



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

13th meeting of the FiTI International Board

1 July 2021, Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

ID: BM-13_2021_MM

Provided by: FiTI International Secretariat

Date: 21.07.2021

Table of Contents

OUTCOMES OF MEETING3

1. WELCOME AND ADMINISTRATION 3

2. 2021 MEMBERSHIP ELECTION FOR THE FiTI ASSOCIATION 4

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF 2X NEW WORKING GROUPS 8

4. OVERVIEW OF NEW TAKING STOCK PROGRAMME 8

5. NEXT BOARD MEETING(S) 11

6. CLOSING 11

APPENDIX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 12

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Date | 1 July 2021 |
| Time | Noon – 2.00 p.m. (Greenwich Mean Time) |
| Venue | Global Conference Call (Zoom) |
| Supporting document(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2021 membership election for the FiTI association [draft], version: 22 June 2021 |

Outcomes of meeting

1. Welcome and Administration

The Chair of the FiTI International Board, Valeria MERINO, opened the 13th International Board meeting by welcoming all participating members.

Apologies were noted prior to the meeting from Francisco LEOTTE (Business stakeholder group) and Julien MILLION (Observer). Francisco assigned Philippe MICHAUD as his proxy.

Prior to the meeting, the Board Members were informed that the updated constitution of the FiTI association [approved during the 12th FiTI International Board Meeting; Decision-ID: BM-12_2021_D-04] has also been officially confirmed by the Department of Legal Affairs of the Registration Division of the Republic of Seychelles.

Based on the updated constitution it was determined that a quorum for this meeting was reached:

Determination of a quorum

*'No binding decision shall be made in an FiTI International Board meeting unless a quorum is present at the time of making the decision. Half of the total number of members (including proxies), with at least two members from each stakeholder group, forms a quorum.'*¹

| Pro-rated attendance of Board Members ² : | At least two Board Members per stakeholder group? | Attendance of Observers: |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| 15 out of 18 votes | Yes | 2 |

In her opening remarks, the Chair recalled that the updated constitution did not only cover an expansion of the International Board from 12 to 18 members, but also the elimination

¹ Article 14 (7) of the constitution of the association of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (as of 13 May 2021).

² 'Every member has one vote, unless the current total number of members is not equally distributed among the stakeholder groups stated in Article 8. In such a case, voting power shall be determined on a pro-rated system, ensuring that all stakeholder groups have equal voting power.' Article 14 (7) of the constitution of the association of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (as of 13 May 2021).

As not all 18 seats have been filled for this Board meeting, the pro-rated voting powers for the 13th FiTI International Board meeting were determined as follows:

- **Government sector:** Currently three active Board Members → each Board Member carries two votes
- **Business sector:** Currently three active Board Members → each Board Member carries two votes
- **Social sector:** Currently six active Board Members → each Board Member carries one vote

of the previous 'Alternate' rule, which stated that Board Members could utilize alternates to attend the meeting on their behalf. While no alternates were used for the 'Government sector' and 'Business sector' stakeholder group, Ahmed SENHOURY served as an alternate for the Board Members of the Civil Society Group. Consequently, the change to the constitution affected Ahmed's role in the Board. Based on discussions between the Chair and Ahmed, he agreed to continue serving on the Board until the end of 2021 as a Board member with immediate effect (as of 26 June 2021). This allows the FiTI International Board to benefit from his views and experience for the next six months while the process to elect new Board Members is implemented. The Chair stated further that as part of the upcoming election process, Ahmed's seat will be treated as vacant. Interested candidates will be invited to apply for this position, including Ahmed.

The Chair highlighted the recent press release by the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Organisations (CAOPA), congratulating Seychelles and Mauritania for the publication of their first FiTI Reports³. The press release included also a strong call for action for other African countries to get involved in this process, and for the African Union to support this process by continuing to advocate for the highest levels of transparency in fisheries and by considering providing political support to the FiTI. This should be considered a priority in order to make transparency in African fisheries a reality in line with the objectives of the International Year of Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022. The Chair thanked Gaoussou GUEYE for this important press release and emphasised that these kind of outreach activities are highly important to further incentivise stakeholder engagement.

2. 2021 membership election for the FiTI association

With the updated constitution of the FiTI association officially approved, the Chair stated that the FiTI is now able to embark on its first membership election process. A document was sent to the FiTI International Board (see supporting documents), providing detailed information regarding the proposed procedures for the FiTI's first election of members. The objective of this session was for current Board Members to discuss and approve the proposed election procedures of new members for the FiTI association.

The Chair stated that the election process seeks to attract capable candidates from a diversity of regions and backgrounds to establish a global membership to further strengthen the leadership of the FiTI in advancing transparency in marine fisheries management worldwide.

³ <https://caopa.org/en/caopa-congratulates-mauritania-and-seychelles-on-the-publication-of-their-first-fiti-report/29/06/2021/news/3399/>

The Chair added further that based on the FiTI International Board’s decision to extend the membership seats from 12 to 18, a total of *7 new membership seats* should be filled through this 2021 election process, distributed as follows:

| Stakeholder Group | Membership seats to be filled |
|-------------------|--|
| Government sector | 3 membership seats |
| Business sector | 1 membership seat for individuals from large-scale/industrial organisations along the marine fisheries value chain |
| | 2 membership seats for individuals from small-scale/artisanal organisations along the marine fisheries value chain |
| Social sector | 1 membership seat |

The term for the 7 newly elected members will be *3 years*, i.e. from 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2024. Members retire at the end of their term, but are eligible for re-nomination and *re-election once*.

Questions were raised by several Board Members regarding their own current terms of serving in the Board. The Chair stated with the founding resolution of the FiTI association, registered on 24 January 2020, the second term for all Board Members started, except Ahmed SENHOURY. Nevertheless, she requested that an overview is provided as part of these meeting minutes, as well as on the FiTI’s website⁴:

| Name | Stakeholder Group | Current term | No. of term(s) |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Alexander BIRYUKOV | Business sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Gaoussou GUEYE | Business sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Francisco LEOTTE | Business sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Sebastián LOSADA | Social sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Francisco J. MARÍ | Social sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |

⁴ <https://www.fiti.global/fiti-international-board>

| Name | Stakeholder Group | Current term | No. of term(s) |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Ylva MATTSSON | Government sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Philippe MICHAUD | Government sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Mohamed Salem NANY | Government sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Nedwa NECH | Social sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Alfred SCHUMM | Social sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |
| Ahmed SENHOURY | Social sector | 26 June 2021 – 31 December 2021 | 1. |
| Eduardo ROLÓN | Social sector | 24 January 2020 – 23 January 2023 | 2. |

The Chair noted that with 7 new Board Members being added by 1 January 2022, the Board has enacted a de facto staggering system, ensuring that a regular rotation of Board Members is possible, while at the same time avoiding major fluctuations within the Board.

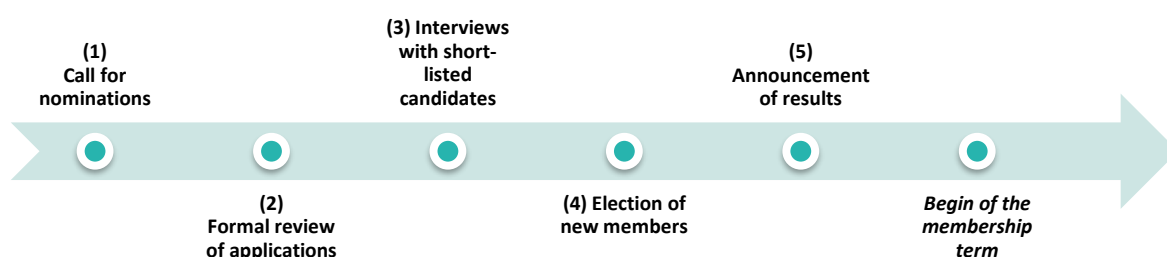
Salimata SOUMARE recognised that while only individuals can serve as members of the FiTI association, and thus as members of the FiTI International Board, she raised the question regarding possible substitutes within observer organisations. Sven BIERMANN mentioned the importance of dedicated focal points within the observer organisations. At the same time, the attendance of substitutes, in case focal points are unable to attend a meeting, was seen as unproblematic. This view was shared among all participants.

The aspect of language was raised by Nedwa NECH, as the proposed eligibility criteria for new members included that the working language of the FiTI International Board is English, and all candidates must be proficient in reading, writing, and speaking. Several participants stated that such a criterion might exclude some future candidates, but at the same time recognised the administrative and financial burden for the FiTI International Secretariat to interact and communicate in multiple languages, and the impact in the operation of the Board. Also, as the FiTI continues to expand into new regions and languages, the aspect was raised about how many languages should be served eventually. It was therefore confirmed that English is the working language of the FiTI International Board, but when the FiTI is growing further, in particular regarding its financial means, the aspect of adding other official languages should be reconsidered. Several Board Members also voiced their

expectations that in the near future, technology solutions might facilitate the simultaneous translation of meetings.

Marcio CASTRO DE SOUZA stated that he will provide via email, to the International Secretariat, additional comments and recommendations to improve the election process for new members.

The Chair briefly explained the key activities and milestones of the proposed election process:



| <u>Process step</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|--|--|
| (1) Call for nominations | 15 July – 31 August 2021 |
| (2) Formal review of nominations | 1 September – 26 September 2021 |
| (3) Interviews with short-listed candidates | 27 September – 24 October 2021 |
| (4) Election of new members | 25 October – 14 November 2021 |
| (5) Announcement of results | 15 November – 30 November 2021 |
| Begin of the membership term (2022 – 2024) | 1 January 2022 |

Finally, it was noted that the FiTI International Secretariat will aid the process, but will not make any decisions regarding nominees, or participate in the interview and voting process.

The participating Board Members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-13_2021_D-01]:

The Board approved the procedures for the 2021 membership election for the FiTI association, as presented in the draft version of 22 June 2021.

The Board continued its discussions regarding the upcoming election process, in particular exploring ideas regarding possible candidates that should be invited to submit an application. Several individuals and organisations were identified and documented by the FiTI International Secretariat. Also, it was stated that for government representatives, it

should be considered targeting technical/administrative colleagues, as such colleagues might not be subject to frequent changes, unlike their political colleagues.

Given the challenges that the FiTI faced in the past of recruiting representatives from government, business and civil society, the Chair emphasised the importance of every Board Member communicating this election process as widely as possible within their own networks. This should be done in addition to a global email campaign and postings on social media (e.g. Twitter and LinkedIn) by the FiTI International Secretariat. The election process will be launched on Thursday, 15 July 2021.

3. Establishment of 2x new Working Groups

During the last Board meeting (2 April 2021), several Board Members suggested that additional working groups could be established to further support the FiTI's overall objectives. This included in particular the following two aspects:

- ➡ *Transformational science/behavioural change management*
- ➡ *Finance / Investment stimulus for government transparency*

Given the advanced time during this Board meeting, the Chair proposed that she will send out a separate note to all Board Members in order to solicit input on these working groups, including possible key objectives, timeframe, members, required resources. This procedure was agreed by all participants.

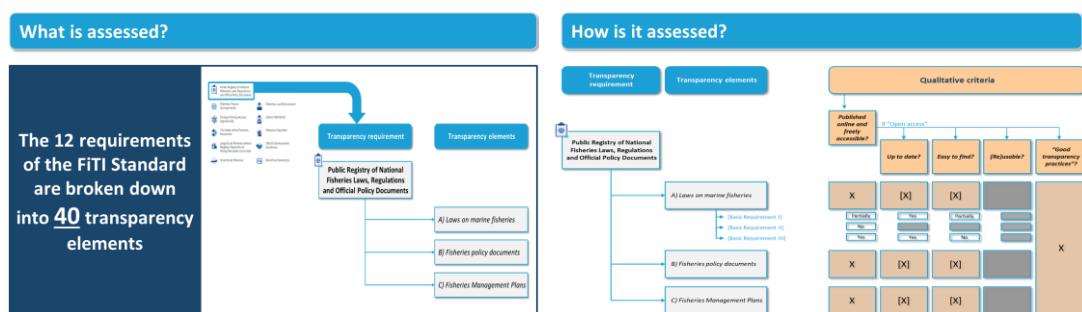
4. Overview of new TAKING STOCK programme

Sven BIERMANN stated that over the last 15 months, the FiTI International Secretariat has developed a new programme to assess the level of fisheries management information that is provided on government websites: *TAKING STOCK – Online Transparency of Fisheries Management Information*. This will not only reveal which information is already publicly available (in accordance with the FiTI Standard), and which is not. The assessment is also intended to provide a sound information basis to spark interest among various non-governmental stakeholders and serve as a foundation for capacity-building and communication endeavours.

However, the potential '*game changing*' effect is that these desktop assessments can be applied to all coastal countries globally (including large fishing countries, like China, Russia etc. that are unlikely to join FiTI any time soon, if at all) – subject to funding.

In addition to previous information provided to the FiTI International Board, e.g. as part of the Secretariat’s quarterly updates, Sven gave a brief overview of the methodology of this new programme, in particular regarding its core principles and assessment methodology:

- ➔ The assessment analysis whether *national (federal) information is published online by national authorities on their own websites*. The assessment does not:
 - try to capture and display the actual underlying information (e.g. number of vessels);
 - analyse whether information that is published by authorities is truthful or accurate (e.g. complete)⁵;
 - seek to highlight additional (non-governmental) information on the country’s marine fisheries (e.g. through reports published by research institutes, civil society or international organisations).
- ➔ Based on 12 thematic areas, as set out in the FiTI Standard, the assessment covers *40 transparency elements regarding a country’s marine capture fishery*, ranging from the publication of national laws, fisheries management plans, vessel registries, trade information, fisheries subsidies to beneficial ownership.
- ➔ The transparency elements are assessed against a number of *qualitative disclosure criteria*:
 - *Is basic information freely accessible on government websites?* If yes:
 - *Is the published information up to date?*
 - *Is the published information easy to find?*
 - *Is the published information (re)usable for further analysis?*



- ➔ *‘Good transparency practices’* are collated that recognise whether the published information allows non-experts to draw reliable conclusions from it.

⁵ Nevertheless, if compelling evidence of unreliable or contradicting information is found, this will be noted.

- ➔ Each assessment will be conducted as a *desk-based study* without relying on inputs or contributions from national authorities. However, the national authorities are informed about the launch of this assessment and will also have the opportunity to comment on the initial findings prior to the publication of the results.
- ➔ The assessment results will be summarized in a *non-confrontative, non-numerical way* and visualised in a report (published in the national language).
- ➔ The reports will be made *accessible to the wider public*.

Sven also thanked Ylva MATTSSON for her involvement during the proof-of-concept phase, which provided important feedback in the design phase of the methodology and the underlying assessment tool.

The Board Members highly welcomed this new programme and shared the Secretariat's enthusiasm that these assessments could serve as a 'door opener' for future discussions with interested stakeholders. Furthermore, several aspects were raised among the participants:

- ➔ Once these assessments reach a certain maturity level, it was suggested that regional or even global research partnerships with academic institutions might be pursued in order to broaden input for these assessments.
- ➔ It was strongly appreciated that the assessment does not result in numeric scores or even an index.
- ➔ The Chair voiced her expectations that in the future, such assessments could be commissioned from the FiTI for countries targeted by donors or development agencies. This would not only support further the mandate of the FiTI to increase understanding and awareness about transparency in fisheries management, but also open funding opportunities.

Sven stated further that the International Secretariat has already started three assessments in Latin America (Mexico, Ecuador, Peru – all funded by the Moore Foundation) as well as in Bangladesh (funded by the World Bank's PROBLUE multi-donor trust fund). It is currently envisioned that 4 additional assessments will be conducted throughout 2021 (i.e. Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mauritius, Comoros).

5. Next Board meeting(s)

The Chair recalled that during the last meeting (2 April 2021), the International Board approved that the FiTI International Secretariat should start preparing a 2-day face-to-face Board meeting in October or November 2021. In order to promote the first two FiTI Reports further, it was agreed that the meeting should take place in Brussels/Belgium, accompanied with possible side meetings at the European Commission and with members of the European Parliament.

The participants agreed that while certain positive trends in vaccination progress as well as case reductions can be observed, in particular in certain areas within Europe, it is currently too early to determine whether a physical meeting can take place in November.

The participating Board Members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-13_2021_D-02]:

The Board agreed that during the next (14th) FiTI International Board meeting a decision will be taken regarding a 2-day face-to-face Board meeting in November 2021 in Brussels. This next Board meeting should take place at the end of August/beginning of September 2021.

6. Closing

The Chair thanked the Members of the Board for their participation in the 13th meeting.

13th International Board Meeting ended

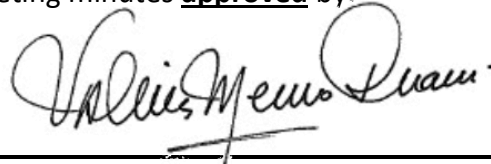
Meeting minutes **provided** by:



Mr Sven Biermann

Secretary of the meeting; Executive Director of the
FiTI International Secretariat

Meeting minutes **approved** by:



Dr Valeria Merino

Chair of the FiTI International Board.

APPENDIX I: List of Participants

Chair

Valeria MERINO

Stakeholder Group of Governments

Ylva MATTSSON [Voting power for this meeting: 2 votes]

Philippe MICHAUD [Voting power for this meeting: 4 votes]⁶

Not excused:

Mohamed Salem NANY

Stakeholder Group of Business

Alexander BIRYUKOV [Voting power for this meeting: 2 votes]

Gaoussou GUEYE (*partly present*) [Voting power for this meeting: 2 votes]

Excused

Francisco LEOTTE

Stakeholder Group of Civil Society

Francisco MARI [Voting power for this meeting: 1 vote]

Nedwa NECH [Voting power for this meeting: 1 vote]

Eduardo ROLÓN [Voting power for this meeting: 1 vote]

Alfred SCHUMM [Voting power for this meeting: 1 vote]

Ahmed SENHOURY [Voting power for this meeting: 1 vote]

Not excused:

Sebastián LOSADA

⁶ Due to a proxy vote assigned by Francisco LEOTTE.

Observers

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

Salimata SOUMARE, African Development Bank (AfDB)

Excused:

Julien MILLION, The World Bank Group

FiTI International Secretariat

Sven BIERMANN

Guests

None