

Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative**98th MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GROUP (MSG) MEETING**

April 24 2025, Thursday | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Somerset Central Makati

MINUTES OF MEETING**Attendees:****NAME****AGENCY**

Usec. Bayani Agabin

Department of Finance (DOF)

Asec. Karlo Fermin S. Adriano

DOF

Dir. Agutus Cesar A. Navarro

Department of Energy (DOE)

Dir. Maricor Ann D.G. Cauton

Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)

Engr. Romualdo Aguilos

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB)

Dir. Ricardo L. Bobis, Jr.

Local Fiscal Policy Service, Bureau of Local Government
Finance (LFPS-BLGF)

Mr. Reymark Tablanza

Department of the Interior and Local
Government (DILG)

Atty. Ronald Rex S. Recidoro

Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP)

Atty. Kiril Caral

Petroleum Association of the Philippines (PAP)

Atty. Odette Javier

Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.

Ms. Beverly Besmanos

Bantay Kita (BK)

Prof Maria Aurora Tabada

Visayas State University (VSU)

Atty. Avril De Torres

Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED)

Mr. Jeffrey Carin

Father Saturnino Urios University Foundation, Inc.

Ms. Elaine Joyce V. Borejón

Oxfam Pilipinas

Ms. Jeanira Godio-Okubo

PILIPINA, Baguio-Benguet Chapter

Ms. Arlene Sevilla

Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College
Assembly of Masses and Basic Sectors for Unity and
Harmony—Initiatives for Normalization and
Advancement for Human Security (AMBUH-INAH)
Tawi-Tawi Alliance of Civil Society Organizations, Inc.
(TACOS)

Ms. Mary Ann Dizon-Rodolfo

PH-EITI Secretariat

Mr. Albert A. San Diego

PH-EITI Secretariat

Ms. Rhea Mae B. Pamatmat

PH-EITI Secretariat

Mr. Amiel De Guzman

PH-EITI Secretariat

Ms. Rhoda H. Aranco

PH-EITI Secretariat

Mr. Job G. Besmonte	PH-EITI Secretariat
Ms. Andrea Denise S. Ong	PH-EITI Secretariat
Ms. Shaina Gem P. Cardenio	PH-EITI Secretariat
Mr. Lloyd Rainiel C. Bonsol	PH-EITI Secretariat
Ms. Aliyah Mae Gozon	PH-EITI Secretariat
Ms. Jollie Anne M. Las Piñas	PH-EITI Secretariat
Ms. Malene Skensved	PH-EITI Secretariat

Agenda:

- I. Call to order**
- II. Approval of the agenda of the 98th meeting**
- III. Approval of the minutes of the 97th meeting**
- IV. Matters arising from previous meetings**
- V. Main Business**
 1. Report from the Implementation Committee
 - Draft Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Chapter consultant in the FY 2023-2024 Country Report
 - Outline: PH-EITI FY 2023 and 2024 Contextual Information Report
 2. Progress Updates on the FY 2023-2024 Reporting Cycles
 3. Technical Working Group Meeting on the NCIP/ Blockchain-based Monitoring Tool
 4. Update on FGD and Consultations
 - Strengthening Local Voices: Stakeholder Dialogues on Energy Transition, Subnationalization, Small-Scale Mining (SSM), and Gender-Responsive Mining – Benguet
 5. Draft Data Sharing Agreement with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
 6. Terms of Reference for support to the Opening Extractives programme in the Philippines
 7. 2026 Global Conference
- VII. Other Matters**
 1. Nook Studios Proposal
- VI. Summary of Agreements**
- VII. Setting of the Next Meeting**
- VIII. Adjournment**

Proceedings:

I. Call to Order

The 98th Multi-Stakeholder Group Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on April 24, 2025. The meeting was chaired by Usec Bayani Agabin of the Department of Finance.

II. Approval of the agenda of the 98th MSG meeting

The Chair presented the provisional agenda with no objections or suggested revisions, the group agreed to proceed based on the agenda presented on-screen and in the handouts provided.

III. Approval of the minutes of the 97th MSG meeting

Attention then turned to the approval of the minutes from the 97th meeting. It was noted that the draft minutes had been circulated by the Secretariat on April 15 and subsequently throughout the week. As there were no comments received thus far, the group was asked whether a provisional approval could be granted.

The participants were agreeable to this approach. It was decided that a one-week extension would be provided for any final feedback. Should any substantial changes be submitted within this period, these would be brought to the attention of the body for review. In the absence of such revisions, the minutes would be considered officially approved.

IV. Matters arising from previous meetings

Under matters arising, it was noted that out of approximately ten items previously raised, only three remained pending. The Chair commended the Secretariat and committee for their significant progress since the last meeting, acknowledging the considerable efforts that led to the completion of most action points.

To provide a brief update on the remaining items, a member of the Secretariat was invited to present a summary of the pending matters.

No.	Agreements	Status	Remarks/ Progress Update
97.1	The MSG members agreed to a one-week period for reviewing and submitting comments on the 96th MSG Meeting Minutes. Any substantial comments will be addressed in the next meeting.	Completed	Deadline: 27/03/2025 All comments received were incorporated into the document.
97.2	The MSG agreed to allow more time for reviewing the draft 2025 work plan and to hold a face-to-face discussion during the 98th MSG meeting, scheduled for April 23-25, 2025. The Secretariat will also circulate the previous work plans along with updates on their progress.	Completed	A comparative progress update on the previous work plans will be presented at the MSG Capacity Development Activity on April 24, 2025.
97.3	The MSG has officially approved the amended FY 2022 Country Report. As part of the process, the MSG will conduct a further review of the report and provide any additional comments to the Secretariat.	Completed	Approved Deadline: March 24-28, 2025
97.4	The MSG to provide contact information for Rosario Manobo Mining Corp to facilitate their follow-up regarding the company's participation in the reporting cycle	Completed	The Secretariat has already received the contact information of Rosario Manobo Mining Corp from the MSG.
97.5	The MSG recommended that the Secretariat develop publicity materials in social media featuring general information about the FY 2022 country report.	Completed	The Secretariat started posting online content regarding the FY 2022 country report, and will continue posting related contents for the next few weeks.

97.6	The MSG recommended that communication with companies reporting to the PH-EITI, particularly those with problematic contact and updated operational status, should be made in written form to ensure formality and proper documentation.	Completed	The PH-EITI requested companies to submit written formal letters stating their current operating status for FY 2023–2024.
97.7	The MSG has approved the draft Data Sharing Agreement with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). This agreement aims to facilitate secure and efficient data exchange, supporting enhanced transparency and accountability in the sector.	Completed	Approved by the MSG, the document is under review by LAO and will be forwarded to the SEC once completed.
97.8	The MSG has approved the Terms of Reference (TOR) for support to the Opening Extractives program in the Philippines with a recommendation of providing a clear definition of the BO disclosure mechanisms objectives to ensure its effective and appropriate application and piloting localized Beneficial Ownership (BO) reporting.	Completed	The MSG agreed that the document shall be circulated to the members for review, and any comments will be incorporated into the document.
97.9	The MSG proposed initiating a pilot program in Region 11 and collaborate with NCIP regional director who already established a royalty monitoring tool or mechanism	Ongoing	This agreement will be presented for discussion during the TWG meeting in the first week of May.
97.10	The MGB to inform the Secretariat regarding its acceptance of the chairmanship of the TWG with NCIP.	Completed	The MGB agreed to take on the role of chair for the TWG alongside the NCIP.

97.11	The Secretariat to circulate the new composition of MSG committees to the MSG.	Completed	Shared with MSG members on March 20, 2025. An updated list will be shared in the 98th MSG Meeting
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The Secretariat discussed the matters arising from the 97th MSG meeting held last March 20, 2025.

97.1 MSG members were given a one-week extension to submit comments on the 97th MSG meeting minutes; all comments have since been incorporated.

97.2 It was recalled that the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) had agreed to allot more time for reviewing the draft 2025 Work Plan and to hold an in-person discussion during the 98th MSG meeting. Due to the full agenda, this discussion could not be accommodated during the morning session; thus, a dedicated half-day session was scheduled for later in the afternoon to revisit the PH-EITI objectives and finalize the work plan.

97.3 The MSG officially approved the amended FY 2022 Country Report; final comments were submitted between March 24–28, 2025.

97.4 The Secretariat successfully obtained contact information for Rosario Manobo Mining Corp for reporting follow-up.

97.5 It was reported that the MSG had recommended for the Secretariat to publish materials on social media featuring general information about the FY 2022 Country Report. In response, the Secretariat drafted a summary of key findings, the translated materials are expected to be ready for release the following weeks.

97.6 PH-EITI began requesting companies to submit BO forms with formal letters starting late March.

97.7 The Data Sharing Agreement with SEC has been approved by MSG and is now under legal review prior to SEC endorsement.

97.8 The TOR for the Opening Extractives Program was approved and is being finalized following MSG feedback.

97.9 This initiative is ongoing, and discussions on the agreement were initially scheduled for

the past week. However, due to scheduling constraints, the item will instead be tackled during the upcoming Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting in the first week of the current month.

97.10 The MGB agreed to co-chair the TWG with NCIP and confirmed this with the Secretariat.

97.11 Updated MSG member list has been finalized and will be shared during the 98th MSG Meeting.

With no further questions or comments raised, the Chair noted the updates and commended both the Secretariat and the designated working groups for the progress made on the action points. The meeting then proceeded to the main order of business.

V. Main Business

1. Report from the Implementation Committee

a. Draft Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Chapter consultant in the FY 2023-2024 Country Report

A representative from the Secretariat presented the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Reconciliation Chapter under the Consultant Office, noting that the document had already been circulated to the MSG and previously discussed during the Implementation Committee (IC) meeting.

To guide the body through the discussion, the Secretariat outlined the key sections of the TOR: background, objectives, scope of work, qualification requirements, budget and payment terms, and support from PH-EITI.

The background section provides basic information about EITI implementation in the Philippines, including its legal foundation, objectives, and structural setup. This section is designed to give incoming consultants foundational knowledge of the initiative.

Under objectives, the TOR describes the expected outputs from the Independent Administrator (IA), such as reconciliation services, integration of systematic disclosures, collaboration with the Secretariat, and production of a comprehensive and cohesive report. It also requests the consultant to map all data needed for EITI reporting in line with

validation requirements. A risk-based approach was also included, with a detailed explanation and recommendations from the IC to follow.

The scope of work is divided into five key stages:

- **Inception Report & Preliminary Analysis** – defining the scope and identifying covered entities;
- **Data Collection & Analysis** – gathering data from government, industry, and reporting tools;
- **Initial Reconciliation** – performing reconciliations, identifying discrepancies, and requesting supporting documents;
- **Draft Report** – presenting reconciled financial data and justifications for discrepancies;
- **Final Report** – addressing MSG feedback and finalizing for publication.

Timeframes were included for each stage to ensure that the six-month (180-day) period would be sufficient, with performance monitoring built in.

In terms of qualification requirements, the TOR specifies that the consultant should hold a bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, or related fields, be a CPA in good standing for at least 10 years, and have substantial experience in auditing, financial analysis, and similar past engagements.

For the budget and payment structure, the contract duration is six months, with payments tied to the completion and approval of specific milestones. A proposed adjustment to the milestone payment percentages was also raised—specifically, increasing Milestone 2 (initial reconciliation results) from 20% to 34%, and reducing the final report milestone payment accordingly.

The support section outlines the Secretariat's commitment to assisting the IA, including coordination with MSG members, reporting entities, and provision of necessary reference materials and data.

Key additions based on recommendations from the previous IC meetings were also highlighted:

- **Objective updates:** Incorporating data mapping and link sharing for publicly accessible information.
- **Risk-based approach:** Introducing assessment mechanisms and capacity-building

efforts to potentially transition toward this methodology.

- **Expanded scope:** Including tasks that support MSG in addressing governance questions and aligning outputs with national priorities.
- **EITI 2023 Standard compliance:** Coverage of project-level disaggregation (Req. 4.2) and discussions on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Req. 3.4), although IC recommended relocating the GHG section to the Contextual Chapter due to limited familiarity and data availability.

Additional updates included:

- A proposed 10–14 day review period before the final reconciliation report is presented to the MSG, replacing the earlier one-week timeline.
- Introduction of a separate stage for “Data Collection and Analysis” to clarify activities and timelines.

The TOR was then formally moved for MSG approval, with the floor opened for questions, clarifications, or suggested revisions.

A government representative raised several clarifications and concerns regarding the draft Terms of Reference (TOR). It was observed that the version included in the meeting handouts differed from what was presented, particularly in the section outlining the stages and timelines. Specifically, discrepancies were noted in the labeling of Stages 2 and 3, which appeared to have been swapped, and the timeline for Stage 5, where the handout reflected only 15 days instead of the actual intended range of 15 to 30 days.

The representative also provided detailed feedback on the qualifications section of the TOR, noting that the criteria appeared too generic. Questions were raised regarding the lack of specificity on the required years of experience, especially in relation to the term “substantial knowledge.” Further clarification was sought on whether previous experience as an external auditor would include both public and private sector auditors, and what constituted a comparable project in terms of nature and magnitude. The concern was that vague language might result in a broad pool of applicants, some of whom may not meet the expectations of the MSG.

Finally, the issue of the payment scheme was brought up. It was pointed out that the TOR did not include any retention mechanism, meaning full payment would be released upon completion of deliverables. The representative questioned whether this was standard practice and whether provisions should be included for retention or withholding, especially in cases where revisions, redrafting, or additional work may be required after initial submission.

The Chair acknowledged the value of the comments raised, particularly on the lack of a retention clause and the clarity of qualifications. It was clarified that, in practice, while no explicit retention is stated, the MSG does not release full payment upon submission of the draft report. Payment is only released after the final report is submitted, incorporating MSG comments and formally accepted. This, the Chair explained, effectively functions as a form of retention.

A government representative followed up, noting that the TOR mentions a 120-day timeframe, which might lead the consultant to expect full payment at the end of that period regardless of revisions. The Chair agreed that this was an important clarification, and emphasized that while overall timeframes are set, the milestone-based payment system is what governs fund release.

The Chair directed the Secretariat to refine the TOR accordingly and ensure these issues—particularly the sequencing of stages, time allocations, and payment mechanisms—were made clearer in the next version. The Chair also raised a question about how best to clarify the consultant qualifications, including whether the terms used in the previous TOR had been similar. The Secretariat confirmed that the previous version followed the same language and structure, but agreed to revisit the criteria for better specificity based on the feedback.

A civil society representative raised questions regarding the background and qualifications outlined in the draft TOR for the Reconciliation Chapter. Before providing further recommendations, the representative asked for clarification on whether consultants had been hired consistently across the ten years of PH-EITI reporting. It was confirmed that external auditors had been engaged in past cycles. Given this, the representative emphasized that the consultant should ideally come from an ISO-accredited organization to ensure credibility, independence, and alignment with verification and validation standards.

The CSO representative also suggested strengthening the conflict of interest clause by including a provision that the consultant should not be affiliated with any extractive company, thereby ensuring neutrality. In terms of qualifications, the CSO proposed broadening the expertise beyond finance to include those with a background in law or legal analysis, noting that reconciliation often involves interpreting regulatory frameworks alongside financial discrepancies.

Responding to these points, the Secretariat acknowledged the critical role of the online reporting tool, which has significantly reduced the administrative burden of data collection

since 2018–2019. Given funding constraints, PH-EITI has shifted from hiring large auditing firms to engaging individual consultants. The Secretariat confirmed that while these individuals were not always from firms, they still met minimum professional standards—though some may not have legal credentials.

The CSO then reflected on the cost-effectiveness of the current approach, observing that the Secretariat and MSG have already developed considerable capacity in data gathering and analysis over the past decade. The consultant's role, therefore, could be streamlined to focus on reconciliation and validation alone. This would justify a reduced contract cost, especially given the simplification of the reporting process through digital tools.

The Secretariat explained that the consultant's fee is benchmarked against Civil Service Commission salary standards and remains under review.

The Chair added historical context, recalling that in PH-EITI's earlier years, large accounting firms such as PWC and Isla Lipana were engaged for reconciliation work at costs reaching ₱10 million. Over time, with the implementation of the online reporting tool and better reporting compliance, discrepancies have dropped to as little as 2%, significantly reducing the workload. Nonetheless, as stipulated in the Executive Order governing PH-EITI, the engagement of an Independent Administrator remains a requirement.

The Chair also noted that funding levels have declined, especially after the World Bank's support ended, necessitating a more cost-efficient model. Still, PH-EITI has continued to secure capable professionals to fulfill the role within the constraints.

The Secretariat reiterated that the hiring of an Independent Administrator (IA) is mandated by the Executive Order that institutionalized PH-EITI. This requirement remains in place regardless of the simplification of processes brought about by online reporting.

The Chair expanded on this by recalling how, in earlier years, the reconciliation process involved field visits to mining companies and local government units, which are now largely replaced by online submissions through the reporting tool. While this shift has streamlined operations, the Chair emphasized the importance of revisiting the scope and criteria of the IA engagement to ensure the body is aligned and satisfied with the revised approach.

A key point raised was the need to explicitly address conflict of interest in the TOR. The Chair acknowledged the concern, especially when dealing with large auditing firms that may already count extractive companies among their clients. However, it was noted that such firms typically implement "Chinese wall" protocols, meaning internal boundaries are

established so that teams working on PH-EITI will not interact or share information with those serving extractive clients.

An industry representative raised a concern regarding the risk of recurrence of issues experienced during the 2021 reporting cycle. It was recalled that in that instance, despite the IA being similarly qualified on paper, the process resulted in significant discrepancies and what was described as failures in reconciliation and validation. The representative stressed that while private accounting firms often issue standard assurances of due diligence, those measures had not been sufficient in the past to prevent substandard outcomes.

The question was posed as to whether the current Terms of Reference or contractual provisions include safeguards to prevent such a scenario from recurring. In particular, the representative suggested the inclusion of performance standards or corrective mechanisms that could hold the IA accountable in the event of serious lapses.

The Chair acknowledged the comment, affirming its importance and indicating agreement with the need to address it.

A government representative offered a suggestion to consider developing internal capacity within the working group or Secretariat to handle at least the initial stages of the reconciliation process. Given that PH-EITI has already accumulated years of experience in data collection and analysis, the representative proposed that in-house reconciliation or preliminary analysis could be feasible, potentially lowering overall project costs by reducing reliance on external consultants.

The Chair acknowledged the comment but advised the group to maintain focus on one topic at a time.

An industry representative responded by emphasizing the importance of independence and credibility in the reconciliation process. They noted that a key reason mining companies supported PH-EITI participation was the assurance that the data would be validated by a world-class, independent third party—not the government or the industry itself. This perceived neutrality is critical, especially when affirming the accuracy of disclosures. While acknowledging current budgetary limitations, the representative expressed willingness to compromise, provided that the administrator remains independent and professionally reputable, maintaining the integrity of the EITI process.

The government representative clarified that the earlier suggestion was intended only for initial tasks, such as data gathering. The Secretariat confirmed that, in practice, **Stages 1 to 3**

of the reconciliation process—namely **inception, data collection, and initial analysis**—are already being handled internally by the Secretariat.

A civil society representative revisited concerns about the 2021 reconciliation, questioning why the same qualifications for the Independent Administrator were being proposed despite the poor outcome that year. They asked whether lessons from that experience had been incorporated, and emphasized the need to strengthen the TOR to avoid repeating past mistakes, especially regarding conflict of interest and accountability measures.

The Secretariat responded to earlier concerns by noting that the 2021 Independent Administrator had no prior experience with extractive reconciliation, which contributed to the poor outcome. In contrast, the contractor engaged for FY 2022 had handled previous cycles (2018–2020) and brought extensive experience in extractive data reconciliation.

The Chair responded that to address past issues, the payment schedule was revised, with a larger percentage (30%) allocated to the final milestone to incentivize quality outputs. It was recalled that the 2021 consultant's final payment had been significantly delayed due to dissatisfaction with their report.

The Chair emphasized that extractive reconciliation is highly specialized—unlike standard audits—even large firms like PWC and Isla Lipana had difficulties. Fortunately, former members of these firms who are now independent practitioners continue to assist PH-EITI due to their institutional familiarity.

The group was reminded that overly strict qualification terms may discourage bidders, leading to failed procurements, a concern already experienced in past cycles. The Chair proposed that the body revisit the TOR's qualifications section and find a balanced set of criteria that ensures both credibility and a successful bidding outcome.

The body resumed discussion on the qualifications section of the Terms of Reference (TOR). The proposed requirement for a background in finance or accounting was generally accepted, with the group agreeing to expand it to include auditing, tax, public finance, and law, as long as these fields were relevant to the reconciliation process.

On the proposed requirement for the consultant to be a CPA in good standing for at least 10 years, some members questioned the arbitrary nature of the 10-year threshold. After discussion, the group reached a consensus to lower the requirement to at least 5 years, balancing experience with accessibility for potential bidders.

Several members also suggested replacing vague terms like “substantial knowledge” with specific qualifications, and incorporating prior experience in the extractive industry as a preferable (but not mandatory) criterion to prevent excluding capable bidders and avoid conflict of interest concerns.

One member proposed including Certified Internal Auditors (CIAs) as an alternative to CPAs, citing their specialization in reconciliation and internal auditing. The group noted it as a possible consideration for future revisions, pending broader agreement.

The MSG continued deliberation on the qualifications of the Independent Administrator. While the inclusion of CPA credentials with at least 5 years of experience was affirmed, members debated whether to also allow Certified Internal Auditors (CIA) or Certified Management Accountants (CMA). Some supported broader recognition, citing these as common sub-specializations of CPAs, while others noted that such certifications are not formally accredited in the Philippines, raising concerns about standardization.

Ultimately, the group agreed to retain CPA as the primary requirement, with other certifications acknowledged but not required.

The body also revised the language to state “preferably with substantial knowledge in the extractive sector”, to maintain flexibility while prioritizing relevant experience.

On the issue of conflict of interest, members agreed that prior work with mining companies should not automatically disqualify a candidate, provided there is a signed declaration of independence and full disclosure of affiliations. It was emphasized that the contract, rather than the TOR, should contain clear provisions on conflict of interest, including clauses on non-affiliation with PH-EITI personnel by blood or legal relation.

A CSO representative inquired whether a separate declaration of independence and disclosure form—in addition to the contract—would be required from the Independent Administrator. The Chair responded that these provisions, including any statement of independence and potential conflicts, should be integrated into the contract itself to ensure legal enforceability.

The group also revisited the earlier suggestion to explore a partnership with Phoenix, an external group previously considered to support the reconciliation process. The Chair instructed the Secretariat to initiate contact and assess the feasibility of such collaboration.

Further discussion highlighted the Secretariat's growing capacity in data collection and management, especially with the use of online tools. A participant suggested that instead of outsourcing the entire process, PH-EITI could consider a partnership model, where the external consultant focuses primarily on data analysis, objectivity, and risk-based assessment, while the Secretariat continues to handle the preparatory and technical groundwork.

The Chair acknowledged that risk-based reporting is a relatively new and evolving area, even within EITI International. The group agreed on the need to learn the approach collectively, and the idea of working with Phoenix was again emphasized as a potential opportunity to support this learning curve and future implementation.

A government representative suggested reorganizing the TOR by placing the requirement to be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) as the first item, emphasizing its importance and clarity. It was also noted that track record and relevant background should follow immediately to strengthen the initial screening criteria.

To address earlier concerns about conflict of interest and consanguinity, it was clarified that these matters are handled through standard government procurement processes under RA 9184. Any issues related to relationships with PH-EITI personnel will be assessed by the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) and the Technical Working Group, in line with existing regulations.

Another participant raised the point that marital relationships should also be considered in conflict-of-interest evaluations. The Chair responded that procurement guidelines are already strict and would cover such cases.

The body shifted focus to the content and deliverables of the TOR. A government representative highlighted that some of the data discrepancies observed in past reports likely stemmed from the type and method of data collection. They pointed out inconsistencies among data reported by companies, local government units (LGUs), and national agencies, particularly around real property taxes and production data. The suggestion was made to include in the consultant's deliverables a dedicated analysis of the sources and causes of discrepancies, to inform future improvements in reporting.

The Secretariat clarified that data from LGUs is obtained through the ENRDMT system and is generally comprehensive. However, it was acknowledged that cross-referencing with company and national-level data reveals inconsistencies that warrant further examination.

Another government representative noted that discrepancies are often systemic, rooted in varying tax regimes at the local level, and may also involve political factors or different accounting standards. These complexities make complete reconciliation difficult, but a clear analysis with set parameters can help MSG understand the scope and limitations.

The Chair reiterated that the proposed recommendation was to explicitly task the consultant with identifying systemic sources of discrepancies, such as mismatched tax reporting, multiple layers of aggregation, or varying report types.

The Secretariat clarified that many of these discrepancies are already captured in the Independent Administrator's reports, typically attributed to timing differences, differing accounting periods, miscalculations, and lack of supporting documents. However, it was acknowledged that a more strategic and comparative analysis across all ten country reports could improve understanding of recurring issues.

The Chair supported the proposal to commission a future study, ideally with external funding, to synthesize past reconciliation reports and extract insights on discrepancy trends. It was agreed that such a study could help guide data standardization efforts moving forward.

A CSO representative emphasized the need to contextualize LGU discrepancies, noting that varying local tax regimes and policy discretion (e.g., tax amnesties or rate adjustments) make full alignment with national datasets inherently difficult. This nuance should continue to be reflected in reports to avoid misinterpretations of variance as irregularity.

An industry representative flagged the NCIP's role as the most persistent source of discrepancy, particularly in the reporting of Indigenous Peoples' royalty data, which remains largely untracked. The Chair acknowledged this challenge, noting that while PH-EITI has signed a MOA with NCIP, more work is needed to improve data access and coordination.

The group agreed that existing TOR provisions—specifically the clause requiring the IA to provide granular results and investigations of discrepancies—were sufficient for now, but future work should aim to further deepen discrepancy diagnosis across agencies and levels.

The Chair formally acknowledged the presence of NCIP representatives, expressing the importance of their continued engagement, especially in obtaining data on IP royalty payments, which remains a critical and persistent gap in reporting.

A CSO representative raised a question about voluntary submissions from mining companies. It was noted that historically, submission rates hovered around 65%, with some companies consistently failing to submit data. The group discussed whether PH-EITI's current participation rates meet international quality standards.

It was clarified that while reporting is required, PH-EITI itself lacks enforcement power. However, the MGB and DENR issue administrative notices, including three-letter warnings to non-compliant companies. This has led to improved participation, although non-submission is often due to companies being under care and maintenance or having ceased operations.

To address this, the MSG had previously agreed that non-producing companies (including those under development or care and maintenance) would no longer be invited to participate in the report, thereby refining the count of operating mines. This decision helps align data sources and expectations for reporting consistency.

Concerns were also raised regarding PH-EITI's ability to meet international standards given these gaps. The Secretariat clarified that no fixed compliance percentage is set by the EITI Standard, but reporting completeness and credibility remain key validation criteria.

The discussion continued with a government representative giving a reference to the proposed Mining Fiscal Regime bill, which includes a provision mandating transparency and accountability in the extractive industries. The provision empowers the Department of Finance (DOF), in coordination with other agencies, to institutionalize data collection, verification, and public disclosure mechanisms, with clear guidelines and mandates for participation. If passed, this law would provide legal backing to compel company compliance and strengthen PH-EITI's mandate.

The Chair expressed strong support for the legislative push and acknowledged the DOF's leadership in championing the bill.

A civil society representative suggested that even non-reporting companies—particularly those in exploration or under suspension—should still be tracked and monitored, as communities report ongoing activities like material extraction despite non-operational status. It was recommended that MGB provide updates on these companies as part of a broader push to strengthen transparency.

Another participant echoed earlier concerns around coal companies, emphasizing that their non-participation remains an unresolved issue since the first EITI report. The Department of Energy clarified that coal firms under its supervision are strictly regulated, and noted that

the energy transition is already influencing coal sector policy, marking it as a sunset industry in the Philippines.

The Chair encouraged further data-sharing with the DOE, especially as coal remains one of the few commodities underrepresented in the EITI report.

A recommendation was also raised by the industry representative for the Independent Administrator (IA) to contextualize discrepancies in their report by referencing official data from agencies like MGB and PSA, especially when mismatches arise due to coverage scope (e.g., EITI capturing 95% vs. MGB capturing 100%). It was noted that such mismatches could mislead policymakers unless explicitly explained in the report's methodology or footnotes.

Further discussion clarified that while EITI data informed portions of the Mining Fiscal Regime estimates (e.g., through BIR data), some calculations required more granular per-company data sourced directly from tax agencies.

With no further questions, the body moved to approve the Terms of Reference, subject to all amendments and agreements discussed. A formal motion was raised and seconded, and the TOR was officially approved by the MSG.

The Chair then outlined the next steps, confirming that the TOR will now be published for procurement, and the standard bidding process is expected to take approximately three months. With this timeline, a consultant is projected to be onboarded by June, and the 180-day work period would span until December.

The Secretariat was requested to provide regular updates on the progress of the bidding process.

The meeting then proceeded to the next agenda item. But before proceeding to the reporting cycle update, the Secretariat suggested advancing the presentation on the blockchain feasibility study, noting that the relevant guests were already present. With agreement from the Chair and the body, the agenda was adjusted accordingly.

The Chair acknowledged the guests and apologized for the delay, noting that the group would proceed to Agenda Item 3: Updates from the Technical Working Group on NCIP, which included the presentation of the blockchain feasibility study.

The floor was then opened to the designated presenter.

2. Technical Working Group Meeting on the NCIP Blockchain-based Monitoring Tool

The Secretariat first acknowledged the presence of guests from Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. (FNI), who have been collaborating with PH-EITI and NCIP to explore the integration of blockchain technology into the monitoring of Indigenous Peoples' royalty payments.

The TWG, established on March 4, 2025, is co-chaired by MGB and NCIP, with secretariat support from PH-EITI and NCIP's Foreign-Assisted Programs and International Relations Office (FAPIRO). Plans include engaging Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) in consultations, capacity building, and the development of a centralized royalty monitoring system.

A representative from GFNI presented the conceptual basis for blockchain as a tamper-proof, decentralized ledger, drawing parallels to tools like Google Sheets but with immutable entries. He emphasized blockchain's value in enhancing data integrity, transparency, and public trust, especially in royalty payment tracking where administrative inefficiencies have persisted.

Drawing on his experience as both a mining industry practitioner and a student of financial technology, he shared that the idea was initially developed as an academic project and later expanded through collaboration with agencies such as DICT and DOST-ASTI. Both institutions have active blockchain initiatives: DICT's eGovChain and DOST-ASTI's Project BlockStart.

While acknowledging the cost limitations of using commercial platforms like Ethereum (estimated at ₱40 million annually), He proposed exploring open-source or government-led blockchain platforms, like Hyperledger, which may be more viable.

The presentation detailed prior exploratory meetings (March 21 and April 22, 2025) among PH-EITI, NCIP, DICT, DOST, and GFNI, which identified early pain points in the current royalty monitoring process—such as discrepancies in pre- and post-2012 data handling due to changes in concurrence requirements.

The proposal is to run the blockchain study in parallel with the development of a centralized database, using the NCIP's system flow and interviews with process owners to inform design.

The meeting continued with an in-depth discussion following the presentation of a proposed blockchain-based monitoring tool for tracking IP royalty payments. The initiative, conceptualized by a private sector representative and student of financial technology, is currently in the exploratory and feasibility study phase, with collaborative support from

PH-EITI, NCIP, DICT, DOST-ASTI, and Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc.

The end goal of the study was clarified: to determine the financial and technical feasibility of integrating blockchain technology into IP royalty tracking. The presenter emphasized the importance of beginning with variance reconciliation—addressing persistent inconsistencies between company-declared payments and reported receipts—as a foundation before expanding the scope to cover utilization monitoring and broader transparency outcomes.

A member of civil society raised critical points regarding the practical value of the initiative. Among the issues raised were:

- Lack of signal and internet access in many IP communities, making real-time tech-based data entry impractical.
- The capacity constraints of Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) and Indigenous Political Structures (IPS) to engage with complex technology, especially where basic literacy and infrastructure are lacking.
- Concerns that the study's current framing—"Ancestry Meets Technology"—suggested the technology would directly empower IP communities, when the actual focus remains largely administrative and centralized.
- Broader concerns around equity in royalty negotiations, the timeliness and completeness of royalty payments, and the proper use and management of royalty funds, which were seen as more urgent and foundational issues to address.
- A recommendation was made to reframe the initiative more accurately as "When NCIP Meets Technology", centering the tool as a support for institutional monitoring rather than direct community interface.

The need to include CSOs and IP representatives in the technical working group (TWG) overseeing the study was also emphasized, with calls to ensure these sectors are part of decision-making from the early design phase.

Additional points were raised by the government representative about the cost-effectiveness of blockchain, particularly given the relatively low volume of data involved in quarterly royalty payments. Suggestions included considering alternative platforms (such as IBM's Blockchain-as-a-Service) or learning from existing government efforts such as the DOE's Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS), which already employs blockchain principles.

The presenter acknowledged all feedback and clarified that:

- The study is still in the conceptual stage;
- All stakeholder concerns would be integrated into the scoping and feasibility analysis;
- The proposed platform, if developed, would be modular, scalable, and grounded in

- real-world community constraints;
- A cost-benefit comparison between blockchain and a centralized database would be included.

The Chair acknowledged the value of the discussion and affirmed PH-EITI's continued engagement in the initiative on an exploratory basis, emphasizing that any sustained involvement will depend on the demonstrated value to PH-EITI's mandate. The study will proceed in coordination with participating agencies and stakeholders, with regular updates to be provided.

B. Inclusion of company-reported GHG emission data from the ORE tool in the FY 2023-2024 Country Report

During the meeting, the Chair clarified that most of the remaining agenda items were intended for the body's information. However, he also emphasized the importance of ensuring that members were aware of the status of ongoing efforts, particularly in relation to the reporting cycle. The Secretariat recommended addressing the approval items first and disseminating the rest—those marked for information—through email instead.

The Chair confirmed that Item A had been completed, including the approval of the terms of reference. Regarding Item B, there was a consensus that the current capacity did not permit the inclusion of GHG emissions data in the report. Instead, publicly available data would be used as part of contextual information and integrated through a desk review approach.

The Secretariat further explained that the main objective of this item was to present recommendations from the Implementation Committee, including proposed learning sessions for the international secretariat and capacity-building initiatives for the MSG and reporting entities.

The secretariat began by recapping the highlights of the April Implementation Committee (IC) meeting. To provide context, it was explained that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data had been gathered from annual reports submitted by publicly listed mining and oil and gas companies. However, as discussed in the IC, both the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) and reporting companies currently lack the full capacity to engage in detailed GHG reporting and data analysis.

Given these limitations, the secretariat suggested that GHG emissions be included only in the contextual chapter of the country report, rather than in the reconciliation chapter or through the Open Reporting (OR) tool. This approach would allow the group to begin

exploring the available data without requiring formal reporting mechanisms. Since much of the information is already publicly accessible, a preliminary write-up could be developed based on existing sources.

To support this gradual approach, a step-by-step capacity-building plan was proposed. This would begin with a dedicated forum tentatively set for June 11, focusing on the current state of GHG reporting within the Philippine extractive sector. The forum was envisioned as a deep dive into reporting practices and would include a learning session led by the International Secretariat, which has in-house expertise on EITI's climate-related disclosure requirements under the 2023 Standard.

In addition, the forum could feature presentations from the Climate Change Commission (CCC) on the country's nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and their relevance to the extractive industry. Another component would involve engaging with the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), which already mandates sustainability reporting from listed firms. Learning how these reports are developed and standardized could benefit other stakeholders.

It was also suggested that companies already reporting emissions—such as Global Ferronickel, Nickel Asia, and OceanaGold—share their experiences and practices. These exchanges could be complemented by facilitated workshops led by GHG experts from institutions like the Nomura Research Institute, Action Klima Philippines, or Bureau Veritas. The intention is to eventually assess capacity gaps and explore further technical support based on the forum's outcomes.

The chair welcomed the proposal and emphasized that capacity building is necessary before more advanced reporting can be pursued. It was clarified that this move toward contextual GHG reporting aligns with the Philippines' earlier commitment to the CCC, even before such practices were codified in international standards.

When asked about the source of current data, the secretariat confirmed that it comes from the PSE's collection of annual and sustainability reports, with most contributions coming from nickel and gold companies. It was also noted that the Chamber of Mines has been promoting sustainability standards, further reinforcing the sector's gradual movement toward consistent disclosures.

As the discussion progressed, some concerns were raised over the proposed title—"Energy Transition Forum." Multiple participants cautioned that the term might be misleading or create mismatched expectations. It was suggested that the forum's name be adjusted to

better reflect its actual focus: understanding the present landscape of GHG emissions reporting, rather than positioning it as a full-scale energy transition discussion.

The chair echoed this concern and recommended rebranding the event accordingly. The goal, it was emphasized, is not just to host a forum but to generate reliable data on current GHG emissions and identify how the extractive sector can move forward in a coordinated, informed manner.

In principle, the group expressed agreement with the direction of the plan—including the inclusion of GHG data in the contextual chapter, the tentative date for the forum, and the need for clear framing of the event’s scope.

C. Outline: PH-EITI FY 2023 and 2024 Contextual Information Report

The chair confirmed consensus on the earlier agenda items, noting that Items One and Two would be treated as approved, with the understanding that further details—especially on the proposed forum—would be finalized separately.

Before breaking for lunch, the chair inquired whether the outline of the contextual chapter would take much time to go through. The secretariat responded by offering a concise explanation of the updates, noting that this year’s report would not only comply with EITI’s 2023 standards but would also serve as a key input to the country’s upcoming validation process. The section on governance and policy frameworks remains consistent with prior reports, but the secretariat proposed including the 10-year milestone of PH-EITI’s implementation, incorporating issues raised during the meeting. These reflections were suggested to be better aligned with the 10th Country Report but since the previous year’s report had already published the Terms of Reference (TOR) it can no longer be added.

The sector overview, beneficial ownership and contract transparency, and revenue management and subnational transparency sections would remain largely the same. What would be new are additions covering Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations, energy transition, and a segment titled A Decade of Transparency. There were also plans to include impact stories and case studies to illustrate key themes.

The chair asked whether these additions were part of the new reporting standard, to which the secretariat confirmed that ESG, energy transition, and the decade-long transparency assessment were among the updated requirements. When asked whether participants needed more time to absorb the content, the secretariat clarified that the outline had already been approved by the Implementation Committee.

A civil society representative then raised the point that the 10-year implementation review should include not only successes but also persistent challenges. They proposed the inclusion of a case that remains unresolved—not to discredit the initiative but to emphasize that transparency alone cannot address all systemic issues. Highlighting such a case would show honesty in the report and underscore the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The chair agreed and suggested that this could be framed under a “lessons learned” section.

Another civil society representative emphasized the need to consciously apply a gender lens throughout the report. They argued that when presenting lessons learned or impact assessments, the report should clearly indicate how far the initiative has come in terms of gender mainstreaming. This aligns with the EITI 2023 Standard, which calls for the integration of gender and inclusion. The representative encouraged incorporating data that shows the differentiated impacts of extractive revenues on men, women, and children, especially at the community level.

They elaborated that gender, generations, and geography should be key analytical dimensions. Without deliberately embedding these from the start of data collection and research design, the resulting insights would be limited. Including this lens, they said, would significantly enrich the report and position it as a model aligned with global standards. They further suggested that even if existing studies are not gender-focused, available data can still be re-examined to reflect these perspectives.

The Chair acknowledged the value of the point and raised the question of whether disaggregated data was available. It was recalled that the initiative had previously begun collecting such data, although the availability of community-level information remained uncertain. The chair clarified that while data at the company level may exist, community-level datasets might still be lacking. It was agreed that the inclusion of gender- and community-based insights would depend on data availability, and efforts would be made to review past studies.

As the session drew to a close, the chair suggested breaking for lunch and resuming the discussion afterward. It was agreed that a 30-minute break would follow, and upon reconvening at 12:45 PM, the group would revisit the contextual chapter outline for additional comments and feedback.

As the meeting resumed, the chair invited the group to view a document on-screen, asking if someone could flash it for everyone to see.

A civil society representative took the opportunity to make a suggestion, acknowledging the volume of work being managed by the PH-EITI Secretariat. The representative proposed that, in alignment with the EITI International Standards and current trends across Philippine government agencies, the country report should integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given that many agencies are now required to submit SDG-linked reports, the representative saw value in articulating PH-EITI's contributions to relevant SDGs within the country report. This, they noted, could position PH-EITI as a best practice model by showing alignment with both national and international development agendas.

The chair responded affirmatively, noting that SDG alignment is also embedded in EITI's global framework. It was confirmed that the SDGs are already referenced within the contextual information section and that their integration into the report would be appropriate and beneficial.

With no further comments raised, the chair confirmed the approval of the contextual information outline for the 2020–2024 report. It was clarified that this outline would serve as the working template for the consultant who would be commissioned to draft the chapter. The secretariat was tasked with developing the write-up, incorporating all feedback and inputs provided during the session.

3. Progress Updates on the FY 2023-2024 Reporting Cycles

As the meeting resumed, the chair acknowledged the time constraints and noted that five reports were scheduled to be presented by the secretariat, despite the session running behind. Recognizing the importance of the reports, the chair requested that each be delivered in abbreviated form, ideally within five minutes per report. The first update focused on the progress of the 2020–2024 reporting cycle.

A representative from the secretariat began by reporting on the submission of legal and data entry documents required from reporting companies. These documents are essential for verifying company participation and for enabling access to tax payment data from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). According to the report, the number of projects with complete submissions increased from 55 to 58 for fiscal year 2023, and from 54 to 59 for fiscal year 2024. There was also an increase in advanced document submissions.

Despite the improvement, the secretariat noted that follow-ups were still being made to companies that had yet to submit, with assistance being requested from both the Chamber of Mines and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). In terms of Beneficial Ownership

(BO) compliance, the secretariat reported 48 BO-related documents collected for 2023 and 49 for 2024. However, around 39% of companies had not submitted any BO data, which remains voluntary.

The secretariat then turned to updates regarding the status of mining projects. The original target included 126 projects, but this number had been revised downward due to several companies being placed under "care and maintenance" or being declared non-operational. Two companies—Domingo and Rosario Manobo Mining Corporation—were acknowledged for formally notifying PH-EITI of their inactive status. The secretariat expressed appreciation for the support of the MGB representative in validating these statuses, as well as the assistance of the Chamber of Mines.

The update concluded with the status of the Online Reporting Extractives (ORE) tool, which is in its final development stages. While the full tool has not yet been deployed, offline templates have been circulated to allow companies to begin data input. A recent orientation held on April 4 attracted 95 industry representatives, who provided feedback and suggestions for the platform. During that session, three companies—Lazy Bay, Mount Sinai, and Chrominko—were identified as under care and maintenance and would be removed from the target list accordingly.

The chair thanked the secretariat for the presentation, noting that first-quarter participation is often lower due to tax filing season, with improved numbers typically seen in the second quarter. When asked about the number of companies represented at the April orientation, the secretariat estimated that around 40–45 firms were in attendance, averaging two representatives per company.

A civil society representative then inquired whether company representation had increased compared to three or five years ago. The secretariat responded affirmatively, explaining that while the overall number of participating companies had grown, this had also led to more variance in reporting timelines, particularly among new entrants.

Another civil society representative raised a concern regarding how the reporting tool categorizes companies under "care and maintenance." Specifically, the case of Chrominko was cited. This company operates in Barangay Loreto, Dinagat Islands, in an area known for its bonsai forest. The representative noted that the company may have ceased operations due to environmental violations—such as waste disposal into the sea—and possible unpaid penalties. The concern was that such cases might be inaccurately classified as "under care and maintenance" rather than "suspended due to violation."

The secretariat responded by stating that they are coordinating with the MGB to clarify company statuses. For the current reporting cycle (2023–2024), they plan to send formal letters to the MGB requesting details on whether specific cases of inactivity are due to administrative violations or legitimate care and maintenance status. This effort is meant to ensure that the final report reflects the accurate operational context of each reporting entity.

As the meeting continued, a civil society representative raised a follow-up point related to an earlier discussion on the operational status of Chrominko Mines. The representative shared that during a field visit to the bonsai forest area—which overlaps with the company's mining concession—visitors were required to secure permissions from both the local government and the mining company, as entry to the forest equated to entering the mine site. During the visit, the delegation observed a large open pit, which appeared to be in active use. Conversations with vehicle drivers in the area suggested that gold was being mined at the site, in addition to chromite.

This observation raised concerns about possible undisclosed multi-mineral operations. The representative questioned whether such activities were being properly monitored, especially if the company's declarations only mentioned one mineral. The point emphasized was the need for accurate reporting not only of a company's operational status—such as being under care and maintenance—but also of the actual activities on the ground, to ensure that the reports reflect the real situation, not just what is officially declared.

The chair acknowledged the concern, noting that Chrominko's operations might involve copper and gold. While not confirming the specifics, the chair reiterated that the main issue at hand was the status reporting of mining companies. Acknowledging the photos and observations, the chair emphasized the need to clarify whether these companies were genuinely inactive or operating in some capacity.

The civil society representative followed up, requesting that the report distinguish between companies under care and maintenance and those that are suspended or non-operational for other reasons, such as violations. The secretariat confirmed that previous iterations of the Independent Administrator (IA) report had included remarks indicating suspension, though details on causes were not always included.

This led to a broader exchange on how much status detail should be included in the report. The chair asked whether reasons behind suspensions could be noted, and the secretariat responded that such information could be obtained from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). It was acknowledged that this kind of detail might be more routinely handled under

the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) reviews.

A government representative elaborated on the matter, explaining that the MGB had already received written inquiries from PH-EITI requesting clarification on company statuses. Several companies were confirmed to be non-producing due to low mineral prices and other operational constraints. The representative cited examples of companies that were either suspended, had their Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) cancelled, or were under review. While the bureau can declare a project suspended or cancelled, they explained that the reasons behind such decisions are typically not disclosed, citing limitations on divulging that level of detail in public reports.

The chair suggested that as long as official data from the MGB was available, noting a company's status as suspended or under care and maintenance should pose no problem. Including this information could contribute to the transparency and credibility of the report.

Another civil society representative expanded the point, emphasizing that providing accurate operational statuses in the report—especially in cases involving violations—would reinforce the credibility of PH-EITI. One example shared was Rosario Manobo Mining Corporation (RMMC), a joint venture involving the Manobo Indigenous Peoples of Rosario. Although the company is officially listed as non-operational, it was pointed out that its tunnel is located within an informal small-scale mining area, which continues to operate. The representative urged further verification, noting that inactivity at the large-scale level does not always equate to total cessation of mining activity.

The same representative recalled a security incident in the area involving a former community leader, which reportedly led to the withdrawal of financial support for the company. This added complexity to the classification of the company's status and underscored the importance of on-the-ground verification, especially in sensitive areas with overlapping formal and informal mining activities.

A government representative responded by saying that while the MICC mining review findings are not publicly disclosed in full, the operational statuses of reviewed companies are shared. The chair concluded the discussion by reiterating that including available data on whether companies are under care and maintenance or suspended—based on MGB records—would be both feasible and helpful.

4. Update on FGD and Consultations

A. Strengthening Local Voices: Stakeholder Dialogues on Energy Transition, Subnationalization, Small-Scale Mining (SSM), and Gender-Responsive Mining – Benguet

A representative from the Secretariat delivered a comprehensive report on the recent stakeholder dialogue held in Benguet during the second week of April, which was attended by members of the Secretariat. The main objective of the activity was to support fieldwork for the energy transition scoping study and to contribute to the contextual information chapter of the upcoming PH-EITI Country Report. In addition, the dialogue served to introduce the concept of subnationalization, collect stakeholder insights on extractive governance, and explore the potential creation of a subnational EITI body in Benguet.

A range of stakeholders were interviewed during the visit, including representatives from the Benguet Environment and Natural Resources Office (BENRO), MGB-CAR, Itogon and Tuba LGUs, civil society, Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs), and small-scale mining (SSM) cooperatives such as the National Coalition of Small-Scale Miners in the Philippines, Inc. (NCSSMPI) and the Baguio Small Scale Mining Cooperative.

To raise awareness, localized EITI data and informational brochures were produced and distributed to provincial and local offices, including bulletin board postings at the Benguet Provincial Capitol, MGB-CAR, and the LGUs of Itogon and Tuba.

- **Subnationalization**

Discussions with MGB-CAR revealed that the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) may not be a suitable body to serve as a subnational EITI counterpart due to its limited jurisdiction over small-scale mining. However, PEDRO, a provincial-level body, expressed that it may be possible to pass an ordinance mandating LGUs to establish local EITI structures—but noted that the initiative should be demand-driven, ideally originating from municipal governments. A CSO representative shared that DILG-CAR had previously shown willingness to issue a memo encouraging LGUs to establish EITI bodies, suggesting this channel be revisited.

While LGUs in Itogon and Tuba were receptive to the subnational EITI idea, they advised that engagement be resumed after the elections, to avoid duplicating efforts should leadership transitions occur. They also recommended presenting the concept to local councils and executives post-election.

- **Energy Transition**

Interviewees noted the presence of renewable energy (RE) operations in Benguet and acknowledged that some LGUs benefit from RE revenues. However, challenges remain, especially in managing the impacts of climate change, including weather shifts and forest fires. Valuable insights were gathered to inform PH-EITI's energy transition scoping study, led by the Secretariat's researcher, who also incorporated questions on gender sensitivity into the fieldwork.

- **Small-Scale Mining (SSM)**

The team engaged with the Baguio Small Scale Mining Cooperative, which operates differently from typical SSM setups by being registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and actively pursuing formalization through a minahang bayan application. The team also met with the chairman of the NCSSMPI, who shared that efforts are underway to consolidate national SSM data. He expressed willingness to coordinate with PH-EITI and even suggested representation for SSM stakeholders in the MSG, given their significant footprint in the extractives sector.

The cooperative views PH-EITI as a valuable platform for integrating SSM data into both national and subnational reporting, and they expressed support for becoming more involved in the initiative's activities.

- **Indigenous Peoples (IP)**

Discussions with an IPO in Tuba revealed frustrations around unreleased royalty payments, with confusion over whether to follow up with the NCIP or another agency due to delays in CRDP approval. Still, the IPOs acknowledged that PH-EITI reports have helped them understand what royalties they are entitled to, and they expressed support for subnational EITI bodies and local representation. The Secretariat recognized that national MSG participation remains a challenge for many IPOs and suggested that including IP representatives at the subnational level might be a more feasible and inclusive approach.

- **Key Opportunities & Next Steps**

- The dialogue identified several emerging opportunities:
- Strong local interest in subnational EITI structures;
- Potential LGU champions in Itogon and Tuba;
- Willingness among IP and SSM stakeholders to engage;
- Concrete feedback supporting national initiatives on energy, gender, and

transparency;

- Opportunities to strengthen ties with DILG-CAR, NCIP, and SSM coalitions.
- **The proposed next steps include:**
 - Re-engaging DILG-CAR regarding a circular to support the formation of local EITI bodies;
 - Returning to Itogon and Tuba post-election to brief their Sangguniang Bayan and executives;
 - Mapping current renewable energy and SSM operations for further profiling;
 - Drafting guidelines and structures for subnational Multi-Stakeholder Committees (MSCs);
 - Continuing engagement with IP organizations to clarify royalty processes and transparency concerns.

The Secretariat also noted plans to conduct similar stakeholder dialogues in Eastern Samar (Visayas) and South Cotabato (Mindanao)—two areas that not only host mining and energy transition issues but also have existing Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments, making them ideal candidates for further subnational engagement.

The chair opened the floor for questions and comments. With none raised, the report was accepted, and the meeting moved on to outlining the next steps.

5. Draft Data Sharing Agreement with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

The secretariat gave a brief update regarding the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), clarifying that while the DSA had already been approved during the 97th MSG meeting, there was a suggestion in a recent Implementation Committee (IC) meeting to also seek a legal opinion from the Department of Finance (DOF). The secretariat confirmed that, as far as the multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) was concerned, the agreement had been cleared, and the SEC had since followed up in support of its implementation.

The chair emphasized that since the form was developed by the SEC itself, their approval was clear, and that this agreement would allow PH-EITI to access beneficial ownership (BO) data. However, the secretariat clarified that this access does not extend to public disclosure; any publication of BO data would still require individual company waivers. Nonetheless, the DSA provides PH-EITI internal access for review purposes—a significant step forward.

The chair asked whether this was also tied to PH-EITI's Open Government Partnership (OGP) commitments. The secretariat confirmed it was part of the OGP milestones related to improving data capacity, specifically in BO reporting. It was agreed that the signing of the DSA could be reported as a milestone under the OGP initiative.

With no further questions raised, the meeting transitioned to the next agenda item—the Terms of Reference (ToR) for support to the Opening Extractives (OE) program.

6. Terms of Reference for support to the Opening Extractives programme in the Philippines

The secretariat explained that this initiative is also part of the OGP commitment and involves limited international funding intended to support capacity-building activities, including the hiring of a consultant to assist with implementation. The scope covers five activity commitments, although only some are currently included in the draft ToR.

The chair asked for the current status of the proposal, to which the secretariat replied that the ToR was being presented for MSG approval. The chair inquired whether timelines were already defined, but the secretariat noted there was some delay on implementation scheduling. Given this, the chair proposed deferring approval to the next meeting, especially since the item would benefit from further discussion. The secretariat clarified that the matter had already been discussed at the IC level and received no objections there.

A civil society representative interjected to raise a broader concern. While acknowledging the importance of the funding and its alignment with national and international commitments, they cautioned that the group must prioritize activities strategically—especially with the validation process being resource-intensive. The representative stressed the importance of ensuring that once PH-EITI commits to an activity, it must have the capacity to deliver it fully. They also called for industry input, pointing out that capacity-building support from international partners often comes with expectations, and that the multi-stakeholder group must be united in understanding and accepting those.

An industry representative acknowledged the point, though no detailed objection or support was voiced during the exchange.

Given the absence of urgency and the need for consensus across sectors, the chair confirmed the decision to defer approval of the TOR, allowing stakeholders more time to reflect and coordinate.

7. 2026 Global Conference

A representative from the Secretariat provided an update on the recent assessment visit by the EITI International Secretariat from April 7 to 11, regarding the Philippines' potential hosting of the 2026 EITI Global Conference. The visit included consultations with MSG representatives, the Secretariat, and development partners to assess the country's readiness and willingness to host the event, tentatively scheduled for June 2026.

Initial feedback from the discussions was positive, with government and stakeholder representatives expressing confidence in the Philippines' ability to deliver—especially with anticipated financial support from EITI International. However, the need for a counterpart budget from the Philippine government was also highlighted.

As part of the planning mission, the EITI International team conducted ocular inspections of possible venues, with PICC, Conrad Manila, and Marriott Hotel as top contenders. While PICC was initially considered ideal, ongoing renovations and the absence of a clear completion timeline became a major concern. With PICC unable to commit to a definitive date, the Secretariat noted that the Conrad Manila is now being considered as the more feasible option.

Next steps include the formal submission of a letter of acceptance from the Philippine government, which is being finalized and will be sent upon approval by high-level officials. EITI International will consolidate their planning mission findings and present these to the EITI Board, with a formal decision expected at the June 2025 board meeting, which will be held online.

The Secretariat shared that EITI International is open to conducting a follow-up workshop or MSG-wide meeting to ensure more inclusive discussion and to address any questions stakeholders may have. The board's decision will be based on the submitted documents and the Secretariat's assessment.

It was also confirmed that, should the Philippines host the event, counterpart support would include assistance with immigration processing (e.g., visas) and sponsorship of at least one formal dinner event, among other logistical contributions. Coordination across government agencies is expected, and efforts are underway to secure an executive order from Malacañang to formalize inter-agency support.

The chair emphasized the significance of the undertaking, expressing appreciation for the support of Secretary Recto and noting that the initiative would require collaboration across

all sectors.

A civil society representative inquired about the overlap between the proposed June 2026 conference and the scheduled July 2026 validation process, asking whether this timing would necessitate a formal extension request. It was clarified that EITI International had already proposed moving the validation to accommodate the global conference, relieving the Philippines from the need to initiate the extension request.

The chair added that the hosting year would coincide with the end of the current EITI Chairperson's term—currently held by the former Prime Minister of New Zealand—and the global conference would culminate in the election of a new Chair, making the occasion even more significant.

With no further questions, the chair acknowledged the gravity and prestige of the responsibility and expressed confidence that the MSG would be able to deliver with collective effort.

VII. Other Matters

1. Update on committee membership changes

Before concluding, the secretariat requested to flash an updated presentation for MSG members regarding committee memberships. The chair acknowledged the request, and the update was briefly introduced.

A civil society representative suggested that the list of committee members be shared via the group chat (GC) instead of being read aloud to save time. This was initially affirmed, although a moment later another clarification was made about specific membership changes.

The secretariat announced that, since the previous Implementation Committee (IC) chair's term had ended Atty. Kiril Caral of PAP had been designated as Chair of the Implementation Committee.

A civil society representative then relayed a clarification from another CSO member, regarding committee assignments. It was noted that a previous member's term had ended, and a proposal was made to reassign one representative to the Finance Committee in their place. This adjustment was acknowledged and accepted by the chair.

The chair took a moment to thank all members who had stepped up to participate in or lead the various committees, especially those who agreed to chair them.

In closing, the chair asked whether the updated plans or agreements needed to be flashed again, but the group collectively agreed that these documents would be shared via the group chat and circulated through email for comments. The secretariat was tasked with disseminating the draft agreements and requesting feedback to ensure that all action items had been accurately captured. The chair also noted that any outstanding concerns would be addressed under “matters arising” in the next meeting.

VI. Summary of Agreements

Agreements	Responsibility Center	Timeline
The Chair recommended allowing an additional week for MSG members to review the minutes. Should there be any substantial comments, these will be raised and discussed in the next scheduled meeting.	MSG and Secretariat	
The MSG recommends refining the qualifications of the IA by including a legal background among the preferred criteria. Additionally, it was agreed to prioritize candidates with experience in the extractive industry or those who have been involved in related fields. The requirement for a CPA was also adjusted, reducing the minimum experience from ten (10) years to five (5) years, provided the individual holds good standing in the profession.	Secretariat	
The MSG noted the need for a more detailed analysis of the types of data being collected and the manner of collection, particularly as inconsistencies appear to stem from the use of three different data sources and varying report formats. To minimize reconciliation issues, the MSG recommends disaggregating the data collection process and standardizing reporting formats to allow for greater consistency and detail across all sources.	Secretariat	
The MSG agreed to highlight in the report the varying tax regimes implemented by different Local Government Units (LGUs). It was noted that this variation significantly affects the data reported at the subnational level, and therefore warrants specific attention in the analysis.	Secretariat	

Agreements	Responsibility Center	Timeline
<p>The MSG recommended the need to contextualize and analyze the Independent Administrator’s (IA) data findings alongside those released by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). It was observed that discrepancies exist among the datasets, and a comparative analysis is necessary to explain the differences in methodology, data sources, and reporting timelines that may have contributed to the inconsistencies.</p>	Secretariat	
<p>The MSG approved the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Reconciliation Chapters Consultant for the FY 2023–2024 Country Report, subject to the incorporation of amendment points raised during the discussion. These amendments will be reflected in the final version of the TOR prior to implementation</p>	Secretariat	
<p>The MSG recommended that GFNI include a cost-benefit analysis of adopting blockchain technology in the development of a centralized data system. This aims to assess the long-term efficiency, transparency, and security advantages of blockchain integration in data management and royalty utilization. Additionally, the MSG suggested exploring the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS) as a reference model for streamlining digital systems.</p>	Secretariat	
<p>The MSG further recommended the inclusion of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs), and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the Technical Working Group (TWG) on blockchain integration. Their participation is seen as vital in ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and the protection of community interests in the design and implementation of blockchain systems related to royalty management and data governance.</p>	Secretariat	
<p>The MSG recommended proceeding with exploratory talks on the proposed blockchain initiative, with the understanding that further engagement will depend on whether the outcome proves to be beneficial to the MSG and aligned with PH-EITI objectives. The MSG emphasized the importance of ensuring that any new mechanism or partnership must add value to the transparency,</p>	Secretariat	

Agreements	Responsibility Center	Timeline
accountability, and inclusivity goals of the PH-EITI process.		
The MSG agreed that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data will be included solely in the Contextual Chapter of the FY 2023–2024 Country Report, and not in the Reconciliation Chapter. In support of this, the MSG also approved the Secretariat’s proposal to organize a forum session with the EITI International Secretariat to align with the environmental disclosure requirements under the EITI 2023 Standard. The forum will include presentations from the Climate Change Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)—the primary agencies responsible for GHG data—and will also highlight best practices from extractive companies that currently report their GHG emissions.	Secretariat and MSG	
To manage stakeholder expectations, the MSG recommended rebranding the session to focus specifically on GHG data reporting, rather than positioning it under the broader theme of “energy transition.” This is to avoid misinterpretation and ensure that the forum reflects the current scope and availability of data.	Secretariat and MSG	
The MSG recommended including in the FY 2023–2024 Contextual Information Report a specific unresolved case from the past 10 years of implementation to reflect ongoing challenges and avoid sugar coating.	Secretariat	
MSG also emphasized the need to apply a gender lens across the report, highlighting progress in mainstreaming gender in policies and disclosures, and ensuring it becomes a conscious and consistent element in every report.	Secretariat	
The MSG approved the outline of the Contextual Information Report for FY 2023–2024. The Secretariat will proceed with drafting the report, incorporating the comments and suggestions raised during the discussion.	Secretariat	
The MSG raised the need to include the status of non-operational mining companies, particularly those under suspension due to violations. The MSG agreed that companies should be clearly tagged as either under “care and maintenance” or “suspended,” to improve transparency.	Secretariat	

Agreements	Responsibility Center	Timeline
The MSG deferred the discussion on the Terms of Reference (TOR) to support the Opening Extractives Program in the Philippines to the next meeting, allowing MSG more time to review and provide input.	MSG and Secretariat	

VII. Adjournment

The Chair thanked all the MSG members for their active participation in the 98th MSG meeting and adjourned the session at 2:00 pm.