



REPORT



29 March 2022

WORKSHOP TO MONITOR CSOs LEVEL OF COMMITMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EITI IN CAMEROON



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I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Since 2007, the EITI has enabled Cameroon to make significant progress on transparency in the management of resources from the extractive industries. The EITI has made efforts to advance multi-stakeholder dialogue in the extractive sector in Cameroon. However, Cameroon was suspended on 1 April 2021 for not publishing its 2018 EITI report. In accordance with the EITI Standard, it was agreed that the suspension would be lifted if the EITI Board was satisfied that the outstanding report had been published within six months of the deadline. The Permanent Secretariat has therefore confirmed that Cameroon has published its 2018 EITI Report on 30 June 2021.

Thus, the condition for the lifting of the suspension was met, raising at the same time concerns of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) members of the platform on the dynamism of its representation within the EITI and the respect of the Multi-Stakeholder Group for compliance with the requirements of the EITI Standard.



Also, in order to encourage civil society to clarify the objectives of its participation in the EITI and to ensure that it is well represented and has the necessary capacities to participate freely, actively, effectively and fully in the process; CRADEC, through the "Strengthening Fiscal Justice in Cameroon" project, provides an opportunity for reflection to the CSO-EITI Platform, extended to other groups, to review the dynamics of monitoring the EITI process within and outside the EITI Committee to ensure that the challenges and national priorities for compliance with the Standard constitute points of convergence of the attention and resources of the various groups working on extractive sector governance in Cameroon.



II. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The main objective of the workshop was to reinvigorate CSOs' representation to ensure that they participate freely, actively, effectively and fully around the national challenges and priorities for compliance with the EITI Standard.

The specific objectives were to:

- review the participation and limitations of CSOs in the EITI process and on the basis of the 2021 Validation;
- exchange on national EITI challenges and priorities in Cameroon (contract disclosure/data opening; legal framework; integrated reconciliation, 2023 Validation, etc.);
- define a framework for peer supervision-follow-up-review within and outside the EITI Committee of the CSO-EITI platform on the EITI process in Cameroon



III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the workshop were:

- Participants are informed and imparted with an appreciation of CSO participation within and outside the EITI Committee ;
- The national challenges and priorities in extractive sector governance are highlighted and appreciated;
- A roadmap for the platform's future validation through interaction with other stakeholders is defined.



COURSE OF THE WORKSHOP



The opening session was punctuated by two articulations :

-The welcome address by the Executive Director of CRADEC, organiser of the event.

Mr. Jean MBALLA MBALLA presented the context and objectives of the workshop whose resolutions will help to revitalize the engagement of the CSO-EITI platform.

-Introduction of participants and their expectations.

Participants were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their expectations. This included :

Ø To make an objective assessment of the level of commitment of civil society to the EITI in terms of involvement and advocacy for the implementation of the EITI Standard by the Government;

- Ø Conduct an objective assessment of the level of civil society engagement with the EITI in terms of involvement and advocacy for the EITI Standard is implemented by the Government;
- Ø Have data on community participation in the process of implementing the EITI standard in Cameroon;
- Ø Reflect on ways for civil society to regain leadership in this process;
- Ø Be aware of the shortcomings that undermine the participation of civil society;
- Ø Consider self-financing of civil society meetings;
- Ø Propose ways to boost CSOs engagement in the process.



PRESENTATION OF THE CSO/EITI PLATFORM (ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

The Industry Transparency Initiative Extractives (EITI) is a global standard for promoting open and accountable governance of oil, gas and mineral resources. The EITI requires countries to publish information on the extractive value chain, the granting of rights extraction to government revenues and in the manner benefits to the population. The EITI seeks to:

- Strengthening public and corporate governance;
 - Promote a good understanding of management natural resources;
 - And to provide data to inform and conduct reforms to curb corruption and move towards more responsible management of the extractive sector.
- In each of the 54 implementing countries, the EITI is supported by a coalition formed by the Government, Business and Civil Society.



PRESENTATION OF THE CSO/EITI PLATFORM (ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

The EITI is implemented within a national framework, in which of the local multi-stakeholder groups oversee the implementation and ensure that it aligns with national priorities.

Civil Society is one of the main groups of stakeholders involved in the EITI process. It plays an important role in the design and control of the EITI process and supports the implementation of the Initiative, both within the multi-stakeholder group and in other frameworks. To this end, civil society contributes to the implementation of the EITI in key areas which are:

- Launch of the EITI process and steering;
- Definition of the scope of the EITI;
- Reporting and data reconciliation (selection of the conciliator or audit firm, disclosure of detailed information on payments made and corresponding government revenues);
- Publication of EITI results.

PRESENTATION OF THE CSO/EITI PLATFORM (ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

The Cameroon Civil Society College is made up of some twenty civil society organisations involved in monitoring the governance of the extractive sector governance, grouped together in a platform (CSOEITICAM).

Until 2018, the contribution of the Cameroonian Civil Society Civil Society College in the implementation of the EITI has consisted of participating in the work of the multi-stakeholder group (Cameroon EITI Committee) through its representatives, for the most part appointed or co-opted by the Government and through the personal works of other organizations involved in monitoring the governance of the extractive sector. This contribution to the implementation of the EITI in Cameroon has proven inadequate and inappropriate due to the lack of coordination of civil society activities in Cameroon. This is also reflected in the 2016 and 2020 EITI validation results from Requirement 1.3 on “Civil Society Engagement”.



PRESENTATION OF THE CSO/EITI PLATFORM (ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

Civil society should participate fully, effectively and actively in the EITI process (provision 1.3.e) by :

- speaking out on transparency and natural resource governance

- engaging substantively in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the EITI process, and ensuring that these elements contribute to public debate

- communicating and collaborating with each other

- acting freely and expressing opinions about the EITI.

The Cameroon Multi-Stakeholder Group has 30 statutory members including the three colleges. Cameroonian Civil Society is represented on the EITI Cameroon Committee by 09 organisations (08 organisations that sit as statutory members of the Multi-Stakeholder Group and 01 in the Permanent Secretariat as Focal Point), where the Board of Directors gave civil society a rating of “significant progress”, which is actually below average.



PRESENTATION OF THE CSO/EITI PLATFORM (ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

Indeed, a number of shortcomings are blamed on the Cameroonian Civil Society, in this case:

- Weak communication and cooperation between representatives in the Multi-Stakeholder Group and other members of the College on issues related to the extractive sector or public finance;
- The lack of technical capacity of college members to address issues related to the monitoring of extractive sector governance and the implementation of the EITI;
- Weak capacity to implement the Civil Society College Code;
- Insufficient and irregular coverage in the national press of issues related to oil and gas revenues;
- The lack of a framework for coordinating the actions of the College and planning the actions of the College of Civil Society;
- The lack of a College action plan;
- The lack of a strategy to promote public debate by the Civil Society College to inform the public about the EITI process and its results;



PRESENTATION OF THE CSO/EITI PLATFORM (ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

- The lack of a strategy to promote public debate by the Civil Society College to inform the public about the EITI process and its results;
- The lack of concerted actions and debates on the governance of natural resources;
- The lack of studies on natural resource issues using EITI data;
- CSO poor media presence to communicate EITI report findings.

At this point, the only door of salvation that can lead to full, effective and active participation the EITI process (section 1.3.e) by civil society must go through the structuring of the Cameroon Civil Society participation to the implementation of EITI in Cameroon by formally creating a Civil Society College which will bring together other CSOs coopted within the EITI Committee and other CSOs involved in the follow-up. PWYP-Cameroon will take the forerunners to propose the establishment of the College Civil Society and a code of conduct to govern the functioning of this framework.



ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF CSO ENGAGEMENT IN THE EITI PROCESS

This exercise allowed CSOs to question themselves, in order to get a clear picture of their own commitment to the EITI. Their self-assessment showed that CSOs face a number of limitations in monitoring EITI implementation, but that there are also positive points in terms of achievements. The first achievement is the effectiveness of the CSO College at the EITI Committee or GMP sessions, notwithstanding the inherent burdens of the effective implementation of the provisions of the decree on the modalities of creation, organisation and functioning of the Multi-Stakeholder Group (GMP). The second achievement is the ability to carry out a certain number of activities related to the mining sector (capacity building for communities living near mining operations, studies, advocacy, etc.). With regard to the limitations, it can be observed that civil society is losing its leadership in an initiative that it itself initiated. This is due to weaknesses in communication, consultation and coordination between the various members within and outside the Committee. The same observation was made in terms of exploiting the opportunities that exist at national level.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE SHORTCOMINGS AND LIMITATIONS IDENTIFIED

Based on the assessment of the level of CSOs' engagement, the following proposals were made:

1. Strengthen the synergy of CSOs' actions within and outside the EITI Committee ;
2. Fostering communication between CSOs members of the Platform;
3. Strengthen the capacity of Platform members on technical issues related to the EITI standard;
4. Monitor monthly within the Platform the level of implementation of corrective measures for the 2023 Validation;
5. Capitalise on civil society actions (in relation to corrective measures) and formalise their dissemination;
6. Set up a working group to formulate a CSO roadmap on the 2023 validation.

CONSULTATION IN THE RUN-UP TO THE EITI COMMITTEE MEETING ON MARCH 30, 2022

The workshop ended with the preparation of the EITI Committee session to be held the following day, 30 March 2022.

Civil society has expressed fears that Cameroon will be suspended from the EITI again. This is especially so as Cameroon has only implemented three of the fifteen corrective measures contained in the 2020 Validation Report. Furthermore, since the publication of the 2019 report in November 2021, the EITI Cameroon Committee has not met as of March 2022. Finally, to avoid the possibility of a new suspension, it is urgent that a work plan and an action plan be adopted. That being said, its mantra is that Cameroon should fully take up the corrective measures of the EITI Board for the 3rd Validation of 2023. To this end, with regard to the draft agenda of the EITI Committee session, three (03) points were discussed by the Platform:

CONCLUSION



1. “Review for adoption of the status of implementation of the corrective measures of the previous validation”;

In this regard, the Platform places particular emphasis on reviewing the progress of implementation of the corrective measures to at least 75% for the 2023 validation. These corrective measures should be the priority in the review and validation of the 2022 and 2023 work plan included.

2. “Review for adoption of the EITI work plan for the period 2022 to 2023”;

The Platform recommends the invalidation of the work plan in session. An in-depth examination should be carried out beforehand within the civil society college, extended to other members with the aim of effectively integrating the 15 corrective measures targeting the CSO college in particular, and other stakeholders in general into the 2022 action plan.

3. “Validation by the EITI Committee of the request to be sent to the International Secretariat, before the end of the first quarter of the current year, so that Cameroon can participate in the pilot project for the production of EITI reports” ;

The platform has taken the position not to validate this request, provided that this option would pose a risk to the production of the 2020 EITI Report, counting towards 2023 Validation. That said, it is better to stay with the system of production of the EITI Report by an Independent Conciliator.

WHAT DID THEY SAY?

“ Civil society is losing its leadership in an initiative of its own making. ”

Dr. André KOUNG, Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon (CEPCA)

“Civil society played a key role in Cameroon's achievement of compliant country status in October 2013. It must also play a full role in moving the country from significant progress, which refers to mediocre, to satisfactory!”

Sylvanus BINLA, National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (CENC)

“In the self-assessment we have just made, we recognise that there are a certain number of limitations that we encounter in monitoring the implementation of the EITI, while at the same time there are positive points in terms of achievements.”

Jean MBALLA MBALLA, African Regional Centre for Endogenous and Community Development (CRADEC)

“There is no conflict of interest in the Civil Society College, the threat to our effectiveness lies in the issue of per diem.”

Dr. Livinus ESAMBE, Action for Governance over Natural Resources (AGNR)

CONCLUSION

