

Myanmar has been recognized as the 45th candidate country to become a full member of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

Yangon, 4 July — Now that Myanmar has been accepted as an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative-EITI candidate country, it needs to implement the EITI requirements and demonstrate compliance with the requirements by 2 January 2017, Ms. Dyveke Rogan, regional director of EITI International Secretariat, told *The New Light of Myanmar* on Friday in an email.

Myanmar has been recognized as the 45th candidate country to become a full member of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative after its application for EITI candidature was approved by the International EITI board at its meeting in Mexico City on Wednesday.

The EITI regional director added that four signup steps—the government is required to issue an unequivocal public statement of its intention to implement the EITI, appoint a senior individual to lead the implementation of the EITI, commit to work with civil society and companies, and establish a multi-stakeholder group to oversee the implementation of the EITI and the multi-stakeholder group is required to maintain a current workplan, fully cost and aligned with the reporting and validation deadlines established by the EITI Board—were used in accepting Myanmar as an EITI candidate.

Myanmar's admission to the EITI comes at a critical time as the country is now opening up its vast natural resources for foreign investment. Chair of the EITI Ms. Clare Short, who was the UK Secretary of State for International Development from 1997 to 2003, expressed her view on Myanmar candidate status with EITI after the board meeting.

Having status as an EITI candidate country means a country is implementing the extractive industries transparency initiative, but is not yet meeting requirements. According to the EITI, its standard requires extensive disclosure and measures to improve accountability in how oil, gas and minerals are governed.

So, Myanmar needs to implement the EITI standard with the submission of its first report within 18 months of achieving candidate status to the EITI, Norway-based international organization. The report is required to be published by 2 January 2016 for validation that will commence within two and a half years, i.e. by 2 January 2017, of becoming a candidate.

Despite having a deadline of 2.5 years to become EITI compliant, experience with EITI implementation in other countries shows that it often takes longer to become compliant, Dyveke Rogan said. "If Myanmar does not achieve compliance by 2 January 2017, it will continue to be an EITI candidate and will get a new deadline by the EITI board for reaching compliance," she added.

In meeting with the EITI chair last year, President U Thein Sein acknowledged the need for better governance of Myanmar's natural resource wealth, saying Myanmar wants to use the EITI to ensure that the resources are developed and managed in a transparent manner for the sustainable benefit of the people.

Becoming a member of EITI will be a tangible result of the country's political and economic reforms, he added.

Before its submission of the EITI candidature application on 7 May 2014, Myanmar had taken two important steps with work done in the creation of a multi-stakeholders group and formulation of a workplan for EITI implementation in Myanmar.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is a global coalition of governments, companies and civil society working together to improve openness and accountable management of revenues from natural resources, with the vision of bringing transparency and accountability in a clearer version into the hands of the citizens.

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