

MSG meeting 2023#6

Teams

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

13.05- hrs – 14.55 hrs

# MINUTES

## Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

### MULTI STAKE HOLDERS GROUP

### SURINAME

EITI Suriname

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**Certification of quorum:**

Apologies were noted from:

Michiel Raafenberg

Rene Artist

Daniela Herkul

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

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**AGENDA 6<sup>th</sup> MSG meeting, August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023**

1. Opening remarks  
Certification of quorum
2. Announcements and correspondences
3. Minutes June 28<sup>th</sup> 2023
  - a. Discussion
  - b. Approval
  - c. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Minutes July 12<sup>th</sup> 2023
  - a. Discussion
  - b. Approval
  - c. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Session Pre-validation team from EITI International  
Evaluation of the pre-validation mission  
Progress on the gap analysis
6. Any other business
7. Adjournment

**Proposed date for next MSG meeting: September 06<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

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## **1. Opening remarks**

### Certification of quorum

The meeting started 13.05hrs because when the call started at 13.00 hrs. there was no quorum yet. Bernadette from the company's constituency was the chairperson at this meeting. Bernadette opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to this MSG meeting. After confirming that there was quorum she gave the floor to the secretariat to do the announcements.

## **2. Announcements and correspondences**

### **Correspondences:**

- A letter received from Newmont that they are unable to provide operational support for the EITI Suriname secretariat because the request does not meet the criteria necessary to contribute funding.

### **Announcements:**

- The agenda item minutes June 28<sup>th</sup> and July 12<sup>th</sup> are adjusted and discussion, approval and matters arising from the minutes was attached.
- There was a Teams online meeting on August 3<sup>rd</sup> with BDO on the issue of the presentation on June 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a misunderstanding which was partially cleared at the meeting. In emails send afterwards the MSG gave permission for flexible reporting for the mining companies stating the following: Dear Robin, Based on your proposal presented during the kick-off meeting on Friday December 10th, 2021, the MSG agrees to carry out the reporting of 2018, 2019 and 2020 report with the use of flexible reporting.
- We had a fruitful but busy week with the pre-validation team from OSLO. On Tuesday August the 15<sup>th</sup> a short report on how the pre-validation went, was sent to the MSG.
- ToR Independent Administrator was sent back to the MSG for reviewing. Some members have sent comments and this was send to SCDS PIU yesterday.
- The companies constituency has decided to chair as follows:
  - August 23<sup>rd</sup> Bernadette
  - September 6<sup>th</sup> Michiel
  - September 13<sup>th</sup> needs to be discussed by the companies
  - September 20<sup>th</sup> Bernadette
  - September 27<sup>th</sup> Michiel
  - October 11<sup>th</sup> Daniela
  - October 25<sup>th</sup> Daniela
- The topic presentation by Newmont was taken from the agenda because civil society asked to discuss first before the presentation.

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- We have received invites for sub meetings from the companies' constituency for the filling out of the templates but are still waiting for civil society and the government. The templates must be filled out completely before they will be commented on by the International Secretariat.
- The pre-validation team was not pleased with the 2018-2020 report from BDO and expressed this at the meeting of Friday August 11<sup>th</sup>.  
BDO will have to make some adjustments to the report and send this before October 1<sup>st</sup>.  
The BDO team will be getting a to do list from the pre-validation team stating what needs to be addressed.
- On August 16<sup>th</sup> the secretariat had a meeting with IaDB. IaDB will provide support to Suriname to have a successful validation. At this point the training camp with Guyana and Trinidad will not take place this year but will be postponed to next year. In preparation for the validation a team from EITI Trinidad will be in Suriname to provide support to the MSG and National secretariat to be prepared for the coming validation in October.
- The TTEITI cohort led by the National Coordinator, Sherwin Long, will be arriving in Suriname on Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup> to host a two-fold event. The first event will be a half-day workshop on Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> with the Suriname EITI MSG, CSOs and select government officials. On September 21-22, they will be facilitating intimate, hands on sessions with the Suriname EITI Secretariat to assist with Suriname's validation preparation. As part of the preparations for the above mentioned events, a link was sent to the National Secretariat and will be shared with you after this meeting. We politely ask the MSG members to fill out this link so the TTEITI can prepare before coming to Suriname. The deadline is August 28<sup>th</sup> 2023.  
Bernadette asked the Secretariat if there were announcements on absence of members. The secretariat could not see that. Rayah said that if the members responded to the invite, Bernadette could have seen it but the secretariat might not be able to see that. Mark said that Bernadette can check the meeting invite to see who might have declined. Bernadette responded that she received an email from Michiel that he would be absent due work in the field. At this moment Bernadette does not see more responses of absence but she will have a look at this after the meeting and sort it out with the secretariat.
- Monique referred to the announcements of the invitation to the revised mining law workshop on Friday September 1<sup>st</sup>. She wanted to know if the whole MSG was invited and her question was that the MSG members should look at common issues that have been mentioned since the process had started in terms of the revised mining law to make sure that EITI gets a space in the mining law.  
You know, so that's just a big issue that one of the common issues in terms of the revised mining law that we might want to have agreement on as a whole group.

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Bernadette advised to discuss this in any other business on how the MSG will contribute and how to proceed during the coming meeting and any other preparation prior to the meeting.

- Rayah pointed out that the announcements were a lot and she tried to write down everything but maybe she missed some things. She wanted to know more about the announcement that Newmont rejected the funding proposal because it did not meet the criteria for funding. She wanted to know if there was any information on what those criteria were, if there was a formal criteria regarding quotations and if there is a way that the funding proposal could be corrected and resubmitted.

Novella responded that we were asked by Bernadette to send a letter to Newmont and maybe they will fund the things we needed at the office but we did not know what the criteria were. Together with Monique and Mark we have written the letter and send it to Newmont.

Bernadette answered that indeed when she heard what the situation as the office was she suggested to write to the donation committee. She explained that she is not part of the committee and not really involved, nor does she know how the donations are being selected and what the criteria are. One thing she knows is that Newmont is very careful when it comes to donations to government related institutions and government funding.

Rayah mentioned that if so in the response Newmont should have given more information other than just saying that the criteria were not met because it just leaves more questions than answers. Because if you know the criteria maybe there are things that can be corrected and resubmitted otherwise there is nothing that can be worked with. Bernadette responded that it will be a good idea to formally ask that question as a response to the letter received.

Monique added to the conversation that funding has been an issue since the beginning because there is no independent secretariat and no independent organization, so we're being seen as a government organization by many donors.

On the other hand, sometimes you can get around that when you have a very specific, very transparent sort of request that is not being where the money is and not being given to the government directly or is being given to a third party who needs to do something for you. She thinks that this is what Rayah was saying and we

could maybe go around that issue of non-independence and government related institutions until we have solved this problem and of course the funding issue needs to be on our table, on our next agenda again. Bernadette responded that the funding of the secretariat will be on the next agenda. Monique added not only funding for the secretariat but also funding for the whole work plan.

- Regarding the EMSASGS workshop on the revised mining law Rayah will not be participating on September 1<sup>st</sup> because her organization was invited for September 30<sup>th</sup> and she will be participating in that one. She thinks that EMSAGS had divided these meetings into various sessions with various stakeholder groups and she registered for the one with civil society organizations.
- Rayah announced that the High Commission of Canada will be visiting the country this week and one of the issues they want to discuss, with various stakeholders is also the EITI validation because Canada is also on the EITI International Board. So they have approached us for a meeting tomorrow and one other civil society organization to discuss the validation questions. And she just wanted to know, if they have approached any of the MSG members as well?

Mark said this is a great opportunity to present the slide with the budget from the presentation that was done to Staatsolie so areas can be discussed where they might be able to assist with funding the work plan. So it might be a nice exchange opportunity. Monique thought about this also.

Rayah asked if the presentation was sent to the MSG. Mark answered that it was circulated by the secretariat a while ago. Rayah thanked Mark for the tip and will definitely use the opportunity to raise this issue as well.

Bernadette thanked Rayah for her willingness to address also financing of the work plan tomorrow.

- Rayah made another announcement that she will be traveling for work from September 19<sup>th</sup> till September 26<sup>th</sup>. She had already sent this by email but wanted to make sure that this announcement was included in the minutes. Sherwin Long from TTEITI contacted

her and she will not be able to attend the sessions with TTEITI but she will fill in the survey. She stated that Sherwin Long also contacted her.

- Tosca mentioned that she would not be available in the last week of September till the 14<sup>th</sup> of October. On this Bernadette said that it would be a challenge for the MSG because the validation mission preparations are going on now. Tosca answered that she would be traveling for work also. Bernadette said to discuss this later. Tosca mentioned that this cannot be postponed.

Because there were no more announcement Bernadette moved on to the next agenda item. The minutes of June 28<sup>th</sup> 2023.

Bernadette asked the Secretariat if there were announcements on absence of members. The secretariat could not see that. Rayah said that if the members responded to the invite, Bernadette could have seen it but the secretariat might not be able to see that. Mark said that Bernadette can check the meeting invite to see who might have declined. Bernadette responded that she received an email from Michiel that he would be absent due work in the field. At this moment Bernadette does not see more responses of absence but she will have a look at this after the meeting and sort it out with the secretariat.

Because there were no more announcement Bernadette moved on to the next agenda item. The minutes of June 28<sup>th</sup> 2023.

### **3. Minutes June 28<sup>th</sup> 2023**

- A. Discussion
- B. Approval
- C. Matters arising from the minutes

She stated that she requested comments prior to the meeting because of the validation session which would take some time from the regular meeting. Bernadette asked if the MSG was able to review the Minutes of June the 28 and the Minutes of July the 12th.

She stated going through the minutes in several ways.

To have comments on the content;

if there are things that should be changed then they can be discussed;

issues that were raised during the previous meetings and needed attention and

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the next steps, or things that were linked to that particular meeting.

Bernadette asked if there were any comments with regard to the content.

Monique stated that she made an announcement on her absence, stating that she would be out of the country from June 5<sup>th</sup> until July 28<sup>th</sup> but her status in the minutes is without notice. She had worked on the budget of the work plan with the secretariat and told them that she would be traveling. This will be corrected by the secretariat.

Because there were no comments on the minutes Bernadette shared her screen with the actions needed to be taken after the meeting of June 28.

- Arrange a meeting with BDO concerning the presentation of 2018-2020 reports.

Betty informed that this meeting took place on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. BDO clarified that there was a letter from the MSG on flexible reporting which means that there was no reconciliation data from the companies. This was well explained by BDO

Rayah had a question for clarification because the action point about the meeting with BDO was not to imply that the MSG did not choose for flexible reporting, but it had specifically to do with the content of the public presentation of the reporting where in the meeting and the minutes also reflect that we felt that they should have discussed the content of the presentation with us beforehand and if they had felt that due to flexible reporting, they were only able to present a smaller subset of data and not everything, then they should have indicated to us and then we would have found a way to also add on to the presentation the data that we felt were missing. And in particular, Michiel felt that a lot of important data was not included in that presentation. Was this discussed specifically in the meeting of August 3<sup>rd</sup>?

Bernadette suggested this action point to be discussed when Michiel is present because Mark could not recall talking about the reporting at the meeting with BDO. Rayah said to be okay with waiting till Michiel is around at the next meeting because it was one of his big concerns also.

- Chairman ship rotating system between companies.

Jenusah has explained already in the announcements how the companies have decided to chair these coming meetings. This action is completed.

- Stakeholder engagement templates to be sent to the MSG members

Each constituency was assigned contact persons that happened already so this action was completed.

- Include contribution of EITI in the national budget.

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Bernadete stated that the responsible person is the Permanent Secretary for Mining at the Ministry of Natural Resources Preciosa Simons. She asked if Preciosa could respond to this action point. Since Preciosa wasn't responding Mark asked Novella if she was able to assist on clarification on this.

Novella clarified that even if the Mining Department could not include the contribution for 2022 and 2023 in their budget, the secretariat included that in the draft EITI budget of fiscal year 2024. We didn't receive the draft of the national budget of the Ministry of Natural Resources yet but when we do, we will share it with the MSG.

Mark asked then if the secretariat submitted estimates for the next fiscal year for the EITI in the budget submission of the Ministry. Novella responded yes to his question. Bernadette thanked for the clarification on this.

Monique asked if the secretariat has a separate budget in the budget of the Ministry.

Novella answered that the secretariat has a separate budget because there is always confusion about EITI. Is it mining or is it oil and gas because we have a different Department for Energy and a different Department for Mining.

The minister said, we have to have our own budget, so if we need things we can put it on our own budget and there will be no confusion, because this is the first time that EITI will be included and mainstreamed into the national budget.

Monique asked if the budget can be shared with the MSG. The secretariat will share the budget with the MSG.

Bernadette asked what the amount was in the budget. At this moment the secretariat could not tell what the amount was but the document will be shared.

Rayah said the budget has not been submitted for approved yet so she hopes it will be included in the final version of the national budget.

➤ Comments on the CS statement regarding the conflicts in Pikin Saron

Sagitta did sent some comments but the secretariat did not receive them. Sagitta explained that something must have gone wrong. But if there was agreed on the statement she did not have problems with it since the MSG had decided that if there were no comments within a week, the minutes would be considered approved. The CS members present will ask Rene what the follow up on this should be and then Sagitta will have the chance to still share her comments.

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Monique asked the secretariat what the status of this statement is at the moment  
Novella explained that at this moment, Newmont and RGM we're going to get statement also on this, but we haven't received anything and in the meeting we discussed that if in one week from then there were no comments, then the minutes would be approved. Sagitta said she sent her comments but we didn't receive it, so at this moment, the statement stayed a statement.

Monique said Sagita just said that if the agreement was that if one week from the date that it was sent, nobody responded that it would be ok, that it would be approved. So nothing happened after that week?

Novella said nothing happened.

And in the minutes, I think of the 12th of July, Rene Artist gave some comments on what he thought about how it went with the statement.

He was disappointed that he didn't get comments from the other constituencies.

Monique thought the agreement was that once the statement was approved by all the constituencies, that it would be distributed, that we could all distribute it, and that it could be put on our website or things like that. Novella explained that that did not happen.

Monique asked for a follow up on this statement. Mark said he will look at this statement again but he could not recall agreeing on the content.

Novella could not remember having the statement in English but Rayah said that the statement was sent in both languages. Rayah suggested that the content of the statement would probably have to be updated because that statement was drafted in the week following the incidents and there have been also various developments afterwards which would have to be reflected in an updated statement reflecting the situation now and any specific concerns now where we are so many months later.

Rayah suggested Rene to be present to have a discussion and give an update on the situation and support this as MSG

Bernadette asked if can be concluded that the statement will be again distributed among all the constituencies to have a look at this again.

Rayah said that she thinks that it can be agreed upon and Rene should be asked to provide with input and updates on this subject.

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Bernadette suggested that Rene would be asked for input and update and then decide on an amendment of the current statement because the companies and the government have not responded yet.

Mark suggested that this might benefit from being a substantive agenda item on a subsequent meeting to discuss an updated draft in a future meeting. Some members agree to this.

Tosca asked what the update is regarding this item. What has to be done?

Bernadette answered that input from Rene will be requested because the statement needs to be updated and then we can redistribute the amended statement among all constituencies and that this can be on the agenda in a next meeting.

After these comments on the actions the minutes of June 28<sup>th</sup> were approved by the members present.

Bernadette moved on to the minutes of July 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **4. Minutes July 12<sup>th</sup> 2023**

- a. Discussion
- b. Approval
- c. Matters arising from the minutes

The MSG members did not have comments on the content and moved on to the actions.

##### ➤ Rotating Chair schedule

The rotating chair schedule by the private sector constituency was announced during the start of the meeting.

##### ➤ Stakeholder engagement templates

The templates are still a work in progress. Bernadette suggested that the MSG decides on a clear time table to have these templates send on time to EITI International for comments. This will be discussed in the next agenda item.

Georgetine and Rayah asked that some of the spelling of the words could be corrected.

##### ➤ Outcomes and impact templates

Bernadette suggested this agenda item to also be discussed in the next agenda item.

The members agreed.

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- Review 19 corrective actions, the report stated that no progress has been made. This is also something that can be discussed in our session with the Esteban
- Contribution of EITI 2022/2023

Bernadette stated that the MSG is very happy to hear that there is a line in the budget and the MSG has its fingers crossed, that that line will not vanish before October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Meeting with BDO about presentation 2018-2020 reports.

This will be discussed when Michiel is present in a next meeting.

There were no further comments and the minutes of July 12<sup>th</sup> were approved by all the members present.

Bernadette thanked the members for their participation and gave the floor to Esteban after welcoming him to the meeting.

## **5. Session Pre-validation team from EITI International**

Evaluation of the pre-validation mission

Progress on the gap analysis

Esteban first of all thanked everyone for a very interesting and successful mission. The pre-validation team had a presentation at the Secretariat about the results of their mission to Suriname, learned a lot and were happy about that. They are also preparing a document for BDO and will be sending it tomorrow. There is a detailed list of things that needs to be addressed by BDO and also the shortcomings in the report could be addressed before October.

Esteban is also pleased to see the willingness of all stakeholders to push ahead with the recommendation emanating from the pre-validation. Furthermore, he thanked the MSG for holding the meeting in English but he suggested the MSG to have their meetings in the language they are comfortable with.

Bernadette explained that Mark speaks English that is why the meetings of the MSG are always in English. So he does not have to worry about that.

Esteban stated that they were very happy to see the willingness of everyone to bring a positive validation. Esteban also explained that BDO will receive a to do list of what they have to do before October. BDO also has to fill out the Summary Data Template for each year covered in the report 2018-2020. When received all these templates they should be uploaded on the website.

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Furthermore he asked the constituencies if there is support needed that he is available for them any time. It is very important that all the templates are filled out before October the 1st and sent to us before October the first, so we should be very clear about the timeline and the time frame we have the deadline and the other one is the transparency template.

Esteban furthermore said that the transparency template is perhaps the biggest challenge in terms of filling out information. And requires a lot of data that was published in the report, and I think BDO can also do a lot of help there in filling them out. I have contributed some information and fill out a little bit to help you all.

And there is the long list that we suggested of actions that need to be implemented or that the MSG needs to address before the next validation.

The first let me be very frank with you. I understand there have been a lot of challenges and I understand a lot of information might not be readily available now, but we can find out and identify opportunities to publish that data either on the EITI website, that's also another question I have. How are we doing with the updating of the EITI website? That'll be fundamental before validation, but also in terms of reaching a better mark, a better grade in the validation.

There are several issues that the EITI standard requires the MSG to discuss, and sometimes, when we prepare the reports, given that the reports are developed by an international or by an independent administrator, sometimes these requisites of having an MSG discussion on the completeness of the data, the discussion about if there were or not, any deviations from the due process, et cetera, are and just missed.

If we actually listed those also in the document that we shared with you, if we pay attention to those and if we have a series of conversations from now until October, the first time before several of you go and leave, we can push that forward and then we can have a stronger case before validation begins.

So I don't know if you have any questions or if you want me to go over the list again of actions and we can discuss each and every one or if you have any specific question, in the last session we had, it was really helpful for example to identify already several action points that GRASSALCO had to do.

Mark was just wondering, just as a simple clarification point, which one of the templates are you describing as a transparency template?

Esteban answered that the transparency template is a very complete, thorough, exhaustive and mammoth of an Excel file that includes each and every one of the EITI requirements and also the data that's disaggregated per company.

If you see, for example, the summary data templates that regularly should be published with any EITI report, that those are a subset of the whole. We discussed that in the last session in

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Suriname, the transparency template can be a super useful tool to do the follow up of your activities, not only before validation, but actually year to year because it identifies the progress in each and every one of the requirements.

Esteban continues to explain that it can also identify gaps and it has another great aspect of it, which is given that it's just a huge Excel file sometimes to have it updated and have a discussion and an updated discussion of what's the status of the sector just by looking at that Big Excel file, we can update it more regularly and have a closer overlook of the whole status of the of the extractive sector in the country.

Mark answered on this that the MSG has been focusing more on the other templates. On this Esteban answered that's good because the main focus for the MSG should be right now on the other templates and that he will work with Novella and Jenusah to fill out the transparency template and present it to the MSG. Esteban shared his screen and shared some examples of how the transparency template should be filled in with questions such as where is the information, stated in the report is systematically disclosed. For example requirement 2.1 which is the legal framework. The MSG should assess whether it's mostly met, fully met, exceeded, et cetera. And then where is the government information on laws and regulation with the mining sector? So if there's a website, add it. Here I have identified already it's on page 38. And then for the oil and gas sector, the same thing, then licenses and contracts.

Mark asked if there's a separate one for mining and oil and gas.

Esteban Manteca answered yes to this question.

As you can see, we have already added some comments for all of you to see and also we identified. I have been helping out the national coordination to fill this out just to advance and try and make it faster so that you can have your attention on the other templates.

For example, if we know where this information is systematically disclosed it can be added in the column. So as you can see, we have done a lot of work already. The summary data templates are actually what BDO must send. All the different companies that are here, what's their sector? What are the projects that they have? Which are the revenue agencies? Are they the agents that receive revenue? What are the kind of funding they receive? Etcetera.

The different companies and the payments that each company has made and then we need to see whether these two numbers match and with the whole production on each and every one of the different commodities.

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Esteban explained furthermore that this is a lot of work and this should also be sent to the International Secretariat together with the other two templates, but so this is the transparency template, which as he mentioned given the completeness of it and the detail included in it, we can also see for example, we can easily identify if there's something that needs to be corrected in the next validation in the next year, the next work plan and identify also gaps and weaknesses. So this will also be filled out by Riley and his team and they will do this assessment very detailed and together with the other final assessment that will be written with all the requirements, we will send those back to you.

And so you can actually start also identifying some additional information that you would like to share with us. So these are the templates that I mentioned. Any additional question on this?

Mark said on this that it was very clear and the MSG got a chance to walk through the template in more detail and will be casting an eye on the transparency template. But the focus as he said before were on the other 2 templates.

Esteban Manteca said that that's perfectly ok, because to be honest, the other two are the ones that require more of a general debate and a general understanding of the perception of the participants of the constituencies represented here.

This is more of a technical one and then we can work this out identifying other sources.

And of course, for example, if the government representatives in the MSG know of websites or other sources where this information can be shared, then this is key for you to contribute to this with links.

And that could also help, prove systematically disclosed information and that will help also of course the final result of validation. Esteban asked how it is going with the other templates.

Regis responded that the companies have been working together on a regular basis and they are in a good place with respect to the filling out of the templates

Esteban asked Civil Society if they have been able to discuss their template within their constituencies and if there's any note on progress on that? Esteban is available if Civil Society needs another meeting to go over the templates.

Rayah asked Tosca to give an update because she and Rene had to provide most of the input for the stakeholder engagement templates, and there have not been an internal discussion since then.

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Tosca said that she will be talking to Rene and be back with more information on the templates.

Georgetine commented that the government constituency will look at the templates again and try to follow up on them.

Esteban expressed that it is important to identify any challenges, any missing data and any gaps so the work can actually start. The templates need to be filled out completely and be approved by the MSG. And for the recording it is important if the constituencies have different opinions about a topic it should be discussed.

So if civil society thinks one thing, the government thinks another and industry thinks another one, it can be pointed out as such but the best solution would be to have a discussion on how the whole MSG evaluates itself, its work and its progress.

I know that for example the industry UM draft that was shared with me already includes some of those self-assessments.

And so it is of the highest importance to have those templates filled out. Again do not hesitate to ask help as much as possible.

Mike asked if certain items are already discussed in the two templates, if they can just be referred to. Esteban answered yes to this question.

Esteban stated that if those templates are sent back to him no later than next week, then he will have another whole week to do the revisions of those comments, then send them back so the MSG will have two good weeks to have everything discussed and there will then be just enough time to fix what is needed to be fixed.

Esteban also stated that a lot of MSG members will not be present in the last week of September so it is important to have discussions early because those templates need to be registered and approved by the MSG in an official meeting with a quorum.

Otherwise they are not considered approved and so it's important to take those things into consideration as well.

And so let's aim for having those templates complete at least a good first draft by next week, so that in two weeks' time so there will still be at least two weeks to work on them.

And I will be working also with Jenusah and novella to fill out this transparency template and we can go back to BDO and ask them where they are and about the data.

That is really important and urgent. Just remember this essential elements of the work that one of the requirements is exactly the functioning of the MSG and requirement 1.4.

And so if there's no templates approved, then this of course will reflect on that. Esteban expressed again that he can work together with the MSG on these things to achieve the goals.

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And that he is one phone call away and is willing to help anytime.

And I think it's also one of the easy things to achieve.

So the MSG agreed on sending the stakeholder engagement and outcome and impact template to Esteban on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September. Esteban will sent comments on September the 8<sup>th</sup>. The MSG then will have two weeks to finish the templates, have a discussion about them and approve them.

Esteban stated that the other thing he would like to highlight that there are two parallel lists of things to do. One is the templates and that's super important for validation for the whole process but the other thing that's also super important is if we want to have a better grade at validation is there are several comments that have been discussed in the gap analysis mentioned and we can go over that and identify which are the easiest in terms of having just a discussion of saying OK, the MSG read the report and discussed whether for example there are variations or deviations from the due process in the assignment of licenses and what does that mean?

There are several of those requirements in the EITI standard that just need one discussion of the MSG. For some of them MSG members would need to have read and informed themselves about what's going on but even then, facilitating those discussions and having those on record will give the whole EITI in Suriname a stronger base. Well, at least we might not have all the data but with all these requirements that procedurally have been addressed, then the grade could be instead of not met, could be partly met, or instead of being partly met, it could be mostly met and those tiny little efforts here and there in the end can be the difference between a positive result and a suspension. So need to go over those details as well.

Bernadette suggested to quickly go over the low hanging fruits, things that we can be done during this time before the validation mission, things that can be achieved and just pick out some of them and be included in the planning for September targets and dates to achieve them as well.

Esteban mentioned on this that this was already shared as a list of suggested actions to the MSG. Esteban gave some examples of a low hanging fruit like having the work plan on the website, having the revised ToR of the MSG online. Discuss the progress. This is already included in one of the templates and so if these templates are discussed, we can definitely say this is already checked

Another example, the representatives that are here from the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Mining can help us identify the economic contribution to the GDP of the extractive activities these segregated oil and gas and mining that would also be very useful if the MSG can agree and identify if the data that's published here in this report by the Organization of American States,

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that includes some calculations on the contribution of small and artisanal scale mining to Suriname's economy.

If those are correct, and if those are thorough, then we can have a discussion on that and agree that this is a good assessment and then publish that on the website as well.

Esteban asked how about discussion on future plans for the disclosure of contracts?

Staatsolie will not be disclosing contracts in the near future. It might do so in the future, and it's already published the standard PSC format.

With the leadership of novella and Jenusa, some of the mining contracts are already public on the website, which is something that's really wonderful. What are we going to do?

What is the energy plan to do in the future to fulfill requirement 2.4?

We need to have a discussion about that, then also and a discussion identifying if there are legal barriers preventing the full disclosure of contracts but we need to address those and see well if there's none then what are we going to do for example also identify with the Minister of Natural Resources how many active transfers were there, if there were any and if there were none then tell us, let him say that in a document or in a minute. If in the discussion there might be elements that cannot be made public about that discussion of the mining law.

If the MSG can then contribute to that discussion as well and say this invitation that we all received to discuss the mining law, that can be also reflected in one minute, that will be super important to push forward with the outcomes and impact and great for the validation.

Esteban said again, let me give you just two examples of this shortcomings that need a confirmation from the MSG and specific issue.

So for example, invite GRASSALCO to do a meeting with you and explain to you the current situation of GRASSALCO.

So if GRASSALCO is receiving revenues or not, annual audited financial statements and if GRASSALCO has identified any other major priorities in the disclosure of information et cetera, confirm with that solely for example the existence of quasi fiscal expenditures, this is not a subsidy, but this the sale of energy to the National Energy Company that is then deducted from the revenues and the dividends, that sorely needs to be paid to the government.

That's a quasi-fiscal expenditure because there are somehow, statutorily, is subsidizing the energy, to the energy company, although it gets compensated by the state.

But that's the definition of a quasi-fiscal expenditure. So that needs to be public and disclosed.

Mark asked just Esteban on that point, because quasi- fiscal expenditure can only be done by a state owned enterprise, so no private companies are not involved in.

Esteban answered yes but at the same time gave an example this is also important and we call that barter agreements. We think there aren't any, but if there are, it's really important to discuss them. Then that needs to be disclosed as a barter agreement.

For example some African countries, airports have been built and service off with the payment for one license for example. So, those needs to be need to be disclosed.

Also confirm if there are no revenues from transporting minerals in the country.

Bernadette asked what a barter agreement is.

Esteban explained so if a company compromises or commits to build public works or a highway or school, and that's as a form of payment, like an in kind payment for a license or for taxes, then that needs to be disclosed. If a company dedicates a percentage of the total amount of the contract to social activities or to contributions or to building a school etcetera

That's social expenditure that's also included in the report, but that needs to be reported disclosed as under 6.1. It's not a quid pro quo.

Mark stated that that this would be a separate reporting line in the reporting template. Esteban confirmed that it's a separate portfolio. And the voluntary payments needs to be discussed by EITI to see whether those need to be and what is the threshold and to make those public. Because those are not part of a contract, those are part of the social responsibility of a company. Countries are suggested and invited to present that information, but that's not an obligatory requirement.

Mike asked while you were in Suriname and having a meeting with MSG, you had the slides up with the header gap analysis on previous recommendations. So he just wanted to double check if the MSG also needed to work on that document.

Esteban answered that there are certain items in green that can be discussed by the MSG and are short term issues.

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For example in government engagement, it will be really good to have to stretch the support from the government of Suriname to the EITI implementation.

So if the minister gives a speech or an interview in a national newspaper, then that would be something relatively easy to do.

If, for example, budget line is confirmed for the EITI, then that would also provide a proof of the government engagement.

So even the industry constituency, for example, can be very clear in the outcome and impact and the stakeholder engagement template of how the work plan captures the priority of the industry. Then that is a very low hanging fruit that could be clearly identified.

Monique suggested to be more concrete on the list of things that has to be done and because Esteban suggested to work with Novella and Jenusah on a list of things to be discussed in the coming meetings with dates and who is responsible will help the MSG to address all the gaps. And that before the meeting or next meeting that a person or constituency make sure that they have addressed it in some way or have some answers or not.

Bernadette supports Monique's suggestion.

What we need just says to be more specific in our actions and have responsible persons and a timeline, and the secretariat can take the lead and that what is very important to us is that we will have weekly meetings now, so we have a strong monitoring of our actions and do as much work as we can do.

Bernadette advised the constituencies to invite Esteban to go through the actions that have to be done and look who can be approached and where the information or data can be found to make sure that the template are filled out while on the other hand, also work on the other actions as mentioned by Esteban, which are also very important, so called low hanging fruit.

So if we can have that in a detailed action plan we try to achieve as much as possible during the coming weeks, giving all the challenges and limitations that we have as people who are very busy.

Georgetine asked about the Summary Data Templates but Esteban answered that they have to be filled out by BDO so the MSG should focus mainly on the stakeholders engagement and outcomes and impact templates. He could not stress enough about filling in all the blanks to receive feedback from the International Secretariat. The summary data templates are the responsibility of the MSG but need to be filled out by the Independent Administrator.

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Esteban mentioned that together with the National Secretariat he will be working on a list of low hanging fruits and share a proposal by Friday. The MSG would then have to determine whether the assigned responsible people in the document are correct and correct that. For example if it is not the responsibility of the Central Bank then it should be corrected.

Novella pointed out that is very challenging to work with no computers and so much work that has to be done. Why she pointed this out because we sometimes cannot respond immediately. The Ministry has submitted documents to the council of ministers but they have not been approved yet. And even if approved it is a long process so we ask to bear with us.

Tosca mentioned that this issue has been going on for a long time and has been discussed on several occasions and wanted to know the status of this issue. Bernadette explained that EITI has a budget within the ministry for fiscal year 2024 and hopefully be addressed when the budget is approved.

Bernadette concluded with having a clear understanding of the templates because there are a lot of templates and also to have a specific action plan on the low hanging fruits.

Bernadette also advised the constituencies to try to meet as much as possible even if it's one hour every day to work together in completing the templates. So we can do our homework and try to improve the situation with regard to our reporting and on our response to all the templates and the work needed to be done.

Mike informed the MSG review EITI outcomes and impact template.

He has merged the comments from Esteban and also the latest version we had worked on as a subgroup and then for a few constituencies he has already emailed separately.

After this call he will be sending an email with the latest version and then to incorporate all input from all the constituencies.

Bernadette thanked Mike for this and thanked everyone for the contribution to this meeting.

Bernadette also urged everyone to commit to the work that needs to be done. There are challenges but once they have been identified they can be worked on. She asked the members to go for it and have a good score. Do not be afraid to ask for help of other constituencies or members who have been in the MSG longer and do not hesitate to seek help from Esteban for guidance. Let's all make use of him and meet again next week and hope that there will be more progress.

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6. **Any other business was not addressed**

7. **Adjournment**

Bernadette thanked everyone very much and adjourned the meeting at 14.55 hrs.