



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

7th meeting of the FiTI International Board

9 September 2019, Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

ID: BM-07_2019_MM

Provided by: FiTI International Secretariat

Date: 04.11.2019

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Date	9 September 2019
Time	13.00 - 15.00 (Berlin time)
Venue	Conference Call (Skype for Business)
Hosted by	-
Input(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparatory Paper for 7th International Board (EN/FR) [ID: FiTI_BM-07_2019_PP] - Funding outline (2019 – 2022) for the FiTI International Secretariat (dated 16 July 2019), only in English

Outcomes of meeting

1. Welcome and Administration

The Chair of the FiTI International Board, Peter EIGEN, opened the meeting by welcoming the Board Members to the 7th meeting of the Board.

Apologies were noted from Mamadou Goudiaby (Government Group), Gaoussou GUEYE (Business Stakeholder Group), Sebastian LOSADA and Alfred SCHUMM (Civil Society Group). Mamadou delegated his voting authority to the Chair. No other proxies were assigned.

The Chair also informed the members that Ricardo Bernales (Business Group) resigned from the FiTI International Board end of July due to new professional assignments.

After all members joined the call, the Chair identified that a Quorum was again not reached¹, as not enough members (incl. proxies) of the Board attended the call.

Current total size of Board:	2/3 of total Board:		Actual attendance ² :	At least two Board Members per stakeholder group
14	9,3		9	Yes

The Chair recommended to the attending members that provisional decisions should be made during this call and that all members are able to object to the decisions recorded in these meeting minutes afterwards. The Board agreed to this procedure.

The Board also agreed on the Agenda.

The Chair proposed not to address the overview of tasks identified in previous meetings in order to allow for sufficient time regarding the other agenda items. This approach was approved.

¹ “At least two-thirds of the total number of Board Members, with at least two Board Members from each constituency, establish a quorum. “Terms of Reference of the FiTI International Board, para. 3

² Including proxy votes.

2. Update on current funding situation and transition

The Chair invited the International Secretariat to provide an update on the current funding situation.

- **Support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation**

Sven BIERMANN recalled the previous announcement by the FiTI Chair (15 July 2019) that the International Secretariat was able to secure a 2-year grant of US\$779,000 from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation for activities from July 2019 until June 2021. Sven emphasised that the Moore Foundation recognized that the FiTI will only become the envisioned game changer in oceans governance by adding value to global efforts seeking to increase transparency and multi-stakeholder participation *if the number of countries that adopt and implement the FiTI Standard continuously grows over the upcoming years*. At the same time, the FiTI must complement this growth by building a global partnership of stakeholders and putting measures in place to safeguard the integrity of the initiative.

Therefore the grant, which is given to the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA for financial administration, sets out ambitious targets:

- By December 2020, 2x African countries have conducted a multi-stakeholder assessment regarding the public availability of fisheries management information according to the global FiTI Standard
- By March 2021, 3x additional countries have been granted the “FiTI Candidate country” status by the FiTI International Board
- By March 2021, 4x new countries have commitment to implement the FiTI, thereof 2 non-African countries (focus on Latin America)
- By December 2020, the FiTI has established a global members’ base of at least 30 stakeholders (individuals/organisations), thereof 20% paying members
- By March 2021, the FiTI has contributed to the global debate on transparency in fisheries management by publishing 6x quarterly briefings (“tBrief”) in 3 different languages (EN, FR, ES)

The Chair thanked again the team for their tireless efforts in building a sustainable financial basis for the initiative and raised his hopes that through this financial momentum, the FiTI will also attract other donors in the future.

Sven stated further that with an initial financial stability now achieved for the International Secretariat in the Seychelles, he has submitted his resignation as the Managing Director of the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform by the end of 2019³ and will start the full-time position of Executive Director of the International Secretariat in the Seychelles by beginning of January 2020. Sven and his family will relocate by the end of December.

The Chair then asked the International Board whether he would be authorised to negotiate on behalf of the Board the concrete terms of Sven's employment contract and relocation package. The Chair voiced this matter openly, raising the close collaboration between him and Sven over the last few years. The Chair stated further that he might seek external assistance in reviewing the terms.

The Board members did not perceive this as a Conflict of Interest and reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-07_2019_D-01]:

The Board approved the authorisation of the Chair to negotiate the concrete terms of the Executive Director's employment contract and relocation package.

- **Requests by the Government of Seychelles to the World Bank's new Multi-Donor Trust Fund PROBLUE**

Sven informed the International Board that negotiations between the Government of Seychelles and the World Bank are still ongoing and that an upcoming World Bank mission (scheduled for October 2019) will be used to make further progress on this matter. He also reminded the Board that if funding is granted, it cannot be expected until mid of 2020 and that any provided funding can only be used to cover material costs. Therefore, personnel costs from the staff employed by the FiTI International Secretariat will not be covered through this fund.

- **Transition of the International Secretariat to the Seychelles**

Sven recalled that the official opening celebration of the International Secretariat took place on 28 May 2019 in Victoria/Seychelles. The ceremony was attended by the President of Seychelles, Danny Faure, Vice-President Vincent Meriton, members of the government and the diplomatic corps, as well approx. 70 national and international stakeholders. Sven thanked Philippe MICHAUD for his efforts in organising this prestigious event.

Sven further informed the Board that the International Secretariat is currently working on the following three major topics:

³ Sven will remain a shareholder in the non-profit organisation HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform.

- i. A formal **Headquarters Agreement** is currently being drafted which lays out the terms for the FiTI to establish its global operations in the Seychelles. A draft agreement as already been submitted for review to the relevant ministries in the Seychelles (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance) and it is expected that the agreement will be presented by the Vice President of the Seychelles to the Cabinet in late October / early November.
- ii. The International Secretariat is currently drafting the **constitution** for the new FiTI Association. This constitution will be presented to the International Board at the next Board Meeting. It is currently expected that the documents for legally establishing the FiTI Association will be submitted to the Seychelles Registrars' Office by latest end of November 2019.
- iii. The International Secretariat is also in the process of **hiring employees**. It is currently envisioned that, starting January 2020, the Executive Director and a new Administrative Assistant, Public Relations Coordinator and (possibly) a Membership Coordinator will be hired – all operating out of Seychelles. Furthermore, the team of the International Secretariat will then also encompass the Regional Coordinator for West Africa (Mansor NDOUR, based in Senegal), a new Regional Coordinator for Latin America, (possibly) a part-time fundraiser and the Secretariat's Technical Advisor (Dr. André Standing) – all based outside of Seychelles.

3. Update on identification of 2nd FiTI Chair

The Chair informed the International Board that after an intensive search and numerous discussions with a number of potential candidates, he is now proposing Ms. Valeria Merino to the FiTI International Board to become his successor.

The Chair requested the International Secretariat to send a Board Circular to members of the International Board no later than mid of October 2019 to obtain the official approval for appointing Ms. Merino as the 2nd FiTI Chair, starting 01 January 2020 for a three-year term.

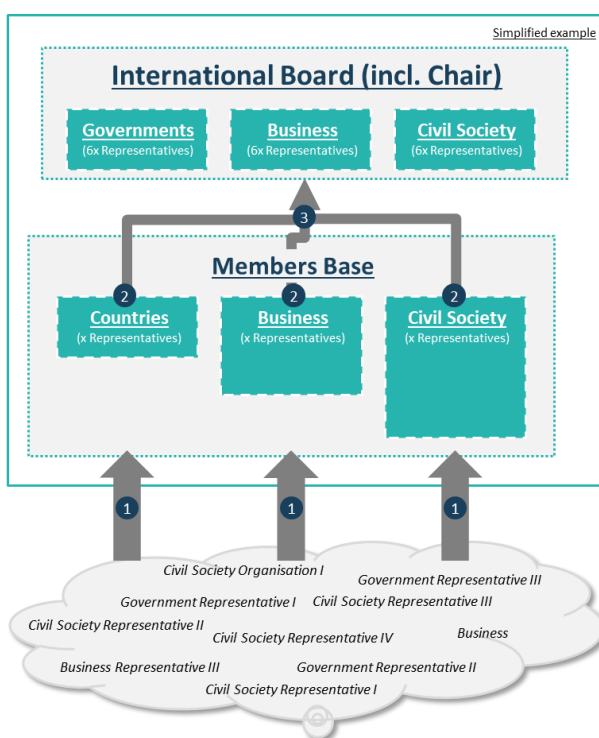
4. Personal vs. institutional membership

The Chair asked the International Secretariat to provide a brief introduction into this important topic. Sven outlined that over the past two decades there has been an enormous growth in collective action for international development. This is based primarily on the commonly accepted understanding that complex and interlinked, global challenges, such as sustainable fisheries, cannot be tackled by unilateral actions alone, but rather through collaborative partnerships involving multiple actors.

For this reason, the FiTI has been established as such an “antagonistic cooperation” among different stakeholders. Their different positions, experiences, resources etc. have already benefited the initiative significantly by e.g. determining a global standard that defines for the first-time which information on the country’s fisheries sector must be published by governments in the public domain. However, multi-stakeholder initiatives – such as the FiTI – do not have the authority and regulatory power of governments. Instead, their sustainability is largely determined by whether the initiative is accepted by those directly targeted, closely related and other relevant parties. In other words, whether it is perceived as legitimate. Issues of representation, inclusiveness and transparency are therefore critical in building the necessary trust for legitimacy.

Sven further outlined that for the FiTI to be regarded as the preeminent global transparency initiative for marine fisheries information, its credibility and legitimacy are therefore critical success factors. And these are directly influenced by whether the FiTI is seen as inclusive; in other words, whether all relevant actors are able to participate in the initiative. The diversity of different stakeholders is a central feature of how the FiTI works, for national implementations as well as international governance.

The principles of inclusiveness and diversity were also key underlying rationales for the FiTI Board decision to choose a members’ association as the preferred vehicle to give the FiTI its own legal personality [BM-06_2019_D-03]. This will not only allow the FiTI to grow a global membership base, and therefore increase its legitimacy. The membership base will also form the pool from which Members of the International Board are regularly elected.



Each member of the Association is either a personal representative or an organisation

- 1 Each stakeholder group decides on its rules for appointing Members of the Association**
- 2 Each stakeholder group nominates Candidates for the Board**
- 3 The Members’ Meeting elects Members of the Board and the Chair**

However, Sven further stated that the recent 12-18 months have shown a number of **significant challenges for the FiTI when using personal membership**. In addition to minor issues, such as communicating the names of organisations when asked about the composition of the Board (instead of only individual names), or the misperception of some members that their organisation “owns” a seat in the Board, there are a number of aspects which should be considered:

- Changes to the Board, e.g. when a *Board Member resigns*, trigger a cumbersome procedure for replacement. According to the Terms of References, vacancies due to resignation or removal of a Board Member shall be filled by the former Board Member’s Alternate. As the FiTI is currently already struggling to fill all Board Member seats, the concept of Alternates is barely used. Furthermore, in the absence of Alternates, the relevant stakeholder group shall nominate a new Board Member to be elected by the FiTI International Board. Thus, the affected stakeholder groups must first identify a suitable candidate, then the stakeholder group must approve this candidate and then the candidate is presented to the entire International Board for approval. Such a process can require multiple months, often with support from the International Secretariat and requires significant attention from the International Secretariat. The frequent changes in the government of Mauritania illustrate this challenge.
- There is a perceived *lack of buy-in for the FiTI from some organizations* for which Board Members are working. While individual Board Members are committed to the cause of the FiTI, it has shown that others within their organization may not even be aware of the FiTI (e.g. side event at Our Oceans Conference 2018).
- Some Members of the Board stated the difficulty to *justify time and (travel) expenses* within their own organisations in order to participate in the International Board, if they are not representing their organisation, but are acting in their own personal capacity.
- In order to establish a sustainable financial base for the FiTI, the International Board introduced mandatory annual *financial contributions* from participating countries. In the future, it may also be envisioned that non-governmental actors becoming a member of the FiTI Association will contribute through regular financial support. While such contributions are not up for discussion yet, the possibility of obtaining such regular funding support is almost completely ruled out if membership is bound to an individual person, and not the organization itself.

Sven emphasised therefore the need that in the process of designing the most sustainable setup of the FiTI Association, the aspect of personal vs. institutional membership is revisited.

The Chair then opened the discussion on this topic. Fruitful discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of personal membership took place, weighting e.g. the benefit of individuals being able to easier join the FiTI Association (instead of the organisation they work for) vs. the potential lack of organisational buy-in. It was further acknowledged that serious challenges

concerning members not being able to attend meetings exist and that these challenges must be addressed rapidly (e.g. through the utilisation of alternates) as it hampers the decision-making process.

Also, the aspect that, in case membership is allowed to individuals and organisations, each individual would have the same voting power as a single (large) organisation was raised.

Overall, Board Members confirmed the importance but also complexity of this matter, but no clear majority regarding personal membership only, organisational membership only, or a mix of both materialised during this meeting. Therefore, it was requested that additional stakeholder consultations should take place afterwards. The Board agreed that feedback from these consultations should be sent to the International Secretariat no later than 20 September 2019 and that these outcomes and derived decisions will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Based on the initial discussions during the Board meeting and the feedback submitted afterwards⁴, the Board reached the following decisions:

Decision [BM-07_2019_D-02]:

Membership in the FiTI Association shall be open to any individual over 18 years as well as businesses and civil society organisations interested in enhancing transparency and multi-stakeholder participation in fisheries, good ocean governance or wider areas of open government and access to information.

Individual membership shall be limited to up to two representatives from one organisation.

Organisations that wish to become a member of the FiTI Association shall nominate a representative as focal point from within their organisation, but may replace this

⁴ Out of 14 Board members, the following six responses were sent to the International Secretariat.

- *"I do not have a strong view concerning whether or not FiTI should be based on personal or institutional membership... I would opt for option 2 but I would be happy to go along with the most realistic and practical solution."*
- *"I prefer the institutional membership for the Stakeholder groups... And I prefer the separate voting for representatives of each Stakeholder group"*
- *„I agree with the...FiTI as association, established on personnel and institutional membership.“*
- *„I am for more flexible option which provides for both individual and corporate participation.“*
- *„I will be inclined for a mixed approach of individual and institutional membership. That been said, if a mixed approach is considered, we will need to think in how to solve issues about individual vs organizational voting or to avoid delays in decisions due to the incapacity of institutional representatives to take decisions without consulting and getting consent from their organizations.“*
- *"I do not have a strong view on this topic, but I do understand that problems with members being unable to attend meetings, for whatever eligible reason, hampers decision making. So after giving this some thought I believe that option two, a combination of personal and institutional membership, is probably the most likely option to improve attendance at board meetings.“*

representative if needed. A written explanatory notice must be sent to the Chair. The organisation must also ensure a proper handover.

Decision [BM-07_2019_D-03]:

The number of seats of the FiTI International Board will be reduced from currently 18 to 12, but remain equally distributed amongst representatives of the three stakeholder groups.

Individual members as well as organisational members of the FiTI Association are eligible to be elected for a seat in the FiTI International Board.

Individual members of the FiTI Association are only eligible to become a Member of the FiTI International Board if she/he names an Alternate from the same stakeholder group, who is also a member of the FiTI Association.

Organisations who are elected to the FiTI International Board must nominate a representative as focal point from within their organisation, but may replace this representative with another person from their organisation, if needed. In any case, the elected organisation must ensure that one person is participating in FiTI International Board Meetings.

These decisions will be gradually applied to the current International Board (including whether current Board Members want to become an individual member of the FiTI Association or whether their organisation becomes a member), but they should be fully applied no later than 31 December 2020.

5. Topics and process for quarterly “Transparency briefs”

The Chair outlined that as part of the 2-year grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the FiTI is now able to contribute to national and global debates about transparency and multi-stakeholder participation as underlying principles of good oceans governance. Specifically, this means that the FiTI is obliged to publish 6x quarterly briefings (“tBrief”) in 3 different languages (EN, FR, ES) between October 2019 and March 2021. Each briefing must reach at least 300 stakeholders.

Sven stated that these briefings will be written by the FiTI’s Technical Advisor, André Standing in close collaboration with the International Secretariat. Further, he recommended that a small Editorial Committee will be setup by Members of the International Board to determine the topics and key messages for each briefing and function as a review and approval instance.

The Board reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-07_2019_D-04]:

The Board agreed to establish an Editorial Committee, which identifies topics and serves as the review and approval instance for these briefings. María José CORNAX and Ylva MATTSSON volunteered to form this Committee. The International Secretariat was tasked to identify one additional member from the business stakeholder group.

6. Date and mode of the 8th International Board meeting

The Chair outlined that the next meeting of the FiTI International Board should focus primarily on the constitution of the FiTI Association. The Chair asked the FiTI International Secretariat to provide relevant background information on this topic as part of the regular preparatory document.

The Chair proposed that the 8th meeting of the FiTI International Board will be conducted as a 1,5-hour global conference call either on:

- Monday, 4 November 2019 (1 p.m. Berlin time), or
- Monday, 11 November 2019 (1 p.m. Berlin time)

The Board reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-07_2019_D-01]:

The Board agreed to conduct the 8th International Board meeting as a 1,5-hour conference call on Monday, 11 November 2019 (1 p.m. Berlin time). The key focus of this meeting will be on the constitution of the FiTI Association.

7. Closing

The Chair thanked the Members of the Board for their participation in the 7th meeting.

7th International Board Meeting ended

APPENDIX I: List of Participants

Chair

Peter EIGEN

Stakeholder Group of Governments

Ylva MATTSSON

Philippe MICHAUD

Mohamed Salem NANY

Excused:

Mamadou GOUDIABY (voting delegated to FiTI Chair)

Stakeholder Group of Business

Alexander BIRYUKOV

Francisco LEOTTE

Excused:

Gaoussou GUEYE

Not excused:

Marthin HADIWINATA

Stakeholder Group of Civil Society

María José CORNAX

Nedwa NECH

Eduardo ROLÓN

Excused:

Sebastián LOSADA

Alfred SCHUMM

Not excused:

Francisco MARI

Observers

None

FiTI International Secretariat

Sven BIERMANN

Mansor NDOUR

André STANDING

APPENDIX II: Initial Agenda

Agenda item	Type ⁵	Time (Berlin)
1. Welcome and Administration	① / ☑	1.00 – 1.10 p.m.
2. Update on current funding situation and transition	①	1.10 – 1.35 p.m.
3. Update on identification of 2 nd FiTI Chair	①	1.35 – 1.50 p.m.
4. Personal vs. institutional membership	☑	1.50 – 2.30 p.m.
5. Topics and process for quarterly “Transparency briefs”	☑	2.30 – 2.45 p.m.
6. Date and mode of the 8th International Board meeting	☑	2.45 – 2.55 p.m.
7. Closing	①	2.55 – 3.00 p.m.

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen, Chair of the FiTI International Board.

⁵ ① Agenda item is primarily for information; ☑ Agenda item requires decision