

# Phase I Consultations Summary for IATI's Strategic Plan 2026-2030

November-December 2024

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The three engagements that launched the consultations for developing IATI's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan — a Workshop in Nairobi, the virtual 2030 Visioning workshop, and the first round of global online consultations on IATI Connect — offered an expansive view of the trends, challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for IATI. The insights, reflections and ideas surfaced from this first phase of the consultations provide a robust foundation for re-envisioning IATI's role as a transformative force in development cooperation, transparency, accountability and impact.

## Key Trends Shaping International Cooperation and Strategic Implications for IATI

### 1. Political Trends and Global Development Contexts

The consultations underscored the growing political polarization, declining multilateralism, and increasing geopolitical tensions. These dynamics have compounded challenges such as fragmented aid flows, misaligned donor-recipient priorities, and reduced budgets for international cooperation. Simultaneously, there is a notable rise in citizen skepticism toward foreign aid, particularly in donor countries.

#### Key Takeaways

- Transparency and accountability remain critical to addressing inefficiencies in aid allocation and fostering trust.
- Political influences often undermine the alignment of donor priorities with recipient needs, exacerbating systemic misalignments and hindering impact.
- Emerging opportunities exist in leveraging data-sharing regulations and AI-driven analytics to develop powerful tools, strengthen data systems and ultimately build greater trust and enhance decision-making.

#### Strategic Implications: IATI needs to adopt a more robust advocacy and partnership strategy

Positioning transparency as a foundational pillar of international development, and IATI data as platform for dialogue, can serve as an advocacy and engagement mechanism to bridge political, institutional and sectoral divides, foster collaboration, and enable mutual accountability and trust among stakeholders.

## 2. Financing Trends: Diversification and Accountability Challenges

The global financing landscape is evolving rapidly, with an increased emphasis on diversified financial flows, including climate finance, social impact investments, and South-South cooperation. However, these shifts have introduced complexities, including challenges in ensuring traceability and accountability.

### Key Takeaways

- Countries are grappling with fragmented financial flows and a lack of comprehensive data integration systems.
- The absence of transparency from emerging donors and private-sector actors limits the full picture of development finance.
- Participants expressed strong support for expanding IATI's scope to capture new financial instruments while emphasizing the need for alignment with local systems and national priorities.

### Strategic Implications: IATI can position itself as a “one-stop shop” for aid data

Creating a unified platform for development finance data could enable capturing of more diverse financial flows, including climate finance and other innovative financing. Clear boundaries—such as excluding domestic flows and general private commercial flows—are essential though to maintaining focus and a distinct value proposition.

## 3. Data and Technology Trends

The consultations revealed a consensus on the transformative potential of data and digital technologies, including AI-driven analytics, geo-referenced data, and advanced visualization tools, as well as more inclusive, user-friendly technologies for both publishing and using IATI data. However, there are disparities in readiness and capacity, particularly in fragile and low-resource settings, to adopt these innovations.

### Key Takeaways

- An adaptive standard and interoperability between IATI and national data systems is crucial to maximize impact and ensure future relevance for data users.
- AI, automatic translation and other emerging technologies hold immense potential to enhance decision-making, though challenges such as data security, governance, and inclusivity remain significant.
- Geo-referenced data is increasingly seen as critical for subnational insights and resource allocation.

### Strategic Implications: IATI should strengthen its own technical capabilities and partnerships

Advanced technologies—such as AI-driven traceability and geo-referenced data—can revolutionize how stakeholders' access and use development data and engage with the IATI community. Ensuring digital inclusivity, through capacity-building initiatives and simplified, consolidated tools and services, is paramount to avoid widening the digital divide, and supporting the growth and depth of IATI's community participation.

## Elements of a Renewed Vision for IATI

Several potential strategic opportunities surfaced from these consultations and discussions of trends, to guide IATI's role in the evolving landscape of international cooperation. While there were some issues where participants had diverging perspectives, several distinct areas of convergence and consensus emerged from the conversations and contributions from across the IATI community.

### **1. Enhancing Data Quality and Usability**

Participants repeatedly emphasized the need for improved traceability, completeness, and alignment of aid data. Ensuring broader participation and fostering iterative improvement can support stakeholders who are not benefiting from the full potential of IATI data, expanding its use, value and new applications.

#### **Proposed Actions:**

- Expand IATI's standards to include emerging financial mechanisms and integrate subnational data.
- Develop intuitive tools and capacity-building programs to enhance data usability across diverse stakeholder groups, particularly development partners, government ministries and civil society organizations.
- Leverage AI and other relevant technologies to improve ease, speed, quality and quantity of IATI data publishing

### **2. Strengthening Advocacy, Partnerships and Local Engagement**

The consultations highlighted the importance of strengthening collaboration and co-leadership across and beyond the IATI community, donors, recipient governments, and civil society.

#### **Proposed Actions:**

- Deepen partnerships with regional and national actors to tailor data tools and solutions to local contexts.
- Engage with non-traditional donors, emerging data users, and private-sector actors to expand the inclusivity of IATI's platform.
- Convene multi-stakeholder dialogues to explore new avenues for collaboration and complementarity, and ways to leverage IATI data to align resources with national development priorities.
- Review membership structure, services and opportunities to strengthen and expand the community and strengthen advocacy

### **3. Advancing Technological Innovations**

Technology is a cornerstone of IATI's future. Investments in IATI's technical infrastructure, capabilities, adoption of more proven and best-in-class technologies, and exploration of emerging and cutting-edge technologies, aligns with the community's aspirations for enhanced analytics and interoperability.

### **Proposed Actions:**

- Prioritize interoperability between IATI and country systems and statistical frameworks to facilitate seamless data integration and use, exploring a range of established and emerging tools and technologies.
- Invest in geo-referenced data systems to provide subnational insights and address resource allocation gaps.
- Explore automatic translation capabilities to make IATI data accessible to non-English-speaking stakeholders.

## **4. Future-Proofing IATI's Services**

As the development finance landscape continues to evolve, participants emphasized the need for IATI to remain agile and forward-looking.

### **Proposed Actions:**

- Position IATI as a platform for building consensus, sharing innovations and learning, and strengthening common data and accountability principles.
- Develop a more adaptive governance and updating process for data standards to reflect dynamic trends and stakeholder needs.
- Develop a clear action plan and results framework to measure IATI's progress and its the value proposed by its service offers against longer term strategic goals and a more unpredictable operating landscape.

## **Conclusion: An Emerging Vision for 2030**

The consultations reinforced IATI's pivotal role in transforming data into actionable insights that drive transparency, accountability, and impact. By incorporating the insights surfaced through this initial round of consultations into its next Strategic Plan, IATI should be able to better navigate the dynamic and complex landscape of international cooperation and position itself as a global leader in aid transparency.

Key to achieving this vision will be IATI's ability to:

- Enhance data quality and inclusivity while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to diverse stakeholder needs.
- Strengthen partnerships and foster trust among donors, governments, civil society, and emerging actors.
- Leverage technological advancements to deliver real-time, actionable insights that empower decision-making at all levels.
- Sustain a clear focus on transparency as a catalyst for collaboration, mutual accountability, and equitable progress.

Through deliberate action and strategic innovation, IATI can transform its platform from a repository of data into a catalytic platform for global change, leveraging the collective ambition of the IATI community to ensure that transparency and accountability remain at the heart of international development efforts.