:

Apologies were noted from:

Sagita Jaggan

Michiel Raafenberg

Rene Artist

Daniela Herkul

Present	Absent without notice
<u>GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES</u> Preciosa Simons Georgetine Tjalim Henk Deel	<u>GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES</u> Amit Chandansingh Vikaash Soerdjbalisingh
<u>COMPANIES</u> Mark Regis Mike Resomardono Bernadette Cederboom	<u>COMPANIES</u> Kathleen Blom
<u>CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS</u> Rayah Bhattacharji Monique Essed-Fernandes	<u>CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS</u> Roy Caupain Tosca Pinas
<u>GUEST</u> Jasna Kortram (Consultant Staatsolie)	<u>SECRETARIAT</u> Clyde Griffith
<u>SECRETARIAT</u> Novella Alcantra – Majana Jenusah Sanné	

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AGENDA Meeting 6th September 2023

1. Opening remarks
Certification of quorum
2. Announcements and correspondences
3. Status of the templates:
 - a. Stakeholder engagement templates (Private Sector, Civil Society and Government.)
 - b. Outcomes and impact template
 - c. Transparency template
4. Discussion on the list of suggested actions before validation
5. Any other business
6. Adjournment

Proposed date for next MSG meeting: September 13th, 2023

1. Opening remarks

Bernadette opened the meeting at 13.11 even though there was no quorum, but the meeting started since the announcement has already been sent to each and every one. Bernadette asked Novella to go quickly over the announcements and asked members to comment on the announcements that have been sent.

2. Announcements and correspondences

- Today we have in the meeting Jason Wilks from IaDB to observe the MSG meeting. IaDB is facilitating the coming of TTEITI to Suriname.
- In the last meeting of August 23rd we did not discuss any other business in which one of the points would have been presentation by Newmont on the draft law land rights indigenous and tribal peoples.
- There has been a slight change in the chairing of the coming meetings .The company's constituency will now chair as follows:
 - August 23rd Bernadette
 - September 6th Bernadette
 - September 13th Michiel
 - September 20th Workshop with TTEITI/ Ballroom Torarica
 - September 27th Michiel
 - October 11th Daniela
 - October 25th Daniela
- The National Secretariat placed calls in the emails and WhatsApp to fill in the survey for the TTEITI team but they received only 8 responses which was a bit disappointing.
- All the documents such as the stakeholder engagement templates and gap analysis have been sent to Esteban on September 1st but the outcomes and impact templates were sent on September 2nd. Esteban is in the meeting and will discuss further on the received documents. There still were some blank spaces in the templates.
- The pre-validation team was not pleased with the 2018-2020 report from BDO and expressed this on the meeting of Friday August 11th. BDO will have to make some adjustments to the report and send this before October 1st. The BDO team got a to do list from the pre-validation team stating what needs to be addressed.
- The National Secretariat has had some meetings with IaDB concerning the visit of TTEITI to Suriname. All the preparation is going well.
- On September 1st EITISR participated in a workshop regarding the revising of the mining decree of 1986. EITI Suriname stated very well that amongst other things that EITI is not very well incorporated in the law. The EITI standard 2023 must be used to cover some of the requirements.

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Present were: Rene Artist, Monique Essed, Roy Coupain, Georgetine Tjalim, Michiel Raafenberg, Bernadette Cederboom, Kathleen Blom, Novella Alcantra and Jenusah Sanné.

- Also that Grassalco is invited to do a short presentation in the meeting of September 13th.

Bernadette welcomed Jason to the meeting and asked him to give a short introduction.

Jason introduced himself as Jason Wilks, the Public Management Specialist within the IDB's innovation and Citizen Service Division and Innovation, into supporting modernization of state agencies. Jason covers the countries of Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago and is based in Trinidad, but works for the next two weeks remotely in the United States and his areas are for specific domains, citizens, security or public safety, anti-corruption and transparency, digital government and public sector reform, and within that domain very positive discussions were held with Novella.

Jason was pleased to see Esteban here, also in relation to the work that is being done under the EITI initiative in Suriname and the interest of IaDB is to support that.

Jason stated that Novella would have already indicated the possibilities of IaDB planning to bring support through Tobago EITI, and he really attended this meeting to get to know the folks before that meeting that's planned for later this month.

And also just to communicate two very important messages, one is that IaDB understands that there is so much happening right now towards the first week of October submission and we know that this is not really a period across the Caribbean and certainly in Suriname where folks will want to step away, spend time with family, get ready for taking the kids back to school and so on.

But it's also a very critical period for the EITI, and from the perspective of the bank, we are very much hoping that the MSG will provide an extra level of support and commitment the next few weeks to do what has to be done.

It will be wrong of us not to state that all the resources that we're willing to provide and the resources that might come in the future will really be contingent on how the EITI team works together in these next coming weeks.

So in short he did not need to put pressure but it's very imported that it's stated because the whole reason to be able to justify additional support to EITI is on the successful submission and approval of the assessments.

So that's one thing that's really needed to be clear.

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The second is that the IaDB is here to help. So we understand that there are things that you know are beyond your control in relation to how you receive the information and how it's provided to you. If there are ways that we can help clear some of those bottlenecks, because we know Novella is in good contact with the honorable minister of Natural Resources but certainly it never hurts in having other partners also encouraging, promoting and reinforcing the value of what EITI provides. The IaDB is happy to be an advocate and happy to try to address some of the bottlenecks and see how to be responsive.

Bernadette thanked Jason for the short introduction and expressed on behalf of the MSG to look forward to the training with the TTEITI.

Monique expressed that it was also good to have included in the announcements that all of the stakeholders of the MSG participated in in the consultation sessions for the new draft mining law in the past weeks.

She expressed being very happy with the response from all the members and that the funny thing was that the consultants were surprised also to hear that the MSG had already made a joint response and made joint comments in 2021 on this draft mining law already.

Bernadette thanked Monique for sharing and announcing that and stated that those discussions were very fruitful. It was also good to see how the members of the several constituencies were able to exchange information and thoughts and position the MSG really clear during that session last week Friday.

Bernadette moved on to Agenda item 3 and gave Esteban the floor on the status of the templates.

3. Status of the templates:

- a. Stakeholder engagement templates (Private Sector, Civil Society and Government.)
- b. Outcomes and impact template
- c. Transparency template

Esteban thanked the chair and stated that it was really encouraging to see the progress on the templates, in particular the stakeholder engagement templates.

There is still some work that needs to be done on the outcomes and impacts template. Esteban complimented the MSG on being critically but honest about the self-assessment done of the requirements but again, focusing a lot on the objective, so

ensure that there is an independent MSG that can exercise a meaningful and active oversight of all access of the EITI implementation and an adequate representation, et cetera.

Esteban asked the MSG to provide a better list of the sub committees that worked over the past year. He did not think that all the sub committees were mentioned.

Monique responded that basically most of the committees were not permanent committees, but for only for when a task needed to be done. There have been other subcommittees. For instance, there was a beneficial ownership committee which finally got the approval, of the definition through. Monique said that it would not be a problem to produce a list of the temporary subcommittees and what they resulted in. It will be filled out in the template.

Esteban answered that it would definitely strengthen the position.

Esteban also referred to the MSG Terms of Reference. This is being discussed and there has been recent modification to that and should be updated on the website also. Esteban asked Novella to give an assessment on the current situation of the website because that needs to be working otherwise a solution should be found. The website needs to be on in October otherwise Suriname will be in dire straits.

Novella responded that Financial Department has given the promise that the website host will be paid immediately when there is credit opening. The Permanent Secretary of Mining assured that the website host will be paid hopefully next week. This is really important because a lot of information has been put on the website already and since the link cannot be opened it is a big problem. Esteban expressed that it is really important to have the website updated and before October. There should be a discussion of the descriptions of the role and responsibilities and see if those have changed. Each and everyone needs to be addressed. Some of the dates in the template need to be updated and everything needs to be completed

Esteban suggested that the MSG needs to have a reflection on how it is providing oversight on the implementation, the role of the MSG and how the MSG has been fulfilling the responsibilities, but it's also very important to acknowledge really clear where that policy is?

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Is this figure agreed in a in a budget?
Is this figure agreed in a MSG meeting?
When was this done?

And then we can see whether that was actually followed, yes or no.

I know, for example that in the last years, the policy has not been observed, so it's important to see when that was observed, when it stopped being observed and when it has restarted again. If that's the case, I think that's really important to be very clear.

Esteban said the following about the minutes; I really again want to acknowledge all the work that Novella and Jenusah have been doing in gathering all the information and posting it in complicated circumstances, without the full control of the website. It is a heavy load to carry and it's been done really well, so congratulations again, but then but again all that work will be, really unfairly served if there is no website working. He proposed the MSG can work on the comments and approve the templates during the next meeting.

Bernadette asked what the budget for hosting the website was and Novella answered that it's SRD 15.650, - Novella said further that the Permanent Secretary of the Mining Department promised that the host will be paid from the credit opening of September.

Bernadette interrupted at 14:36 hrs and stated for the minutes that there was quorum.

Esteban urged the MSG to commit to EITI by addressing EITI in speeches and meetings for example, if the Government has used these EITI data that's published in the reports in for example, in presentations to the Inter-American Development Bank or in its discussion with the IMF. Like if data that's publicly available because of the EITI, or that the EITI has helped to make it public, has been used by the government in its own efforts.

Georgetine stated that in meetings for example with the IMF.

Finance talked about the EITI, but have not shared data as it was just a discussion.

There was no presentation but just a discussion on updates with regard to EITI.

Bernadette added that the report was formally presented by the government. She further said that the consolidated report was recently made public and presented to the

wider public. Mark added that the presentation was done in June.

Rayah commented that Civil Society also has a lot of courtesy meetings with for example embassies and international organizations and EITI is often mentioned but there are no presentations done.

Esteban answered on this that different stakeholders use EITI to make impact on specific agenda's or to bring attention to particular issues. If in those discussions, bring up data that's been published or the lack of data in the report shows a problem, or if actually the whole EITI process is discussed, then it's EITI reporting. If these are courtesy calls, or if this is more a conversation on the future commitments mentioned and it's written in the recent report of the IMF and it's clearly stated that the commitment of the government of Suriname in strengthening the governance of the extractive sector and in particular strengthening transparency of beneficial ownership information which is written in the IMF report, then that is not specifically use of EITI data.

Esteban thanked the MSG for sending the financial statement for this year to EITI International but he would like to have clarification if they can also read and make comments about those. Esteban wanted to know if these were confidential or if they were going to be public somewhere on a website?

Bernadette asked what Esteban meant by making comments on the financial statements?

Esteban said for example that during validation a list of subsidiaries that was listed then we could say the list of subsidiaries was reported in the financial statement and their responsibilities are described in the financial form, the payments to the government are described in the financial audit and the audited financial statements. The validation team won't be using the data or disclosing that data, but it's important to know whether that data is public or not, because then one of the comments will definitely be, for example, the MSG had access to the financial statements, but these are not public.

Bernadette will ask about this.

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Esteban continued and said that it's very important to have meeting with Grassalco. It's really important to have a clear understanding of the situation in Grassalco and have this here in terms of the discussion.

Esteban wanted to be very clear on the list of recommendations

If this list is discussed in the next session and approved, this should also be identified in a minute as saying this was the revision of the whole work for the last years and that will be very important to actually have requirements 7.3 mostly met or partly met, but this discussion at least of understanding what was the reason behind the status of each recommendation. Also on answers such as to be acted on. What is meant by that? Does it mean there's already gold, there is a discussion programmed or will it be taken under consideration in the next report and included in the new work plan? Do not make general statements because then it's not clear what the position is.

If the status of recommendations have not changed explain very briefly why that is the case. Is this a question that a new law needed to be approved or there was no funding or there were some other difficulties or COVID or what have you that would be very important as well to explain and have a very clear picture of what happened. So that will then help inform the recommendation for the next phase, but also to make sure that the MSG has discussed this already.

Mark mentioned that Staatsolie hired a consultant for the database.

Esteban answered that evidence of the MSG pushing for reforms and pushing for new data being available is very relevant but it needs to be working if it's going to be taken into consideration in validation. Otherwise it won't.

Esteban said that systematically disclosed data means data that's published by the source on the source. So the office that's responsible for specific data should be the one that publishes it under its responsibility, under its website. So taxes should be disclosed under the Ministry of Finance. Environmental impact information should be published on the website of environmental ministry. Companies should also publish information on their websites.

So for example, there audited financial statements, a list of their beneficial owners, and of course, all these payments, the work of the independent administrator afterwards would be then of course to compare those data. And see whether there are any mismatches.

And of course verify the mechanisms that guarantee the quality of that data. The

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companies should definitely be publishing that data and referring to that data as well.

Esteban said that it is not clear regarding the open data policy. What does work in progress mean? Georgetine clarified that at the Ministry of Finance they work towards a policy of transparency. They have discussed within the Ministry to also publish the data in an excel version. It will be done in October because the budget of 2024 is being discussed and prepared.

Esteban answered that this is very important and this needs to be discussed with BDO as well because they should produce excel files. All the tables in the report should be available on the EITI website in excel. Rayah added that it emphasizes the proactivity of disclosing data not only disclosing data but also in a format that could be used by everyone. Esteban added that open data is data that is downloadable and can be modified by a user but the source remains the same. The user uses just the columns needed.

Mark asked if the MSG is required to have a policy on open data.

Esteban answered that the MSG should have at least a discussion regarding how they are going to push for that and how they will make their own information public in such a format that it is accessible to anyone, meaning it should be in an excel format.

Bernadette said that the report has certain tables in it. So you can have a excel files of the tables and one should be able to copy, paste or hide files and use certain part of the data and use it for calculations and so on that's open data. Esteban said that is exactly the meaning of open data.

Esteban asked for an update on BDO.

Have they said anything regarding the summary data templates and the comments that we sent to them on the report and how they want to improve it?

Novella answered that they are not finished yet and are still waiting on information of BDO UK. That is what they said the last time and at this point the Secretariat does not know what to do here. Esteban asked if Preciosa can call and ask them what's going on because it is important that they respond as soon as possible. Preciosa wrote in the chat that she will be contacting BDO.

Also the changes on the report 2018-2022 need to be ready before October the 1st as well as the data that needed to be filled out for the transparency template and to fulfill

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the requirement of public data as well. Esteban will write to be the BDO UK to add some pressure to this.

Novella asked about some of the things filled out in the transparency template, that cannot be found online, but they are systematically disclosed in the report. Do we say systematically disclosed because is it only in the EITI report?

Esteban answered that systematically disclosed, means it has to be published online by the authority or the company that's responsible for that information.

If it is only in the EITI report, then it is not systematically disclosed, and so if it's not systematically or it's only in the EITI report just leave that column blank.

Bernadette thanked Esteban for his quick response on the templates and also announced that the MSG will be meeting weekly to come up with as much information as possible and fill out the blank spots.

Esteban replied on the gap analysis that he wanted to thank the MSG for filling out the gap analysis. A lot has been done already so keep on working on that. He will work with the Secretariat on grouping the topics so the MSG can at least have discussions and start approving some of the topics mentioned. Have lots of discussions so it can be recorded in the minutes.

Bernadette concluded that we need to approve all the documents necessary by September 27th so she asked the MSG to work hard on all the topics so we can get the documents approved.

4. Discussion on the list of suggested actions before validation

Since Bernadette had some trouble with her voice she asked Novella to go over the action points for this meeting. Novella indicated the following:

- The National secretariat produced a more specific action plan, especially regarding the low hanging fruits and have done it with all the help from Esteban and was sent to the MSG.
- The stakeholder engagement and outcomes and impact templates had already been discussed with Esteban in previous agenda item. The MSG has 2 weeks to discuss and then on the 27th approve these documents in order for the secretariat to publish them online.

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- The workshop with TTEITI is September 20th so there will be no MSG meeting that day.
- The 19 corrective actions have been addressed but the MSG need to address the topics that have not been discussed or filled out yet.
- The EITI website is indefinitely suspended and we are waiting for the credit opening. When the host is paid and the website is on again the items that needed to be on the website will be put up.
- Then there is the CS statement regarding the conflicts in Pikin Saron. The statement was resubmitted to the Members. The Civil Society members would talk to Rene about this in order to know how to go about this since it was not approved by the other constituencies. Rene replied that his first reaction is that when this incident just happened, CS drafted a statement a few days after, in the heat of the moment and the other constituencies did not react as such. Now two to three months later he does not know if it makes sense to come up with a revised statement on this incident. He asked why should there be an updated statement if the first one was not signed by the MSG only by Civil Society. He asked if it could be explained to him after this meeting.

Monique answered to this the issue is not so much about a statement, but we should have a discussion in terms of how to address within EITI issues, that have to do with conflicts of interest and of the extractive industries and, for instance, the indigenous groups that live in the interior, because this is one of the basic problems that are being encountered. And there are a number of ongoing issues that we EITI maybe do not address because sometimes we say it's political but it's part of the developments that more and more you see that there might be conflict of interest in terms of the development of the extractive industries and the rights of the communities and the interior or the environmental issues that are ongoing there. This should not be dismissed as just an incident that happened.

- Visit of representatives of the High Commission of Canada. Rayah sent us the outcome of that. Of the meeting with the High Commission, Michael is not in the meeting, so this is pending for uh, September the 13 because Michiel was in the meeting about the presentation of video on the 9th of June and he would share some light on how the meeting went and the 10 days if I if I get a salco to MSG meeting and explain the current situation of Grassalco. Grassalco promised us that they will be in the next meeting and

they will give a short presentation about how it's now going on in the MSG in in Grassalco.

5. Any other business

- Rayah asked if the Newmont's proposal for the presentation can be discussed since any other business was not discussed in the previous meeting. Bernadette answered that since she is leading it will be moved to another meeting.
- Rayah said they had a meeting with representatives from the Canadian High Commission and the Canadian High Commission, as the Government of Canada is also an EITI supporting country and of course, the EITI board. They had asked the Canadian High Commission to talk to, in particular civil society, regarding our views on the EITI process, and it was just the standard validation questions that were sent around in the call for inputs.

So we discussed that with them and at the end as we had discussed in our last meeting, we also asked them for recommendations on possible funding and they would look around for us for recommendations as during the meeting they did not have any specific concrete recommendations. But what might be a problem is the fact that a lot of funders are not always eager to fund government ministries and especially things like equipment. So there would be more funding for technical assistance, consultancies, research, communications, etc. But for the needs that are the most urgent now, things like laptops, they said that it would be very difficult finding funding for that but they were going to ask around and report back to me.

- Bernadette said that after Grassalco has done a short presentation the MSG can give one to explaining EITI to them. It can be a first them to engage with them and maybe it will trigger them to become part of the MSG. She was always wondering why Grassalco was not part of the MSG. We can get the data from them and fill out all the blank spaces that we have in the report.

Monique and Rayah agreed that Grassalco need to be on board. Rayah stated that this has been an ongoing issue for years and hopes that Grassalco finally joins the MSG.

Bernadette urges the members to give input as much as possible and work together to get all the work that needed to be done, in time, for approval. She indicated again that she would not be able to participate next week but she will contribute as much as possible.

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6. Adjournment

After thanking everyone for their support and wishing them lots of success with the work that needs to be done, Berandette adjourned the meeting at 15.02 hrs.

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