

Report on the 5th meeting of ATI Consultative Group 4

Enhancing space and capacity for accountability stakeholders in partner countries in tax and revenue matters

Date: 12 December 2022, 15 :00 – 16 :15 (CET)

Participants: Peter Wieżel (ITC), Lodovico Muratori (Ministry of Economy and Finance of Italy), Maria Altavilla (Italy), Margaret Myklebust (NORAD), Steve Rozner (USAID), Fariya Mohiuddin (IBP), Aniket Bhusan (GAC), Peter Hurst (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), Jenny Russell (Save the Children US), Andrew Wainer (Save the Children US), Tais Chartouni (ITC), José Luis Salazar (SRI Ecuador), Marianna Macášková (Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic), Jonas Nyrop Henriques (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark), Nathan Coplin (Oxfam), Tantely Ravelomanana (Madagascar’s Ministry of Economy and Finance), Samba Sallah (The Gambia’s Domestic Taxes Department), Altayesh Terefe (ITC), Markus Paffhausen (ITC), Mauricio Ramírez (ITC).

Agenda:

1. Welcome and presentation of agenda
2. Presentation on developments since March 2022
3. Presentation of “Stocktaking of Initiatives and tools for Enhancing Accountability”
4. Proposal for upcoming activities
5. Open dialogue on upcoming activities in 2023
6. Next steps and closing remarks

1. Opening and introduction

On 12 December 2022, the Addis Tax Initiative (ATI) Consultative Group 4 (CG4) met in the fifth consultative group meeting since the signature of the [ATI Declaration 2025](#). The ATI Secretariat members attending the meeting were Mr. Markus Paffhausen, Ms. Michelle Ordoñez, Mr. Altayesh Terefe, and Mr. Peter Wieżel.

2. Presentation on developments since March 2022

The ATI Secretariat briefed ATI GC4 members about the developments in implementing the [work plan 2021/22](#) since March 2022:

- **ATI Regional Workshops on Tax Expenditures** - The ATI Secretariat successfully initiated a series of regional workshops on tax expenditures in partnership with the Council on Economic Policies (CEP) and the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). The workshops seek to provide a platform for peer learning and exchange with a unique group of

stakeholders, involving members of parliament, tax authorities, ministries of finance, and academia. By placing an emphasis on transparency and accountability regarding tax expenditures through the inclusion of parliamentarians and CSOs, the workshop series adds to the ATI fulfilment of the ATI Declaration 2025 commitments three and four. ATI members can learn more about the [Lagos](#) and [Nairobi](#) regional workshops on the ATI website.

- **2022 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** - The ATI Secretariat conveyed the ATI involvement in the Parliamentary Forum at the 2022 UN High-Level Political (HPLF) on Sustainable Development in July 2022. The HPLF brings state and non-state actors to revisit previous efforts and advances towards SDG17 on partnerships. This Forum focuses on members of parliament to bring legislative stakeholders closer to financing for development topics, including increasing DRM. Mr. Toril-Iren Pedersen, Assistant Director at the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), represented the ATI and stated that taxes are beyond a development issue since taxes are a matter of governance. Read more and watch the recording of Mr. Pedersen’s intervention [here](#).
- **Equitable Taxation: Case study** - The ATI Secretariat is finalising a brief on equitable taxation, presenting case studies of partner countries that have implemented different tax reforms with impacts on equity. The brief includes the analysis of sins taxes in the Philippines, where tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks were subject to a tax reform resulting from civil society organisations’ engagement in the public debate. The case study highlights the critical role accountability stakeholders perform in the tax policy ecosystem.
- **ATI webinar on enhancing tax accountability through citizen participation and education** - Last 02 December 2022, the ATI Secretariat held a webinar on enhancing tax accountability through citizen participation and education in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) and Save The Children. The webinar highlighted the importance of integrating accountability into taxpayer education and the benefits of citizen participation in tax policy. The session, which gathered more than 50 participants representing 30 countries, was moderated by Ms. Fariya Mohiuddin, co-chair of the consultative group and Senior Programme Officer at the International Budget Participation’s Tax Equity Initiative. The webinar’s discussion revolved around the OECD and Save The Children’s reports on taxpayer education, followed by an enriching presentation of partner countries (Ecuador’s revenue administration experience) and civil society organisations (Cabdost and Policy Forum Tanzania), and donors (USAID). Read more about the webinar [here](#).

3. Presentation of “Stocktaking of Initiatives and Tools for Enhancing Accountability”

Ms. Altayesh Terefe presented the results of the “[Stocktaking of Initiatives and Tools for Enhancing Accountability](#),” a product developed for ATI per the consultative group's decisions.

The “Stocktaking of Initiatives and Tools for Enhancing Accountability” was developed following the elaboration of the [Accountability Stakeholder Mapping](#), which identifies ways of improving the space and capacity of accountability stakeholders. It was elaborated following the consultative group agreement for its subsequent efforts to focus on work stream 3 – “Innovating, Sharing, and Learning” of the [work plan for 2021/22](#). The stocktaking aims to compile existing initiatives and projects that focus on increasing the space and capacity of accountability stakeholders, specifically focusing on the revenue side of public

finances. The Stocktaking meets four objectives: First, provide a perspective from partner countries on conceptual and thematic products; second, avoid duplication of efforts; third, serve as an accessible repository for ATI members; and fourth, identify relevant initiatives to inform the ATI Secretariat on potential synergies with other actors/initiatives. The Stocktaking follows a table format where readers can inform themselves about the description, the products and tools, the stakeholders involved, the project owner and implementing partners, and additional online resources for each of the mapped initiatives.

Three of the seventeen mapped initiatives were presented to the consultative group members to showcase the Stocktaking usage. First, the African Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions ([AFROSAI-E](#)), a member-based platform with 26 Auditors-General from English-speaking African countries with the vision of making a difference in the performance of member Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), has developed the AFROSAI-E toolkit aimed at enhancing the collaboration between PACs and SAIs at the national level. Second, the African Organisation of Public Accounts Committees (AFROPAC) has held activities to empower African budget oversight committees in promoting accountability and good governance through advocacy, synergies, capacity building, and research in collaboration with members of parliament and involving SAIs, CSOs, the media. Third, the Fiscal Openness Accelerator (FOA) project collaborates with CSOs to support governments in developing participation mechanisms to foster citizen engagement in budget processes. The project is implemented by International Budget Partnership (IBP) and Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT).

Mr. Rozner thanked the insightful presentation and encouraged members to read the Stocktaking once it is published on the ATI website in 2023. During a brief Q&A section, Ms. Jenny Rusell (Save the Children US) took the floor and embraced the opportunity to offer information from other, less well-funded and less visible projects to be included in the stocktaking and also wondered about the steps being taken forward from the stocktaking. The ATI Secretariat encouraged all CG4 members to provide additional projects to be included, given they match the inclusion criteria for the document. The next steps following the elaboration of the stocktaking were discussed next.

4. Proposal for upcoming activities

Mr. Paffhausen presented the proposals for upcoming activities on behalf of the ATI Secretariat:

- **Presentation of best practices for engaging different types of stakeholders and their collaboration towards accountability** – As a step forward on work stream 3 – “Innovating, Sharing, and Learning” of the work plan for 2021/22, the ATI suggested to organise a series of webinars on best practices for accountability stakeholders’ collaborations. The presentation could be thematic around a specific type of accountability stakeholder. For example, in the case of SAIs, the webinar may be centred around case studies on auditing revenue processes, best practices of SAIs engaging with civil society, or showcasing tools to increase holistic engagement. When considering members of parliament, the webinars could serve as a stage to present critical initiatives engaging with members of parliament, case studies on the engagement of members of parliament with other stakeholders to increase accountability or present relevant tools and publications. In the case of CSOs, the objective would be to understand how they work together to increase accountability of the finance system in both the expenditure and the revenue side. The webinar could introduce relevant initiatives to increase the space of CSOs (for instance, the Fiscal Openness Accelerator -FOA), and country experiences on successful inclusion of non-state actors (for instance, SEATINI in Uganda).

- **Elaboration of a pocket guide on tax expenditures for members of parliament in collaboration with Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA)** – The ATI Secretariat suggested seeking to move forward in collaboration with Tax Justice Network Africa to develop a pocket guide on tax expenditures with members of parliament as the target audience. The pocket guide will fill up a gap in knowledge among members of parliament with a saying in the subject but limited access to tools to get a profound and simple understanding of the impact and technicalities of tax expenditures. The pocket guide will be a low-barrier essential information tool to build capacities. The ATI Secretariat suggested considering the African parliamentary Network on Illicit Financial Flows and Taxation (APNIFFT) as the space to disseminate the pocket guide.

5. Open dialogue on upcoming activities in 2023

Mr. Rozner opened the floor for members of the consultative group attending the meeting to step in with ideas and suggestions about activities to be developed within the consultative group in 2023. Mr. Peter Hurst (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) agreed on the relevance of the presentations on accountability stakeholders' collaborations, particularly the proposed agenda for SAIs. Regarding the pocket guide, Mr. Hurst posed a question regarding its level of specification and detail, as tax expenditures are inherently specific to each country context. The ATI Secretariat clarified that the focus of the pocket guide would have a more general approach, informing parliamentarians of about the fundamental aspects of tax expenditures which parliamentarians could then apply to their country context. Further, the pocket guide should also point to more detailed knowledge resources regarding the topic. A potential collaboration with the [Global Tax Expenditure Database](#) (GTED) could be envisioned for this. Further, Ms. Ordonez suggested adding a regional perspective to exploit the opportunity to work with regional experts through the TJNA network.

Finally, Mr. Rozner took the floor to announce the [second Summit for Democracy](#) on March 29-30, 2023, which the governments of Costa Rica, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Zambia, and the United States organise. The second Summit will demonstrate how democracies deliver for their citizens and are best equipped to address the world's most pressing challenges.

6. Next steps and closing remarks

Mr. Rozner wrapped the discussion up. As the ATI Secretariat will work on conceptualising the proposed activities, he invited all members to engage in the organization of activities. Finally, Mr. Rozner thanked the ATI Secretariat for their diligent work.