

Mapping IATI to donors' Accra commitments on transparency – IATI Secretariat, October 2010

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008. IATI is a multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to increase transparency in order to improve the effectiveness of aid in reducing poverty.

While IATI is an independent, voluntary initiative, it seeks to offer its members a way of meeting the commitments they made on aid transparency in the Accra Agenda for Action in a co-ordinated and consistent way. Although donors could meet these commitments individually, this would be much less useful for partner countries and CSOs, who want information that is standardised and comparable – this is what IATI seeks to provide.

IATI is affiliated to the formal follow-up process to Accra led by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, with Cluster C benefitting from the technical expertise and consultation process that IATI has put forward, which the relevant task teams can use as a free resource.

The core Accra commitments on transparency are contained in paragraphs 24-26 of the Accra Agenda for Action under the sub-headings: ***We will be more accountable and transparent to our publics for results, continue to change the nature of conditionality to support ownership, and increase the medium-term predictability of aid*** (full text in Annex).

As the mapping in the table below illustrates, donors would be able to deliver on their Accra commitments on transparency by implementing the IATI standard, which provides for:

- regular and timely publication, with information published “as soon as possible, and at least quarterly”;
- publication of detailed data on aid volume and allocations;
- publication of results information where this is contained in documents, with provision for the optional recording of indicators in future*;
- publication of documents containing conditions, with the option of publishing conditions linked to disbursements in future*;
- publication of detailed transaction-level data on commitments and disbursements;
- publication of forward indicative aggregate budgets by country, on a commitment or disbursement basis, or both, on a rolling 3-5 year basis where they exist, or for as many future years as possible.

(* these items have yet to be discussed and agreed by the IATI Steering Committee).

In a minority of cases, IATI seeks to go further than the Accra Agenda for Action. It does so, on the basis of widespread consultation with users of aid information, especially stakeholders in partner countries, as well as existing Freedom of Information Acts and information disclosure policies. The results of the consultations have highlighted the importance of publishing a small number of additional categories of information that are reflected in the proposed IATI standard, in particular the publication of project, policy and strategy documents (see below), in addition to data.

Similarly, in deciding what constitutes “detailed” information, IATI has been guided by the results of these consultations, and sought to include in the standard the type of detailed information frequently requested by stakeholders in partner countries, including a link to recipient budget (to ensure compatibility with national systems), details of specific geographic location (which will be included as an optional item), and information on implementing agencies to ensure traceability throughout the system.

Accra commitments on transparency	IATI standard
<p>24 (a) “Donors will publicly disclose regular, detailed and timely information on volume, allocation and, when available, results of development expenditure to enable more accurate budget, accounting and audit by developing countries.”</p>	<p>Regular and timely: The IATI Steering Committee has agreed that information will be published “as soon as possible, and at least quarterly”.</p> <p>Detailed information on volume and allocation of expenditure: IATI donors will publish: <i>(in phase 1 unless otherwise stated; entries in italics still to be agreed)</i></p> <p><u>Identification data:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting Organisation [Funding, Extending, Implementing, Beneficiary (phase 2)] • Recipient Country or Region • Collaboration Type (e.g. bilateral/multilateral, core NGO funding) • Flow Type (e.g. ODA, OOF) • Aid Type (e.g. budget support, project finance, experts, students, debt relief) • Finance Type (e.g. grant, loan) • IATI, donor and other activity identifiers, including to related activities (e.g. project subcomponents) • Activity Title and Description • Sectors and themes (CRS and donor’s own) • <i>Recipient budget codes (phase 2)</i> • Activity start and end dates • Tied Aid Status • Activity Status • Activity Contacts • <i>Sub-national geographic location (phase 2 optional)</i> • Activity Web Site <p><u>Financial data:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial transactions covering disbursements (transfers within the aid system) & expenditure (on goods and services) • Financial transactions covering incoming funds, loan and interest repayments. <p><u>Results:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Documents containing information on results, outcomes and outputs (phase 2)</i> • <i>Provision to record indicators by name, date and value (phase 2 optional)</i>
<p>25 (b) “Beginning now, donors and developing countries will regularly make public all conditions linked to disbursements.”</p>	<p>IATI will provide a mechanism for publishing (phase 1 for documents already published; otherwise phase 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents containing information on conditions • <i>Text of conditions linked to disbursements (phase 2 optional)</i>
<p>26 (b) “Beginning now, donors will provide full and timely information on annual commitments and actual disbursements so that developing countries are in a position to accurately record all aid flows in their budget estimates and their accounting systems.</p>	<p>Full: The IATI standard provides for publishing detailed transaction-level data on commitments and disbursements.</p> <p>Timely: The IATI Steering Committee has agreed that information will be published “as soon as possible, and at least quarterly”.</p> <p>IATI donors will publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial transactions recording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commitments ○ Actual disbursements (transfers within the aid system) ○ Actual expenditure (on goods and services) <p>Budget estimates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activity budgets and planned disbursements (phase 2).</i>

26 (c) Beginning now, donors will provide developing countries with regular and timely information on their rolling three- to five-year forward expenditure and/or implementation plans, with at least indicative resource allocations that developing countries can integrate in their medium-term planning and macroeconomic frameworks. Donors will address any constraints to providing such information”.

Regular and timely: as above.

IATI donors will publish:

- Forward indicative aggregate budgets by country, on a commitment or disbursement basis, or both, on a rolling 3-5 year basis where they exist, or for as many future years as possible* (phase 2).

In addition IATI donors will publish:

- Annual forward planning budget data for donor agency and for (major) institutions it funds.
- *Activity budgets and planned disbursements (phase 2).*

**(As a minimum, the data must be on, or be able to be mapped to, the financial year of the partner country. Suitable qualifications will be made about the data being indicative, and subject to parliamentary or Executive Board approval and change.)*

Documents

IATI will provide for publishing documents according to content rather than specific report name or type, as these vary by donor. Documents will be included in phase 1 for documents that a donor already publishes and in phase 2 otherwise. The list of content to be covered, still to be further discussed and agreed, is:

- Agency level
 - annual reports, strategy papers
 - country strategy papers
- Activity/project level
 - pre- and post-project impact appraisals
 - objectives/purpose of activity
 - intended ultimate beneficiaries
 - conditions
 - budgets in as much detail as available
 - summary information about contracts
 - reviews of project performance and evaluation (annual reports, project completion reports, etc.)
 - results, outcomes and outputs
 - *MoUs (subject to agreement of both parties)*

Annex – Extract from Accra Agenda for Action relating to transparency

We will be more accountable and transparent to our publics for results

24. Transparency and accountability are essential elements for development results. They lie at the heart of the Paris Declaration, in which we agreed that countries and donors would become more accountable to each other and to their citizens. We will pursue these efforts by taking the following actions:

- a) We will make aid more transparent. Developing countries will facilitate parliamentary oversight by implementing greater transparency in public financial management, including public disclosure of revenues, budgets, expenditures, procurement and audits. Donors will publicly disclose regular, detailed and timely information on volume, allocation and, when available, results of development expenditure to enable more accurate budget, accounting and audit by developing countries.
- b) We will step up our efforts to ensure that—as agreed in the Paris Declaration—mutual assessment reviews are in place by 2010 in all countries that have endorsed the Declaration. These reviews will be based on country results reporting and information systems complemented with available donor data and credible independent evidence. They will draw on emerging good practice with stronger parliamentary scrutiny and citizen engagement. With them we will hold each other accountable for mutually agreed results in keeping with country development and aid policies.
- c) To complement mutual assessment reviews at country level and drive better performance, developing countries and donors will jointly review and strengthen existing international accountability mechanisms, including peer review with participation of developing countries. We will review proposals for strengthening the mechanisms by end 2009.
- d) Effective and efficient use of development financing requires both donors and partner countries to do their utmost to fight corruption. Donors and developing countries will respect the principles to which they have agreed, including those under the UN Convention against Corruption. Developing countries will address corruption by improving systems of investigation, legal redress, accountability and transparency in the use of public funds. Donors will take steps in their own countries to combat corruption by individuals or corporations and to track, freeze, and recover illegally acquired assets.

We will continue to change the nature of conditionality to support ownership

25. To strengthen country ownership and improve the predictability of aid flows, donors agreed in the Paris Declaration that, whenever possible, they would draw their conditions from developing countries' own development policies. We reaffirm our commitment to this principle and will continue to change the nature of conditionality by taking the following actions:

- a) Donors will work with developing countries to agree on a limited set of mutually agreed conditions based on national development strategies. We will jointly assess donor and developing country performance in meeting commitments.
- b) Beginning now, donors and developing countries will regularly make public all conditions linked to disbursements.
- c) Developing countries and donors will work together at the international level to review, document and disseminate good practices on conditionality with a view to reinforcing country ownership and other Paris Declaration Principles by increasing emphasis on harmonised, results-based conditionality. They will be receptive to contributions from civil society.

We will increase the medium-term predictability of aid

26. In the Paris Declaration, we agreed that greater predictability in the provision of aid flows is needed to enable developing countries to effectively plan and manage their development programmes over the short and medium term. As a matter of priority, we will take the following actions to improve the predictability of aid:

- a) Developing countries will strengthen budget planning processes for managing domestic and external resources and will improve the linkages between expenditures and results over the medium term.
- b) Beginning now, donors will provide full and timely information on annual commitments and actual disbursements so that developing countries are in a position to accurately record all aid flows in their budget estimates and their accounting systems.
- c) Beginning now, donors will provide developing countries with regular and timely information on their rolling three- to five-year forward expenditure and/or implementation plans, with at least indicative resource allocations that developing countries can integrate in their medium-term planning and macroeconomic frameworks. Donors will address any constraints to providing such information.
- d) Developing countries and donors will work together at the international level on ways of further improving the medium-term predictability of aid, including by developing tools to measure it.