Open Data Does Not Build Trust
By: Marco Zaplan

We were skeptic at first said an industry representative. At first we did not want to engage said a CSO representative. We are disclosing data already said a government representative. Fifty-eight MSG meetings, 24 nationwide roadshows, and five country reports later, those once skeptic representatives now sit literally in the same table during MSG meeting lunch breaks interacting endlessly. The discussion moved away from why should we trust you to what can we do together. The process of opening up extractives data taught our stakeholders that they actually have more common goals than they initially thought. They only needed a safe space to discuss constructively and the EITI process made that available. Getting data out in the open is easy. But without the tasking process of government, industry, and civil society opening up data TOGETHER, the trust-building component gets missed. Open data alone does not build trust. The process does.

Marco Zaplan currently works as technical policy specialist at the Philippine EITI. He works extensively on EITI data and related policy reforms including mainstreaming, beneficial ownership, and open contracting.