



SUMMARY NOTE OF THE EXCHANGES AND CONCLUSIONS OF CSOs ENGAGED IN IMPLEMENTING THE EITI IN CAMEROON



Yaoundé-Cameroon, 29 March 2022

As part of the implementation of the "Strengthening Tax Justice in Cameroon" project supported by the Tax Justice Network (TJNA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Corporation (NORAD), the African Regional Centre for Endogenous and Community Development (CRADEC) organised a workshop on 29 March 2022, on the eve of the first session of the EITI-Cameroon Committee for the year. CRADEC thus provided an opportunity for exchange and consultation with civil society, member of the EITI Committee, extended to other stakeholder groups. The objective of this meeting was to revitalise the representation of CSOs to ensure that they speak with one voice, and participate freely, actively, effectively and fully in the challenges and national priorities for compliance with the EITI Standard.

The key points that fuelled the debate were:

- I. Assessing the level of CSOs' engagement in the EITI process ;
- II. Possible solutions to the shortcomings and limitations identified;
- III. Consultation in the run-up to the EITI Committee meeting on 30 March 2022.

I. Assessing the level of CSOs' engagement in the EITI process

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

II. Possible solutions to overcome the shortcomings and limitations identified

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

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

III. Consultation in the run-up to the EITI Committee meeting on 30 March 2022

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the end of this agenda review, it was agreed to circulate the conclusions of the Committee session within the Platform within 48 hours. These will enable us to draft a political brief to the Minister of Finance, Chairman of the EITI Committee.

What did they say?

“Civil society is losing its leadership in an initiative that it initiated”

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

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

Sylvanus BINLA, National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (CENC)

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

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

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

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