



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

11th meeting of the FiTI International Board

19 November 2020, Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

ID: BM-11_2020_MM

Provided by: FiTI International Secretariat

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Date	19 November 2020
Time	Noon – 2.15 p.m. (Greenwich Mean Time)
Venue	Global Conference Call (Zoom)
Supporting document(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global Membership Policy of the FiTI association [draft], Version 0.95, 13 November 2020

Outcomes of meeting

1. Welcome and Administration

The Chair of the FiTI International Board, Dr Valeria MERINO, opened the 11th International Board meeting by welcoming all participating members.

Apologies were noted prior to the meeting from Sebastián LOSADA, Eduardo ROLÓN and Alfred SCHUMM (all Civil Society stakeholder group). Alfred assigned Francisco Mari as his proxy.

After the participants joined the call, it was identified that a quorum was not reached, as not enough members (incl. proxies) attended the call. ¹

Current total size of Board:	2/3 of total Board:	Actual attendance ² :	At least two Board Members per stakeholder group
13	8,67	8	Yes

It was proposed by the Chair that provisional decisions should be made during this call and that the absent Board Members are able to object to the decisions recorded in these meeting minutes afterwards. This procedure was approved by the participants

In addition, the African Development Bank, represented by Ms. Salimata SOUMARE, Senior Natural Resources Governance Officer at African Natural Resources Centre, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, represented by Mr. Marcio CASTRO DE SOUZA, Senior Fishery Officer – International Trade, participated in the meeting as Observers.

¹ “Two-thirds of the total number of Board Members (including proxies), with at least two Board Members from each stakeholder group, forms a quorum.” Constitution of the association of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (as of 23 January 2020), Article 14 (8).

² Including proxy votes.

2. Housekeeping

I. Update on participation status of Board Member Marthin HADIWINATA

In the last Board Meeting, it was decided that Board Member Francisco MARI will reach out to Board Member Marthin HADIWINATA to clarify his commitment and availability to remain a Board Member.³

Francisco informed the Board that he was unable to obtain additional information from Marthin. Francisco was asked by the Board Members to try reaching out to Marthin one last time. For this, Francisco requested that the FiTI International Secretariat sends him Marthin's current email address to ensure that the same email is used. Also, he will explore other potential venues to get in touch with Marthin (e.g. through his organisation, Bread for the World).

The Board Members stated that concluding discussions on this matter should be conducted at the next meeting.

II. Update on status of Mauritania's first FiTI Report

In the last meeting, the additional extension request from Mauritania to submit its 2019 FiTI Report (based on 2018 data) no later than 31 December 2020 was approved.⁴

Ms. Nedwa NECH, who also serves in Mauritania's FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG), informed the Board that the two appointed Report Compilers visited Mauritania already twice and compiled a large number of information regarding the first six transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard. Nedwa stated further that it is planned that the Report Compilers will prepare the initial draft report and submit it to the National MSG by end of November. A meeting of the National MSG is planned for beginning of December, in order to provide feedback to the draft report and to allow sufficient time for the Report Compilers to finalise the report. The submission of the final report to the National MSG is planned for mid of December. Nedwa stated also that the process of discussing and overseeing the FiTI Report in Mauritania has been impacted by the lack of a functioning National Secretariat, which could coordinate such activities.

Mr. Sven BIERMANN from the FiTI International Secretariat stated that a dedicated website has been setup, where all the relevant documents, as well as the information from the FiTI Report will be made publicly available: <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.org>.

³ Decision ID: BM-10_2020_D-01

⁴ Decision ID: BM-10_2020_D-03

Sven welcomed the approach of consolidating all relevant information into a single access point, but emphasised the following:

- The FiTI seeks to avoid creating new or additional website and instead, emphasises that national authorities should develop and strengthen their own existing systems for collating and publishing information online.
- A clear link needs to be provided between the website of the Mauritanian's Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy and this new website, so that everyone can easily find it.
- Likewise, it needs to be clearly stated on this new FiTI Mauritania website, that this is an official government website, in order to ensure that information displayed there is seen as official government information. Sven stated that the current domain of this new website (.org) may falsely indicate that this is a website from a civil society organisation (typically utilising this domain), so a legal notice on the website is very important.

Furthermore, Sven stated that the Report Compilers should pay particular attention to the publication of Foreign Fishing Access Agreements. In order to be in compliance with the FiTI Standard, all existing agreements need to be published, and not only the agreement and protocols between Mauritania and the European Union.

Mr. Ahmed SENHOURY, who's organisation 'Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation (PRCM)' is supporting the reporting process in Mauritania financially remarked that the aspects regarding the website will be taken into account and that discussions are already under way to include a link to the new website on the current website of the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy in Mauritania.

The FiTI Chair welcomed the tangible progress in Mauritania and stated her expectations to receive Mauritania's first FiTI Report by end of December.

3. Global Membership Policy

The FiTI Chair recalled that at the 6th FiTI International Board Meeting (April 2019) it was approved that a legal entity for the FiTI should be created in form of a not-for-profit association under the legal system in Seychelles⁵. The legal vehicle of an association (over a statutory body) was chosen to emphasise the FiTI's collaborative effort among different stakeholders from governments, business and civil society, and

⁵ Decision [BM-06_2019_D-03].

- ➔ by attracting a large number of well-known organisations (and selected individuals), the FiTI is *increasing its international reputation and standing* as a widely accepted and supported initiative;
- ➔ by establishing a global base of members, the FiTI is able to conduct a *democratic (and legitimate) election of the FiTI International Board*.

As of 24 January 2020, the FiTI has been duly registered as an association under Seychellois law (registration number A431648).⁶ The founding constitution states that individuals as well as business, business associations, and civil society organisations are eligible to become a member in the FiTI.

The Chair highlighted further that in accordance with this founding constitution, the provision of a global membership policy needs to be discussed. This policy would govern the admission, retention, resignation and removal of members, their responsibilities as well as any other aspect related to the management of our membership.

Sven stated that the overall membership model should not be too complicated as the FiTI International Secretariat does not have the capacity to manage multiple membership requirements, nor should the requirements for engaging with the initiative be seen as confusing or cumbersome.

Before the proposed Global Membership Policy of the FiTI association [Version 0.95, 13 November 2020] was discussed, several members from the business and civil society stakeholder group raised concerns about the envisioned challenges to get their own organisation registered as a member in the FiTI association⁷. Such concerns included:

- ➔ operational considerations, e.g. lengthy and time-consuming internal process (in particular in larger organisations or in those operating in multiple countries);
- ➔ formal (i.e. legal) considerations, e.g. liability concerns, long-term formal commitments for the organisation.

It was further noted that the more prominent an organisation is (and thus highly attractive for the FiTI), the more difficult a legal membership registration will be, due to often lengthy and bureaucratic internal processes at the targeted organisation.

From the subsequent active discussions, it became evident that the FiTI could face significant difficulties in building a broad membership base (in particular when seeking to include large or complex social or business entities as members). Board Members therefore emphasised that a partnership model, instead of a formal membership, could be much more preferable for organisations. Such organisational partnerships could not only help to

⁶ <http://fisheriestransparency.org/association>

⁷ The fact that the FiTI association is based in the Seychelles has not been raised as an issue.

forge collective actions and solidarity to advance transparency and participation in marine fisheries, but also document the collaborative nature where all engaging organisations (FiTI and partners) derive a clear benefit.

It was stated that such a partnership approach may also be appealing to intergovernmental organisations, such as the African Development Bank or the FAO. Ms. Salimata SOUMARE from the African Development Bank suggested that a Memorandum of Understanding can be pursued between the FiTI and the AfDB to demonstrate a more formalised collaboration.

The discussions regarding the membership policy proposal were therefore postponed and the Board requested to receive recommendations from the Secretariat, in collaboration with the FiTI Chair, that would allow continuing the collaborative nature of the FiTI (e.g. a partnership model), while at the same time overcome practical challenges of registering organisations as members in the association.

4. Next Board meeting(s)

Sven stated that the next (12th) FiTI International Board meeting will focus primarily on continuing the discussions regarding membership/partnership, obtaining approval from the Board regarding the 2021 Workplan of the Secretariat and discussing the current status of the FiTI's first two reports (from Mauritania and Seychelles).

The participating Board Members confirmed that the ongoing COVID-19 induced global travel restrictions prevent the next meeting to be conducted as a face-to-face meeting.

The Secretariat was therefore requested to schedule a virtual conference call within the first quarter of 2021 (initial target date: 28 January 2021).

5. Closing

The Chair thanked the Members of the Board for their participation in the 11th meeting.

11th International Board Meeting ended

APPENDIX I: List of Participants

Chair

Valeria MERINO

Stakeholder Group of Governments

Ylva MATTSSON

Philippe MICHAUD

Not excused:

Mamadou GOUDIABY

Mohamed Salem NANY

Stakeholder Group of Business

Francisco LEOTTE

Gaoussou GUEYE

Not excused:

Alexander BIRYUKOV

Marthin HADIWINATA

Stakeholder Group of Civil Society

Francisco MARI

Nedwa NECH

Ahmed SENHOURY (as Alternate)

Excused:

Sebastián LOSADA

Eduardo ROLÓN

Alfred SCHUMM (proxy: Francisco MARI)

Observers

Salimata SOUMARE, African Development Bank (AfDB),

Marcio CASTRO DE SOUZA, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Not excused:

Xavier VINCENT, The World Bank Group

FiTI International Secretariat

Sven BIERMANN

Guests

None