

IATI Members' Assembly 2023

Monday 13 March (14:00-18:00 CET) and Tuesday 14 March (09:15-17:15)
UN City, Copenhagen & online (Zoom Events Space)

Paper 3: Secretariat Implementation Update 2022

This paper shares an update from the IATI Secretariat on the implementation of activities in 2022 to help meet the objectives of the [IATI Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#) ([ES](#) / [FR](#)).

Promote the systematic use of IATI data by development and humanitarian actors

Partner country workshops

In 2022, three workshops were delivered to engage data users in partner countries. In May, representatives from partner country government members of IATI attended a [workshop in Kigali, Rwanda](#), which included a dedicated session bringing together Aid Information Management System (AIMS) providers and government representatives on improving IATI integration. In July, a [regional workshop was held in Abuja, Nigeria](#) to engage a range of data users from across West and Central Africa. In November, data users from the Asia-Pacific region joined a [regional workshop in Bangkok, Thailand](#) which was co-hosted with UN DESA's Development Cooperation Forum team.

In total the workshops were attended by 58 government representatives from 49 countries, 75 participants from national and international civil society organisations (CSOs), and more than 25 representatives from development partner organisations, many of whom were attending an IATI meeting for the first time. The workshops facilitated dialogue and offered training on using IATI data, as well as presentations on IATI use cases (from Chad, Lesotho, Liberia, and Nigeria). Participants provided feedback which will be valuable in future planning for the initiative. Government representatives spoke of facing continuing challenges in accessing data on development finance at the country level, and highlighted the value of IATI in helping to fill these data gaps. Workshop participants also shared areas for improvement for IATI, including long standing issues with data quality and the need to consolidate the range of IATI tools, in order to improve the accessibility of IATI data.

The participants have taken part in follow-up virtual sessions with the Secretariat to help them progress their journey on using IATI data.

IATI Country Development Finance Data tool

In 2022, three new training videos were developed to support the use of IATI's [Country Development Finance Data](#) (CDFD) tool (all available in French, Spanish and Portuguese). CDFD was used to train Government representatives during the partner country workshops, who reported that they found substantially more development partners were publishing to IATI when compared to in-country data sources. In addition, CDFD was updated (based on user feedback) with new [Data Dashboards](#) (with summary maps, charts, and tables); a [Custom Data Download](#) feature with a range of filters; and a redesigned website which brings the site in line with IATI's brand.

Launch of Datastore Search

In March, IATI launched [Datastore Search](#) to enable data users to download all valid development and humanitarian IATI data in CSV, JSON and XML formats. Datastore Search replaced IATI's previous Query Builder tool, offering a range of additional functions to enable complex queries of data published to the IATI Standard. New functions include an online web-search style interface; flexible searching across *any* combination of IATI Activity Standard elements or attributes (with hover-over definitions) and no pagination (so users can download thousands of rows of data at once). Usage of the new Datastore Search has increased considerably over the previous Datastore's Query Builder, e.g. 807% more page views and 445% increase in unique visitors.

New IATI Secretariat Data Analysis

To raise awareness about the different ways in which IATI data can be analysed and used, the IATI Secretariat authored two analysis pieces in 2022. A [paper](#) published in November showed how 2022 budgets and spending by country can be found using IATI's Country Development Finance Data tool, and in December [analysis](#) identified funding for mine action (released to mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty).

Ongoing data use training and support

IATI's Secretariat continued to deliver virtual Data Use Drop-In Sessions for data users to bring their questions and receive on-the-spot support from the IATI Secretariat and other data users. The Secretariat also updated the [Data Use Query Corner](#) with new examples of data queries, including ones using the newly launched Datastore Search (see above). Virtual support and presentations were delivered to interested data users through 2022, for example to the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in Turkmenistan who was interested in using IATI data in their Development Finance Assessment, and Tanzania's Development Partner Group wanted to use IATI data to inform dialogue with partners at the country level.

Drive a significant improvement in the quality of data published to IATI

IATI Data Quality Index Consultation - phase 2

In 2022, the second phase of IATI's Data Quality Index (DQI) consultation began. As with the first phase of the DQI consultation (delivered in 2021), the second phase attracted a wide range of feedback on IATI Connect (and via two virtual meeting) for: Part 1 - [Timeliness, Frequency and Validation](#) (February - March) and Part 2 - [Data Completeness](#) (March - May).

The third and final part of the DQI phase 2 consultation on *Weights and Measures* [was postponed](#) in September as part of the IATI's Governing Board decision to pause activities with a medium- to long-term horizon until new hosting arrangements for the IATI Secretariat were selected in 2023.

Activity Level Validation

The [IATI Validator](#) is a key online tool that checks if data complies with the rules of the IATI Standard. The Validator was updated to run checks on data at a more granular level by implementing Activity Level Validation. The Validator previously assessed activity 'files' (which contain multiple activities) and if *any* data in the file was critically invalid then *no* data in the file would be available to users of the IATI Datastore. However now the Validator individually assesses each activity contained within activity files and excludes only activities with critical errors. By implementing activity-level validation, the IATI Datastore provides as much usable information as possible, whilst still upholding standardisation.

The Technical Team also improved the user interface of the Validator, making it easier to search and navigate, and filter/view validation reports.

Support to publishers via IATI Helpdesk

IATI's Helpdesk continued to provide dedicated support to organisations requesting assistance to publish and improve their data. The IATI Technical Team and Secretariat also provided support through one-to-one calls to existing publishers and organisations interested in publishing IATI data for the first time. In-depth publisher support calls were held with USAID, Institute of Development Studies, British Red Cross, UNFPA, UNEP, ILO, the World Bank and others. In addition, the Technical Team contacted over 100 publishers that had started to register their organisations in preparation to publish, but had not yet completed the process. This contact has so far led to 15 new organisations becoming IATI publishers.

Strengthen the IATI Standard by consolidating its technical core, maintaining its infrastructure and reinvigorating its community of publishers and members

Launch of new Datastore API and Datastore Search

In January 2022, the Technical Team launched IATI's new Datastore API on IATI's Unified Platform, fulfilling a commitment to members to integrate the Datastore in-house. The new version of the Datastore API has been built to a higher specification and is more cost-effective. It updates in less than 24 hours; and it can return activity, transaction and budget data filtered by any element or attribute in the IATI Activity Standard. The Technical Team also implemented Search Engine Optimisation, enabling IATI data to be discovered via Google search. This has led to IATI data being found by more organisations that were previously unaware of the initiative.

IATI Validator

In addition to delivering Activity Level Validation on the Validator tool and its API, the Technical Team also improved the user interface of the tool, making it easier to search and navigate and to filter/view validation reports.

IATI Publisher tool developed

During 2022, IATI's new publishing tool was developed by the IATI Secretariat and Technical Team, through a contract with software provider *Young Innovations*. [IATI Publisher](#) (launched in January 2023) is a new online tool that enables organisations to publish data according to the XML format required by the IATI Standard. The new tool is free to use, has clear explanations of data fields in the IATI Standard (with links to useful guidance), enables bulk uploading and runs automatic checks for errors (via the IATI Validator). Take-up of the new tool has been very positive: within one month of launch 33 publishers had registered and 63 activities were published.

IATI Registry improvements

The Technical Team also implemented important improvements to the [IATI Registry](#), which contains a repository of links to every IATI data file published. The Registry now shows the Validator 'status' of all activities, enabling organisations to see if their datasets contain errors that need to be fixed. The Registry also now has a feature to alert publishers if the URL to their IATI data set does not point to an XML file (as the IATI Standard requires data to be published in XML). Finally a new feature was implemented to enable the Technical Team to search for pending publishers.

Maintaining d-portal

During 2022, essential maintenance was undertaken on IATI's search platform, [d-portal](#). The Technical Team worked with the tool's supplier *Wetgenes* to upgrade the server, and the website's headers were adjusted to ensure CORS (Cross-origin resource sharing) compliant servers are able to securely retrieve data. Planned work to develop a new version of d-portal was postponed as part of the wider decision by IATI's Governing Board to pause activities with a medium- to long-term horizon, until new hosting arrangements for the IATI Secretariat were in place in 2023.

Cross-cutting action areas

The Secretariat also delivered activities to contribute to the IATI Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025 cross-cutting action areas including outreach and engagement with IATI's members, community and other important external stakeholders, as well as enabling effective governance of the initiative.

Governance and membership

The Secretariat delivered the process for IATI members to [elect the Governing Board](#) for a new two-year term in March. The Secretariat also supported the Governing Board in its new initiative to introduce virtual 'IATI Board Drop-in Sessions', inviting IATI members to discuss existing and upcoming governance issues. The Board also engaged IATI members via a new Members group on IATI Connect.

The [Strategic Plan Results Monitoring Report 2021](#) was published on the IATI website outlining results from the second annual monitoring of the 2020-2025 IATI Strategic Plan. Developed by the IATI Secretariat in partnership with the Results Working Group (RWG), the report measures the implementation of the Strategic Plan against its Results Framework. Preliminary results for 2022 monitoring of the Strategic Plan are available [here](#) and distribution of the annual survey will be launched during Q1 2023.

IATI Hosting transition

To manage the process of transition, the Board recruited a Transition Manager to work with existing and future hosts in delivering transition activities. The work plan and budget approved by the Board introduced a range of transition activities for the Secretariat, and paused some planned activities that would extend beyond the mandate of current consortium hosts. Transition work currently underway includes documenting institutional knowledge to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities to future Secretariat hosts. The Secretariat has been working closely with the Transition Manager whose work is managed by the Board, and whose contract will span the entire period of transition OUT for current hosts and IN for new hosts.

Outreach and engagement

By delivering three in-person workshops (in Rwanda, Nigeria and Thailand - see above), the IATI Secretariat has generated a surge in interest in IATI membership. For example, the Government of Lesotho joined IATI formally as a member in October 2022 following their attendance as an observer at the Partner Country workshop in Rwanda. The IATI Secretariat also held biannual virtual information sessions to promote IATI membership to interested organisations, whilst continuing to respond to ad hoc requests for personalised briefings.

The Secretariat also produced a new briefing on the 'offer' of IATI, to better support UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to access detailed information from many types of development assistance providers in their support to different government-led, country-level processes. These include through Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF) and the development of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. With the support of the Secretariat, the Government of Turkmenistan successfully used IATI data to inform its Development Finance Assessment, the first step in the INFF process. In November the Secretariat also co-hosted the 2022 regional workshop in Thailand with UN DESA's Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), the officially-mandated space for discussion on development cooperation amongst UN member states.

Engaging IATI's Community

Two Virtual Community Exchanges ([VCE3](#) and [VCE4](#)) were held in June and November, showcasing promising IATI use cases, and promoting collaboration amongst IATI's community. Among the high-level speakers, the keynote speech at the VCE4 was delivered by Mr. Augustus Flomo, Deputy Minister for Economic Management, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning at the Government of Liberia who shared Liberia's development data needs and described how IATI was helping to fulfill them. In total, the two VCEs attracted 548 registrants, 57 speakers, and 18 sessions on development and humanitarian open data and transparency issues.

During 2022, the number of accounts on the community platform IATI Connect increased by 30% (from January to December 2022). The IATI Secretariat continued providing support to existing groups on the platform and (upon request) launched new groups such as the [IATI Members Group](#), where the Governing Board shares regular updates on governance-related matters with more than 100 group members. A new automated [calendar](#) was also added to IATI Connect to share relevant upcoming events to the wider community. Nine vlogs ([IATI Connect Stories](#)) were published on IATI Connect showcasing organisations from IATI's community sharing their IATI work and perspective.