

MINUTES
REGULAR LEITI MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE LEITI, OLD BUDGET BUREAU BUILDING
REDEMPTION
ROAD, MONROVIA, LIBERIA Friday, JANUARY 21, 2022

Present in Attendance were:

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| 1. Hon. C. Mike Doryen | FDA |
| 2. Edrick Noah | MOJ |
| 3. Eric Daniels | NOCAL |
| 4. Carlton S. Miller | MME |
| 5. Jeanine Cooper | MOA |
| 6. B. Al Dennis | LRA |

Private Sector

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| 1. Ekema Witherspoon | LIBTA. |
| 2. Marcus S. Wleh | Mittal |
| 3. Elvis Morris | LACA |

CSO

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| 1. Mr. Winston W. Wreh | LLC |
| 2. Mr. Fallah B. Kamara | MICSOL |
| 3. Cecelia Danuweli | PWYP |
| 4. Loretta A. Pope Kai | NSCL |

Observer

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| 1. Samuel Summerville | GIZ |
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Others

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| 1. Ansu S. Konneh | MOA |
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LEITI

1. Jeffery N. Yates/HoS
2. McDonald S. Kerl Sr.-Technical Officer

Preliminaries: The regular meeting of the LEITI Multi-stakeholders Steering Group (MSG) was held on Friday, January 21, 2022 in the LEITI Conference Room. Commencing at 1:30pm, the meeting was called to order by the proxy Co-Chair, Hon. Carlton Miller of the Ministry of Mines and Energy.. The Presiding asked the Head of Secretariat, Mr. Jeffrey N. Yates, to pray for the Body. This was followed by self-introduction.

Reading and Adoption of the Agenda: -asked by the Presiding Co-Chair to read the agenda, the HOS read the agenda and it was moved (Mr. Witherspoon) and seconded (Mrs. Danuweli) that the agenda as read be accepted and used to guide the meeting.

1. **Opening prayer:** The HoS, Jeffery Yates, said the opening prayer.
2. **Welcome Remark:** The Presiding welcomed all MSG Members and observers and informed them that the MSG Chair, Hon. C. Mike Doryen was on his way. He extended special recognition to the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Jeanine Cooper, who was in attendance and welcomed her to the new MSG.
3. **Self-introduction:** Self-introduction was observed with at least 13 persons participating.
4. **Review and Approval of the last meeting minutes-** The draft minutes of October 2021 regular meeting was adopted by the body after the following observation/recommendations:
 - Mr. Edrick Noah of MOJ observed that Mr. Roosevelt Tule's name had no institution attached.
 - Mr. Ansu Konneh advised that as a standard policy, MSG members usually received the meeting minutes in advance and forward their observations to the Secretariat to avoid time procrastination.
 - Mrs. Cecelia T. M. Danuweli then moved that the minutes be adopted and corrections forwarded to the Secretariat later. This motion was seconded by Mr. Winston Wreh and the Body passed on the minutes.

The Chair of the MSG, Hon. C. Mike Doryen arrived at this time and the gavel of authority was turned over to him by the Co-Chair, Hon. Carlton Miller. The Chair also welcomed everyone and particularly recognized the presence of the Minister of Agriculture. He advised that high level representation at MSG meetings was key to improving the MSG Scorecard. He also called out the MoA for not responding positively to data request form the LEITI and hope that with the Minister's participation the narrative will change.

Responding the Minister of Agriculture said she was happy to be a part of the MSG and the EITI process and thanked the President for her appointment. She said the Ministry of Agriculture was fully ready to contribute to the transparency initiative in the country. In concluding, she said that in her absence, Mr. Ansu Konneh, who once represented Western Cluster on the MSG but was now at the MoA will be her alternate.

5. **Update from the Secretariat-**The Secretariat's update was done by the Head of Secretariat, Jeffrey Yates. He presented the following as updates for the period October to December 2021: **(Please see annex I for details of the update)**

MSG Decision on critical issues presented in the update:

- A. **Production of 13th and 14th Reports-** the HoS informed the MSG that the EITI International Secretariat is advising that Liberia should continue with the Flexible Reporting framework for the 13th and 14th EITI Reports of Liberia as opposed to the conventional reporting which the Secretariat was contemplating on proposing to the MSG. In discussion, Mr. Al Dennis of LRA expressed concerns about the realistic nature of the six months reporting period and whether Liberia was the only country

that expanded its reporting scope to include forestry and agriculture. The HoS said he cannot speak definitively to that. Hon. Carlton Miller of MME and Mr. Eric Daniels of NOCAL inquired from the HoS as to why the LEITI Secretariat was not using local firms to produce the EITI reports. The HoS responded by saying that Liberia does not have a local firm with the technical capacity to produce a standard EITI report. He indicated that even the local firm Parker & Associates usually works in collaboration with and uses the credentials of BDO, formerly Moore Stephens to bid and to produce the EITI reports for Liberia.

Mr. Marcus Wleeh of Arcelor Mittal Liberia expressed concern as to whether reporting delays by LEITI was also a challenge facing the Secretariat. In response, the HoS stated that Liberia was not behind in reporting, as the country has two years to produce a report. But the Chair, Hon. Doryen added that Liberia was not catching up, but will be aligning with the Government of Liberia adopted calendar year. He advised against reporting in grace period and urged that the MSG endeavour to be current with its EITI reports. It was hereafter agreed after all constituents had sought clarifications that the LEITI proceeds with the flex reporting framework for the 13th and 14th Reports

- B. **Approval of TOR for 13th and 14th Reports-** the HoS also informed the MSG that they need to take a decision on approving the ToR for the 13th and 14th Reports given the procurement process and the limited timeframe. He informed the Body that the 13th Reports should be published by latest June 30, 2022. On the issue of approving the ToR, Mr. Witherspoon of LibTA suggested that MSG members be given 48hrs to review the ToR and submit their “No Objection” to the Secretariat. The Chair suggested that 48hrs was small because new MSG members needed more time to understand the document. For her part, the Minister of Agriculture, commenting on the ToR approval, suggested that since this very ToR has been approved before and with just minor changes, it was not necessary to delay given the expected delay associated with Liberia’s procurement processes. With that said, the Body agreed by consensus to the approval of the TOR.
- C. **Staff salary-** On the issue of staff salary, the HoS informed the MSG that they needed to take a decision on it. The MSG agreed to allow the Admin& Finance Committee to handle it and report to the Body.
- D. **Budgetary Gaps-** the HoS also informed the MSG about the Secretariat’s budget and gaps which needed to be filled. The Chair asked the HoS to write letters to donor partners to help with LEITI’s operational budget.
- E. **Newsletter Approval-** the HoS informed the MSG that the Secretariat has produced a draft newsletter, has a new website and an active Facebook page. The Chair told the HoS that the newsletter should be shared with MACs and that the reconstitution of the MSG should be included in the newsletter. Commenting on the newsletter, the Minister of Agriculture advised that the word “scarce” should be

removed from the story caption because it is a national indictment of Liberia which is not a reality that should be sent out there. The Newsletter was then approved with those clarifications.

- F. **Staff Retreat-** the HoS also informed the MSG that the Secretariat was planning a retreat and needed their approval. The MSG approved the staff retreat once funding was available.
- G. **MSG Scorecard-** the HoS reminded the MSG that at their retreat in Grand Bassa in February of 2021, they agreed that a committee will be established to work on the issue of MSG scorecard. But the Chair of the MSG said the Body does not remember taking such decision and therefore admonished the HOS to provide documentation to that effect in the next meeting.
- H. **MSG Committees-** the HoS urged the MSG to consider constituting the various MSG committees. The MSG agreed that the Secretariat will send email to MSG members to solicit their preferred committees.
- I. **Staff capacity upgrade-** the HoS informed the MSG that there was a need to approved local and international trainings for staff because the AfDB grant will expire in June. Mr. Witherspoon stated that while the grant might expire in June, the training will continue once it is paid for. With that the MSG agreed through a consensus to approve the trainings.

6. AOB

Under AOB, the following were discussed:

- A. The Chairman raised the issue of limitation on the amount of money the Secretariat can withdraw without MSG's approval. He stated that given current realities, there was need to give the HoS some financial flexibility to run the Secretariat. Commenting on the issue of the spending limit of the HoS, Mr. Dennis (LRA) advised that the MSG should first look at the spending range or record of the entity to inform their decision on the matter. But Minister Cooper indicated that the logistical and financial aspects of running an entity make valid the need to increase the spending limit and give the HoS some flexibility The Body then agreed that the Finance & Administration Committee deliberate on the issue and report to it.
- B. Hon. Carlton Miller expressed concerns over delays the Finance and Administration committee's work and advised that old committees usually continue working until the new ones are constituted in such dispensation. Mr. Eric Daniels suggested that a vote be taken to request the committee to continue

working. But a consensus was sought after which the MSG agreed that the old committees should continue working pending the constitution of new committees

- C. On the issue of MSG's honorarium, the Chair indicated that the MoJ has given an opinion on the matter which makes boards receiving fees legal. Additionally, it was agreed that the Finance and Administration Committee look at the issue of increment in MSG members' honorarium.

At this point, Mr. Witherspoon moved that the meeting be adjourned until the next call meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Summary of key points

- MSG reviewed and approved the last meeting minutes after with minor typographical corrections.
- The Body also endorsed the reintroduction of the quarterly Newsletter with minor recommendations to some contents of the October-December 2021 edition
- MSG also approved the capacity building initiative that the Head of Secretariat had initiated for staff members with funding from the AfDB
- The MSG, through a consensus, approved a proposed staff retreat for the Secretariat provided the Secretariat can secure funding for the activity.
- The MSG wants the Secretariat to engage donors and international Partners to fund gaps within the LEITI Budget.
- On the issue of staff salary increment, the MSG mandated its Administration and Finance Committee to review the available proposals and report to it as soon as possible.
- The MSG also approved the **TOR** of the 13th and 14th EITI Reports as well as the time table for the production of these Reports.
- 15 persons-12 males, 3 females attended the sitting

ANNEX I

LEITI SECRETARIAT UPDATE- JANUARY 2022

REPORTS

1. **13th and 14th EITI Reports for Liberia:** On October 15, 2021, the Secretariat presented a draft financial proposal to the MSG to prepare the 13th and 14th EITI reports. Due to the proposal's reasonable cost, the MSG unanimously agreed to proceed with the draft proposal. However, the MSG advised the Secretariat to follow all the PPCC related requirements in finalizing the submission. The estimated cost for the production of the two reports was USD 150,000.00. The TOR has been completed and shared with the MSG for inputs and approval. (**MSG Decision on the Approval of the TOR**)
2. **2020/2021 Annual Progress Report-**the Secretariat is completing the draft of the combined APR for 2020/2021. Upon completion at the end of the month, the Secretariat will send it to the MSG members for review and input before finalization.
3. **Summary Report:** The Secretariat is completing the summary of the 12th EITI report and will submit the same to the MSG at the end of the month for reviews and inputs before finalization.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATION FROM THE 10TH AND 11TH REPORT

1. The Secretariat has begun implementing recommendations from the 10th, 11th, and 12th reports. Specifically, Recommendation # 6 of the 10th and 11th reports pinpointed the lack of LEITI Focal Persons at various MACs and companies. To ensure implementation of the recommendation, the Secretariat has written all reporting MACs to nominate a focal person for LEITI activities during the reporting period. The Secretariat is pleased to inform you that this recommendation has been fully implemented.

VALIDATION

1. Upon review and approval of the validation templates, the Secretariat submitted them to the International Secretariat on December 31, 2021. The International Secretariat is currently reviewing the templates, and we expect to receive and respond to preliminary findings in early February. During the Stakeholder's consultation, the International Secretariat will reach out either individually or collectively to members of the MSG as part of the validation. Hence, the Secretariat asks for your accurate response to the International Secretariat questionnaires.

CONTRACT TRANSPARENCY MAPPING

- I. The International Secretariat reached out to the LEITI Secretariat late last year to support contract transparency mapping in Liberia. A Consultant was hired to work with the LEITI Secretariat to ensure adherence to the above requirement. As part of the consultancy, work with the MSG is being arranged to present an overview of the consultancy and seek the MSG's input in preparing the draft report. The MSG will be informed once a timeline is agreed with the International Secretariat and the consultant.

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE REGISTRY

- I. The International Secretariat, Opening Extractive, LEITI, LRA, LPRA, and LBR are finalizing a draft workplan to roll out various activities geared towards establishing a Beneficial Ownership Registry.

MAINSTREAMING

- I. The Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has finalized the procurement and selection of a consultant to update the Mainstreaming Feasibility Study. The consultant will start work in February, and a final report will be ready for the MSG approval in March

RECRUITMENT OF THE DEPUTY HEAD OF SECRETARIAT

- I. As you are aware, the Secretariat is currently without a Deputy Head. It is recommended that the MSG finalizes the Deputy Head of the Secretariat selection. (**MSG Decision is needed**)

APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE MSG MEMBERS

- I. ***2.3.5 Alternates- the Amended MSG Policy Manual states:***

"Each constituency may nominate an alternate to the MSG, including observers. An Alternate may deputize for an MSG member at regular, emergency, and extraordinary meetings. When deputizing for an MSG member, the Alternate shall have the power to participate in discussions, vote, and generally perform all the functions of that MSG Member at such meetings for those with voting right. This does not apply to Alternates or Proxies of Observers".

2. Given the above, the Secretariat requests each appointed institution to kindly submit through a letter the name of the institution's Alternate on or before the close of the business day on Monday, January 31, 2022. (**MSG Decision is needed**)

MSG SCORECARD

1. 2.3.3 Attendance- the Amended MSG Policy Manual states:

All MSG members are expected to attend and fully participate in all meetings. The Secretariat shall include MSG members' scorecards as part of the minutes and plan for a monthly discussion from time to time. This scorecard shall also be available on the LEITI website and the general public.

However, at the MSG retreat in Grand Bassa County in February of 2021, the MSG unanimously agreed to remove the responsibility for preparing the scorecard from the Secretariat to a committee to be established by the Chairperson.

2. The Secretariat recommends the establishment of the committee or a decision to return the responsibility for preparing and publishing the MSG Scorecard to the Secretariat. (**MSG Decision is needed**)

SETTING UP OF THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES

1. SECTION 3.0 BOARD COMMITTEES- the Amended Policy Manual states

"The MSG shall create committees to further specific issues. Any such committee shall include two or more MSG Members or their Alternates and official observers and, as far as is reasonable, reflect the multi-stakeholder nature of the LEITI. These committees shall make recommendations to the MSG for a final decision on specific issues addressed by the committees". The committees to be established are Governance, Membership and Ethics, Finance and Administration, and Reporting and Communication Committees.

2. Given the above, the Secretariat requests that the MSG kindly set up the various committees to comply with the MSG Policy Manual. (**MSG Decision is needed**)

NEWSLETTER

1. The Secretariat has completed and printed copies of the latest edition of its Newsletter. The quarterly Newsletter will also assist in preparing the Annual Progress Report at the end of each year.

WEBSITE

1. The Secretariat's website is currently undergoing gradual reconstruction. The Secretariat expects the MSG to formally launch the new website at the end of February 2022.

FACEBOOK

1. The Secretariat has reactivated its Facebook page. The page is regularly updated with current events to provide information to the public about the activities of the Secretariat.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING WORKSHOP

1. In December of 2021, the Secretariat conducted a Gender Mainstreaming Workshop with participants of various organizations. The participants mainly were females drawn from the government, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The workshop's objective was to ensure compliance with the EITI Standard of 2019 and involve women in the governance of the extractive industry.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. The LEITI Secretariat now has an updated communication strategy, which runs from 2021-2023. The Secretariat is developing a tentative budget to ensure full implementation of the strategy.

STAFF SALARY

1. The MSG last year requested the Secretariat and the previous Finance and Administration Committee to work around the improvement of staff salary at the Secretariat. The Secretariat has presented three-way salary scenarios to the committee for discussion and subsequent submission for review and approval.

STAFF TRAINING

1. MSG last year requested the Finance and Administration Committee to conduct a capacity need assessment of staff at the Secretariat to ensure fair use of the capacity building grant under the AfDB. However, due to Covid-19 and other situations, the committee didn't do the need assessment.
2. Given the above, the Secretariat requests the MSG approval to allow staff to attend short-term courses locally and internationally as the grant will expire at the end of June 2022. (**MSG Decision is needed**)

STAFF RETREAT

2. The last staff retreat at the Secretariat was held in 2015 in Margibi County. The Secretariat is requesting the MSG approval of a staff retreat to allow the Secretariat to conduct a self-assessment of its past and current activities and outline a strategic plan for the future amid post validation. . **(MSG Decision is needed)**

FUNDING

1. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has appropriated Four Hundred Ninety Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Nine (USD 490,849) for the LEITI Secretariat. This represents eighty percent of the total amount (611,446) the Secretariat projected to receive from the government of Liberia and thirty-one percent of the overall budget (1,540,446) needed for the year. The Secretariat has not received allotment for the new budget year, though it has applied to the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Office for its January allotment.
2. The remaining activities under the AfDB granting amounting to 300,000.00 are still being implemented by the Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. The activities are as follows: Updating of the Mainstreaming Feasibility Study, Beneficial Ownership Disclosure, Training of CSOs, and awarding of mini-grants to enhance their capacities, staff capacity, and erection of LEITI's Billboard throughout the country.