



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

12th meeting of the FiTI International Board

15 April 2021, Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

ID: BM-12_2021_MM

Provided by: FiTI International Secretariat

Date: 13.05.2021

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Date	15 April 2021
Time	11.00 a.m. – 2.10 p.m. (Greenwich Mean Time)
Venue	Global Conference Call (Zoom)
Supporting document(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated 'Constitution of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative incorporated' [draft], version: 23 March 2021 '2021 Workplan of the FiTI International Secretariat' [draft], version: 17 March 2021 Annual Financial Statement of the FiTI association, 2020 [draft], version: 15 April 2021

Outcomes of meeting

1. Welcome and Administration

The Chair of the FiTI International Board, Dr Valeria MERINO, opened the 12th International Board meeting by welcoming all participating members.

Apologies were noted prior to the meeting from Sebastián LOSADA (Civil Society stakeholder group). Sebastian assigned Francisco MARI as his proxy.

After the participants joined the call, it was identified that a quorum was not reached.¹

Current total size of Board:	2/3 of total Board:	Attendance of Board members ² :	At least two Board Members per stakeholder group?	Attendance of Observers:
13	8,67	8	No	3

It was proposed by the Chair that provisional decisions should be made during this meeting and that absent Board Members are able to object to the decisions recorded in these meeting minutes afterwards. This procedure was approved by the participants.³

The FiTI Chair welcomed Julien MILLION as the *new representative for the World Bank*⁴, and thanked him for the continued support of the World Bank throughout the years, as well as his personal support for the initiative. Julien briefly introduced himself to the participants, stating that prior to this current position as Senior Fisheries Specialist at the World Bank, he worked extensively in marine fisheries over the last two decades. This included, inter alia, working as a Fisheries Expert with the Secretariat of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), based in Seychelles, as well as a consultant on several projects with the FAO in Somalia, Indian Ocean Commission and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Julien further stated that he has been working in close collaboration with the FiTI International Secretariat for more than 2 years now, in particular for advancing transparency in marine fisheries in the Western Indian Ocean

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.

³ During the meeting, two additional Board members partly, fulfilling the requirement of a quorum temporarily. Nevertheless, the decision to give all absent Board members the opportunity to object to the decisions was maintained.

⁴ Julien MILLION replaces Xavier VINCENT as the World Bank’s representative.

region. Sven BIERMANN thanked Julien for his support in the process of obtaining and managing the financial support for the FiTI from the World Bank's multi-donor trust fund PROBLUE.

In her opening remarks the FiTI Chair expressed her great satisfaction with the upcoming *launch of Seychelles' first FiTI Report*⁵ – the first country in the world to produce such a report following the FiTI Standard. This report does not only mark a monumental step for Seychelles, but for the entire global movement of increasing transparency for marine fisheries. This first ever report is published almost 4 years after the FiTI Standard has been approved during the 2nd FiTI International Conference in Bali/Indonesia.

She thanked Philippe MICHAUD for his commitment and dedication, not only serving as a member of the FiTI International Board, but also acting as the Chair of the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group in Seychelles. Philippe stated that this is indeed a great achievement and he expressed his hope that this report will increase the appreciation of the importance of Seychelles' fisheries sector, provide the basis for informed public debates, and also highlight what needs to be done to ensure that fisheries benefits us all. He further recognised that compiling this FiTI Report in a truly inclusive spirit during a global pandemic was not an easy task. In addition to the administrative challenges, including the restrictions of face-to-face meetings between stakeholders from government, business and civil society, it clearly required a mind shift towards 'open government'. A significant amount of information on Seychelles' fisheries sector is already collated by national authorities (e.g. the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy, the Seychelles Fishing Authority), but this information is often not accessible online. He highlighted further that as part of this first FiTI Report, previously unpublished information is now publicly available, while the report also shows several weaknesses in the availability of information. The National Multi-Stakeholder Group determined therefore 34 recommendations, with clear priorities and due dates for the national authorities to demonstrate improvements over time.⁶

⁵ For calendar year 2019.

⁶ *The FiTI Report was officially launched on Friday, 16 April 2021.* The Launch Forum was attended by the President of Seychelles, the Minister of Fisheries and the Blue Economy as well as around 50 members of the government, the diplomatic corps and national stakeholders within the fisheries sector.

Congratulatory video messages were shown from Mr Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean; Ms Idah Pswarayi-Riddihough, Country Director, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and Seychelles, Eastern and Southern Africa, The World Bank; Dr Nicholas Hardman-Mountford, Head of Oceans and Natural Resources, The Commonwealth Secretariat; Mr Audun Lem, Deputy-Director, Fisheries Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Dr Valeria Merino, Chair of International Board, Fisheries Transparency Initiative

The report is available for download: <http://www.sfa.sc/index.php/doc/publications/fiti-reports/summary/33-fiti-reports/111-seychelles-1stfiti-report-20210416>

Sven stated further that the FiTI International Secretariat is supporting the Seychelles' National Multi-Stakeholder Group in promoting the report among national and international stakeholders. He encouraged all Board Members and Observers to follow closely the launch of the report and promote it within their own networks, as well as on social media.

2. Housekeeping

I. Participation status of Board Members

In the last Board Meetings, 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.⁷ The Secretariat had already made several attempts to contact Mr. Hadiwinata and did not obtain any answer.

Francisco stated that he was unable to get in touch with Marthin.

The participating Board members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-01]:

In line with Article 18 of the FiTI's constitution, the Board approved the removal of Marthin HADIWINATA from the FiTI International Board and declared this seat as vacant, with immediate effect.

This vacant seat within the stakeholder group 'Business' will be included in the upcoming global election of FiTI International Board Members, scheduled for August/September 2021.

Furthermore, the FiTI Chair informed that Board Member *Mamadou GOUDIABY*, former Director of Marine Fisheries in the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy of Senegal is still listed as a Board Member for the government stakeholder group. However, Mamadou has left his position in Fall 2021 (while remaining in the Ministry of Fisheries) and did not inform the FiTI about the change in position. Furthermore, his successor has not been in contact with the FiTI to discuss a replacement scenario. The FiTI Chair sent an official letter on 13 April 2021 to the national authorities in Senegal (i.e. Directeur des Pêches Maritimes) requesting the nomination of a Senior Officer of the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy in Senegal. The FiTI Chair informed the Board that in case such a nomination is not received by 23 April 2021, this seat in the stakeholder group 'Government' will be

⁷ Decision ID: BM-10_2020_D-01

considered vacant and will be filled with another government representatives during the upcoming election of new Board members.⁸

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-02]:

In line with Article 18 of the FiTI's constitution, the Board approved the removal of Mamadou GOUDIABY from the FiTI International Board and declared this seat as vacant, with immediate effect.

II. Annual Financial Statement of the FiTI association for 2020

The FiTI Chair asked Sven BIERMANN to provide an overview of the annual financial statement of the FiTI association 2020⁹. Sven apologised for the late submission of this document, which did not allow the Board Members to review the statement with due care. Afterwards, Sven offered some opening remarks for this first financial statement of the FiTI association:

- ➡ The *responsibility to prepare annual financial statements* lies with Executive Committee of FiTI association (which is part of the FiTI International Secretariat).
- ➡ The Executive Committee engaged the national branch of the international accounting company *Baker Tilly Seychelles* to prepare this statement¹⁰, based on the association's books and records.
- ➡ As agreed by the FiTI International Board during its 10th meeting (24 September 2020), an additional *financial audit* will not be conducted for the 2020 financial statement during this calendar year, due to a lack of unrestricted funding for this audit¹¹. Instead, such an audit will be conducted in 2022 in conjunction with the 2021 financial statement.
- ➡ The *reporting currency* of the financial statement is Seychelles Rupees (SCR), whereas the *operating currencies of the FiTI* are Seychelles Rupees (SCR), US Dollars (USD), and EUROS (EUR).
- ➡ In compliance with donor requirements, the financial statement includes an overview of *expenses by nature and grant*.

⁸ By the time of publication of these meeting minutes, the national authorities of Senegal did not respond to the letter sent by the FiTI Chair. Therefore, *the membership of Mamadou GOUDIABY is revoked and the seat is considered vacant*.

⁹ Official name: Report of the Executive Committee and Financial Statements for the period ended December 31, 2020

¹⁰ Fiscal year: 24 January 2020 – 31 December 2020

¹¹ Decision ID: BM-10_2020_D-02.

- ➡ After approval by the FiTI International Board, the financial statement will be made *publicly available* on the FiTI's website and submitted to the Registrar General's Office Seychelles.

Sven continued by explaining key financial indicators and supporting notes:

Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2020 (aka Balance Sheet), page 5

What does the FiTI association own and owe?

ASSETS		
Non-current assets:		
Equipment	5	43,989
Current assets:		
Prepayment		1,141
Cash and bank balances	6	13,803,650
		<u>13,804,791</u>
Total assets		<u>13,848,780</u>

EQUITY, DEFERRED GRANT AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Retained surplus	12	3,972,704
Total equity		<u>3,972,704</u>
Deferred grants		
Non-current	7	1,648,415
Current	7	7,009,491
		<u>8,657,906</u>
Current liabilities:		
Trade and other payables	8	1,218,170
Total equity, deferred grants and Liabilities		<u>13,848,780</u>

Values shown in Seychelles Rupees (SCR)

Statement of Profit or Loss December 31, 2020 (aka Income Statement), page 6

How much did the FiTI association earn and spent in total during 2020?

Grants received	9	14,407,877
Projects direct costs	11	(3,700,969)
Gross profit		10,706,908
Other income	10	278,005
Operating profit		10,984,913
Employee costs	11	(1,935,380)
Administrative expenses	11	(455,937)
Foreign exchange gain	11	4,047,925
		12,641,521
Depreciation	5 & 11	(10,911)
Surplus for the period		<u>12,630,610</u>

Values shown in Seychelles Rupees (SCR)

**Breakdown of Profit or Loss December 31, 2020, page 23**

How did the FiTI association obtain and spend its money in 2020?

Income:

Grants income
Other income
Realised exchange gain
Unrealised exchange gain

Grants utilised and other expenses
Balances carried forward

Projects		Administration	Total
Moore grant	Irish Aid Grant	Retained surplus	
SCR	SCR	SCR	SCR
10,012,103	4,395,774	-	14,407,877
-	-	278,005	278,005
-	-	2,554	2,554
-	-	4,045,371	4,045,371
10,012,103	4,395,774	4,325,930	18,733,807
(5,623,811)	(126,160)	(353,226)	(6,103,197)
4,388,292	4,269,614	3,972,704	12,630,610

**Detailed breakdown of costs
December 31, 2020, page 22**

How exactly did the FiTI association spend its money in 2020 (i.e. cost categories)?

	Moore Foundation SCR	IrishAid SCR	General administration SCR	Total SCR
Communication and outreach				
Design	176,229	-	-	176,229
Editorial	13,159	-	-	13,159
Media placement	4,793	-	-	4,793
Printing	5,247	-	728	5,975
Promotional material/accessories	-	-	8,050	8,050
Translation	71,789	-	-	71,789
	271,217	-	8,778	279,995
FiTI chair, coordinators and advisors				
Advisor(s)	380,812	-	-	380,812
FiTI Chair	878,757	-	-	878,757
Regional Coordinators	1,388,561	117,508	-	1,506,069
	2,648,130	117,508	-	2,765,638
Partners and experts				
Other Sub-contractors	105,700	-	-	105,700
Sub-Contractors & National Partners	549,636	-	-	549,636
	655,336	-	-	655,336
Direct costs	3,574,683	117,508	8,778	3,700,969
Employee costs				
Salaries and allowances	1,897,372	8,400	-	1,905,772
Pension contributions - Employer	9,996	252	-	10,248
Other staff costs	-	-	19,360	19,360
	1,907,368	8,652	19,360	1,935,380
Administrative expenses				
Internet Services	-	-	21,017	21,017
IT equipment	-	-	14,490	14,490
Postal Services	-	-	3,272	3,272
Software	32,324	-	31,050	63,374
Bank charges	29,578	-	1,169	30,747
Legal and professional fees	-	-	10,417	10,417
Accounting and audit services	-	-	125,052	125,052
Meals and entertainment	1,056	-	3,452	4,508
Office expenses	-	-	13,891	13,891
Other general expenses	-	-	89,017	89,017
Travelling expenses	78,802	-	1,350	80,152
	141,760	-	314,177	455,937
Depreciation	-	-	10,911	10,911
Total costs	5,623,811	126,160	353,226	6,103,197

Values shown in Seychelles Rupees (SCR)

Given the insufficient time for the Board Members to review the document prior to the meeting, the FiTI Chair proposed that the annual financial statement for 2020 is temporary approved by the Board, but each Board Member can object to this decision during the review period of these meeting minutes. This will allow sufficient time to review this important document in more detail.

The participating Board members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-03]:

The presented 'Report of the Executive Committee and Financial Statements for the period ended December 31, 2020' for the association of the FiTI was approved by the Board.

The International Secretariat was instructed to publish this document on the website of the FiTI and to submit the document to the Registrar General's Office Seychelles.

3. Updates from Board Members

In addition to the information provided by Philippe MICHAUD regarding the launch of Seychelles' first FiTI Report, the following updates were given by Board Members:

- ➡ *Update on the status of Mauritania's first FiTI Report:* Ms Nedwa NECH informed the Board that the review of Mauritania's first report, covering calendar year 2018, is nearly finished and is now awaiting approval from the National Multi-Stakeholder Group. The report will cover the first six transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard. Significant improvements have been made since the first draft, in particular regarding information of large-scale fishery in Mauritania. This was reiterated by Mr Ahmed SENHOURY who stated that due to the high commitment of the two engaged Report Compilers and the close collaboration with the FiTI International Secretariat, the current report made significant advancements on multiple fronts. This includes the provision of previously unpublished information, as well as presenting the information in an easy-to-understand format (similar to the Seychelles report). Ahmed stated further that the personal involvement of the Minister of Fisheries in Mauritania contributed significantly to the release of information. It is now expected that the National Multi-Stakeholder Group will meet at the end of April to determine their recommendations to the national authorities and approve the overall report.

Sven stated that the FiTI International Secretariat has already reached out to the national authorities and the Multi-Stakeholder Group to support the promotion of this report, e.g. through a global email campaign and personal communication with key organisations. On this regard, the FiTI Chair stated that she is already in contact with the Ambassador of Mauritania to the US on how to promote this achievement among 'Washington-based' inter-/governmental organisations, such as the World Bank, IMF, USAID etc. She urged therefore that the report will be released very soon to meet international expectations.

- ➡ *New study on socio-economic benefits of government transparency in fisheries management:* Ylva MATTSSON stated that the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) recently announced the start of a study that seeks to analyse market and non-market based benefits to incentivise governments to proactively publish information on marine fisheries management. Ylva highlighted that most prominently, transparency is linked to enhance effective oversight and accountability. Yet, there is very little research or evidence available where market or non-market based benefits stimulate governments to proactively publish information on marine fisheries management. With this study, the SwAM seeks to close this gap. The Board Members highly welcomed this upcoming study and clearly confirmed its relevance and timeliness for positioning transparency in marine fisheries management as a value-adding approach for countries.

Based on these positive development and initiatives taken by Board Members, additional aspects and ideas were discussed:

- ➡ Continuing the discussions on incentives, the *importance of financial institutions to stimulate enhance government transparency* was discussed. Alfred SCHUMM stated that WWF conducted a study on incentives from financial institutions, in particular targeted at the seafood market, a few years back and that this new SwAM study could potentially benefit from some of the findings and applied methodologies. He committed to make this study available to Ylva and the FiTI International Secretariat. Francisco LEOTTE stated that financial institutions can play a significant role in incentivising key actors in the global fisheries industry, going beyond traditional players, such as banks and institutional investors, to new forms of financial supporters, e.g. coming from impact investors. During the course of this discussion, a number of questions were highlighted:
 - What types of *government-driven fisheries activities* are typical subject to external financing (e.g. fisheries infrastructures, stock assessments, monitoring, controlling & surveillance activities)?
 - *How* and by *whom* are these fisheries activities financed (e.g. through lending or investments, by private or public institutions)?
 - In addition to a *direct approach* (i.e. financial institutions include transparency requirements in their financing provisions to governments), could an *indirect approach* also be pursued (i.e. financial institutions provide financing to businesses (e.g. fishing companies) on the condition of demanding certain transparency standards in countries they operate in)?

- What are the key *rationales* for financial institutions to include transparency requirements in their lending/investment decisions (e.g. financial risk minimisation, reputational aspects, resource sustainability)?
- How can the *FiTI Reports* (as well as the upcoming *‘Taking Stock’ assessments*) support financial institutions in their decision-making processes?

It was agreed that this topic should be discussed during one of the upcoming meetings.

- ➡ Furthermore, Alfred stimulated that the Board should start including experts on relevant *transformational science/behavioural change management*. This could further support the FiTI’s mission of not only ensuring that more information on a country’s fisheries management is published online, but that this information leads to transformational change within the sector. The participating Board Members confirmed the relevance of such expertise. Different opinions were voiced whether to include such experts within the Board – and its implications for the Board’s current stakeholder structure – or whether to start with a Board-supervised Working Group, where members of the Board and external experts can start exploring new approaches. It was agreed that this topic should be discussed during one of the upcoming meetings.

4. Constitution of the FiTI association

The FiTI Chair recalled that during the last Board meeting (19 November 2020), several Board Members from the business and civil society stakeholder groups raised serious doubts about the feasibility of having organizations joining the FiTI association as members. Several challenges were mentioned that could hinder their own organization joining the FiTI. This conversation led to the realization that *the FiTI would confront significant difficulties in building a broad membership* based on governments as well as large or complex social or business entities.

The FiTI Chair briefly presented the core parameters of a *new 2-part proposal*, developed in collaboration with the FiTI International Secretariat, seeking to balance legal membership obligations for the Seychelles-based FiTI association with being able to engage many relevant actors globally. Also, the Chair mentioned that she spent one hour on average on the phone with each Board members to talk about the amendment of the Constitution and hear their concerns and answer any questions.

- 1) Updating the current constitution regarding new membership procedures based on the following guidelines:

- ➡ The FiTI association will maintain its 'membership' orientation in order to comply with Seychellois law.
- ➡ The sole responsibility of members of the FiTI association will be to serve in the International Board; therefore, the current membership body (i.e. Members' meeting) will be merged into the FiTI International Board to form the association's supreme oversight body.
- ➡ Only individuals are allowed to become members of the FiTI association and thus, members of the FiTI International Board. Most importantly, to become members, individuals must be nominated/endorsed by either a governmental, business, or social sector entity.
- ➡ The number of Board Members will be increased from 12 to 18 to allow enhanced participation. The member seats will remain equally divided among the three stakeholder groups – i.e. each stakeholder group will have six seats on the Board.¹²
- ➡ The procedures to reach decisions by the Board are amended to allow the Board to make its decision stand when there is a lack of quorum, by consulting missing Board members via email. Decisions made using the new procedure will require a higher level of approval to be binding.

After discussing advantages and implications of such changes and other minor adjustments to the Constitution, the participating Board members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-04]:

The Board approved the updated constitution of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative, as presented in its version of 23 March 2021, attached as Appendix II.

The International Secretariat was instructed to submit this updated constitution to the Registrar General's Office Seychelles and register all current members of the Board as members of the association.

2) Introducing a new partnership model:

- ➡ A comprehensive partnership model will offer a global platform for all bona fide organizations to shape the future of transparency in marine fisheries actively.

¹² As today, the business sector seats will be split equally between industrial and small-scale fishing.

- ➡ Organizational partnerships will be (mostly) based on written agreements, clearly outlining the benefits that such a partnership is expected to bring for all involved.

Sven stated further that the Secretariat has already engaged in implementation partnerships, e.g., with non-profit organizations acting as FiTI's implementing partner in Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru (i.e. Causa Natura, Conservation International-Ecuador, WWF-Peru). However, under this new partnership model, such collaborative arrangements will be sought after more systematically and beyond FiTI implementations.

The participating Board members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-05]:

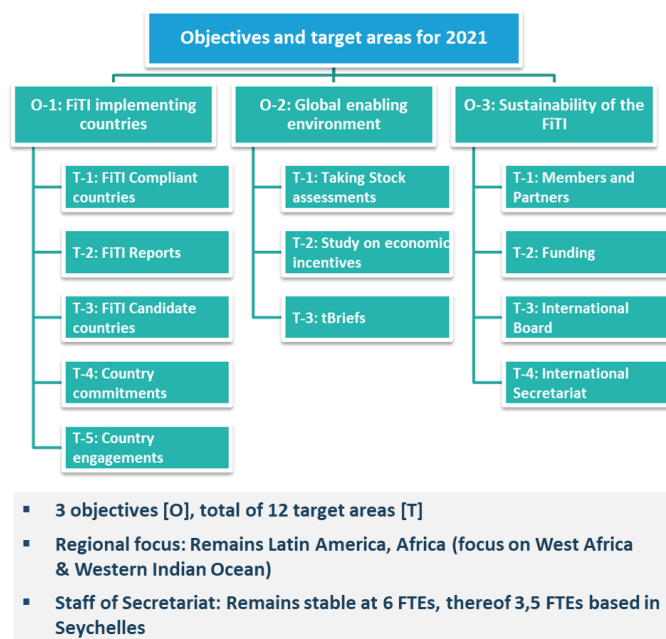
The Board approved the implementation of a new partnership model for the FiTI and instructed the FiTI International Secretariat to provide a practical guidance document for approval by the Board within the next 3-6 months.

It was recommended by Board Members that such a guidance document should follow a pragmatic approach, clearly outlining the most relevant aspects for initiating such a new model and what would the specific issues of concern which would need to be avoided and under which circumstances such partnerships should be approved by the Board (e.g. approval procedures for new partnerships), instead of seeking to cover all possible future scenarios. Furthermore, it was strongly recommended to start engaging in such partnerships with 2-3 systemically relevant organisations, in particular organisations from current Board Members, to test this approach.

5. 2021 Workplan of the FiTI International Secretariat

The FiTI Chair requested Sven to provide a brief overview of the *2021 Workplan for the FiTI International Secretariat*, which was distributed to all Board Members prior to the meeting.

- ➡ The Workplan seeks to *document the Secretariat's understanding of the Board's expectations* regarding priorities, objectives and specific implementation targets for the period 01 January until 31 December 2021.
- ➡ The Secretariat proposes to pursue *three objectives [O]* with a total number of *12 target areas [T]* for 2021.

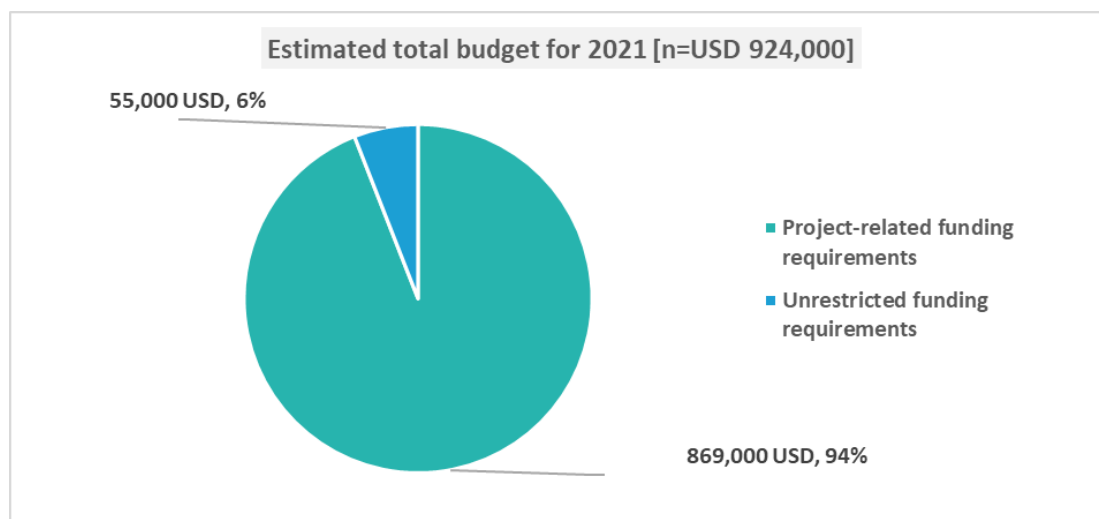


Highlights:

- Support the release of up to 4 national FiTI Reports
- Conduct the first validation process of the FiTI
- Increase the number of committed countries from 4 to 8 countries
- Conduct at least 7x 'Taking Stock' transparency assessments
- Raise USD 1m in additional project-related funding

The scope of these objectives and target areas are almost fully determined by existing grant obligations (e.g. Moore Foundation, Irish Aid). Consequently, Sven informed the Board that there was no much flexibility to modify the content of the plan.

- ➡ In order to pursue these objectives and targets, the Secretariat requires a *total budget of USD 924,000* (project-related and unrestricted)¹³.



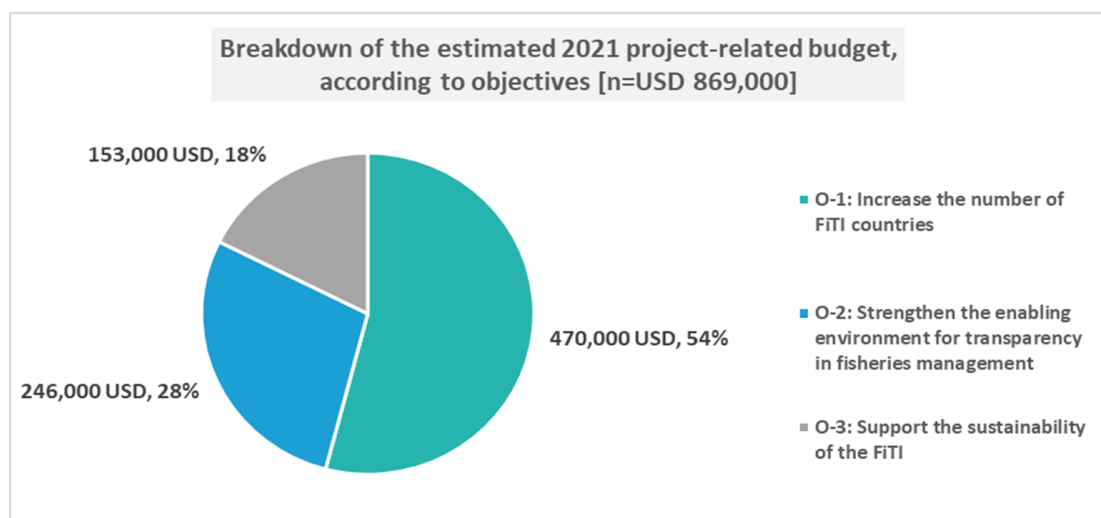
Sven stated that 85% of the anticipated budget for project-related funding, and 64% of the anticipated budget for unrestricted funding has already been secured by the Secretariat. However, it was emphasized that the current core funding for the FiTI,

¹³ Unrestricted funding refers primarily to administrative costs, that are not covered by specific projects. This includes e.g. accounting and auditing, insurances, rent, office supplies.

provided by the Moore Foundation, runs out in August 2021. This grant covers currently almost 70% of personnel costs of the Secretariat. Discussions have started with Moore regarding a second grant. If the Secretariat does not secure this grant, a major adjustment to the staff size and expenditures of the organization would be required.

The FiTI Chair highlighted the importance of *unrestricted funding* to ensure that relevant administrative costs that are not included in project grants, such as accounting and auditing expenses, will be covered. Furthermore, such unrestricted funding also allows an initiative to react more quickly and flexible in pursuing new opportunities. As mandatory annual financial contributions from participating countries are currently waived until the end of 2022 (and in fact might be soon suspended indefinitely), the challenges for obtaining such funding is increasing. The FiTI Chair asked therefore all Board Members and Observers for their help in identifying future fundraising opportunities. Julien stated that under the FiTI-support from PROBLUE, a fundraising strategy can be commissioned.

- ➡ Sven continued to explain the various objectives, targets and budget allocates of the 2021 Workplan.



It was decided that Board members are able to request further explanation about this work plan from the Executive Director within the period of time set to approve this minutes.

The participating Board members reached the following decisions by consensus:

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-06]:

The Board approved the 2021 Workplan of the FiTI International Secretariat, including the proposed budgets for project-related as well as for unrestricted (administrative) activities.

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-07]:

The Board authorised the FiTI Chair to approve the grant request to the Moore Foundation on behalf of the Board, prior to its submission by the FiTI International Secretariat 2021.

6. Implementation partnership with 'Diaries of the Ocean' (Lebanon)

Sven informed the Board Members that the Secretariat has been contacted by the Lebanon-based non-governmental organisation 'Diaries of the Ocean' (DotO)¹⁴ to explore the possibility of collaborating with the FiTI on enhancing the public availability, credibility and comprehensibility of fisheries management information in Lebanon. The initial contact was established by a representative from the Publish What You Pay (PWYP) campaign.

Additional background information on DotO as well as the marine fisheries sector in Lebanon were briefly presented.

- **Started as a group of (women-led) marine biologists**
- **In 2018, established as a non-governmental organization under Lebanese law, Decree #1875**
- **Mission: Training people to become guardians of the Ocean and conserve our blue planet**
- **Advisory Board: 6 individuals**
- **Executive Director: Jina Talj**
- **Currently, one funded 3-year project: "United civil society for a transparent oil and gas sector", funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)**



Diaries of the Ocean Social Media:

<https://www.diariesoftheocean.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/diariesoftheocean/>
<https://twitter.com/diariesofocean>
<https://www.instagram.com/diariesofocean/?hl=en>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5UwdGN19RJ6DBPLRiWx5gA?>

¹⁴ <https://diariesoftheocean.org/>

Under the guidance of the FiTI International Secretariat, the DotO would be expected to conduct the following activities:

- ➡ Conduct a ‘Know Your Fisheries Sector’ (KYFiS) exercise¹⁵
- ➡ Conduct awareness raising meetings and workshop(s)
- ➡ Mobilise key actors to advocate for FiTI (e.g. ‘National Coalition’, if applicable)
- ➡ Promote the FiTI (e.g. social media)
- ➡ Provide operational support for implementing the sign-up steps, if applicable
- ➡ Propose national and regional contacts to relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to promote the FiTI in Lebanon and the Mediterranean region.

It was emphasised that while Lebanon is currently not part of the FiTI’s workplan, the support effort needed to enable DotO to act as the FiTI’s national partner is fairly limited (based on experiences with similar engagement scenarios, such as in Madagascar). Provisional arrangements have been discussed within the Secretariat to have the Regional Coordinator for Western Indian Ocean act as the focal point for this collaboration. On the other side, such a collaboration could not only raise awareness about the importance of transparency in fisheries in the country, but could also act as a ‘door opener’ for other engagements in the Mediterranean / Arab speaking region. It may also be a possible venue to engage with new donors and stakeholders.

The FiTI Chair emphasised that these kind of engagement scenarios need to be covered in the partnership guidance (see above), as such requests should not necessarily need to be discussed with the Board on a regular basis.

Specific comments made by Board Members that could hinder the way the FiTI engages in partnerships will be considered and addressed when preparing the partnership guidelines.

After discussing advantages and possible risks for the initiative when engaging in this particular collaboration, the participating Board members reached the following decision:

¹⁵ A sound understanding of Lebanon’s fisheries sector regarding transparency and stakeholder collaboration is paramount to determine a successful engagement approach. Each country is different and has its own priorities, internal dynamics, and external influences. Yet, experiences of country engagements over the last years have clearly shown the need for a structured approach. Each FiTI implementation partner is therefore tasked with conducting a ‘*Know Your Fisheries Sector*’ (KYFiS) exercise. Typically, such a “KYFiS” comprises of the following four elements: *Sector Profile*, *Stakeholder Analysis*, *Engagement Pitch*, *Taking Stock assessment*. The scope of such a KYFiS depends on partner’s previous exposure to the country’s national fisheries sector, level of information as well as its resources. The FiTI International Secretariat provides a pragmatic methodology for each of those four elements.

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-08]:

The Board approved the collaboration with the Lebanon-based non-governmental organisation 'Diaries of Ocean' as the FiTI's national implementation partner for Lebanon.

7. Next Board meeting(s)

As the final agenda point, the FiTI Chair requested the views of the participating Board Members and Observers regarding the possibility of conducting a face-to-face Board meeting in the second half of 2021. Board Members stated that while a final decision regarding such an on-site meeting cannot be made at this point in time, it is expected that the global vaccination efforts will make further progress and that there is indeed a possibility for such a meeting. It was further reiterated that the location for such a meeting should fulfil a number of criteria, including the possibility to conduct side events with relevant organisations, ease of access for travelling, as well as sufficient and acceptable medical infrastructures.

The participating Board members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-12_2021_D-09]:

The Board approved that the FiTI International Secretariat starts 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.

Additional Board meetings via conference calls will be conducted during 2021 as well.

8. Closing

The Chair thanked the Members of the Board for their participation in the 12th meeting.

12th International Board Meeting ended



Meeting minutes **provided** by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sven B.', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Sven Biermann

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

Meeting minutes **approved** by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valeria Merino', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Valeria Merino

Chair of the FiTI International Board.

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 (*partly present*)

Not excused:

Alexander BIRYUKOV

Marthin HADIWINATA

Stakeholder Group of Civil Society

Francisco MARI

Nedwa NECH (*partly present*)

Eduardo ROLÓN

Alfred SCHUMM

Ahmed SENHOURY (as Alternate)

Excused:

Sebastián LOSADA

Observers

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

Julien MILLION, The World Bank Group

Salimata SOUMARE, African Development Bank (AfDB)

FiTI International Secretariat

Sven BIERMANN

Guests

None

APPENDIX II: Updated constitution of the FiTI (23 March 2021)

Attached separately to this document: Updated 'Constitution of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative incorporated' [draft], version: 23 March 2021