



IATI INTERNATIONAL
AID
TRANSPARENCY
INITIATIVE

Supporting aid transparency

“IATI aims to make information about aid spending easier to access, use and understand”

www.aidtransparency.net



Example of the benefits of transparency

UGANDA - a randomised control trial of community health clinics showed the remarkable effects of transparency on health care in Uganda. Clinics subjected to greater public scrutiny reduced under-five mortality rates by 33%. The experiment randomly assigned community health clinics to receive published "report cards" and to be subject to NGO-organised public meetings on the quality of the clinics' health care.

In those clinics receiving transparency "treatment", waiting time for care decreased, absenteeism among doctors and nurses plummeted, clinics got cleaner, fewer drugs were stolen, 40-50% more children received dietary supplements and vaccines, health services got used more and, most impressively, 33% fewer children died before their 5th birthday.

This amounted to 550 saved lives in one small area of Uganda encompassing only 55,000 households—a strong testament that transparency in development finance can save lives.

¹ Bjorkman and Svensson, Quarterly Journal of Economics, MIT 2009

About IATI

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was set up in 2008 by 18 leading international development organisations. It aims to make information about aid spending easier to access, use and understand.

Launched at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, this multi-stakeholder initiative brings together donors, developing countries and civil society organisations to help donors and developing countries meet their Accra Agenda for Action commitments on aid transparency.

After widespread consultation, IATI decided to do this by:

- developing and agreeing a common standard for the publication of aid information – the IATI standard (<http://iatistandard.org/>) which includes agreements on what to publish, common definitions and formats for publication, and a Framework for Implementation; and
- setting up an on-line registry (<http://iatiregistry.org/>) that acts as an address book to the location of aid information that participating donors publish on their own websites.

What will the initiative do?

The new standard builds on existing agreements and definitions. It provides comparable classifications and definitions so that citizens, governments, parliamentarians, and people working in the development community can find out:

- how much money is being provided
- when it was, or is, due to be paid out
- what the funds are expected to achieve.

Participating donors are adjusting their existing processes for collecting information about their aid expenditure in order to publish more information, more quickly, in a common, open format. This will enable IATI to meet the needs of a much wider range of stakeholders. Donors choose their own systems for collecting and publishing information. A new central registry makes it possible for people to find information quickly and easily because it points users to where the information they need has been published.

Who Benefits?

Having one gateway for accessing information from different sources is essential for:

- governments of developing countries who need to know how much aid is spent in their country and when the money will be paid out, so that they can plan their budgets and activities accordingly;
- citizens who want to check whether governments are keeping their promises and hold them to account;
- participating donors who are able to meet their 'access to information' obligations and reduce their administrative costs because they only need to publish their information once and no longer need to respond to multiple information requests
- donors who want to co-ordinate their spending with that of other donors;
- community-based organisations who want to know what resources are available and influence how they are used;
- anti-corruption activists who want to track recipient governments' aid receipts and expenditure to find out whether money is being siphoned off; and
- journalists and researchers who want to investigate where aid is going and how effectively it is being spent.

What value does IATI add?

IATI adds value to existing aid data systems in a variety of ways:

- The IATI standard is open to all aid providers, whether they are official donors, providers of south-south cooperation, NGOs or philanthropic foundations. In this way it offers the possibility of more comprehensive coverage from a wider range of actors.
- The IATI standard provides for the publication of forward-looking data, including budgets and forecast disbursements.
- IATI donors will update their information at least quarterly, so it will be more timely and help countries with decision making.
- Information will be published in a way that can be reconciled with the financial year of the recipient country, and IATI is supporting further work to align data with countries' own budget classifications.
- IATI will publish more detailed information at the level of individual activities or projects, including information on who receives the money, what transactions are made and contact details for further information.
- The standard allows for the publication of key documents, as well as statistics, including documents relating to the justification of a project, conditions attached and results achieved.
- IATI includes the option to publish detailed geographical information to enable the data to be presented on a map.

How does IATI operate?

IATI is not an organisation but a network of like-minded organisations who have come together to promote greater aid transparency.

As of November 2011, 22 organisations who collectively account for around half of global aid spending are IATI signatories.

In addition 22 developing countries have endorsed IATI. Other organisations and developing countries participate as observers.

The initiative is serviced by a small secretariat comprising staff from the UK Department for International Development, United Nations Development Programme and Development Initiatives Poverty Research (DIPR).

It is run by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, assisted on technical and implementation work by the multi-stakeholder Technical Advisory Group.

Publish Once, Use Often

Organisations only need to publish their aid information in one place and one format. This allows many different information users to access the information they need and use it for their own diverse purposes. This widens access to comparable aid information. It results in more openness and accountability. It makes it easier to monitor aid effectiveness and thus help to accelerate poverty reduction.

IATI at Busan

IATI's representatives at HLF4 will be:

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How to get involved with IATI

Donors:

- Join IATI by endorsing the Framework for Implementation and agreeing a timetable for publishing your information to the IATI standard;
- Contribute to IATI financing and receive help in implementing and developing the standard;
- Work with IATI to see how to map your information to the IATI standard.

Partner countries:

- Endorse IATI's aims and objectives and encourage donors and other providers to publish their aid information to the IATI standard;
- Publish aid information provided by donors and other organisations locally and link it to the IATI Registry;
- Participate in application of the standard in partner countries and use the information for aid coordination, national development planning, budgeting and accountability processes at the country level.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):

- Encourage donors to publish their information to the IATI standard
- Join IATI by endorsing the Framework for Implementation and agreeing a timetable for publishing your information to the IATI standard.

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about IATI, visit:

www.aidtransparency.net
or contact

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What is IATI compliant data?

The IATI standard builds on and extends the DAC CRS standards and covers:

- Organisation and country forward looking budgets for three years
- Project data that is published at least quarterly
- Basic project details (titles, descriptions, dates)
- Detailed financial commitments, budgets and disbursements that are reconcilable with the recipient's financial year and budget classifications
- Details about who is involved in the project (implementing and accountable)?
- Traceable financial flows by identifying the source and recipient organisations
- Sector classifications using DAC sectors. Option for multi-coding and other vocabularies
- Detailed information about geographic location, terms and conditions and results
- Links to project documents and other organisational and country level documents

See 2 page briefing note on www.aidtransparency.net.

Further details can be found at <http://iatistandard.org/standard>

How do organisations publish IATI-compliant data?

There are five steps to publishing IATI compliant data:

- 1) ASSESS existing policies and availability of data, identifying key internal stakeholders.
- 2) COMMIT to transparency by becoming a signatory, and/or publishing an implementation schedule, setting out what can and can't be published and when.
- 3) DEVELOP policies, processes and systems to publish data: establish working groups and disclosure policies, map data and produce preliminary data for review.
- 4) PUBLISH your data on your website and link it to the IATI registry, perhaps considering the data accessibility options.
- 5) IMPROVE data by providing more detail, new items and new data sources, and updating the implementation schedule.

See our 2 page briefing note at <http://www.aidtransparency.net>

Support for all steps is available from the IATI TAG Secretariat at <http://support.iatistandard.org>

Accessibility: Using IATI data

IATI is an open data initiative: its approach is provide raw data in a common machine-readable format that can be used by multiple third parties and many different initiatives that and analyse, visualise and present it in a meaningful way for organisations and individuals to use.

The IATI Standard has been designed to underpin many existing such initiatives and inspire new initiatives to use aid information to target different stakeholders and different needs; Data published in the IATI-format is being used to support country AIMS (see IATI country pilot briefing note , the EU's TR-AID , AidData , donors own websites, and small bespoke applications).

It's early days for IATI, but there are lots of exciting initiatives being built on IATI in the pipeline (e.g. using SMS to create feedback loops). One of the benefits in using a common data standard is that any software that is developed to use the data can be developed as open source and re-used by anyone. This avoids duplicating effort and enable more efficient and collaborative approach to using data. We are now starting to see different organisations establishing a collective approach to developing tools.

Contact Simon Parrish (simon@devinit.org) for more information.