

MINUTES OF 1st MEETING

National Multi-Stakeholder Group Meeting

Fisheries Transparency Initiative

Date: Monday 22nd October 2018

Venue: Blue Economy Department, Oliaji Trade Centre, fourth floor

Time: 10am

Agenda

- A. Welcome by FiTI National Lead
 - B. Introduction of members of the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group
 - C. Presentation on FiTI by FiTI International Secretariat
 - D. Discussions on Terms of Reference (ToR)
 - E. Presentation of Illustrative Report for the FiTI in Seychelles
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A. WELCOME BY FiTI NATIONAL LEAD

The Department of the Blue Economy as the FiTI Lead Ministry started the meeting by welcoming all members of the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group.

The Principal Secretary for Fisheries - Mr. Jude Talma, who joined Principal Secretary for the Blue Economy, Ms. Rose-Marie Bargain and Mr. Philippe Michaud, FiTI National Lead, in welcoming all attendees, chaired the meeting.

The following members attended:

1. Mr. Jude Talma, Principal Secretary of Fisheries representing the Government
2. Ms. Chantal Ghislain, Honourable Member of the National Assembly
3. Mr. Roy Fonseka representing the Private Sector/Leader of the Opposition
4. Mrs. Marie-Thérèse Purvis, representing Civil Society (CEPS)
5. Mr. Peter Purvis, representing the Industrial Tuna Fishery

Absent with apologies

6. Grant Heyer, Civil Society (CEPS)

7. Mr. Julio Morón, OPAGAC
8. Mr. Keith Andre, FBOA

Invitees:

1. Mrs. Rose-Marie Bargain, Principal Secretary for the Department of the Blue Economy
2. Mr. Phillippe Michaud, FiTI National Lead and Special Adviser on Blue Economy to the Vice President
3. Ms. Fatime Kante, Economist for the Department of the Blue Economy
4. Mr. Sven Biermann. FiTI Director of FiTI International Secretariat

Objective

The main objective of the meeting was to:

- meet with all members of the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group (NMSG) and sensitize them on the FiTI and
- discuss the way forward for Seychelles FiTI

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS OF THE FITI NATIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The Chair invited members and invitees to briefly introduce themselves, which lasted 15 minutes. This was followed by a Presentation on the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI).

C. PRESENTATION ON FiTI

The Presentation on the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) was delivered in two parts:

- i.) Mr. Michaud briefed all members on the status of FiTI in Seychelles and
 - ii.) Mr. Sven Biermann (FiTI Director) focused on the FiTI in the general context.
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- i.) Mr. Philippe Michaud (FiTI National Lead) gave the status of the FiTI implementation in Seychelles.

Mr. Michaud stated the objective of FiTI being to promote sustainable and responsible use of fisheries resources by improving public awareness of fisheries through improved access to credible information on fisheries and promotion of stakeholder dialogue.

The FiTI Lead Ministry is Blue Economy and the FiTI National Lead is Mr. Michaud.

He informed the participants that Cabinet agreed to host the National FiTI Secretariat at the Seychelles Fishing Authority's office (SFA).

Ms. Kante was identified as the Focal FiTI liaison person for the Blue Economy as she has been involved with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) of which her experience would be useful for FiTI.

He also informed the participants that the FiTI International Secretariat will be based in Seychelles and is expected to transfer from Germany (mid-next year). Therefore, the Seychelles will host the international headquarter for the global initiative, as well as a National FiTI Secretariat for the Seychelles implementation of the FiTI, based at SFA.

- ii.) On the other hand, Mr. Sven Biermann proceeded by informing members that four countries are already implementing the sign-up steps in order to becoming an official FiTI implementing country, namely: Guinea, Indonesia, Mauritania, and Seychelles since its official launch in April 2017.

Two more countries have also publicly expressed their intention to join the FiTI: Nigeria and Senegal. The International Secretariat is in discussion with a number of other countries to establish a level playing field of transparency in fisheries through the FiTI.

Mr. Biermann's presentation focused on **Increasing transparency and participation for the benefit of a more sustainable management of marine fisheries.**

The Presentation captured the followings:

- Fisheries Transparency Initiative= the lack of transparency can: undermine the quality and credibility of public decision-making, diminish effective oversight and accountability, marginalize certain fisheries sub-sectors or actors
- The FiTI Standard has 12 FiTI transparency requirements against which all countries must report against whether information exists at all, and if information exists, whether information is publicly available as well as accessible.
- The Sign-up steps for countries = There's six steps in total, of which Seychelles now sees itself at step 4, where it has to submit its FiTI Candidate application to the FiTI International Board to become a FiTI Candidate. Afterwards, the Seychelles are expected to publish its first FiTI Report.
- The International Governance= The FiTI International Board is composed of a chair and an International Board, including representatives from the Civil Society, Business and Country governments.

Mr. Biermann insisted on the fact that FiTI is not owned by a single organization. It is a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership. He aligned the expected benefits of the FiTI and said that NMSG and all stakeholders have to be clear on what the FiTI is all about and that information on the Fisheries Sector should be made public and accessible to all.

D. DISCUSSIONS ON TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Mr. Michaud informed members that the Department of the Blue Economy will be submitting at the next meeting a draft Terms of Reference, for further discussions and comments from National Multi-Stakeholder Group (NMSG).

E. PRESENTATION OF ILLUSTRATIVE REPORT FOR THE FiTI IN SEYCHELLES

Mr. Biermann presented the Initial Assessment of compliance with the FiTI Standard: considerations for the National Multi-Stakeholder Group in Seychelles. This assessment was conducted by an external service provider. The Technical Advisor of the FiTI International Secretariat then consolidated the main findings of this assessment in the provided report.

The presentation focused:

- About FiTI and the role of the FiTI Report
- On how Seychelles measure on FiTI Transparency requirements?
- Challenges to completing the first FiTI report
- Opportunities for the NMSG to advance information for the Blue Economy.

This was followed by some questions, answers and contribution.

Questions & Answers/ Contribution

- a. Mrs. Bargain sought for clarification on the number of staff(s) expected to be employed by the International FiTI Secretariat. (Seychelles will be hosting how many staff)?

Answer= Mr. Biermann said that it is still in discussion, but there is currently two staffs. Only when it will be based in Seychelles, it will be increased to 4-6 staff. Future growth in the initiative will then also be reflected in the staff size of the International Secretariat. However, Mr. Biermann outlined that not all staff of the FiTI International Secretariat will be based in the Seychelles (e.g. FiTI Regional Coordinators should be based in their region).

- b. **Donor assistance**

Mr. Michaud informed the session that the FiTI International Secretariat, currently hosted by the German-based not-for-profit organization HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform, has recently received funding from the German Government to finance the global activities of the FiTI. This includes also the preparation of the required transition activities for the international headquarter to be relocated from Berlin to Victoria. He further outlined that there is an interest from the donor community, in particular for supporting countries' efforts in implementing the FiTI on a national level.

- c. Honorable Ghislain asked whether Seychelles FiTI will be incurring any cost? To be specific, who will be responsible to finance the management of the FiTI International Secretariat?

Answer= Mr. Michaud replied by confirming that there's been internal discussions to have the office located within the Oliaji Building and that the Department will be submitting proposals to the Ministry of Finance to assist with the FiTI matter. The Department is also looking into seeking for assistance from the World Bank, and others.

- d. Mr. Fonseka requested for more clarification on whether there is a mandatory contribution by countries implementing the FiTI? Furthermore, Mr. Purvis along with other members questioned on the amount that Seychelles is expected to pay for its membership fee and whether this has been decided?

Answer = Mr. Biermann confirmed that based on the decision during the 4th International Board meeting of the FiTI in June 2018, there will be mandatory contributions from countries starting 2019. The fees are structure according to the World Bank's four official income categories, and taking also into account whether the country qualifies as an Small Island Developing State (SIDS). The 2019 mandatory contribution by the Seychelles as a high-income country will be 50.000 USD. However, as the Seychelles qualify as an SIDS, this fee will be reduced by 50%, so that the final contribution is 25.000 USD.

- e. Mr. Fonseka also queried about appointment of representatives on the International FiTI Board

Answer= Mr. Biermann said that FiTI has the operational arm (International Secretariat), then 18 members from the International Board of which 6 from the government, 6 from business (3 from industrial fleet + 3 small scale) and 6 Civil Society. The Board has its own ToRs- and they make decision for FiTI. The Board meets twice a year. The Board also appoints the Director of the FiTI International Secretariat.

- f. Mr. Calvin Gerry wanted more clarity on potential countries joining this initiative and and that are expected to help finance the International Secretariat.

Answer= Mr. Biermann explained that a mix of financing options, comprising of the above mentioned contributions by FiTI implementing countries, but also through donor support from governmental and non-governmental actors.

- g. Mr. Purvis asked if the National Secretariat at SFA will be using its own resources to make the Secretariat operational?

Answer = Mr. Gerry reassured the members that they are currently doing the work being requested by FiTI, they also have space.

- h. Mr. Fonseka wanted to know if SFA had sufficient staffing?
Answer = Mr. Gerry confirmed that Yes and they are currently seeking for more staffs and until next year in 2019, who was also backed up by Mr. Talma. SFA will be going more autonomous as of next year. The Government will pay them a certain amount, which will have to be repaid by 2019 (so SFA will pay dividends to the Government).
- i. Mrs. Bargain added that FiTI will be an opportunity to build stronger partnership.

AOB/Way forward

1. The NMSG's meeting marked the opening of the Multi-Stakeholder Group. Now it has to be constitutionalized
2. Study to prepare sign-up step process currently ongoing
3. Seychelles needs to produce a Workplan in order to be able to submit a candidate application to the FiTI International Board, which is expected by the end of this year/early next year.
4. Seychelles are expected to produce its first FiTI report in 2019, covering data for 2018.
5. Blue Economy will circulate the draft FiTI NMSG Terms of Reference for comments and finalise Membership at the next meeting.
6. There's a report submitted by Mr. Andre Standing, which is a more concise version of the FiTI study report that was done. This report is a very good foundation of where Seychelles is at and what NMSG is expected to do as of next year. Electronic copies will be circulated.
7. The International Board meeting is in mid-December
8. SFA will arrange in making their data accessible and easily readable.
9. List of published documents will be provided.
10. Try to establish contact with FBOA to attend the next meeting.
11. The next meeting is planned for Thursday 22nd November at 10am.

Having no other matter to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.