**Communication & Engagement Strategy**

# Background

 *“Regular disclosure of extractive industry data is of little practical use without*

 *public awareness, understanding of what the figures mean, and public debate*

 *about how resource revenues can be used effectively. The EITI Requirements*

 *related to outcomes and impact seek to ensure that stakeholders are engaged*

 *in dialogue about natural resource revenue management. EITI disclosures lead*

 *to the fulfilment of the EITI Principles by contributing to wider public debate*.”

 **EITI Requirement 7 Outcomes and Impact, 7.1 Public Debate**

Stakeholder Engagement is a core component of the EITI. At least three (3) of the Requirements under the *2019 EITI Standard* touch directly on engagement[[1]](#footnote-2).

However, effective engagement cannot happen without communication. That is why this Strategy and the sub-group under the MSG that created the Strategy and oversee its implementation now refer to both, ie. Communication and Engagement (C&E).

**Public debate**

The 2019 EITI Standard includes requirements to raise awareness of the EITI and stimulate public debate, particularly:

*“The MSG must ensure that government and company disclosures are comprehensible, actively promoted, publicly accessible and contributes (sic) to public debate.”*

Public debate – at the national and local levels - is a key outcome of UK EITI’s communication and engagement activities, as required by the Standard.

The 2021 Validation noted that:

*“(t)here is some evidence that UK EITI contributed to public debate and accountability in the UK, insofar as UKEITI and EITI data has (sic) been referenced in several civil society blogposts and campaigns, and at least one judicial review process.”*

But more can be done. This Strategy sets out how we will do that.

# State of Play

**Public interest is a constraint to engagement**

There is a continuing recognition - based on UK EITI’s eight (8) years of implementation experience - that public interest in UK EITI issues and data are weak. That is a significant hindrance to engagement and debate around UK EITI issues. Indeed, UK EITI disclosures of extractives sector payment and revenue data now lead all EITI implementing countries in terms of timeliness yet, public interest in the data remains tepid. The latest Validation Report noted a *“lack of robust public engagement and awareness of UK EITI more generally”* adding that *“it is not clear whether improved public engagement would also reveal a demand for increased accessibility and usability of EITI data.”*

For that reason, part of the UK EITI’s recent C&E work has focused on supporting the MSG to *“turn its attention to areas of UK extractive industries where there is greater public interest, in particular the debate on energy transition and the challenges facing the extractives sector as* *the UK works to meet its legally-binding target to bring greenhouse emissions to net zero by 2050.” (Annual Review, 2022)*

**Stronger alignment with International Secretariat & UK public priorities**

“Informing the energy transition” is among the International Secretariat’s “strategic priorities for 2021-2023” and the first of six “shifts for EITI implementation.” It also features in two (2) of the four (4) encouragements from the most recent Validation.

**Surveys**

**UK EITI**

To better understand CSO priorities and their preferred methods of communication and engagement in UK EITI work, the Secretariat conducted a benchmarking survey in the Summer/Autumn 2022. The responses informed this Strategy.

**BEIS**

The Strategy also benefitted from the results of the quarterly Public Attitudes Tracker, conducted by BEIS which captured citizens’ views on issues relevant to the UK EITI, such as corporate trust, transparency and governance, the energy transition and energy security, while compiling citizens’ most trusted information sources – a crucial element for effective communication and engagement.

This aligns with the UK EITI context as well. BEIS’ Public Tracker Surveys have consistently shown that climate change and a just energy transition are key issues/concerns for the UK public.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The 2021 Validation noted that UK EITI had yet to align fully on this.

*“Despite the widely shared expectation that the MSG will position itself to adapt its activities in response to reflect (sic) the changing nature of the extractives sector in the UK, there have been no significant steps taken in this direction yet… most stakeholders consulted considered that the UKEITI could provide a meaningful contribution to public debate on some issues related to the energy transition, even if the MSG had not yet agreed on what those specific issues were.”*

Because these are high priority issues for many citizens and especially for civil society organisations (CSOs), UK EITI will strengthen our focus on relevant issues/data around a just energy transition in 2023 as a potential entry point to engage the public in dialogue/debate about UK EITI issues.

# C&E Objectives

* Raise awareness within industry, civil society, government & other constituencies about the relevance of UK EITI to a just energy transition and the role each constituency can play in the process;
* Facilitate collaboration with local CSOs and their participation in UK EITI working groups;
* Raise the UK EITI profile using a range of channels;
* Inform & increase public understanding and facilitate debate on the impact and contribution of the extractives industry to the UK economy and society– especially in extractives communities;
* Present information in a useful way, taking advantage of existing data to encourage debate & enhance accountability;
* Deliver greater outreach into and engagement from sectors and communities relevant to UK EITI.
* Broaden engagement ahead of the June 2023 launch of the new EITI Standard;
* Connect our relevance to the priorities/concerns of UK EITI stakeholders, eg. energy transition;
* Seek input to potential inclusion of renewables and essential minerals sectors to UK EITI.

# 4. UK EITI stakeholders

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Public sector** | **Private sector** | **Civil society** | **International** |
| * **HMG Regulators**
* **HMG: revenue collecting or monitoring**
* **FCDO**
* **Devolved Administrations**
* **Parliamentary committees, MPs**
* **Local Councils in extractives communities**
 | * **Extractives Industry**
	+ Mining & Quarrying
	+ Oil & Gas
	+ Employees
	+ Industry bodies

incl. Energy transition groups, eg. Critical Minerals Assoc. (CMA), Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC), etc * **Consultancies**
* **EITI-supporting companies**
 | * **“General public”**
* Local extractives communities
* **Media**
* **Universities, think-tanks**
* **Trade Unions**
* **NGOs, CSOs**
* Local, national
 |  * **EITI Board**
* **EITI Secretariat**
* **Media**
* **INGOs**
 |

# Workstream 1

**January - December 2023**

**Maintaining, improving current communication and engagement**

UK EITI provides a key service in collating available data into a more accessible format and signposting to additional sources so that stakeholders have the tools they need to hold the extractive sector to account. The Validators gave UK EITI high marks for our C&E work, whilst encouraging us to be more ambitious. Whilst we work to do better, it is important to continue doing what we do well.

* **Build on the UK EITI website - drive traffic, encourage use of data**

In 2023, the website will continue to be the anchor for disseminating information, systematically publicising data and reports, raising awareness of events and policy developments. Going forward, we will seek to build on the site’s strengths to go beyond aggregation and publication - adding value via analysis, synthesis and graphics to make the content ever more useful and user friendly to stimulate and inform public debate on extractives issues and a just energy transition. To make the site itself accessible to more people, we will also look into modifying it as needed to make it easily usable by the more than 14 million people living with disabilities in the UK, over 20% of the total population.[[3]](#footnote-4)

* **Continue tracking, publicising consultations**

Key activities and public consultations are tracked and published on the [News & Events](https://www.ukeiti.org/news-events) page of the website.

As we engage more broadly, we will continue tracking/publicising events and opportunities to identify more events and public consultations making it easier for citizens, industry and CSOs to join the debate and provide input to the policy-making process. We will also ‘push’ information about relevant consultations via constituency representatives and other multipliers.

* **Prepare for and boost participation in events, host awareness-raising and dialogue opportunities**

UK EITI participation in the Mineral Products Association (MPA) annual conference in 2022 enabled our engagement with 150 representatives of industry organisations. Building on this successful experience, we will intensify outreach in Q1-Q2 to identify relevant 2023 events in good time to explore collaboration/participation opportunities – especially for energy transition and essential minerals sectors where UK EITI are less known. We will prepare slide decks, presentations, leaflets and other materials on UK EITI’s relevance/role in oil and gas, mining and quarrying, essential minerals and a just energy transition.

# Workstream 2

**January - December 2023**

**Preparing for and implementing the new Standard**

**Building awareness, engagement and public debate, connecting UK EITI to energy transition issues, players & platforms**

Our own research and experience as well as that of others shows that managing the energy transition is high on the list of stakeholder priorities, especially relevant communities. Energy and Mining & Quarrying sector data and governance are key to that. Yet that is not immediately apparent to most people. The UK EITI can play a role in that.

It is important that the MSG prepare for the June 2023 launch of the new EITI Standard. Once the details of the new Standard are public, UK EITI will need to engage intensively across the public and private sector as well as with CSOs to raise awareness and build understanding of the new requirements and what that means for each group. Therefore, we divided Workstream 2 into two phases – pre- and post-launch of the 2023 Standard.

**Workstream 2.1: pre-launch of the 2023 Standard**

**January – June 2023**

* **Update the 2021 mapping exercise for Energy Transition Activities**

The June 2021 *Mapping Exercise for Energy Transition Activities* commissioned by UK EITI Champion Lord Callanan included many suggestions that may remain useful as we approach the new Standard. A top priority will be updating that Report and summarising recommendations to the MSG as soon as is feasible.

* **Update and upgrade the Energy Transition webpage**

Th[e UKEITI website energy transition page](https://www.ukeiti.org/energy-transition) sets out the context and [publication of news items](https://www.ukeiti.org/news-events) track developments and highlight energy and climate policy developments. It features many links to UK policies and MSG member actions, but the text provides only an overview, rather than highlighting UK EITI’s role and relevance in a just energy transition. Furthermore, the page had few visitors in 2022.

We will aim to change that in 2023 by upgrading the Energy Transition webpage to:

1. include bespoke coverage of Renewables and Essential minerals;
2. introduce more graphics for visual appeal, user friendliness, etc.;
3. make clear how UK EITI data and processes can inform the transition and policy dialogue at the national and sub-national levels– (as recommended in 2020 scoping study);
4. include information on the legal and regulatory framework for UK renewables with links to relevant sources;
5. provide data on economic and social contributions – current and projected - of renewables and essential minerals (jobs, local revenue, etc)[[4]](#footnote-5)
6. answer some of the key questions posed by the energy transition[[5]](#footnote-6)
* How EITI data can be used to inform public and policy dialogue?
* How will current and future demand for and revenues from oil, gas and minerals be impacted by the energy transition?
* How will future projects, local economy and employment opportunities be impacted by the energy transition?
* Are there gaps in the legal and policy framework supporting the UK’s energy transition?
	+ EITI disclosures on the legal and fiscal framework governing extractives can promote public understanding on government plans or policies related to the energy transition, helping to identify and address governance challenges related to the exploration, production and export of minerals critical to a just energy transition.
* How is the UK incorporating climate change considerations into extractive sector management?
	+ whether there is data available on fossil fuels reserves and emissions, the intensity of production, and how reductions in emissions from the industry can support national commitments.

Based on the webpage content, we will create a 1-pager and slides that can be used for engaging stakeholders across our constituencies.

* **Begin engaging industry and public sector actors involved in renewable energy and essential minerals.**

Both the UK EITI itself as well as the 2023 Standard will be new for many if not most public and private sector actors involved in essential minerals and renewables. It will be important to use the few months before the EITI Global Conference in mid-June to establish contact and develop working relationships to:

* introduce the UK EITI – roles (current and prospective), authority, relevance, etc.;
* facilitate their participation/integration into UK EITI under the new Standard;
* explain what to expect, potential implications and opportunities;
* gauge the potential and the pitfalls in expanding reporting to include renewables;
* learn what are they already reporting that may be relevant for UK EITI to aggregate/make available on the Energy Transition page;
* identify data they have on the economic, social impact of their sectors that can be of interest to UK public and summarised on the Energy Transition page;
* Discuss 2023 events for possible collaboration.

Engaging early to raise awareness of the UK EITI and our relevance to the essential minerals and renewables sectors as well as what to expect from the 2023 Standard will ensure vital understanding of the UK EITI, establish relationships with key private and public sector players in a just energy transition and build stakeholder trust. This will smooth the way for UK EITI’s implementation of the 2023 Standard.

We will develop materials and messaging - for the website and elsewhere – that makes clear the connection between the UK EITI and the energy transition, explains our relevance and raises awareness on how our data can be used constructively in public debate on energy transition issues. Relevant areas to address potential risks and challenges in the renewable energy and essential minerals sectors include contracting transparency, beneficial ownership, revenues and social and environmental impact.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Scoping study

The MSG might also consider commissioning a scoping study of the materiality of revenues from the UK renewables and essential minerals sector(s) to give MSG members evidence to determine if the revenues are substantial enough to bring into EITI reporting.[[7]](#footnote-8) This might best be done in Q1-Q2 to help inform UK EITI’s initial engagement with sector representatives ahead of the new Standard.

**Workstream 2.2 -** **post-launch of the 2023 Standard**

**July - December 2023**

Having capitalised on the months aheadof the launch of the new EITI Standard to raise awareness of the expected shift in focus to a just energy transition among UK EITI stakeholders, our post-announcement C&E work will focus on preparing relevant pubic and industry players to comply with the new requirements. This means engaging players covered by the current requirements as well as new players. Engagement with the civil society constituency will focus on raising awareness of the Standard’s details as well as how to use the new information to be generated to stimulate and/or inform public debate.

* **Build understanding of the new requirements… and opportunities**

We will update bespoke guidance materials for each sector, conduct presentations, convene working seminars and hold individual meetings as needed to explain the new Standard, walk departments, agencies and companies through the new reporting requirements and answer questions. Foundational details and guidance will likely be provided by the International Secretariat which we can modify for UK EITI specifics and stakeholders.

* **Form Energy Transition sub-group**

To facilitate focussed, informed dialogue and prepare templates, guidance and recommendations for MSG decisions, the MSG might consider establishing an Energy Transition (ET) subgroup to co-ordinate work implementing the specifics of the new Standard – in close cooperation with the C&E group. The ET subgroup should be formed and ready to work in July-August, but could even be launched in Q2 ahead of the new Standard to spearhead outreach alongside the C&E group and ease post-announcement work.

# The approach for each key stakeholder group

# Public sector

After eight years of implementation and top-of-class timeliness for reporting, UK EITI communication and engagement with national and devolved administrations functions very well for reporting purposes as well as for obtaining, updating and curating relevant public sector data included on the UK EITI website. At the sub-national level however, eg. in councils with extractives ‘footprints,’ prior efforts have had little result so far. Awareness of UK EITI among officials and other stakeholders in such communities has not been measured specifically, but we can reasonably conclude it is minimal.

Looking ahead to the new Standard, it will be important to engage early with reporting departments and agencies (RDAs) as well as prospective new RDAs that are likely to be covered by the new reporting requirements.

Wherever possible, this will be done via short, interactive seminars/workshops, followed by bi-monthly bulletins/e-newsletters posted to the website and sent to RDAs summarising implementation experience, sharing learning, etc.

**Parliament**

UK EITI have yet to strategically engage MPs to raise awareness about the initiative, explain our relevance to the energy transition, essential minerals, revenue transparency and policy-making. Nor have we conveyed how UK EITI work relates to the interests of MPs’ individual constituencies.

Before the launch of the new Standard, it will be useful to invite a few MPs representing target communities to a short presentation and discussion on UK EITI, how to use the data in policy-making and what the new Standard will mean for reporting, accountability and their constituencies. Following that, MPs from key constituencies might be sent quarterly updates/briefings and invited to join the Energy Transition sub-group if it could be of interest. Engagement with lawmakers can also be done in partnership with industry groups and their government relations platforms/events, eg. CMA’s work with the House of Commons Select Committee on Essential Minerals and OEUK which serves as Secretariat for a cross-party Parliament working group on Oil and Gas.

 **Industry**

**Engaging new players to enrich dialogue, prepare for implementation**

To date, UK EITI’s engagement of the renewables and essential minerals sectors has been limited and the voice of the industries are under-represented in UK EITI activities. With HMG committed to a just transition whilst securing the UK’s energy supply and the EITI Standard poised to pivot to the energy transition, this Strategy aims to engage the renewables and essential minerals sectors to raise awareness of the UK EITI, explore synergies and opportunities for collaboration as well as to ensure that input from renewables and essential minerals sectors informs our work and that reporting – if and when required – goes smoothly.

**How we will do it**

As a first step, we will engage industry associations, innovators and thought leaders involved in the energy transition, essential minerals production and other UK multi-stakeholder platforms to:

* raise awareness of UK EITI’s role(s);
* understand what data they currently report that could be of interest to our stakeholders (especially local communities);
* discuss potential synergies and collaboration – including events;
* introduce the broad outlines of Oslo’s vision for the 2023 Standard;
* answer questions and understand industry concerns; manage expectations.

At the same time, we will look to them and civil society groups to help us broaden opportunities for UK EITI engagement with stakeholders and sector players, particularly those with a footprint in local communities.

**Civil Society**

With the EITI on the cusp of declaring a new Standard focused more on energy transition issues, UK EITI’s work will become more relevant to many CSOs and there will be greater synergies and alignment of interests. Our 2023 engagement with civil society aims to identify and make clear that alignment while facilitating dialogue and broadening participation of Civil Society in UK EITI ‘s work.

**Local communities**

Reaching into extractives communities has been an ongoing challenge. Promisingly, as noted above, BEIS survey data show interest in UK EITI issues among the general UK public. In 2023, we will aim to connect with that overall pubic interest mainly via targeted materials, collaboration and in-person engagement with local actors (MPs, local officials, industry groups, community-based organisations and local media) to pique interest in UK EITI’s work. Prospects for engagement on UK EITI issues are perhaps highest in communities where there is an extractives footprint – a presence, physical or economic. Previous efforts to engage local communities foundered mainly due to lack of public interest and understanding of EITI, but also due to Covid restrictions and the departure of the Civil Society Network Coordinator.

**Energy transition communities**

Communities off the western North Sea coast are the onshore ‘home’ to offshore windfarms where the renewables footprint is pronounced. Engaging residents and public officials there will be important, but it may be best done *after* details for the new 2023 Standard’s requirements are announced. Prior to that, it will be important to engage industries and public agencies *not* covered by current reporting requirements.

**Academia**

Academia is well-represented in UK EITI implementation as part of the civil society constituency. The MSG and C&E subgroup include professors from multiple UK universities. Broader, direct engagement and awareness-raising among UK universities/students has not been a high priority nor will it be in 2023. We will continue identifying and engaging academics, thought leaders and think tanks that produce research papers, blogs or other relevant material that could benefit from UK EITI data and to which the website can link.

# Next Steps

* Submit to C&E subgroup for input, feedback
* Incorporate C&E member input
* Circulate draft and present headline concepts, features to MSG members for input
* Incorporate MSG member input; finalise the Strategy
* Prepare Action Plan to guide implementation
* Implement the 2023 Strategy
1. <https://eiti.org/eiti-requirements> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1105384/BEIS_PAT_Summer_2022_Net_Zero___Climate_Change.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9602/CBP-9602.pdf>; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>; <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/>; <https://www.siteimprove.com/glossary/uk-accessibility-laws/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Helps satisfy Requirement 6.3.    [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/attachments/en_eiti_policy_brief_preparing_for_the_energy_transition.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/attachments/en_eiti_policy_brief_preparing_for_the_energy_transition.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Suggestion of Mark Burnett, EITI Secretariat [↑](#footnote-ref-8)