

Suriname's EITI Open Data Policy

Context

Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname, which reads as follows: “Natural resources and resources are the property of the nation and should be used in economic, social and cultural development. The nation has the inalienable right to take full possession of its natural resources for the purpose of utilizing them for the economic, social and cultural development of Suriname”, enshrines the sovereign rights and use of the country's natural resources for the development of the nation and its people. As the custodians of the nation's patrimony, it is incumbent on the government to provide citizens with transparent, easily accessible information/data on the extraction, monetization and management of these non-renewable resources.

In its Policy Note for the period 2020 – 2025 the Ministry of Natural Resources identifies Transparency, (along with innovation, inclusion and sustainability) as one of its priority policy focus areas for the 5 year period up to 2025, to convert the country's wealth potential from available natural resources to visible sustainable economic development and production, benefiting society to the greatest extent possible. In the specific area of transparency, the government identified the enhancement of systems and processes for public access to data on the management of the extractive industries.

Open data policies play a crucial role in promoting transparency, innovation, and collaboration. Open data policies also typically adhere to principles such as making government data publicly accessible, ensuring data quality, and encouraging its use for various purposes.

There is consensus amongst all stakeholder groups, that EITI implementation in Suriname has improved the availability and accessibility of data on, as well as dialogue between, stakeholders involved in the management of the country's extractives sector. Access to EITI data adds value by increasing transparency and public awareness on extractive industry revenue and the use of this revenue for sustainable, effective development projects. Open access to extractive sector data also benefits Government, with respect to the formulation of policies to better manage the extractive sectors. This in turn, positively influences the investment climate of the country.

The Government of Suriname has undertaken several initiatives related to statistical data and governance. That notwithstanding, Suriname does not currently have an overarching specific National Data Policy. Whilst efforts have been made in the recent past by both the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance to publish data on the extractive sector in Excel spreadsheet format, access to data on the revenues generated from Suriname's extractive sector are largely aggregated with data from other revenue flows and integrated into the national budget, with little or no focus paid to how benefits from the sector are being distributed at the national and regional levels.

EITI Reports are the only place to publicly disclose data that is not systematically disclosed on government or company websites, about key aspects of the management of extractive industries and the revenues derived therefrom, such as in-kind payments and the distribution of extractive revenues across the economy.

Suriname can therefore use EITI reporting as an annual diagnostic to strengthen implementation of legal reforms, raise awareness of issues among community and industry stakeholders, as well as deviations from the fiscal frameworks governing oil, gas and mining agreements.

Policy requirements

Requirement 7.2 A – B of the EITI Standard 2023, requires the Multi-Stakeholder Group of EITI “Implementing countries...to ensure that EITI disclosures are made publicly accessible...[by]:

- i. [Agreeing] a clear open data policy on the access, release and re-use of EITI data...[and]
- ii. Make[ing] the data... [from EITI Reports] available in an open data format online and publicize its availability. Open data format means that data is made accessible in CSV or Excel format and contain all data of tables, charts and figures from EITI Reports.”

“Implementing countries are [also] encouraged to make systematically disclosed data machine-readable and inter-operable, and to structure EITI disclosures and other data files so that the information can be compared with other publicly available data.”

Policy context

In the absence of specific open data policies or frameworks within the government of Suriname, this EITISR Open Data Policy builds upon international definitions and best practice on this matter.

Definition

The Open Data Charter <http://opendatacharter.net/>, an international Open Data NGO, defines Open Data as “...data that is made available with the technical and legal characteristics necessary for it to be freely used, reused, and redistributed by anyone, anytime, anywhere.” In keeping with this definition, the EITISR Multi-Stakeholder Group at its xx meeting discussed and adopted the following definition for “Open data”.

“Data that is in the public domain or ought to be in the public domain that is accessible, can be freely used, re-used, built upon and redistributed anywhere, by anyone, at no cost, for any purpose without restrictions due to copyright, patent or other legal or treaty rights or obligations other than those expressly excluded by the provisions of the laws of the Republic of Suriname.”

Guiding Principles and Objectives

The EITISR Open Data policy is built on the following guiding principles and objectives derived from the Open Data Charter as follows:

Principles

The EITISR Open Data policy will be guided by the following principles viz all reporting data must be:

- a. Open by default;
- b. Timely and comprehensive;
- c. Accessible and usable;
- d. Comparable and interoperability;
- e. Improved governance and citizens engagement; and,
- f. Inclusive development and innovation.

Objectives:

The key objectives of the EITISR Open Data policy shall be to, inter alia:

1. *Enhance* of the transparency of government and business activities
2. *Increase* civil society’s knowledge and awareness of how the country’s natural resources are used and how extractives revenues are levied and spent, as a check against misuse/misappropriation of those funds
3. *Promote* accountability and good governance, by providing free access to, and subsequent re-use of, open data
4. *Improve* government policy making and sector management, enhance public debate by empowering civil society and help to combat corruption.

Access

The systematic disclosure of extractive industry data in Open Data forms is now in a formative stage in key Suriname Government agencies such as the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank and the National Statistical Bureau of Suriname. At the time of the adoption of this policy these agencies have published Open Data sets in Microsoft Excel (XLS) format.

The EITISR MSG has, as a matter of practice, published all its EITISR Reports and associated data on the [EITISR website](#) in Portable Document Format (PDF). With effect from its 4th reconciliation report covering fiscal years 2021 and 2022, the MSG will ensure that all EITISR Data, be they in text or narrative or numerical data formats are published in a standardized, open format, that can be accessed by all from the eitisuriname.org website.

Where datasets have been developed for the purpose of the EITISR Report e.g. reconciliation numerical data and contextual text/narrative data, these will be made available on the eitisuriname.org website. To the extent possible, these datasets will be published simultaneously with the EITISR Report. Where possible, the contextual data published on eiti.suriname.org will also include a longer time set than the version published in the EITISR Report.

In general, tabulated data will be made available in XLS (Microsoft Excel) and CSV (Comma Separated Values) formats and the MSG will, when appropriate consider options to move to publishing linkable and linked data (<http://linkeddata.org/>). Excel/CSV data will be presented in such a way that calculations/ analysis can be easily made from the data (i.e. no special formatting, merged cells, headers etc.)

The EITISR MSG agreed at its Meeting on April 3, 2024 to the adoption of a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public Domain License for the accessing of EITISR data. Adoption of a Public Domain license regime will ensure the user free access to and subsequent re-use of data by granting such user a worldwide, royalty-free, non-sublicensable, non-exclusive, irrevocable license to reproduce and share the licensed material, in whole or in part; and produce, reproduce, and share adapted material with the requirement that users provide attribution to the EITISR whenever our data is used and shared.

Comment 1: specify that narrative/text data should also be in an open format, such as Word, in such a way that it can be copied

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