Minutes:
First Steering Group Meeting of the openIMIS Initiative
01.03.2018 – 9:30-12.30h

Participants: Florian Höllen (BMZ), Ralf Radermacher (GIZ), Alexander Schulze (DEZA),
                  Alicia Spengler (GIZ), Heiko Warnken (BMZ) *(in alphabetical order)*

Minutes: Michelle Lessa Nascimento (GIZ)

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1. Introduction

The meeting on March 1st, 2018 is the first and constituting meeting of the openIMIS Steering Group. The suggested agenda has been accepted without any changes or additional points.

2. Approval of overall goals and strategic direction of the openIMIS initiative

2.1 Contextualization of the cooperation and institutional priorities

Alex Schulze initiated by giving a brief overview on the initiative's origins: the genesis results from a bilateral program with Tanzania for the informal sector. As a quite generic software, IMIS became an interesting solution for other countries as well, and has later been adapted for use in Cameroon and Nepal. Out of the discussion where the project should further lead to, the idea to transform IMIS into a global good and place the software at everybody's disposal took shape. He further updated the Group on the five key topics of Swiss Development Cooperation, one of which is Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and the openIMIS initiative is located there thematically. DEZA cherishes the BMZ's efforts to get active in terms of the debates on digitalization.
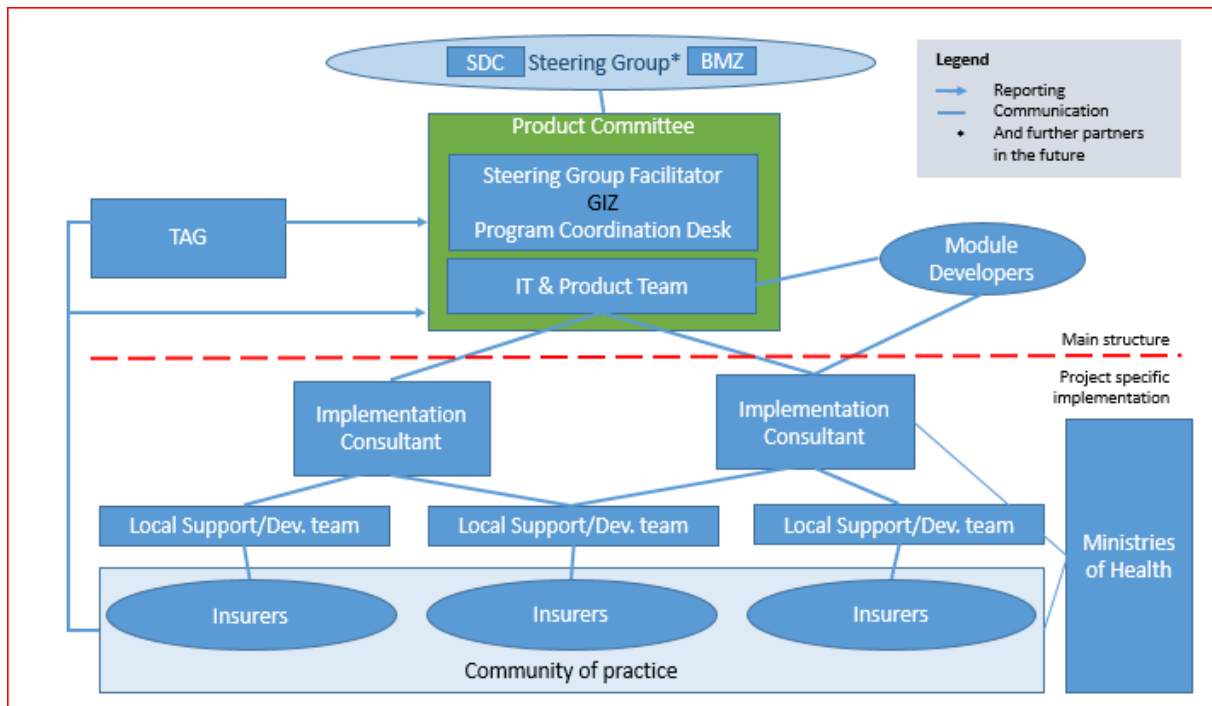
Heiko Warnken shared the fact that there are some important references to digitalization in the German coalition contract, showing that the topic is gaining importance in German politics. This is advantageous for some of the upcoming events, such as the World Health Summit (in Berlin in October). It will also be an opportunity to present openIMIS.

Both countries are involved in the revision of their international health policies and agree that, in this context, openIMIS is key for the achievement of both UHC and USP (Universal Social Protection).

2.2 Approval of strategic goals

In terms of the initiative's vision and mission, the future strategic direction should be clearly expressed. The Steering Group's members agree on the mission but see some need to revise the formulation of the vision, which is currently quite narrow. Florian Höllen suggests clarifying the interface with social protection and UHC and questions the reference on the acquirement of data. The initiative's objective is not to collect data, but to enable countries to manage their data effectively. The link between data management and USP (e.g. by reaching excluded groups, fostering effectivity etc.) is still missing. As the software is freely available, it should be clearly stated what distinguishes it from commercial solutions (see reference to debate on open source software as a global good). Alicia Spengler will adapt the vision accordingly and share for approval.

3. Approval of the openIMIS governance structure

openIMIS has a threefold governance structure, which has been inspired by other open source initiatives (see table below) and is composed of:

- The **Steering Group**, giving strategic direction and taking main strategic decisions;
- The **Product Committee**, maintaining openIMIS and developing the open source application;
- and the **Technical Advisory Group** (TAG), which gives advice on the technical development, but its expertise can be requested for other topics as well (such as the insurance area, global health, IT more broadly,..).

The TAG is based on voluntary participation of experts who are willing to contribute their expertise. The following members constitute the initial core group: Caren Althaeuser (PATH), Carl Leitner (Digital Square), Paul Biondich (consultant, Regenstrief Institute), as well as representatives from the implementers (Swiss TPH and GIZ Nepal). To represent all the geographic regions adequately, other members might join the core group.

Both the TAG and the Product Committee are in constant exchange. Every software release includes many process steps, thus the practical application will show if the sequence of working steps and distribution of roles have been defined adequately. Based on the approval of the Steering Group members, Alicia Spengler will prepare the according TORs asap.

4. Definition of the Steering Group's member structure and participation criteria

4.1 New members and admission criteria

With respect to the initiative's financial needs, BMZ and DEZA agree to attract new (potential) donors. For becoming part of the openIMIS Steering Group, however, they should contribute financially thus avoiding the interference of members without financial commitment.

Though there is a clear focus on African countries as a future market for openIMIS, there is some interest from Asian countries as well, e.g. there will be a study group traveling from Cambodia to Nepal to see openIMIS in practice. The initiative should also consider francophone countries and

those, who are not users, but do have useful experience to share and give leverage (e.g. Ghana). In South Kivu (DRC) and Chad, IMIS pilots are already active and in Madagascar, there is an opportunity as a national health insurance system will soon be introduced. The Steering Group members agree that it would be helpful to prepare an analysis on the state of digital health issues in possible partner countries.

For informal invitations to the SG, GIZ will contact the according contact person via e-mail, as in the case of Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL). For the invitation of country representatives, the BMZ and DEZA will follow their official rules through the Federal Foreign Office. Therefore, the TORs of the SG need to be finalized and approved beforehand. Further, there is no decision yet on limiting the membership by time.

4.2 Tasks and meeting format

The Steering Group is responsible for the initiative's strategic direction, and the prioritization of projects according to the availability of budget. According to the members, it should be clear that the Group will not be able to act as a mediator in relation to possible community conflicts, but only give strategic orientation. It will be further involved in political advocacy, e.g. by promoting openIMIS in relevant events. With regard to the format of the Steering Group meetings, there will be an exchange every six months (1 physical meeting, 1 virtual meeting). The members agree on the importance of having a physical meeting once a year.

4.3 Agreement on TORs

Model TORs are already existing, but the admission criteria need to be added in the annex of the document. If other donors are to be included, the definition of the veto right needs to be adapted. The Steering Group Members decide to extend the veto right to group of donors, so that individual donors are not able to block the group.

The agreement on the final TORs will be done digitally, and included to the minutes later on. The TORs will be reviewed annually.

5. Priorities of the initiative for 2018

5.1 Further development and community management

The focus of the work plan for the next months is the further technical development, including the upload of the source code to establish the online community and offer the tools actively. There will be a problem tracking system as well.

So far, the landing page (www.openimis.org) has been established. Over the next months, tools such as Wiki and ReadTheDocs need to be linked into the website and filled with information to be used by the community. Once the webpage and according tools are fully available, the outreach to new partners will be simplified.

So far, there is no business plan developed, but with an increasing number of participants in the global initiative, it will be necessary to have one, or at least an exemplary calculation of costs.

6.2 Relevant upcoming events

-   World Health Summit;

- Geneva Health Summit: openIMIS will be presented as a case study on interoperability;
- World Health Assembly
- re:publica: suggestions have been transmitted;
- ICT4D: proposal on openIMIS and block chain has been posted, on waiting list;
- AeHIN annual meeting;
- GIZ symposium ("Fachtage"): a session on digitalization is being prepared.