



## Lebanon wants to join EITI: what does that mean, and what are next steps?

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January 26, 2017. Source: Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI)

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On January 25, 2017, the Lebanese Council of Ministers announced its intention to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) with the aim to enhance transparency and accountability in Lebanon's oil and gas sector.

LOGI is keen on embracing the EITI process and welcomes this very important step with great enthusiasm. However, joining the EITI and implementing its standards are voluntary and not mandatory. Therefore, joining the EITI alone will not be enough to ensure full transparency in Lebanon's oil and gas sector. It is a significant step that will need to be implemented properly, and complemented with mandatory transparency and accountability mechanisms to ensure that Lebanon's natural resource wealth benefits all citizens and doesn't fall prey to corruption.

### **What does joining EITI mean for Lebanon?**

If Lebanon joins and implements the EITI it must create a multi-stakeholder group formed by the government, companies and civil society. This group will decide how the EITI process in Lebanon would work and disclose annually data on a range of issues from information on licenses, beneficial ownership, contracts, social payments, budget, production and revenue data.

This is a great opportunity to include civil society in the governance process, disclose to the public all information pertaining to the sector, and enable a platform to advocate for reforms.

### **What are next steps?**

LOGI hopes that these statements are followed by tangible steps towards the adoption, and most importantly, the implementation of EITI standards in Lebanon.

Next steps require the government, with the support of the multi-stakeholder group, to submit an EITI Candidature Application following these three action steps:



1. The government is required to appoint a senior individual to lead the implementation of the EITI.
2. The government is required to commit to work with civil society and companies, and establish a multi-stakeholder group to oversee the implementation of the EITI.
3. The multi-stakeholder group is required to maintain a current work plan, fully costed and aligned with the reporting and Validation deadlines established by the EITI Board.

The ball is now in the court of Lebanon's civil society to take advantage of this opportunity. LOGI urges the following actions to be taken by civil society, which it will help take the lead in implementing:

1. Form a coalition of civil society actors.
2. Set up the bylaws that govern the civil society coalition.
3. Advocate for mandatory transparency and accountability reforms regardless of the EITI process. This should start with influencing the transparency draft laws before they are passed in parliament in the next few months.
4. Advocate for establishing a consultative process where civil society gets access and influence draft laws pertaining to the oil and gas sector before they are passed.

In short, adopting the EITI will be a good step for Lebanon, but alone will not be enough. The focus is now to ensure its proper implementation while pushing for a more comprehensive transparency and accountability process.

*The Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI), is an independent NGO that promotes the transparent and sound management of Lebanon's oil and gas resources. You can learn more at: [www.logi-lebanon.org](http://www.logi-lebanon.org)*