IATI Community Exchange
Bogota, 25 & 26 April 2024

1. Opening: IATI Community Exchange

Moderator: Anand Nair, Co-Founder, Fields Data

Speakers: Andrea Ramírez Pisco, Deputy Director, DANE; Alejandro Pacheco, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Colombia; Eleonora Betancur, Director, APC Colombia

Summary: The speakers welcomed the Community Exchange participants to Colombia and especially to the premises of the National Statistics Department (DANE). The Colombian officials highlighted their country's commitment to open data and transparency and underlined that high quality and accessible data are crucial to drive development forward and make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The UNDP Deputy Resident Representative lauded Colombia on its efforts to lead on open data and transparency in the LAC region and stressed the important role that IATI will play in this critical phase of implementing the Global Goals. All speakers highlighted the excitement for the 5th UN World Data Forum to take place in Medellin, Colombia in November 2024.

2. Opening Plenary

Moderator: Anand Nair, Co-Founder, Fields Data

Speakers: Karen Chavez, Latin America & Caribbean Program Manager, GPSDD; Jonathan Glennie, Co-founder Global Nation; Zainab Al-Azzawi, incoming IATI Governing Board Member and Chief of Organizational Performance, UNICEF

Summary: During this plenary session panelists delved into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by the transparency sector, including IATI, in times of multidimensional crises. Challenges highlighted include:

- Trust in Systems and Institutions: Audience feedback underscored a significant lack of trust in the systems and institutions that manage and distribute data, which can impede the effectiveness of data-driven initiatives.
- Reliability and Quality of Data: There is a critical need for reliable, high-quality data. The quality of data directly influences decision-making effectiveness, making this a primary concern.
- IT Infrastructure: Adequate IT infrastructure is essential for easy reporting and access to data. Current systems may lack the necessary robustness or user-friendliness, hindering data utilization.

Opportunities for IATI that were highlighted by the audience include:

- Improving Data Quality: IATI is positioned to lead efforts in enhancing the quality of the data it manages. This involves rigorous validation processes, standardization of data inputs, and continual monitoring of data integrity.
- Easing Access to Data: There is a clear call for IATI to make its data more accessible. This could involve improving the user interface of data portals, enhancing the

compatibility of data formats with common analytical tools, and providing more comprehensive support and documentation, as well as enhancing outreach to promote IATI data.

- ▪ Support Users and Publishers: Continue to provide high-quality guidance and support to users on how to access and interpret IATI.

By addressing these challenges and leveraging the identified opportunities, IATI can play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of data-driven decision-making in the aid and humanitarian sector and beyond (climate, food-security, early warning, crisis, etc.).

3. **Measuring Transparency in South-South Cooperation**

Moderator: Alfonso Zeron, Economic Affairs Officer, ECLAC

Speakers: Belen Coyto, Information and Investigation Officer, Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI), Uruguay; Natalia Vargas, Specialist for Triangular and South-South Cooperation, Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB); Daniel Rodriguez, Director, Presidential Agency for Cooperation (APC) Colombia

Summary: The discussion on measuring transparency in South-South Cooperation (SSC) highlighted significant challenges, but also potential pathways to enhance transparency and measurement in international cooperation:

- ▪ Challenges in SSC Measurement: One of the core challenges in SSC is the effective measurement of impacts stemming from the transfer of knowledge and experiences. This challenge is compounded by the lack of established systems and structures for transparency within SSC frameworks.
- ▪ Importance of Data Engagement: There is a growing recognition of the importance of not just open data, but broader data engagement as a catalyst for improved decision-making. This involves leveraging data to make informed decisions that enhance the efficacy and impact of SSC initiatives.
- ▪ Role of Latin American Agencies: Latin American cooperation agencies were noted for their advancements in measuring SSC outcomes. These agencies are seen as potential leaders in fostering similar advancements in other regions of the Global South, including Africa and Asia.
- ▪ IATI Contributions: Recommendations from the discussion on how IATI could contribute to improved measuring of SCC included the development of shared measurement instruments and strategies. This could facilitate a standardized approach to evaluating the impact of SSC initiatives across different regions. The need to build or enhance systems and structures that support transparency in SSC, as well as strengthened collaborations between Latin American agencies and their counterparts in Africa and Asia were also mentioned. IATI's experience in managing data could be instrumental in enhancing the visibility and traceability of SSC efforts.

By addressing these insights, stakeholders can enhance the effectiveness and transparency of South-South Cooperation, ultimately leading to more impactful development initiatives.

4. **The Transparency Trap "How IATI can strengthen Accountability Investigations**

Moderator: Jonathan Glennie, Co-founder Global Nation

Speakers: Winnie Kamau, President, Association of Freelance Journalists (AFJ); Colleen Daniels, Deputy Director & Public Health Lead, Harm Reduction International

Summary: The session effectively addressed significant aspects of investigative journalism and its intersection with international aid transparency, focusing particularly on the utilization of the IATI. Key points of the discussion included:

- Role of Investigative Journalism in the Digital Age: The challenges posed by the proliferation of misinformation were emphasized, highlighting the critical role of digital tools and open data in enhancing investigative journalism. These resources empower journalists to disseminate factual, verified information amidst the noise.
- Utilization of IATI in Promoting Accountability: The discussion covered the state of investigative journalism in Kenya, stressing the importance of transparency tools like IATI. These tools are instrumental in uncovering discrepancies in aid distribution and bolstering journalistic credibility by providing access to verifiable data.
- Case Studies on IATI Data Utilization: A detailed case study was presented showing how IATI data helped track nearly a billion dollars in narcotics control funding over ten years. It pointed out the risks associated with the oversimplification of reporting categories by donors, which can lead to misinterpretation and potential misuse of funds.
- Challenges in Leveraging Transparency Data: The difficulties journalists encounter with large datasets were highlighted, including the technical skills required to navigate and extract meaningful information. The necessity of real-time data was emphasized to ensure timely and relevant reporting.
- Ethical Considerations in Reporting: Ethical responsibilities in handling sensitive data were debated, with a focus on the need for accuracy, the avoidance of sensationalism, and respect for privacy, all while maintaining accountability.

The session concluded with a vibrant Q&A segment, allowing the audience to engage directly with the speakers on balancing transparency needs against the risks of data misinterpretation. This discussion reinforced the essential role that investigative journalism and transparency initiatives like IATI play in promoting a more accountable and informed society.

5. Stewarding the IATI Standard

Speakers: Steven Flower, Director, Open Data Services Co-operative; Bee Webb, Software Developer, Open Data Services Co-operative

Summary: The discussions regarding updates to the IATI Standards revealed a complex mix of governance, technical, and stewardship challenges. In more detail, it highlighted:

- Stagnant Updates and Inconsistencies: Since the last formal upgrade in 2018, the IATI Standards have faced numerous bugs and inconsistencies. There's a need for revision, including ideas for a "version 3" of the Standard.
- Governance and Decision-Making: The absence of a structured decision-making process has hindered updates. Previous updates were consensus-based and often cumbersome, pointing to the need for a more streamlined approach.
- Technical and Stewardship Challenges: The discussion differentiated between technical updates and stewardship issues. For example, what is mandatory often overlaps with stewardship rather than just technical updates.

Action Points:

- Establish a Standard Stewardship Group: Form a group responsible for guiding the evolution of the IATI Standards. This group will draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and propose them to the board by mid 2024.

- Clarify Definitions and Processes: The group will address the lack of clarity around what constitutes a "major", "minor", or "patch" update. This involves defining these terms in relation to the IATI Standards specifically, moving away from semantic versioning if necessary.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): There is a pressing need for clear SOPs that outline how updates should be proposed, reviewed, and implemented. This would include governance rules for making technical decisions and handling updates.
- Enhance Communication and Documentation: To avoid confusion and ensure accessibility, all documentation must be in plain English. This includes the process documents and change logs.
- Implement a Regular Review and Update Cycle: Regular meetings and a defined "patch cycle" should be established to address both minor corrections and major updates systematically.
- Open and Inclusive Decision-Making: The governance structure should allow for wide participation in decision-making processes, potentially including an open invitation to the community to contribute, with selective engagements based on specific needs.

By taking these steps, IATI aims to enhance the clarity, governance, and functionality of its Standards, ensuring they remain a robust tool for transparency and accountability in international development and aid.

6. **Agatadata & SDGs**

Speakers: Edgar Catano Sanchez, Agata Agencia Analitica

Summary: Ágata Data, a data analytical agency in Bogotá, is focusing on transforming the city into a smart city by leveraging data analytics to understand and strengthen the interrelationships between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key aspects discussed include:

- Smart City Vision: Ágata Data aims to use data analytics to progress Bogotá towards smart city status, integrating technologies to improve urban living.
- SDG Interrelationships: The agency emphasizes the importance of linking various SDGs, such as housing, public services, and education, to create a more cohesive development strategy.

Challenges and Considerations:

- Communication Gaps: There is an effort to close the communication gap between the public and private sectors to better coordinate on city-wide data initiatives.
- Public Distrust in Law: It was noted that public distrust in the law might stem from a lack of data-driven analysis on the consequences of decision-making, suggesting a need for more transparent and data-informed governance.
- Governance Deficits: Questions were raised about how governance deficits in some areas of Colombia affect data collection and analysis. The response highlighted that this is a broader societal issue, impacting data reliability and utilization.
- Data Privacy Concerns: It was acknowledged that while data privacy must be protected, it should not hinder the necessary use of data for making informed decisions.

Technological Integration and Accessibility:

- AI and Technology Evolution: The discussion recognized that the evolution of AI has been a decades-long journey, rather than a sudden emergence. This historical perspective is crucial for understanding how AI can be strategically integrated into city planning and operations.
- Digital Divide: The impact of the "Estrato System" on internet services was examined, particularly how it affects accessibility. Ágata Data is designing services for mobile phones to help bridge this digital divide, ensuring that technological benefits reach all segments of society.

The session with Ágata Data provided insightful discussions on the use of data analytics to address urban challenges and the strategic steps necessary to transition Bogotá into a smart city while considering societal and technological impacts.

7. **Challenges and Opportunities for Improved Data Use**

Moderator: Anand Nair, Co-Founder, Fields Data

Speakers: Henry Asor, Development Assistant Database Manager, Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Nigeria; Janna Lopez de La Rosa, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, Dominican Republic; Subas Parajuli, Section Officer, Ministry of Finance, Nepal

Summary: In this session, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic and Nepal presented how they are integrating IATI data into national platforms:

Highlights from the Nigeria Presentation:
- System Adaptation and Local Integration: The system uses local classifications and has begun to integrate data from IATI, enhancing the quality and relevance of the information available.
- Sustainability and Scalability: The collaboration with local technology firms ensures that the system is sustainable and can be scaled to include more comprehensive data sets, including government projects.
- Future Enhancements: Plans are in place to further expand the system's capabilities to ensure it meets the evolving needs of Nigeria's development landscape.

Dominican Republic Presentation: SINACID Information System (SI-SINACID)
- System Development: Updates on the progress of SI-SINACID, focusing on overcoming challenges and enhancing data coverage and quality.
- Data Complementarity: Discussion on how SI-SINACID's records complement IATI's country financing data, improving the understanding of development finance.
- Improving Data Accessibility: Initiatives to enhance access to data, thereby increasing transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of knowledge management.

Nepal Presentation: Utilization of IATI Data
- Context-Specific Application: How IATI data is being used in Nepal to complement national systems for monitoring international cooperation resources.

Session Outcomes:
- Experience Exchange: Participants shared experiences and insights on using IATI data to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of international cooperation resources.
- Knowledge Sharing: The session provided a platform for IATI members, especially government agencies, to discuss methodologies and best practices for integrating IATI data with national registries.

This session highlighted the collaborative efforts and strategic approaches being taken by different countries to integrate IATI data into national systems, enhancing both local and global development outcomes through improved transparency and accountability.

8. Building the IATI Network

Speakers: Steven Flower, Director, Open Data Services Co-operative; Rob Redpath, Director, Open Data Services Co-operative; Herman van Loon, IATI Technical Lead, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Anouska Traast, Senior Advisor Open Data, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Summary: Participants of this session explored the importance and benefits of using unique identifiers (IDs) instead of names for tracking activities and organizations within the framework. This approach enhances the ability to trace and monitor results throughout various levels of aid distribution and utilization.

Key points discussed include:

- Utility of organization IDs: IDs allow for clearer tracking of contributions and impacts across projects, avoiding the confusion that can arise from multiple names for a single entity. This helps in understanding broader patterns and partnerships within the data.
- Data Quality Improvement: Using IDs contributes to better data quality by ensuring organizations are correctly referenced across documents and platforms.
- Placement of References: There was a discussion on why IDs appear in both participating organizations and transaction references. This redundancy was introduced to alleviate confusion and enhance clarity in tracking financial flows.
- ID Source and Maintenance: Questions were raised about the origins of these IDs and how they are maintained. Some IDs are sourced from specific organizational databases or international standards, while others may be generated as needed.
- Challenges in Naming Conventions: The variety in naming conventions can lead to challenges in maintaining a consistent list of reporting organizations and recipients, complicating data management and accuracy.
- Mapping and Harmonization: Participants considered the need for mapping between different coding systems, such as the CRS channel codes and the IATI identifiers, to ensure compatibility and comprehensive tracking.
- Real-Time Data and Digital Limitations: The conversation also touched on the feasibility of real-time data lookup, especially for non-digital or new publishers, and how this affects the registration and reporting processes.
- New Developments: The forthcoming activity ID existence check functionality of the IATI Validator was demonstrated, and it was discussed how it would contribute to improving the networks that can be discovered in IATI data.

Action Points:

- Standardize and Streamline Organisation References: Adopt consistent use of unique identifiers for all data entries to improve traceability and eliminate confusion due to varying naming conventions.
- Enhance Data Quality Control: Implement robust mechanisms for verifying and maintaining high data quality, especially in accurately referencing organizations across datasets.
- Mapping and Harmonization: Continue efforts to align various coding systems within IATI, like CRS channel codes, to ensure compatibility and ease of data integration.

- Develop Real-Time Data Capabilities: Invest in technologies to enable real-time data updates and access, enhancing the system's responsiveness and relevance.

The session concluded with suggestions for potential improvements, such as the introduction of an annual "IATI wrapped" to summarize connections and issues encountered, akin to Spotify's annual summary feature. This concept could help highlight the interconnectedness of organizations and the common challenges faced in data reporting and utilization within the IATI framework.

9. **Unlocking Innovation: IATI Data for Climate Finance with a Gender Lens**

Moderator: Javier Bronfman, SDG Advisor, UNDP

Speakers: Navin Haram, Senior Programme Specialist, UN Women; Jessica Ferne, Director, Global Health Impact, Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH); Julio López, Co-Founder & Director, Datalat

Summary: IATI plays a crucial role in highlighting the intersection of gender and climate change, particularly in Latin America where women and marginalized groups disproportionately bear the brunt of environmental challenges. This session discussed the role IATI could play to close this data-gap and included a presentation from Datalat on their experiences of using IATI data. Key points include:

- Critical Data Gaps: Gender and climate data are essential for informed decision-making and fund allocation, yet such data remain scarce in South America.
- IATI's Role: IATI data is instrumental in crafting climate finance initiatives that focus on gender equality. The data helps identify funding, projects, and outcomes that specifically address the gendered impacts of climate change.
- Data Utilization: IATI's platform facilitates better coordination among donors, governments, and NGOs, providing a shared data standard that is crucial for addressing cross-border challenges like climate change.
- IATI'' Role: Recommendation from the audience on how IATI can contribute to closing the gender-climate data gap include advocacy and technical efforts for collecting high-quality, gender-specific climate data to better understand and respond to the unique impacts on women and marginalized groups. Tools like the IATI Datastore can be used to improve access to detailed data on climate finance activities, making it easier for researchers and policymakers to extract valuable insights.

By addressing these points, stakeholders can leverage IATI data more effectively to promote gender-sensitive climate policies and initiatives, thereby supporting vulnerable populations and fostering sustainable development.

10. **Leveraging Partnerships and Enhanced Data Reporting for Global Food Security**

Speakers: John Dearborn, ET Consultant, World Bank; Daniel Gil Sanchez, Data Scientist, World Bank; Alexandra Horst, Senior Economist, Agriculture and Food, World Bank; Steven Flower, Director, Open Data Services Collaborative

Summary: This session spotlighted the critical role IATI can play in addressing global food security challenges. The session explored the innovative contributions of the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) and IATI in developing frameworks for enhanced financial tracking and reporting. Key Points from the session include:

- Integration of IATI Data with GAFS Dashboard: The session highlighted how the GAFS dashboard integrates IATI data to provide an overview of Food and Nutrition

Security (FNS) needs and provisions. The dashboard utilizes IATI's sector codes, keywords, and date filtering to identify relevant activities.

- The interesting challenge has become clear: whilst automating the data pipeline is straightforward, given the infrastructure IATI provides, curation and collaboration is still required, to ensure data is relevant and accurate for each organisation.
- Role of Community of Practice (CoP): The establishment of the GAFS/IATI FNS Community of Practice was discussed. This CoP aims to foster discussions on enhancing data tracking and reporting, providing a platform for stakeholders to collaborate and share best practices.
- Challenges and Opportunities: The dialogue included insights from ongoing discussions with stakeholders, focusing on the challenges in data tracking and the opportunities to improve data quality and utility through the GAFS dashboard.
- Partnership and Collaboration: The importance of partnerships in improving data quality and enabling South-South coordination was emphasized, with real-world examples showcasing effective collaboration within the GAFS framework.

- Community Engagement: Members of the IATI community are encouraged to actively participate in the GAFS CoP to contribute to the evolution of the dashboard and the broader initiative.
- Enhanced Marking of Activities: There is a need to work closely with donors to mark specific FNS-related activities within IATI to improve the identification and tracking of these activities.

Action Points:

- Refine Filtering Processes: Further refinement of the IATI data search and filtering processes used by the GAFS dashboard is recommended to increase the accuracy in finding relevant activities and transactions.
- Data Review and Feedback: Stakeholders are invited to review their data on the GAFS dashboard and engage with the GAFS secretariat or IATI support to help enhance its accuracy and relevance.

The session underscored the instrumental role of IATI in facilitating effective and transparent tracking of food security financing, urging community involvement and continual improvement of the data tracking systems to better address the global challenge of food insecurity.

11. **Results Data - Using IATI data for performance management**

Moderator: Emma Clegg, Product Owner, Open Data Services Co-operative

Speakers: Mark Brough, Managing Director, Emergentally; Horia Sohir Debbiche, Principal Results and Transparency Officer, African Development Bank

Summary: This session highlighted practical experiences from the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Emergentally, focusing on the effective use of results data within the IATI framework. Key points that emerged from the discussion include:

- Aggregation of Results Data: The session explored techniques for compiling results across multiple projects to present a unified view of performance impacts at broader levels such as country and sector.
- Organizational-Level Results Reporting: The importance of organizations reporting results that reflect their entire operation to aid in comprehensive performance analysis was discussed.

- Utilization of Results Data: The session highlighted methods for using results data to amplify the impact of ongoing projects, emphasizing the need for strategic data application to enhance development outcomes.
- Challenges in Current Reporting: Limitations in the existing IATI results reporting methodologies were identified, with particular attention on the need for improved accuracy and reliability of results measurement.
- Community Involvement in IATI Standard Enhancement: The discussion encouraged community engagement in planning for upgrades to the IATI Standard, particularly in how results are reported and utilized.

Ideas discussed to improve results data:

- Enhance Data Aggregation Methods: Develop and share best practices for aggregating individual results indicators across multiple activities, considering factors like summing versus averaging results where applicable.
- Standardize Results Reporting: Work towards standardizing results indicators across organizations to facilitate more reliable cross-comparative analysis and improve the overall quality of data reporting.
- Foster a Results Culture: Encourage organizations to build a culture that utilizes results data more effectively to learn from past experiences and inform future project designs.
- Harmonize Indicators: Initiate discussions among IATI members to address the challenges of harmonizing results indicators across different systems and standards, including the possibility of aligning certain indicators with IMF standards.
- Upgrade IATI Results Reporting: Engage the IATI community in discussions to upgrade the results component of the IATI Standard, aiming to improve how results data is captured, reported, and utilized.

The session provided valuable insights into the use of results data in enhancing the management and impact of development projects. By implementing the discussed action points, the IATI community can advance the effectiveness of results data in driving better decision-making and project outcomes in the field of international development.

12. **No LAC of Transparency - Democratizing Data and IATI in Latin America**
Moderator: Anand Nair, Co-Founder, Fields Data

Speakers: Polinho Mota, Data Coordinator; Data_Labe; Juliana Galvis, Project Manager, Datasketch; Julio Lopez, Co-Founder & Director, Datalat

Summary: The interactive session aimed to engage the IATI community and transparency advocates from the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. Key points of the discussion included:

- LAC Transparency Initiatives: Presentation of current transparency trends and initiatives in the LAC region and discussion of how these can synergize with IATI's efforts to enhance regional data transparency.
- Current Utilization of IATI Data: Review how IATI data is currently being used in the LAC region, identifying under-utilization and discussing potential causes and solutions.
- Data Availability and Limitations: Timeliness and completeness of data remains a challenge and can affect the availability and utility of IATI data in the region.

- Feedback on Data Tools: Solicit feedback on existing tools for accessing and utilizing IATI data, with a goal to simplify and improve these tools based on user experience in the LAC region.
- Harmonization of Publishing Practices: Initiate discussions on the standardization of data publishing practices to address the variability in how different organizations release their data.

This "IATI Cafe" session was designed as an open forum to foster dialogue and collaboration among IATI stakeholders in the LAC region. By addressing the challenges and opportunities related to the use of IATI data, participants contributed to shaping a more transparent and inclusive data ecosystem in Latin America.

13. **Harmonizing IATI with external data monitoring instruments of South-South Cooperation**

Moderator: Karen Chavez, Latin America & Caribbean Program Manager, GPSDD

Speakers: Mohamed Gele, IATI Governing Board, Ministry of Planning, Investment & Economic Development (MoPIED), Somalia; Reanata Ramsey, Economic Statistician, CARICOM; Alfonso Zerón Marmolejo, Economic Affairs Officer, ECLAC; Carlos Gonzalez, Executive Director, Makaia

Summary: The session highlighted the growing instruments for measuring South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSC) among countries of the Global South and their alignment with international standards like IATI and ODA. Various stakeholders presented their perspectives and ongoing efforts:

- CARICOM is focusing on standardization and harmonization as core objectives and faces challenges in structuring, collecting, and harmonizing data across ministries.
- Somalia utilizes national aid information management standards that draw from IATI infrastructure, incorporating OECD code lists aligned with national development plans. They aim to integrate this data into their national government plans and improve dissemination and utilization at sub-national levels.
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is developing a methodological framework for measuring SSC under SDG 17.3.1, which currently does not evaluate the impact of inflows/outflows, highlighting the need for better impact assessment methodologies.
- The Colombian non-profit Makaia emphasized the importance of strategic planning and measurement alignment with SDGs, pointing out the challenges of collecting data from CSOs and the need for greater engagement at the grassroots level to truly leverage open data.

Action Points:
- Harmonize SSC with IATI Standards: Somalia, as an IATI board member, proposed creating a working group specifically for SSC to explore harmonizing these frameworks with IATI standards.
- Regional Data Strategy for CARICOM: Implement a system to harmonize data collection and dissemination at the regional and national levels, facilitated by CARICOM's Standing Committee of Statisticians.
- Develop Clear Methodologies: ECLAC emphasized the need for clear, standardized methodologies that ensure data reliability, promoting better-informed actions.

- Engage CSOs in SSC: Explore ways to make SSC and data reporting relevant to CSOs, ensuring they understand and can contribute meaningfully to the data landscape.
- Facilitate Knowledge Sharing: Conduct workshops and training sessions to enhance understanding and capabilities in data handling and reporting at the national and regional levels across the Global South.

The session showcased the dynamic landscape of SSC measurement and the pivotal role of data standardization in enhancing transparency and effectiveness in development cooperation.

14. **Lightning Talks: How *We* Use Artificial Intelligence**

Moderator: Anand Nair

Speakers: Winnie Kamau, President, Association of Freelance Journalists; Fabio Thoma, Senior Policy Officer/Data Scientist, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Navin Haram, Senior Programme Specialist, UN Women; Siem Vaessen, CEO, Zimmerman; Rob Redpath, Director, Open Data Services Co-operative

Summary: This session explored the innovative uses of AI in enhancing the quality and utility of IATI data, with a focus on improving transparency and policy-making. Key themes and proposed actions from the discussions include:

- Germany's Policy Making through IATI Data: Utilization of OpenAI's Large Language Models (LLMs) for keyword extraction from project descriptions; emphasis on enhancing search functionalities within IATI reporting to boost transparency; and future plans include developing a semantic search function and addressing AI risks such as data hallucinations and biases.
- UN Women's Improvement of Gender Data: Focus on enhancing the visibility of gender-specific data within IATI; development of an AI-powered search function for the UN Women Transparency Portal to facilitate easier access and analysis of gender data. The AI tool is expected to support complex queries, providing instant analysis and answers.
- AFJ's Personalized AI Experience: Introduction of "JASIRI AI," aiming to personalize the user experience on IATI data. Focus on creating an Afrocentric AI solution that caters specifically to the needs and contexts of African users.
- Zimmerman's Advanced Tooling for Data Visualization: Use of AI agents on Dataxplorer.org to enhance data visualization. The integration of AI into data quality validation processes. Challenges associated with connecting complex IATI data to visualization tools and the potential solutions through generative AI and open-source engineering.

Action Points:

- Collaborative Development: Encourage cooperation between AI technical experts and IATI specialists to integrate domain-specific knowledge effectively.
- Address AI Limitations: Implement safeguards against AI risks, such as data accuracy issues and the potential for algorithmic biases.
- Expand AI Applications: Explore the use of AI for diverse functionalities such as personalized user experiences, gender data accessibility, and advanced data visualization.

- Enhance Data Accessibility: Develop tools that simplify the interaction with complex IATI datasets, making it easier for all stakeholders to access and utilize the data effectively.

These discussions underscored the potential of AI technologies to significantly enhance the accessibility and usability of IATI data across various domains, setting the stage for more informed policy-making and effective development cooperation.

15. **Choose your own adventure - how do we tailor IATI publishing to different organisations?**

Speakers: Emma Clegg, Product Owner, Open Data Services Co-operative; Simon Whitehouse, Team Leader IATI Support, Open Data Services Co-operative

Summary: The session explored challenges faced by organisations who contact the IATI team for help with data publishing, emphasizing the isolation and confusion they can feel when getting started. Key challenges and recommendations identified during the discussion include:

- Minimum Viable IATI Dataset: The need to review which subsets of IATI data are relevant for organizations of varying sizes and types to publish (i.e. this could be different for each). Emphasis on creating bite-size, specific guidance that uses familiar language for different organization types.
- Implementation and Publishing Challenges: High turnover among staff involved in data publishing leads to continuous retraining and knowledge gaps. Errors in transactions can make data management cumbersome, especially when dealing with extensive project details.
- Donor Harmonization and Data Usage: Discussions on who mandates and participates in donor harmonization efforts. Donors are also data users, necessitating their involvement in discussions about data requirements and standards.
- Engaging Downstream Partners: Recognition that downstream partners can vary significantly, from local NGOs to international organizations, each with different levels of data knowledge and capabilities. The necessity for a downstream partner-centric approach that considers the minimal data elements they can realistically provide. Potential for a template or simplified reporting mechanism that allows for secondary reporting or proxy data entry by another party.
- Future Directions: Suggestion to use newsletters and other communication tools to reach and engage with a broader spectrum of IATI users, beyond just the current publishers. Continued discussion on the balance between required data fields and the flexibility needed to accommodate the diverse capacities of data publishers.

Action Points:
- Run a follow-on workshop with the donor governments who mandate partner publishing by July 2023 (to continue scoping which subsets of IATI data different partners should publish)
- Organise a subsequent IATI community call to gather input from a wider range of IATI stakeholders (especially data users and smaller publishers).

The session highlighted a collective need for streamlined, clear guidelines that align with the real-world capabilities and constraints of various organizations engaging with IATI, aiming to foster greater transparency and effectiveness in development cooperation data management.

16. **Land Governance Project Database**

Speakers: Luis Baquero, Data Curator, Land Portal

Summary: The Land Portal Foundation's enhancement of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development Land Map leverages the IATI standard to improve transparency and accessibility in land governance data. Key points of the demonstration include:

- Data Integration: Platform uses the IATI standard, which comprises about two-thirds of the platform's dataset, to integrate global land governance initiatives and funding information.
- Gap Identification: Enables stakeholders to identify priorities, find gaps, avoid duplications, and find synergies among organizations, enhancing the effectiveness of land governance efforts.
- Data Consistency Challenges: Notes inconsistencies in adherence to the IATI standard among data providers, affecting data quality.
- Sector-Specific Data Curation: Stresses the need for tailored curation to make data findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR).
- Improved Data Standards Advocacy: Advocates for better data standards and methodologies specific to land governance to enhance data utility and transparency.

This initiative demonstrates a significant advance in using open data to support global land governance, highlighting both opportunities and challenges.

17. **Bridging the gap: how donors can use portals to help users interpret IATI data**

Moderator: Anand Nair, Co-Founder, Fields Data

Speakers: Elise Egan, Senior Policy Advisor on Aid Transparency, USAID; Joshua Satre, Economic Data Analyst, USAID; Sarah Neumann, Senior Policy Officer, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Fabio Thoma, Senior Policy Officer/Data Scientist, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany

Summary: The session involved presentations from USAID (USA) and BMZ (Germany) discussing their respective data portals, the Development Cooperation Landscape (DCL) tool and Transparenzportal (Transparency Portal). Key takeaways from the session include:

- Data Portals Functionality: Both portals offer tools like filtered searches and downloads, with recent updates enhancing user interaction. USAID's portal integrates API access for tailored data integration, although direct API access to the portal itself is not provided.
- User Engagement and Feedback: Both organizations noted a wide range of users including press, academics, public, and students. USAID highlighted the high volume of user interaction, with about 100,000 visits per month, and shared that user feedback often guides improvements and understanding of data utility. BMZ acknowledged the challenges in anticipating user needs but uses queries to adapt resources like FAQs and glossaries for better user guidance.
- Data Security and Transparency: Discussions emphasized the need to balance transparency with security, ensuring that detailed data does not compromise operational security on the ground. USAID particularly noted the need to manage data detail levels to avoid endangering organizations involved in sensitive regions.

- Data Quality and Interpretation: Challenges related to data duplication and outdated information were addressed, with both portals advising users on potential data inconsistencies. Both portals are designed to enhance the understanding of data through contextual information related to policy priorities like localization, gender, and food security.
- Technical Support and Development: Queries about improving data support structures led to discussions on the stability and support for data systems like d-portal. USAID expressed limitations regarding open-source development and reliance on existing data frameworks.
- Future Directions and Enhancements: Continued development of features that allow for more intuitive data exploration, such as semantic search functions or chatbots, to aid non-expert users. Emphasis on incremental improvements based on user feedback and technological advancements to ensure the portals meet the evolving needs of diverse stakeholders.

The session highlighted the critical role of IATI data portals in improving transparency, supporting data-driven decision-making, and enhancing the accessibility of data for a wide range of global and local stakeholders.

18. **Citizens of IATI Unite! Reflecting on the past, building for the future**

Moderator: Rob Redpath, Director, Open Data Services Co-operative, Isabel Precious-Birds, Director, Open Data Services Co-operative

Speaker: n/a - facilitated discussion

Summary: The session focused on reflecting upon the past 16 years of the IATI community and strategizing for future development and enhancements. Key points and action plans discussed include:

- Community Engagement and Feedback: Emphasize the need for more interactive and engaging platforms for community feedback, beyond traditional methods like IATI Connect, which lacks dynamic interaction capabilities. Consider the potential for more modern, conversation-driven platforms like Discord to facilitate ongoing dialogues.
- Tooling and Standard Improvements: Recognize the necessity for sustainable, innovative tooling around IATI that adapts to evolving technology and community needs. Address the complexity of tools and guidance that may not cater well to smaller, local CSOs. Propose simplifying tools or creating tailored experiences for different types of organizations. Explore the possibility of defining a minimal mandatory data set for IATI publishing to streamline the data entry process and make it less daunting for new publishers.
- Training and Resources: Prioritize the creation of accessible training resources and online learning modules to help new publishers understand and utilize IATI standards effectively. Implement evidence-based decision-making processes to ensure that new initiatives and resources are grounded in proven effective practices.
- Data Standard and Policy: Address the issue of multiple data stores and ensure consistency across them. Consider the implementation of a more structured standard that allows for subtyping to tailor data publishing needs according to the scale and scope of organizations. Develop a new data policy to manage and explain significant differences in data handling and representation.
- Governance and Strategic Planning: Engage the community in governance processes to ensure broad representation and input in decision-making. Conduct in-person consultations, focus groups, and moderated online discussions to gather wide-ranging

feedback for strategic planning. Establish focused working groups to tackle specific issues or developments in IATI standard and tooling, with clear mandates and objectives to influence policy and standards effectively.

Overall, the discussion underscored the importance of a collaborative, well-supported community equipped with the right tools and strategies to adapt to future challenges and opportunities in transparency and data management within the IATI framework.

19. **IATI Community Exchange Closing Session**

Speakers: Anand Nair, Co-Founder, Fields Data, Thea Schepers, IATI Chair and Senior Advisor Open Data, Foreign Ministry, Netherlands, Annelise Parr, Manager Policy and Technology IATI, UNDP

Summary: The IATI community exchange concluded with a sense of achievement and optimism, marked by active participation and fruitful exchanges among community members. This event served as a critical forum for addressing the challenges and exploring the opportunities that lie within the realm of open data and transparency in the development sector, driving the conversation towards innovative solutions and enhanced collaborations. The discussions throughout the event have established a solid foundation for future initiatives, highlighting the transformative potential of IATI data beyond mere documentation to being a pivotal tool for impactful development work. The IATI community is looking forward to continue parts of the discussions during the UN World Data Forum in November.

IATI extends its gratitude to all the organizers, speakers, and participants whose contributions made this event a notable success. The IATI Secretariat and Governing Board look forward to seeing the continued success of the community and remain committed to staying connected and energized as we enter the planning phase of the new Strategic Plan.