Report of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) regional consultation for the Arab States

Kempinski Hotel, Amman, Jordan

12-13 August 2009

The IATI regional consultation for the Arab States region gathered in Amman, Jordan, from 12-13 August 2009, representatives from the governments of **9** partner countries, namely *Algeria, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, and Syria*, as well as parliamentarians and representatives from the donor community in Jordan, and aid effectiveness specialists from the Local Aid Coordination Secretariat in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Development Initiatives Poverty Research, Synergy International Systems and from a number of UNDP Country Offices in the region. The list of participants is provided in Annex 1.

Session 1: Introduction: aid information in the broader context of ownership, accountability and implementing the Accra Agenda for Action

The two-day consultations were opened by **H.E. Mr. Nasser Sultan Shraideh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) of Jordan** and **Ms. Jacinta Barrins, Country Director, United Nations Development Programme, Jordan**.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary General expressed the support of the Government of Jordan for IATI, which was a step forward in responding to the accountability, transparency and predictability commitments made in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). He stressed the importance of supporting existing aid information management systems (AIMs) of partner countries and making these accessible to the public. He underlined that Jordan as a signatory to the Paris Declaration has made noteworthy progress in strengthening its own systems and developing mid- to long-term development plans, which had helped donors to better align their financial and technical support with the national priorities. The government also maintained regular dialogue with its development partners and had established coordination groups in 10 priority sectors. Furthermore, Jordan had improved its management capacity and financial accountability, as well as procurement and audit systems, which had allowed for a substantial amount of foreign aid to be channeled through the national budget. Moreover, with assistance from the EC and the UN Resident Coordinator, MoPIC had

recently developed the Jordan Aid Information Management System as a tool to support alignment and coordination around the national development agenda. The Secretary General concluded that having better aid information can assist partner countries with improved decision-making, budgeting and accountability, both domestic and international, on how aid was used. He also thanked UNDP for co-hosting the regional consultation for the Arab States.

Ms. Jacinta Barrins, UNDP Country Director in Jordan thanked the Government of Jordan, in particular the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, for co-hosting the regional consultation, as well as DFID for their financial contribution. She noted that IATI was a young, but promising initiative and that the findings and recommendations from the consultation in Amman would feed into the global IATI Conference in The Hague, 20-21 October 2009. IATI has emerged as a result of a consultative process in the run up to the Accra High-Level Forum where partner countries had stressed that the efforts to implement the global aid effectiveness commitments at the country level should be facilitated by access to comprehensive, timely and detailed information on aid. Ms. Barrins re-iterated UNDP's commitment to IATI and to development that was led by partner countries and in support of their capacities to manage their own development resources effectively. Therefore, IATI should be seen as a global framework that needs to be localized and implemented at the country level. In the same vein, IATI should strengthen the aid information management systems (AIMs) of partner countries and country-led processes for ownership, alignment and accountability. The UNDP Country Director further encouraged peer exchange and learning and for partner countries to have a collective voice on the issues of predictability, transparency and accountability in global fora.

Ms. Danila Boneva, IATI Partner Outreach Coordinator, UNDP welcomed the participants on behalf of the IATI Secretariat. She provided an overview of the objectives of IATI; the key stakeholders involved; the process for the development of the IATI standards; the working mechanisms and decision-making body of IATI; and the expected benefits of better aid information, progress and next steps for the initiative.

Mr. Rob Tew, Economic and Statistics Advisor, Development Initiatives Poverty Research presented the key findings and recommendations from the IATI Scoping Paper, focusing on the aid information needs of different users; the existing sources of information, such as OECD/DAC CRS[1], AiDA[2], country AIMs; as well as the current gaps, challenges and opportunities for better aid information.

In the subsequent discussion, the following questions and concerns were raised by the participants and answers were provided by the two presenters.

---

[1] OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System. For more information, please visit:
http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,2340,en_2649_34447_37679488_1_1_1_1,00.html.

[2] AiDA, provided by the Development Gateway Foundation. For more information, please visit:
http://aida.developmentgateway.org/index.do.

- ***How would IATI define transparency?*** The IATI standards would be quite detailed and concrete in terms of the aid information to be published. The IATI Technical Advisory Group was looking at this.

- ***Was IATI focusing on projects or was it also looking into programme-based approaches?*** IATI was examining this issue from the perspective of "unit of analysis" rather than project or programme-based approaches in order to better capture the specificities of different aid modalities.

- ***What efforts was IATI making in increasing the number of donor signatories, including non-DAC donors?*** Similar to the partner country consultations, DFID was leading the ongoing consultations with donors at the global level. Some donors while not signatories to IATI were involved in the development of the standards. In the course of 2009 the intention was to consolidate the initiative and subsequently broaden its base as of 2010.

- ***How did IATI fit into the OECD/DAC working mechanisms? What was the OECD/DAC response to IATI?*** The IATI standards were being developed in cooperation with the OECD/DAC. IATI would build on the existing standards and systems, such as the CRS. It was envisaged that IATI would cooperate with Cluster C "Transparent/Responsible Aid" of the WP-EFF.

- ***The timeline of IATI was too short. Attempts in the past in the banking sector to reach an agreement on a common data exchange format had failed.*** While it was true that the timeline for consultations and the development of the standards was intense, nevertheless, it was not impossible to pursue the agreements. The common data exchange format was technically possible.

- ***Would IATI change donors' aid policies/behaviour?*** While IATI might not change the behavior of donors, it would play an important role in that direction.

Session 2: Key challenges in accessing and using aid information[3]

In the afternoon, the participants formed three break-out groups. Below are the summaries of their deliberations.

Break-out Group A: current sources of information on aid and challenges associated with these

Participants in Group A identified supply-driven aid as one of the major challenges in improving aid information. Overall, information on commitments and disbursements was more easily accessible, while

---

[3] Participants were offered with the possibility to establish a fourth group on the issue of potential impacts of better aid information, but there were not sufficient government representatives interested to participate in such a discussion and the group was not constituted.

information on future aid flows (by country, sector and project level) was rarely available. Another deficiency was the lack of information, which would allow the measurement of outputs compared to inputs.

It was suggested that in order to improve reporting, development partners should nominate focal points, who would have in their TORs/work plans the provision of aid data as a responsibility. Discussants considered that, in general, bi-annual reporting/updating of aid information was sufficient for planning and analytical purposes. Partner country governments also had a role to play in improving access to aid information and transparency when they were the owners of information.

Break-out Group B: Priorities of partner countries for improving access to aid information

Participants in Group B used the list of criteria in Annex 2 as a starting point of their discussion. They reached an agreement that *non-statistical information, such as documents relating to strategy, policy, procedures and evaluations (criterion 13)* was the top priority as it pertained to setting the dialogue and cooperation framework between partner countries and developing partners and allowed the former to assess the impact and outcomes of development assistance in their countries. It was followed by *criterion 2, i.e. reliable information on future aid flows, at country, sector and project level*. *Criterion 9, namely, contract and procurement details* was also considered to be important, followed by *up-to-date information (criterion 1)*. The group did not reach an agreement on whether to rank *criteria 5, i.e. more information about how aid is spent, and 8, i.e. details of aid agreements, including any conditions attached and the terms of any concessional loans,* as a priority, following the above points, or as least important on the list. On the priority list, the participants in the group added *criteria 6 (better information on what aid is spent on), 7 (in which sectors), 3 (where it is spent), and 4 (when it is spent).* They also considered as a priority *criterion 10 (better coverage from a wider range of donors, including non-DAC donors, all multilateral agencies, large NGOs, foundations and private donors)* and defined it *as cross-cutting amongst criteria 3-7*. The group was divided, however, on who should carry the main responsibility for reporting on aid provided to decentralized entities (so-called *decentralized cooperation*). Some considered that this should be done by the institution providing the funding, while others considered that decentralized entities should report back to the central government. Participants thought that *capturing financial flows to the private sector was a missing element* in the current aid information systems *and it should be included in the scope of the standard*. The table below captures the order of priority, given to each category of information.

Table 1: Aid information priorities of partner countries

	Most Important Aid Information	Least Important Aid Information
Better coverage from a wider range of donors and other actors (considered to be cross-cutting)	*Non-statistical information*	
	Future aid flows	
	Contract & procurement details	
	Up-to-date information	
	How aid is spent	*How aid is spent*
	Details of aid agreements	*Details of aid agreements*
	What aid is spent on	

Which sectors	
Where it is spent	
When aid is spent	
How aid is spent	

Participants in the group also made observations pertaining to the current challenges they face in obtaining aid information. Transparency was mostly one-sided with information flowing from recipient governments to development partners. Overall, projects remained donor-driven despite national development plans and processes put in place by partner countries for ensuring alignment. In a number of partner countries, there was a disconnect between development strategies and their implementation, which often contributed to poor donor alignment. A number of donors were not providing information on disbursements and implementation status of projects. Technical assistance was also an area where transparency and accountability were low. Another example was co-financed projects for which there weren't agreed guidelines on how to implement and monitor implementation. Some donors were reluctant to share their strategies and plans, while national strategies were shared on a regular basis by partner countries.

In addition to transparency between partner countries and donors, the IATI standards should also promote *domestic transparency and access of information by citizens.* In this regard, the information articulated in criteria 3-7 was often available to governments and donors, however, it should also be accessible to the public. In this regard, some countries, such as Lebanon, had decided to prepare and publish quarterly progress reports on the foreign assistance received by the government.

Participants also asked if the IATI standards would have any cost implications for partner countries.

Break-out Group C: Particular issues with respect to aid information faced by countries in special development situations

Participants in Group C based as well their discussion on the list of criteria in Annex 2 and concluded that having *a) more up-to-date information* and *b) reliable information on future aid flows, at country, sector and project level*, were essential for partner countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, and were *cross-cutting* the other aid information needs suggested in the list.

Participants also agreed that the aid information needs defined in criteria 3-7 were the most important ones, i.e.:
- More detailed information about precisely *where* aid is spent, from sub-national down to community level, with ability to map to administrative areas;
- Better information about exactly *when* aid is spent, including donor commitment and disbursement and project expenditure dates;
- More information about *how* aid is spent, including channels of delivery, and ability to map spending through the system from initial commitment to final expenditure;
- Better information on *what* aid is spent on, including detailed project data, descriptions and dates;
- Improved information on *which* sectors aid is spent on, including ability to map sector classifications to national budgets.

5

Furthermore, participants suggested that an **agreement was needed on the *minimum aid information that would be reported in post-conflict countries***. Aid information should be standardized and simple rather than complex as this could lead to failure in reporting. Aid should be aligned with national development plans and budgets. Bi-annual reporting would be sufficient, however, it should be synchronized with the partner country fiscal year. Both Iraq and Somalia emphasized the difficulties they face in donor coordination and collecting aid information due to security conditions and limited presence of donors. In the case of Iraq, the Ministry of Planning was coordinating all grants, while the Ministry of Finance – all loans. Multilateral donors represented less than 10% of all grants and their assistance was, in general, easier to capture than the one provided by bilateral donors.

Session 3: Solutions: aid information management systems, IATI and complimentary initiatives

During the second day of the consultation, participants heard from their peers on national systems for the collection and analysis of aid information; the successes, challenges and lessons learnt in setting up AIMs, as well as the linkages between AIMs and other national systems, such as PFM systems.

Mr. Nader Sheikh Ali, Director General of International Cooperation, State Planning Commission (SPC) of Syria, chair of the session, shared the experience of his country in setting up an AIMs. In 2003, the SPC placed greater emphasis on the technology aspects of the system, while the focus in the second generation of AIMs was on the type of information required by the GoS and the governorates in deciding how to allocate aid based on where the needs were. Such tools should establish a clear link between donors' projects and the national development plans and sectors, the MDGs and the Paris Declaration indicators. An AIMs also needed proper staffing within the government. The SPC had analyzed the aid information it had available and it became evident that aid was concentrated into few sectors. The GoS would hold sectoral meetings with its development partners and request them to verify the data in the system. The next development plan would cover the period 2011-2015 and all bilateral and multilateral partners had already aligned their planning cycles with that of the GoS. Development assistance, which would not align with the national priorities would not be accepted. Mr. Nader Sheikh Ali ***further suggested that the experts from the region should establish a contact group to share information on AIMs and aid effectiveness issues.***

Mr. Houmedgaba Maki Houmed-Gaba, International Cooperation Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFAIC) of Djibouti presented the experience of his country in collecting aid information. The country became signatory to the Paris Declaration in 2008. The two ministries dealing with international cooperation were the MoFAIC (coordination role) and the Ministry of Finance (financial flows and evaluation of aid). As part of its National Aid Effectiveness Plan, Djibouti intended to put in place an AIMs in the near future. Two databases were currently operational, one managed by the MoFAIC, and the other one by the MoF. Based on the latter, the first National Report on ODA was produced covering the period 2004-2008.

Ms. Huda A. Malik, Director General, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of Iraq provided an overview of the multiple political, security, and recovery challenges the country faced. The reconstruction should be seen as a process of re-shaping the relationship between the citizen and the state rather than an effort to rebuild solely the economy and infrastructure. Following the Madrid

Conference in 2003, the GoI adopted the National Development Strategy in 2004, which was revised 3 times and subsequently presented to the international community. A significant drawback in its implementation was the lack of executable programmes and projects aligned with the development objectives, defined in the Strategy. In parallel, the GoI had its Capital Investment Programme, which allocated national resources to achieve the objectives of the Strategy. Since 2003, multilateral aid was channeled through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility and the Iraq Strategic Review Board approved ex ante all multilateral projects. The main function of the Board was to provide strategic guidance, however, the Board had not been able to fulfill it to a satisfactory degree. The other challenge of the Board was that it oversaw only 10% of all grants to Iraq (aid channeled through multilateral agencies), while bilateral aid remained largely outside the national systems and the GoI had little control or information about projects that in many cases were directly implemented by donors, or provided to tribal leaders and local authorities. The GoI also had difficulties in assessing the impact the aid was making in the country. Some of these challenges were linked to weak capacity of the national authorities, prevailing insecurity and political difficulties. In terms of AIMs, the MoPIC had set up the Development Assistance Database (DAD) with support from UNDP. In the beginning MoPIC expected to face some resistance from development partners in reporting, but this wasn't the case. The Iraq DAD contains general information about projects (commitments and disbursements). It featured over 20,000 projects, which was a manifestation of the fragmentation of aid in Iraq.

Mr. Diriye Ahmed Mohamed, M&E Consultant, Ministry of Planning of Somalia presented the aid coordination experience in the region of Somaliland. A number of challenges were highlighted such as the lack of coordination between local and central authorities and between the latter and development partners; high dependence on international aid and supply-driven aid; aid not allocated to sectors, which provide for the livelihoods of local communities, etc. In order to respond to these challenges, the Ministries of Planning and of Finance were putting in place different measures, such as establishing a Macroeconomic Management Office within the Ministry of Plan; the launch of a comprehensive public finance management reform, guided by the Ministry of Finance, and a mapping of partner programs exercise in 2007 and an aid effectiveness and management report in 2008, both prepared by the Ministry of Plan. Another measure was the establishment of a Somali Aid Management System (SAMIS). Mr. Diriye Ahmed Mohamed further suggested that IATI should foster capacity building in establishing country AIMs.

Ms. Yassar Al-Dhugmi, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan presented the Jordan Aid Information Management system, which would be officially launched in September 2009. The system would record ODA received as budget support, project aid in the form of grants, soft loans, technical cooperation, as well as cooperation in the areas of culture and science. Development partners, who had nominated focal points, would enter the data, while the various desks in MoPIC would do the verification. Line ministries had not been asked to designate focal points in the initial stage of the system. The first attempt to establish an AIMs in Jordan was not successful, therefore, MoPIC was developing a simpler tool, which would be gradually expanded in the future. The data available in the Jordan Aid Information Management System went back to 2002. It would be used for the publication of an annual report on the status of ODA in Jordan.

Mr. Mohamed Kabbaj, Deputy Director of Budget, Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF) of Morocco emphasized that the specificities of each country should be taken into account when setting up AIMs. ODA represented less than 5% of the state budget in Morocco. The majority of aid was passing through the national system and multilateral partners, such as the WB, the EC, were establishing joint

programmes in priority sectors. Only small portions of ODA outside the government systems mainly through NGOs, CSOs. In order to meet the GoM commitments for stronger national systems and transparency, the MoEF was undertaking a major reform program with support from the WB, AfDB and the EC. The program had a number of areas, including establishment of MTEFs for all departments, the regionalization of public expenditures. Moreover, the ministry had embarked on a project to set up an AIMs, which would track assistance to geographical areas and would serve as:

- analysis and decision-making tool
- communication and reporting tool
- coordination tool (in order to avoid overcrowding/duplication of work in certain geographic areas/sectors)
- planning and monitoring tool for the commitments made by development partners.

Access to the AIMs would be provided to MoEF (intranet); line ministries and donors (extranet) and the citizens (internet). The system was being put in place in collaboration with a number of development partners, among them the EC, France, Spain and UNDP. The MoEF also contributed financially to the project and this was a key element for the sustainability and government ownership of the system. Besides the technical, human resources and financial aspects of the project, the MoEF had also included a communications component.

Ms. Riwa Nasreddine, Senior Economic Officer, Ministry of Finance of Lebanon and Mr. Farid Bassaid-Oulhakj, Secretary in charge of UNDP from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria also contributed to the discussion on national systems.

Mr. Ashot Hovanesian, CEO of Synergy International Systems, Inc. presented the Development Assistance Database (DAD), a product of Synergy International, deployed in more than 25 partner countries in different regions, often in collaboration with UNDP. In the Arab States region, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and the region of Kurdistan in Iraq were using the DAD. The system had a number of features, such as on-line data entry, GIS mapping capability, and was able to generate different reports (by sectors, geographical areas, etc.). The following were the key lessons learnt in the deployment of the DAD:

- there wasn't a one-size-fits-all approach and AIMs should be customized to meet partner country needs
- it was important to be able to compare data both with existing international standards/classifications, such as the OECD/DAC sector codes, as well as with national standards and classifications.

In response to requests from partner countries, Synergy International was developing more advanced tools to support integration of the DAD with donor database systems (DAD Pakistan linked with the WB's client connection) or government financial management systems (DAD India linked with the government's financial system (CAA&A). Another strong demand from partner countries was to link the DAD with M&E frameworks, measuring progress of the MDGs, the Paris Declaration indicators, and more recently to assist with results-based budgeting (DAD Afghanistan).

In the ensuing discussion, participants asked in the case of Iraq, if the DAD contained information on security sector reform projects and military assistance. This wasn't the case. In the case of Jordan, participants inquired if the AIMs was linked to any PFM system the government was using. The response was that this was not the case at present, but could be envisaged in the future depending on success of the Jordan AIMs. Another question from the floor was how MoPIC monitored project expenditures. The response was that this was done either through donor focal points; for soft loans through the line

ministries, and for non-resident development partners, such as the Islamic Bank, the Nordic Investment Bank, the data was entered by MoPIC.

Session 4: Taking Forward IATI: Partner Country Recommendations

In the afternoon participants formed two break-out groups. The summaries of their discussions are provided below.

Break-out Group A: How should IATI be developed? How should partner countries be involved?

The participants in Group A considered how the IATI standards should be developed and what could be the role played by partner countries in the process. One of the recommendations was for government representatives at the regional consultation in Amman to report back on the discussions and ***advise their governments to endorse the 2008 IATI Accra Statement.*** It was further suggested that there should be ***outreach on IATI at the country level*** with possible support from UNDP. Participants also suggested that they should ***subscribe to the TAG and should contribute to the development of the IATI standards and Code of Conduct.*** From a partner country perspective it was important to review national public financial management systems in order to better inform the work on the standards. The group recommended ***that IATI should support the capacity of partner countries to collect and analyze aid data*** with possible assistance by UNDP and the World Bank.

Participants recommended that IATI ***should reach out to countries in the Arab States region to endorse the initiative and actively participate in the TAG and the Steering Committee***. In addition, they considered that ***IATI should proactively engage with donors, including non-DAC donors*** and impress upon them to become signatories to IATI.

Concerning the ***IATI Code of Conduct***, participants recommended that ***the mechanisms and incentives for ensuring compliance would have to be vigorous and concrete***. Some participants suggested that the Code of Conduct should be legally binding. It was also recommended that the provisions of the Code should include ***minimum set of standards applicable in countries in special development situations***.

Mr. Mohamed Kabbaj, Deputy Director of Budget, Ministry of Economy and Finance of **Morocco** expressed his view that IATI should fully integrate the WP-EFF and its mechanisms as there was a risk of duplication of work.

Break-out Group B: What needs for support and capacity development arise in partner countries?

Participants in Group B debated the priority needs of partner counties in terms of capacity development. As part of their deliberations, the Group noted that, in principle, development partners considered it costly to input data into country AIMs and to understand national systems. Often, donors had limited reporting capacity at the country level and their staff also needed to be trained in aid management. The reporting and overall aid management was even more challenging in the contexts of

Iraq, Palestine and Somalia where a number of donor agencies were non-resident. Participants suggested that *the IATI standards should serve as a push for harmonization of donor policies and alignment with national systems, policies and plans.* A lot of countries were struggling with establishing AIMs, making them AIMs sustainable and having the necessary human resources capacity and expertise to run the systems. The Group proposed the following concrete steps in moving forward:

- *Raise awareness about IATI.* The participatory approach should be maintained in the future at country, regional and global levels. All partner countries in the Arab States region should be involved.
- *Reverse the trend: aid information should be demand-driven and not supply-driven.* To this end, partner countries should prepare locally owned and clearly defined development goals to allow donors to align their aid and for development initiatives and the related information to be demand-driven.
- *Use internationally accepted standards and commitments,* such as the MDGs, the Paris Declaration indicators *in AIMs at the country level*.
- *Establish and/or strengthen country AIMs.* Address the issue of *sustainability of AIMs*.
- Build the necessary *human resource capacity* to utilize country AIMs.
- Create *a regional E-platform* to share experiences in aid management, AIMs and exchange on the proposed standards.
- Establish *a discussion board on the IATI website*.
- *Improve donor reporting capacity* based in recipient countries.
- Address the particular challenges of post-conflict countries.

H.E. Mr. Nasser Sultan Shraideh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of Jordan thanked participants for their contributions during the two-day consultations. He opened the floor for final comments and suggestions on taking forward the recommendations made by the various groups.

Mr. Nader Sheikh Ali, Director General of the International Cooperation, State Planning Commission of Syria suggested that countries in the region should continue the dialogue and work together in supporting IATI and preparing themselves for the IATI Conference in The Hague.

Ms. Jacinta Barrins, Country Director, UNDP Jordan suggested that the consultation be used as a platform to establish an appropriate mechanism for continuous dialogue in the region around the aid effectiveness agenda and IATI. There was also a need to work with donors and bringing those institutions which were not signatories on board the initiative.

Additional session: Presentation via teleconference of the Aid Management Platform (AMP) by Development Gateway Foundation

Following the closing session, there was a demonstration for interested participants of the Aid Management Platform (AMP) via teleconference by **Steve Davenport, Vanessa Goas** and other

colleagues from **Development Gateway Foundation**. The objective was to introduce the features of the system; the approach of how it was being set up at the country level, and the linkages with IATI. AMP was originally developed in a partnership with the OECD, UNDP, the WB, and the governments of Ethiopia and India. It was deployed in more than 20 countries in the world. The approach of DGF was one focused on sustainability and capacity development. Each AMP was customized and the process of its turnover the national authorities would usually take 3 years. The system had different capabilities, such as tracking of donors' alignment with national development plans; aid going to sectors and geographical areas; tracking of MDGs progress and Paris Declaration indicators. Data was verified. The international standards of the OECD were used, but also the AMP had a wider data set to correspond to partner country needs.

The questions from participants and the responses are provided below:

- *What were the key challenges in setting up AMP?* The main ones were of political nature and less so of a technical nature.

- *How often was data uploaded and updated in the AMP? Was access open to the general public?* The frequency of uploading and updating data in the system varied as it was customized to the requirements of partner countries. It was a decision of the government whether and to whom to give access to the system, and ultimately to make it public. IATI would play a positive role in making aid information more widely accessible.

- *What was the level of compatibility of the data in the AMP with the OECD/DAC data for a given country? How did you manage exchange rate fluctuations?* Development Gateway Foundation was working on a study concerning how compatible was the data contained in the country AMPs with the OECD/DAC one. In general, data was very similar. Concerning the exchange rate, fixed exchange rates were used for commitments, while the exchange rates fluctuated when development partners reported on disbursements. OECD/DAC average exchange rates were applied.

- *Did the AMP have any weaknesses?* The objective was to make the AMP sustainable and to institutionalize it. This why it was important to work with partner countries during all phases of setting up the system (assessment, pilot stage, etc.), to help government staff reconcile the data and ensure that data quality, as well as to have an accompanying capacity building support, not only training activities.

Annex 1: Participants List			
#	Name	Title and Organization	Country
1	Mr. Farid Bassaid-Oulhakj	Secretaire Diplomatique, Chargé du dossier PNUD/ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères	**Algeria**
2	Mr. Houmedgaba Maki Houmed-Gaba	Conseiller Ministère délégué chargé de la Coopération Internationale, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération Internationale	**Djibouti**
3	Dr. Azez Jaffar Hassan Abtan	Deputy Minister of Finance	**Iraq**
4	Ms. Huda A. Malik Abdulghafoor Al-Ani	Director General, International Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Planning and Int'l Cooperation	**Iraq**
5	Dr. Hadi Hussain Al-Mohammed	Director/ICI secretariat / Deputy Prime Minister's Office	**Iraq**
6	Mr. Ahmad H. Hmaidat	Head of External Debt Division, Ministry of Finance	**Jordan**
7	H.E. Mr. Nasser Sultan Shraideh	Secretary General/ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC)	**Jordan**
8	Ms. Zeina Toukan	Director of International Cooperation Department, MoPIC	**Jordan**
9	Ms. Yassar Al-Dughmi	Head of Aid Effectiveness Division, MoPIC	**Jordan**
10	Ms. Nada Ayed Wer	Aid Coordination Officer, MoPIC	**Jordan**
11	Ms. Dina Zahran	Aid Coordination Officer, MoPIC	**Jordan**
12	Mr. Hasan Haware	Ministry of Finance	**Jordan**
13	Mr. Salem AlQudah	Ministry of Finance	**Jordan**
14	Eyad Abu Ziad	Finance and Economic Committee, House of Parliament	**Jordan**
15	Ala'a Majali	Finance and Economic Committee, House of Parliament	**Jordan**
16	Ms. Riwa Nasreddine	Senior Economic Officer / UNDP - Ministry of Finance	**Lebanon**
17	Ms. Nagat Alfitouri Omar Burtima	Director of Documentation and Information Office, Libyan Fund for Aid & Dev. in Africa, Secretariat of Foreign Affairs	**Libya**
18	Mr. Mohamed Kabbaj	Deputy Director of Budgeting, Ministry of Economics and Finance	**Morocco**

19	Mr. Diriye Ahmed Mohamed	M&E Consultant, Ministry of Planning	**Somalia**
20	Nader Sheikh Ali	Director General, Int'l Cooperation, State Planning Commission	**Syria**
21	Mr. Frederik Matthys	Head of the UN Coordination Office, UNDP	**Egypt**
22	Mr. Yasuo Ichikawa	Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan	**Jordan**
23	Mr. Guy Honoré	Head of Water Program, GTZ	**Jordan**
24	Ala' K. Shalan	Chief Financial Analyst, USAID	**Jordan**
25	Ms. Ola Ghazawi	Program Assistant, USAID	**Jordan**
26	Ms. Emilie Larese	Programme Manager, European Commission	**Jordan**
27	Ms. Jacinta Barrins	Country Director, UNDP	**Jordan**
28	Mr. Yakup Beris	Programme Specialist, UNDP	**Jordan**
29	Ms. Tiffany Khan	Aid Effectiveness Consultant, UNDP	**Jordan**
30	Ms. Sanaa Al-Shami	Programme Assistant, UNDP	**Jordan**
31	Mr. Jean-Louis Gaillard	Senior Governance Adviser, UNDP	**Iraq**
32	Mr. Neil Taylor	Project Manager, Governance, UNDP	**Iraq**
33	Ms. Abeer Fawaeer	E-governance Specialist, Governance, UNDP	**Iraq**
34	Ms. Tuleen Khoffash	Programme Associate, Governance, UNDP	**Iraq**
35	Ms. Marina Prodanovic	Head of Office, Local Aid Coordination Secretariat	**OPT**
36	Ms. Iman Shawwa	Aid Coordination Office, Local Aid Coordination Secretariat	**OPT**
37	Mr. Gerhard Pulfer	Governance Strategy Group Coordinator, UNDP	**OPT**
38	Mr. Stephan Kanayan	Aid Management Consultant, UNDP	**Somalia**
39	Mr. Aref Tarabichi	National Project Director, Aid Effectiveness & Coordination, UNDP	**Syria**
40	Mr. Sebahattin Gazanfer	Senior Project Advisor, South-South Cooperation Project, UNDP	**Turkey**
41	Ms. Rana Saifi	Regional Advisor, Iraq & MENA Regional team, DFID	**UK**

42	Mr. Robert Tew	Economic & Statistics Advisor, Development Initiatives Poverty Research	**UK**
43	Ms. Danila Boneva	IATI Partner Outreach Coordinator, UNDP	**UN HQ**
44	Mr. Ashot Hovanesian	President and CEO of Synergy International Systems	**USA**

Annex 2: List of criteria used to identify partner countries aid information priorities

1. Information that is more up-to-date;
2. Reliable information on future aid flows, at country, sector and project level;
3. More detailed information about precisely *where* aid is spent, from sub-national down to community level, with ability to map to administrative areas;
4. Better information about exactly *when* aid is spent, including donor commitment and disbursement and project expenditure dates ;
5. More information about *how* aid is spent, including channels of delivery, and ability to map spending through the system from initial commitment to final expenditure;
6. Better information on *what* aid is spent on, including detailed project data, descriptions and dates;
7. Improved information on *which sectors* aid is spent on, including ability to map sector classifications to national budgets;
8. Details of aid agreements, including any conditions attached and the terms of any concessional loans;
9. Contract and procurement details;
10. Better coverage from a wider range of donors, including non-DAC donors, all multilateral agencies, large NGOs, foundations and private donors;
11. Ability to map aid spending against commonly agreed policy markers such as gender or climate change, and against Paris Declaration targets;
12. Information on anticipated outputs and outcomes;
13. Non- statistical information about aid such as documents relating to strategy, policy, procedures and evaluations;
14. Other (please specify)

International Aid Transparency Initiative

Consultation Workshop for Europe and the CIS

Amman, Jordan

12th-13th August 2009

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is a new initiative which aims to make information about aid flows more available and accessible to all stakeholders, particularly partner countries. Launched at the Accra High Level Forum in September 2008, IATI now has sixteen donor signatories[4] and endorsement from a growing number of partner countries[5].

IATI aims to make information about public and private aid more available and accessible, in compliance with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, in order to increase the accountability, predictability and effectiveness of aid and reduce transactions costs. In the Doha FfD outcome document the UN member states noted that *"the aid architecture has significantly changed in the current decade. New aid providers and novel partnership approaches, which utilize new modalities of cooperation, have contributed to increasing the flow of resources... There is a growing need for more systematic and universal ways to follow quantity, quality and effectiveness of aid flows, giving due regard to existing schemes and mechanisms."*

IATI seeks to respond to the concerns raised by partner countries and civil society organizations that information about aid flows is not sufficiently timely, detailed or accessible. The 2008 Paris Declaration evaluation found that partner countries face *"continuing serious difficulties involved in securing and providing timely, transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows that enable [them] to fully report on budgets to their legislature and citizens...this basic contribution by donors to mutual accountability is widely found to be missing or inadequate, even in relatively strong systems."*

---

[4] UK, Germany, Netherlands, UNDP, Finland, Denmark, Ireland, EC, World Bank, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Hewlett Foundation, GAVI, Norway.

[5] So far, the governments of Central African Republic, Colombia, Ghana, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Viet Nam have endorsed or expressed their interest in the initiative.

Challenges in accessing information on aid flows were also raised during the regional consultations ahead of the Accra HLF.

Through IATI, donors will also implement the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action to "*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.*"

IATI aims to bring together donors, partner countries, CSOs and other users of aid information to agree common standards for the publication of information about aid flows. It does not envisage the development of a new aid information database, but rather the adoption by donors of ways of recording and reporting information that will enable existing users and databases – and potential future services – to access more detailed, timely and accessible information about aid.

Agreement of common information standards will help partner countries improve planning and budgeting and promote mutual accountability by:

- Committing donors to publishing more detailed, timely and up to date information in a form that enables partner countries to more easily incorporate aid into their budgets and aid management systems, and strengthen macroeconomic management. For example, IATI is expected to commit donors to providing more detailed information on expected and actual disbursements;
- Committing donors to provide more detailed information about which donors are delivering which projects, and where, to enable partner countries to better co-ordinate development efforts;
- Reducing the time and effort taken by partner countries in collecting and collating information on expected and actual aid flows from different donors;
- Developing common electronic formats to enable automatic data exchange, for example between donor systems and country aid information management systems (AIMS), helping to ensure more accurate and up-to-date data and reduced transaction costs;
- Committing donors to publish indicative future aid flows, to the extent possible, to facilitate medium term budgeting by partners;
- Agreeing a code of conduct for the publication of information which will enable partner countries to hold donors accountable for compliance;
- Providing capacity development support to enable partner country governments and other stakeholders to better access and make use of current and future sources of information on aid.

Consultation Objectives

IATI aims to respond to the needs of all stakeholders, particularly partner country governments. In order to inform the development of the IATI standards, UNDP – as a member of the IATI Steering

Committee[6] - has been tasked with facilitating detailed consultations with partner country government officials and Parliamentarians in order to better understand their priorities and aid information needs. This will help to ensure that IATI is developed in a way that meets as many of those needs as possible.

The Amman consultation is one of a number of regional events that aim to:

- Familiarize a larger number of partner countries and stakeholders with the IATI and its objectives as it relates to the Accra Agenda for Action, Paris Declaration and other international commitments on transparency and mutual accountability;
- Identify those information needs of partner country governments which are not currently being met, and make recommendations for areas to be included in the scope of potential IATI standards, drawing on the IATI scoping paper;
- Facilitate South-South learning and peer exchange on good practices, lessons learnt and challenges from the deployment of aid information management systems (AIMS), and how the IATI can help to improve the effectiveness of such systems, as well as how best practices and experiences with country AIMS can feed into the development of an IATI standard;
- Discuss how to take the IATI forward at country, sub-regional, regional and global levels, to include partner country needs in regard to capacity development.

Expected Outputs

- Enhanced awareness of and understanding of the aims and objectives of IATI, and its relationship to the AAA and WP-EFF, by partner countries;
- Peer learning on aid information management and shared discussion of challenges and how to address them;
- Guidance from partner countries as to the current sources of information on donor flows and activities, and an assessment of the usefulness of those sources;
- Prioritised list of areas/categories in which further and/or more detailed information on aid flows and activities is required. This should draw from, but not necessarily be limited to, Appendix C of the IATI Scoping study;
- Guidance and leadership from partner countries as to how they would like to see the IATI developed, and the role they see partner country members playing;
- Guidance from partner countries on key areas for inclusion in the Code of Conduct.

---

[6] The IATI Steering Committee comprises of 18 representatives from donors, partner countries, CSOs and aid information experts.

Follow-up activities

It is anticipated that the outputs of this workshop should be shared in a number of ways, including:

- Full reports to be available online at http://www.aidtransparency.net
- Partner country representatives and UNDP feed back to the IATI Steering Committee in September 2009;
- Key messages from the regional consultations to be presented at the IATI Conference in October 2009;
- Partner country representatives and UNDP provide inputs and guidance to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Resources / Inputs

- The IATI scoping study will be the major background reading for the consultations. The paper will be circulated to participants ahead of the meetings, along with other relevant readings and background materials;
- Representatives of partner country governments will be invited to present on and share their respective experiences and challenges to date with respect to aid information.

Participation

This regional consultation is aimed at government officials involved in aid management and tracking activities from countries in the Arab States region.

It is anticipated that participants will come from a range of partner country institutions (Ministries of Finance, Planning, and possibly central banks and interested line ministries). Participation is aimed at heads of units responsible for aid management/tracking and their staff.

The following countries have been invited to attend the Amman consultation: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

International Aid Transparency Initiative

Consultation Workshop for Arab States Region

Kempinski Hotel, Amman, Jordan

12th – 13th August 2009

<u>AGENDA</u>

Time	*Session*	*Speaker/facilitator*
DAY ONE – WEDNESDAY 12th AUGUST 2009		
Session 1: Introduction: aid information in the broader context of ownership, accountability and implementing the AAA *Chair: Ms. Suhair Al-Ali, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan. Co-chair: Mr. Luc Stevens, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative.*		
9.00 – 9.30	Welcome and opening remarks Aims and objectives of the meeting	Ms. Suhair Al-Ali, MoPIC Mr. Luc Stevens, UN RC/UNDP RR
9.30 – 10.00	❖ Aid information in the broader context of ownership, alignment and mutual accountability ❖ Introduction to the aims and objectives of IATI in the context of AAA implementation at the partner country level.	Ms. Danila Boneva, UNDP/IATI Secretariat
10.00 – 10:30	*Coffee break*	
10.30 – 11.15	IATI scoping study: key messages and findings	Mr. Rob Tew, DIPR (on behalf of IATI Secretariat)
11.15 – 12:00	Discussion	

12.00 – 13.30	*Lunch break*	

Session 2: Key challenges in accessing and using aid information

Chair: Mr. Azez Jafar Hassan, Deputy Minister of Finance, Iraq

13.30 – 13.40	Introduction to break-out groups	Ms. Danila Boneva, UNDP/IATI Secretariat
13.45 – 15.30	Break-out groups to discuss • Current sources of information on aid, and challenges associated with these • Priorities for partner countries for improving access to aid information • Potential impacts of better aid information • Particular issues with respect to aid information faced by countries in special development situations	Each group to nominate a partner country participant as chair/rapporteur to feed back key points of discussion to plenary.
15.30 – 17.00	Report back from break out groups	
18.00 – 20.00	*Cocktail reception, Kempinski Hotel*	

DAY TWO – THURSDAY 13th AUGUST 2009		

Session 3: Solutions: Aid information management systems, IATI and complementary initiatives

Chair: Mr. Nader Sheikh Ali, Syria

9.00 – 9.15	Introduction to Day 2	UNDP
9.15 – 10.15	Country experiences, lessons and challenges in aid information management *Brief country presentations (10 mins each) on successes, challenges and lessons learned in the use of aid information as it relates to*	Mr. Houmedgaba Maki Houmed-Gaba, Djibouti Ms. Huda A. Malik, Iraq Mr. Mohamed Kabbaj, Morocco

	ownership and accountability.	Ms. Yassar Al-Dughmi, Jordan
10.15 – 11.00	Discussion	
11.00 – 11.30	*Coffee break*	
11.30 – 12.00	Panel discussion: How IATI could help to support country PFM and aid management systems *(to include a preliminary discussion and identification of capacity development needs).*	Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Diriye, Somalia Mr. Ashot Hovanesian, CEO of Synergy International Systems
12.00 – 12.30	Discussion	
12.30 – 13.30	*Lunch break*	

Session 4: Taking forward the IATI: partner country recommendations

Chair: Zeina Toukan, Director of International Cooperation Department, MoPIC, Jordan.

13.30 – 13.45	Introduction to afternoon break-out sessions on IATI process and code of conduct.	Mr. Rob Tew, DIPR
13.45 – 15.30	Break-out groups: *"What are the key issues you would like to take to the global IATI Conference in October?"* • How should IATI be developed? How should partner countries be involved? • What needs for support and capacity development arise in partner countries? • Towards a donor Code of Conduct: what are the key priorities for inclusion by partner countries?	Each group to nominate a partner country participant as chair/rapporteur to feed back key points of discussion to plenary.
15.30 – 16.30	Report back from the break-out groups	
1630 – 16.45	Closing remarks	Mr. Nasser Sultan Shraideh, Secretary General, MoPIC

16.45 – 17.15	*For interested participants:* A live demonstration of the Aid Management Platform (AMP), followed by a Q&A	Mr. Alex Coleman, Development Gateway Foundation (via Web-Ex connection)
17.15 – 17.45	A live demonstration of the Development Assistance Database, followed by Q&A	Mr. Ashot Hovanesian, CEO of Synergy International Systems