iati
International Aid Transparency Initiative

2020 Annual Report

IATI Strategic Plan in Action

Foreword

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the most serious global economic and health crisis in more than a century, leading to a dramatic loss of human life and an unprecedented setback in fighting hunger, inequality and poverty. It presented a profound challenge to public health, international cooperation, and the achievement of the sustainable development goals. COVID-19 also completely altered the way the world works and the ways in which organisations and individuals operate.

Throughout 2020 and entering 2021, the effects and uncertainty of COVID-19 continue to plague enterprises and initiatives, forcing many to adjust to new ways of conducting business, creating and maintaining networks, and engaging with colleagues and stakeholders. IATI, like so many others, has adapted to this 'new normal', while simultaneously ramping up its contribution to the global effort to combat the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
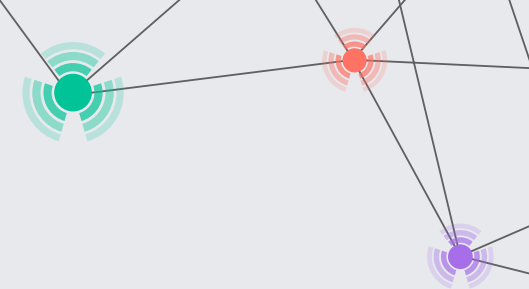
As IATI Governing Board Chair I am particularly proud of IATI's early actions in 2020, recognising the urgent need for open data on development and humanitarian resources responding to the pandemic. This was alongside efforts to begin implementation of an ambitious new strategic plan. At the outset of the crisis, IATI moved swiftly to support the publication of IATI Standard-compliant data by its members and publishers on COVID-19-related funding and activities. By the end of the year, over 170 organisations had published IATI data on more than 10,000 COVID-19-related activities, providing open and transparent real-time information on development resources to support better planning and coordination of the international COVID-19 response.

Now mid-2021, as we launch this report, we are beginning to see glimmers of hope. The global vaccine rollout is accelerating, and international development cooperation is more important than ever – to ensure development and equitable delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to promote a sustainable recovery, while leaving no one behind. There is an urgent need for the international community to work even more collaboratively, including by publishing transparent information in IATI on their efforts to support a resilient economic and social recovery, allowing for better coordination, planning, and sharing of results.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the IATI Community who have kept transparency and development cooperation data as a high priority in 2020, during unprecedented and uncertain times. As IATI continues into its second decade of ensuring open and freely accessible information on development and humanitarian resources and results, its community keeps expanding and now includes nearly 100 members, more than 1,200 publishers, and numerous data users from around the world. This committed community supports IATI because it recognises that better transparency is not an end in itself but an essential step towards improving the coordination, accountability and effectiveness of resources to maximise their impact on the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. I look forward to continued successful collaboration in a brighter 2021.

Theo van de Sande,
Chair, IATI Governing Board

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1. About

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) works to ensure that transparent, good quality information on development cooperation and humanitarian assistance is available and used to help achieve sustainable development outcomes.

Organisations publish information according to the rules and guidance set out in the IATI Standard, generating data that is freely and openly available to anybody with internet access. The initiative supports its publishers to improve the quality of IATI data and facilitates access to effective tools and guidance to use this information to drive decision-making and accountability.

IATI is hosted by a multi-stakeholder consortium led by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), together with the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the international development organisation Development Initiatives. The initiative is governed by its members and a member-elected Governing Board, and it is supported by a global community of development and humanitarian practitioners, advocates for transparency, data experts and technical specialists.

Annual Report 2020: New structure, new financial report

This year's Annual Report has a refreshed structure to align with the IATI Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The Annual Report is also accompanied by a new, separate Financial Report, which aims to improve accessibility and transparency of information on IATI's finances.

2. 2020 overview

2020 saw the COVID-19 pandemic drastically change the landscape in which international development and humanitarian organisations operate. Many planned activities were put on hold, resources diverted and operations initiated to respond to the crisis.

At the onset of the pandemic, IATI Secretariat staff from UNDP, UNOPS and Development Initiatives moved to home-working and its established systems as a geographically distributed team enabled normal services to continue.

Putting the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 into action

2020 marked the start of the implementation period for IATI's ambitious five-year Strategic Plan, with wide-ranging actions undertaken to help achieve its objectives. Despite the cancellation of all in-person events due the pandemic, the initiative has made substantial progress against the measurable targets set out in the Strategic Plan Results Framework.

Analysis shows that there was significant progress in promoting the systematic use of IATI data by development and humanitarian actors. For example, three partner country governments (Nigeria, Chad and Burkina Faso) reported using IATI data in national budget planning and to analyse total resource inflows.

Targets set for the use of data by IATI's tools were far exceeded, with visits to d-portal almost doubling and the number of active tools accessing data via the new Datastore surpassing its target five-fold.

IATI stepped up its effort to improve the quality of data published by launching a new Validator to automatically identify errors. Guidance was created on how to publish data on the results and conditions of funding. To ensure IATI's technical tools and services remain fit for purpose well into the future, a comprehensive Stocktake exercise was undertaken, leading to clear recommendations for the transformation of IATI tools and services.

More data available

2020 marked another year of impressive growth in the volume of data available in IATI on international development and humanitarian financing and activities.

152

organisations published data to IATI for the first time.

representing a

14% increase

in publishers since 2019.

Organisations published data on a further

69,278

development and humanitarian activities.

9,056

of these were identified as addressing humanitarian crises, **increasing by 14% since 2019.**
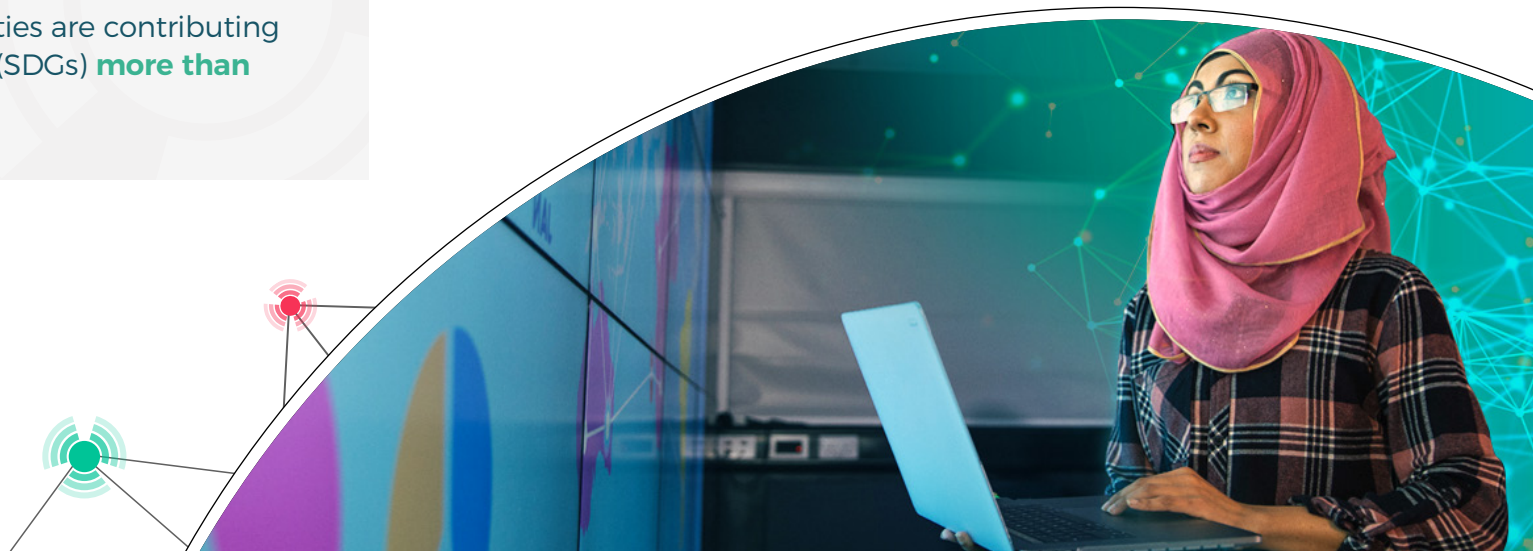
Data published on ways in which activities are contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) **more than doubled since 2019.**

IATI moved swiftly to meet demands for open data on COVID-19-related activities

IATI recognised the urgent need for open data on development and humanitarian resources responding to the pandemic and moved swiftly to support the publication of IATI Standard-compliant data on COVID-19-related funding and activities. By the end of the year, over 170 organisations had published IATI data on 10,000 COVID-19-related activities.

Strengthening the IATI Community

In 2020, IATI transformed its governance advisory structures to accommodate its expanding community of data publishers and users, transparency advocates, open data experts and technical specialists from across the globe. The initiative established a formal Working Group mechanism to respond to specific advisory needs, as well as Communities of Practice (COPs) to foster learning and networking across stakeholder groups. IATI Connect was launched in November providing a user-friendly digital engagement platform for the IATI Community, and registering almost 400 users by year end. It provides high-quality machine translation into 100+ languages and is compatible with low-bandwidth environments, ensuring IATI can expand its reach to new audiences across the globe.

Quick facts about the data available in IATI

1241 organisations have published data on their development and humanitarian spending and activities in compliance with the IATI Standard.

As of 31 December 2020:

Data is available on over **one million** (1,028,237) development and humanitarian activities.

Budget data indicates the amount of money an organisation plans to spend in subsequent years. Organisations have published 2021 budgets for activities in 198 recipient countries.

Budget data has been **published by a range of organisations**, from donor governments, other public sector bodies (e.g. the European Union), multilateral organisations, NGOs, academic organisations and the private sector. In 2020, public sector made up 45% of all organisations providing budget data, followed by multilateral organisations (27%) and donor governments (24%).

Spending data (disbursements and expenditures) on development and humanitarian activities shows money being transferred from one organisation to another across delivery chains, and the eventual spending on goods and services. The top five sectors for which 2020 spending data is available in IATI are:

1. Government and civil society – general;
2. Emergency response;
3. Other social infrastructure and services;
4. Basic health;
5. Agriculture.

IATI data for 2020 shows the highest levels of disbursement and expenditure in **India (USD$10bn)**, followed by **Ethiopia (USD$6.9bn)**, the **Philippines (USD$6.6bn)**, **Bangladesh (USD$5.7bn)** and **Pakistan (USD$5.4bn).**

IATI data on the UN SDGs:
Users can see how nearly **80,000 activities** are contributing to the UN SDGs. These activities cover all 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs.

IATI data available on humanitarian assistance
Organisations have published data on nearly **75,000 activities**, flagging them as specifically responding to humanitarian crises, in **202 countries**.

IATI has worked to align its terminology and definitions with other humanitarian initiatives, ensuring IATI data is meaningful for the humanitarian sector. In 2020, more organisations published data on the ways in which their activities relate to international humanitarian responses:

- Publishers have indicated which humanitarian emergencies their activities are responding to by using internationally recognised GLIDE codes (**GL**obal **IDE**ntifier number). There are **402** unique GLIDE codes, and IATI data from 2020 refers to 34 humanitarian emergencies taking place during the year.

- Organisations have also included data on how their activities are contributing to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s Humanitarian Response Plans and Flash Appeals.

  - There are **208** unique Humanitarian Response Plans referenced in IATI data.

- Adding to the rich humanitarian datasets, publishers have also separately specified whether the humanitarian scope for each activity is an **emergency** or an **appeal**. IATI data includes 17,739 activities associated with humanitarian emergencies and 8,655 associated with humanitarian appeals. This additional data is vital for humanitarian organisations to understand who else is working on specific operations, helping to inform the planning, coordination and effectiveness of their responses.

"We use IATI data in UN OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) platform because it provides relevant, useful information to those working on humanitarian operations."

- David Megginson, Standards Lead, OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data

3. IATI Strategic Plan 2020-2025 in action

IATI Strategic Plan 2020-2025 sets out a clear direction for this five-year period, aimed at capitalising on the initiative's strengths, addressing its weaknesses and maximising its contribution towards achieving sustainable development outcomes. It aims to achieve three closely linked objectives:

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

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

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

To measure progress against the Strategic Plan in each of the five years, an annual monitoring exercise will be undertaken based on the Strategic Plan's Results Framework, and shared through annual monitoring reports.

IATI Strategic Plan Objective:
Promote the systematic use of IATI data by development and humanitarian actors

At the heart of IATI's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is the goal for IATI data to be systematically used to inform the planning, coordination and accountability of development and humanitarian resources to drive sustainable development. In 2020, IATI stepped up its efforts to expand the use of IATI data and achieved significant progress, particularly by demonstrating its value to partner countries.

Improving tools to access and use data

The Secretariat worked to meet a specific commitment in the IATI Strategic Plan to "Ensure all users can access data by improving existing tools such as the IATI Datastore as well as d-portal.org... and invest in new tools that deliver data in the formats and levels of detail users need".

- **Datastore – extending access to IATI data elements**
  Following an extensive testing phase, IATI's new Datastore was launched in September. The service enables more detailed queries and searches of IATI data than previously possible. Its user-friendly Query Builder enables users to search data across 32 fields (elements and attributes) of the IATI Standard and download data in three formats (CSV, XML and JSON). For the more technical user, the Datastore API enables searches of IATI data across all elements of the IATI Standard, enabling more complex data analysis.

  Following the launch, the IATI Secretariat hosted webinars and provided online guidance to support data users to benefit from the new Datastore (see more information on the development of the Datastore in the section on Development of IATI tools).

- **d-portal – enabling more customised searches**
  IATI's popular search tool d-portal was updated to enable the filtering of an additional 14 fields of data on development and humanitarian activities. A new COVID-19 'quick search' button was added to the home page, enabling users to easily view published data on pandemic-related activities.

- **Country Development Finance Data tool: meeting partner countries' data needs**
  In an effort to prioritise and be responsive to the needs of partner countries, the IATI Secretariat commissioned the Country Development Finance Data tool, to provide access to a simple Excel-formatted set of data on projections and spending by country.

  The Secretariat carried out a series of consultations with partner country governments to inform the development of the tool, building on its research on data and user needs, and learning from the experience of providing direct support to governments to access, process and analyse IATI data.

> *"The availability of quality data is essential for governments and development partners to build trust and engage in effective and results-driven partnerships. As a data analyst, IATI's new Country Development Finance Data tool provides me with an excellent way of accessing exactly the data I need, and builds trust between the supply and demands sides of the aid data ecosystem."*
>
> - Henry Asor Nkang, Ministry of Finance,
>   Budget and National Planning, Government of Nigeria

Working with partner countries as they engage with IATI data using this tool will inform IATI's work with publishers to address data quality issues and the development and upgrading of new tools and services in the future.
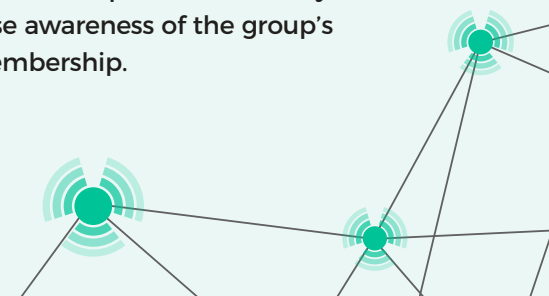
Data Use Working Group

The Data Use Working Group (previously Data Use Task Force) aims to promote the use of IATI data in a more systematic and effective way. In 2020, the multi-stakeholder group of IATI Community members met biweekly to oversee the delivery of their 2020 workplan and projects carried out under the Data Use Fund.

Data Use Fund projects
The Data Use Fund provides opportunities for experts to bid for projects aimed at overcoming barriers to using IATI data while solving real-world problems. Under this fund, three projects were delivered in 2020:

- Exploring Traceability – EyeOpenerWorks reviewed how IATI data can be improved to help track aid as it flows through international delivery chains.

- Strengthening feedback mechanisms – Catalpa International undertook research on possible ways to share feedback between IATI data users and publishers.

- IATI training materials and data use tools – Open Data Watch created an inventory of IATI training materials and data use tools and conducted a gap analysis to understand what materials could be created to further support data users.

The IATI Secretariat worked closely to support the Data Use Working Group to carry out these projects and plan how to implement their key recommendations, while also working to raise awareness of the group's work and encourage a broad and diverse membership.

Chad and Nigeria: Budget planning and development cooperation monitoring

During 2020, the IATI Secretariat worked closely with the governments of Chad (Ministère des Finances et du Budget) and Nigeria (Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning) to support their use of IATI data.

Both governments were interested in using data published to IATI to help assess the projected and actual external inflows of development resources to their countries. The Secretariat worked closely with government representatives to establish what IATI data they needed, then developed a methodology to retrieve, process, clean and organise the information. The governments then undertook their own review and analysis of the data.

As a result IATI data was used to:

- Inform the governments' national budget planning, in particular the allocation of resources in the national budget. IATI data was used to prepare Nigeria's Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

- Produce the first two development cooperation reports based almost exclusively on IATI data. They are Nigeria's Development Cooperation Report: Fiscal Year 2016-2020 and Chad's Rapport sur l'aide internationale au Tchad et perspectives, which was included as an annex to the 2021 Finance Law. These reports analysed the characteristics and trends of external development finance.
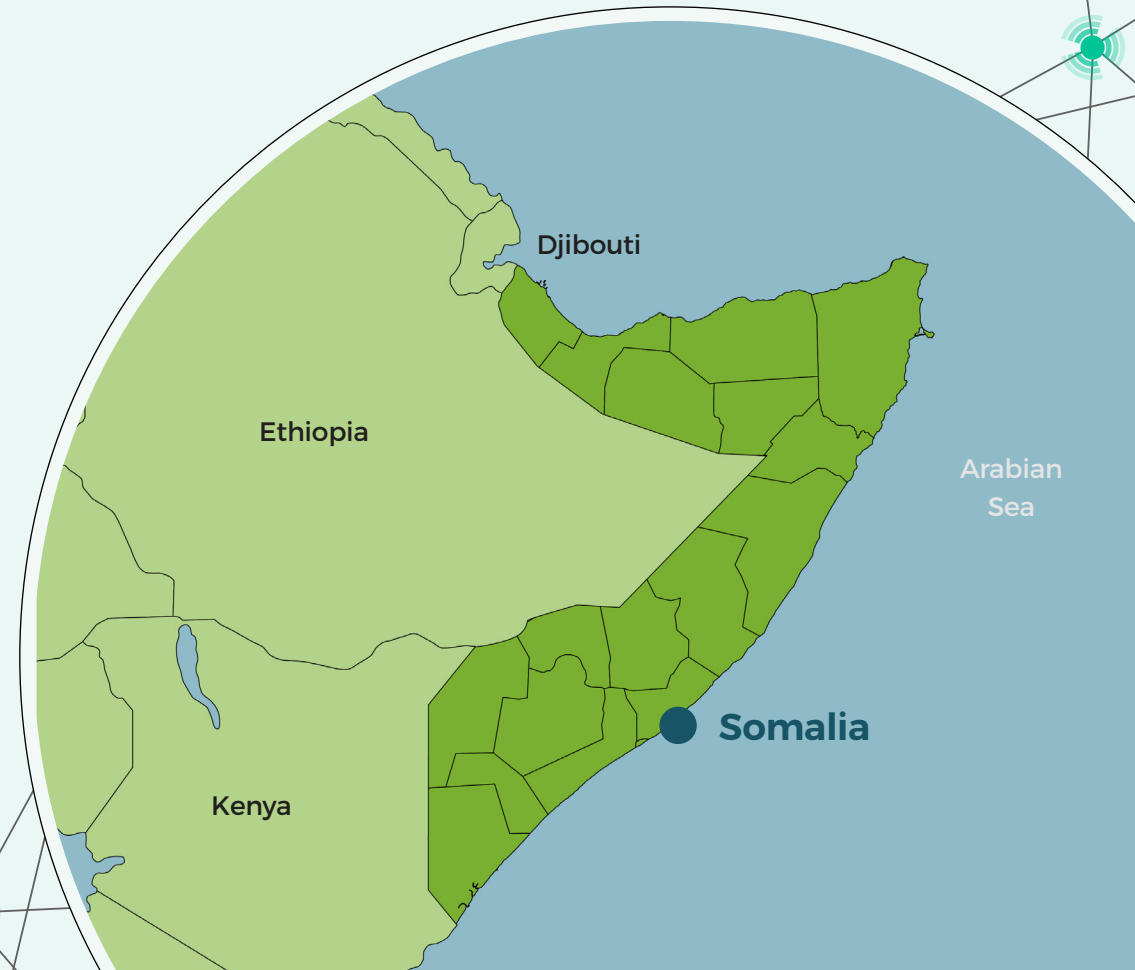
Somalia: IATI data in the government's Aid Information Management System

The government of Somalia developed a bespoke Aid Information Management System (AIMS) in March, which has the capability to import IATI data. Their AIMS is an online tool that enables the government to collect, store and share data on projections and spending for development activities in Somalia. With the IATI import functionality, development partners can choose to import data from IATI to reduce the manual entry of data into the system.

During a presentation of the Somalia AIMS during the IATI Partner Country Virtual Meeting Series in November 2020, ICT Director, Mohamed Gele from the Somalia Federal Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development cited two main benefits of including IATI data in their AIMS:

- The semi-automatic IATI data import function can save time for those entering data by reducing the burden of manual reporting.

- Users can access data from other organisations involved in their activities. For example, donors can easily access the locations of their activities as reported by their implementers.

Case Study – African Development Bank
Improving the use of IATI data by partner countries

Since the African Development Bank (AfDB) first published data in 2013, IATI has become an important means of implementing their *Disclosure and Access to Information Policy* that has given the public more access than ever to the bank's information. Through their online portals, [Projects Data Portal](#) and [MapAfrica](#), anyone in the world can see how over 4800 AfDB-funded projects are boosting Africa's economies and improving Africans' lives.

In 2020 AfDB focused on improving the use of their IATI data specifically by partner countries. In Liberia, the bank has undertaken work with the Overseas Development Institute to understand how to integrate their IATI data with the government's aid management systems. Specifically AfDB has worked to improve how their data is captured as part of [Liberia's Project Dashboard](#). The Dashboard is used to collect, analyse and report information about external assistance programmes and projects in the country.

AfDB's IATI data will soon be captured in the dashboard, allowing them to combine components of a project into a comprehensive project profile and improve the financial data they publish.

AfDB also invested significantly to ensure that citizens and civil society organisations in partner countries can access data on their response to COVID-19. The bank was among the first organisations to use IATI's new guidance on how to publish COVID-19 data. They increased how often they publish data to twice a month and made project information available earlier, at the approval stage. This useful information was made available to access via AfDB's data portals through a new COVID-19 filter.

> *"…with such large volumes of funding being assigned to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, our citizens and our shareholders need to know how, where, and when the bank is investing in Africa's development. When our partners are better informed – ideally in real time – they make better decisions about investing their own resources. This maximises the impact of our aid in turn."*
>
> - Debbiche Horia Sohir, Principal Results and Transparency Officer, AfDB

> *"This will reduce the burden on AfDB country offices and Liberia's Aid Management and Coordination Unit when they capture our data in government systems."*
>
> - Debbiche Horia Sohir, Principal Results and Transparency Officer, AfDB

Good quality data is essential if it is to be used by partner country governments, civil society, academics and other data users. In 2020, IATI took new steps to support organisations to improve the quality of their IATI data.

Eliminating data errors

IATI launched a new online Validator tool to automatically check IATI data files for errors (see page 18 for more information on the development of the tool). The Validator tool has transformed how the IATI Secretariat's technical team engages organisations to improve the quality of their data. The team has offered one-to-one support to all IATI members, produced Q&A and guidance documents and delivered training webinars. As a result, a growing number of key publishers are using the IATI Validator to improve their data quality.

IATI Helpdesk and one-to-one support

IATI's Helpdesk continued to provide dedicated support to organisations requesting assistance to publish their data (achieving a 95% satisfaction rate). Nearly 2000 emails were received, with 353 requests specifically for the provision of publisher support to new and existing IATI publishers. One-to-one support calls were undertaken with a wide range of organisations, including first-time publishers such as United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) as well as existing publishers such as the World Bank and the Germany's Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

New guidance

Following broad consultation the IATI Community, the Secretariat issued a range of guidance documents on how to publish data in accordance with the IATI Standard. This guidance provides clear instructions for organisations on complex data topics including:

- Results, understanding results data and conditions – how to publish and interpret data on the results of development and humanitarian activities and what types of conditions can be published to IATI data.

- COVID-19 – how to publish data on development and humanitarian activities relating to COVID-19.

- Humanitarian – how to publish data on funds and activities addressing emergencies/crises.
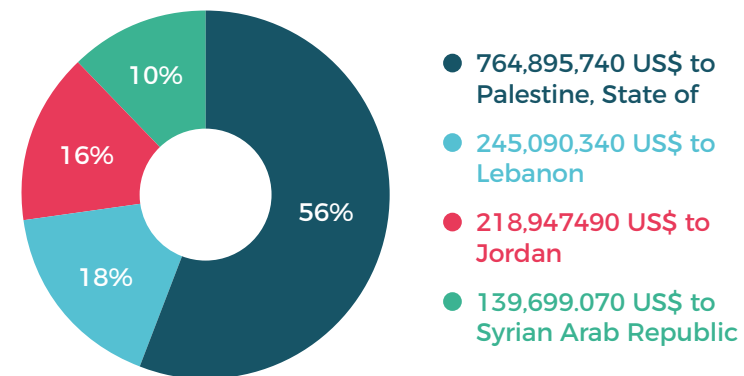
Case Study – UNRWA

Honouring global humanitarian agreement to publish IATI data

During the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, UNRWA first discovered IATI as an initiative to publish its aid data and join other communities promoting transparency. At the summit, UNRWA joined 27 other donors and aid organisations in endorsing the Grand Bargain Agreement, committing to publish data on their humanitarian funding according to IATI's data standard.

At the time, UNRWA was publishing financial data on their website, annually to the UN System Chief Executives Board and reporting directly to their donors. By 2020 UNRWA honoured its commitment to transparency by publishing data on its spending to IATI. It has published data on over 800 projects across four countries:

Funding in 2020 by recipient country

- **764,895,740 US$ to Palestine, State of** — 56%
- **245,090,340 US$ to Lebanon** — 18%
- **218,947,490 US$ to Jordan** — 16%
- **139,699,070 US$ to Syrian Arab Republic** — 10%

Where did funding go in 2020

- **566,101,630 US$ to emergency response** — 36%
- **495,388,500 US$ to basic education** — 32%
- **106,585,824 US$ to basic health** — 7%
- **102,581,664 US$ to reconstruction relief and rehabilitation** — 7%
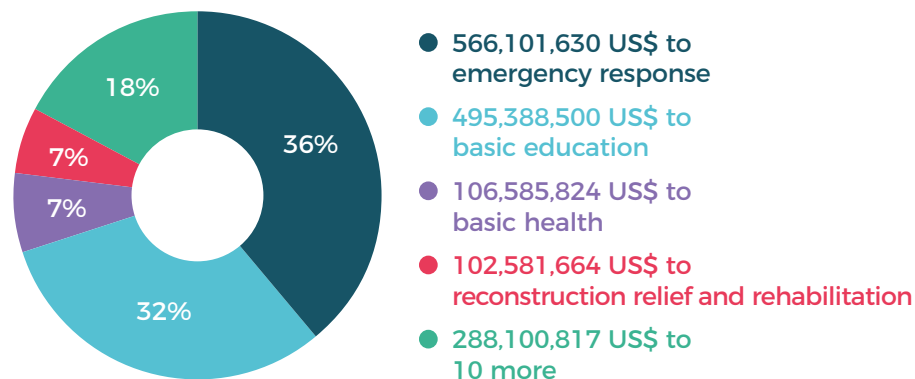- **288,100,817 US$ to 10 more** — 18%

Data shown is from IATI's search platform, d-portal, taken in March 2021. Find the most recent IATI data from UNRWA.

Van Nguyen at UNRWA said that improving transparency in financial reporting was a focus for the agency's management in 2020, and "IATI publication was considered among the most important tools" to achieve this objective. The agency initially prioritised publishing only key data within a short timeframe as it involved a manually intensive approach. "We have now automated the publication of the data so that it is extracted from the agency's financial system" Nguyen explained. He said this automation should enable UNRWA to publish its data in a more timely manner.

Becoming an IATI publisher can be complex, and Nguyen said UNRWA experienced challenges with mapping their data to the IATI codelists. "However, during our initial publication process we received excellent support from the IATI Secretariat as well as wonderful collaboration and sharing of expertise and knowledge by other IATI publishers from the UN system" Nguyen explained. He said that this really helped their initial publishing go smoothly, and they are very grateful for this collaboration and support.

To promote the use of its data by development and humanitarian actors, UNRWA has created a dedicated page on their website to inform the public about its commitment to data transparency. "The webpage provides some background information on what and how UNRWA is publishing to IATI and the links to UNRWA data on humanitarian data portal and the development portal." Nguyen said. He added that the agency has also kept donors updated of major milestones in its progress on IATI publishing.

UNRWA is encouraging other organisations to publish IATI data because "the more organisations contributing, the more enriched the data becomes, and the more the community can achieve towards the transparency of development and humanitarian resources and their results for addressing poverty and crises".

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

Strengthening IATI's technical estate is key to supporting the continual improvement of the quality of data and promoting its systematic use.

Development of IATI tools (Datastore, Validator, d-portal)

To enable development and humanitarian organisations all over the world to publish and access IATI data, the initiative provides a range of digital tools and products. In 2020 IATI strengthened its technical services by launching new tools and improving existing ones. The launch of a new Datastore and Validator, as well as improvements to d-portal, have improved the experience both for IATI data users and for publishing organisations.

- **Datastore**
  Launched in September, the new IATI Datastore allows for more detailed queries and searches of IATI data. Developed in collaboration with supplier Zimmerman, the Datastore was released for several months of testing by the community before its official launch, providing invaluable feedback for further enhancements to the tool.

- **Validator**
  The new IATI Validator will be a game changer for transforming the quality and usefulness of IATI data. Organisations can run their data through the Validator before publishing it, and the tool automatically checks the quality of the data and highlights errors that need to be corrected. Once data has been published the Public Data Viewer can be used by anybody to check it for quality.

The IATI Validator was built in collaboration with supplier Data4Development and launched in September. The tool is managed in-house by the IATI Secretariat technical team, and development work to improve its efficiency is ongoing.

- **d-portal**
  IATI's popular and user-friendly search tool, d-portal, was enhanced in 2020. A COVID-19 'quick search' button was added, as well as a glossary explaining terms used in the tool. Other improvements during the year included minor back-end changes to allow the site to update more quickly.

In 2020 there was a significant increase in d-portal usage:

42,000 unique visits to d-portal in the past year, an **increase of 54%.**

IATI Standard – improving access

The final stage of consolidating information about the IATI Standard to a single platform was completed by moving the contents of the former Reference site to iatistandard.org where it can be easily accessed through a new, simpler framework.

IATI Technical Stocktake 2020

The Secretariat carried out a comprehensive Stocktake exercise to understand how to ensure IATI's technical services are fit for the future. Working with Wittij Consulting, the Stocktake involved extensive desk research, interviews with 40 IATI stakeholders and presentation of future technical proposals to IATI's community in three workshops.

The Governing Board agreed to a number of recommendations from the Stocktake, which will transform IATI's technical services. These include:

- **Better access to IATI data:** A wide consultation will be undertaken to inform the development of a new version of IATI's d-portal search tool, with enhanced visualisations and easily accessible data. A new semantic data layer will be designed to help answer the common questions that humanitarian and development stakeholders demand from IATI data.

- **Ensuring organisations can publish IATI data through an IATI publishing tool:** Extensive 'user experience' research was undertaken in late 2020 to explore with IATI publishers their specific needs from publishing tools. The findings from this research are being applied to develop detailed user requirements for an IATI-funded publishing tool.

- **Moving to an integrated system architecture:** IATI's Secretariat will transform its siloed set of technical tools and products to a single, integrated system architecture. A new Application Programming Interface (API) Gateway will offer technical users a single point of access for IATI's API data services.

Case Study – Oxfam Novib
Making the most of IATI tools

Oxfam Novib has been publishing its finances and projects to IATI since 2014 and has worked hard to ensure its data is useful to its donors, internal staff and the public. As an organisation that holds others to account, they were driven to start publishing IATI data to set a good example. Over the years, Oxfam Novib has made the most of IATI tools to improve the quality and promote the use of their data.

In 2020, Oxfam Novib was able to make significant improvements in the quality of their published data by using the IATI Validator. Officials found this tool to be a game-changer for publishing good data as it automatically checks files for errors that need correcting. Upon the launch of the Validator, organisations were made aware that most were likely to find errors in their data and this would take considerable time to correct. However, within just a few months of using the tool, Oxfam Novib worked hard to eliminate 100% of errors in all their data files.

"Currently no errors and warnings occur, and that was certainly not the case one year ago."

- Leo Stolk, Project Manager Open Data, Oxfam Novib

Leo Stolk from Oxfam Novib explained that he also uses IATI's search platform, d-portal, to show internal data owners what their data looks like once it is published. This enables staff to identify weaknesses in their data such as

insufficient titles and missing descriptions in projects. Oxfam Novib also uses IATI tools to promote the internal use of IATI data to inform its decisions. Specifically they use d-portal and the Datastore Query Builder to find and extract data from organisations that fund or support Oxfam Novib, for instance when a provider's identity is not stated in funding contracts.

As well as using IATI tools, Oxfam Novib built their own project browser, ATLAS. This tool originally displayed IATI data from Oxfam GB and Oxfam Novib. Gradually more Oxfam organisations started publishing to IATI, and ATLAS now shows projects from eight Oxfam organisations.

"As all Oxfam organisations run their own distinct project administration systems, IATI data is used as a bridge between each other's projects."

- Leo Stolk, Project Manager Open Data, Oxfam Novib

4. Responding to COVID-19:
Open data in a global pandemic

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, IATI recognised the urgent need for open data on the development and humanitarian responses. The initiative moved swiftly to enable the publication of data on COVID-19-related funding and activities using the IATI Standard. By the end of the year, data had been published on nearly 10,000 COVID-19-related activities by a wide range of development and humanitarian organisations, including donor governments, UN agencies and NGOs.

As of the end of 2020, data was available:
- On nearly **10,000 development and humanitarian** COVID-19-related activities
- From **172 organisations**
- On **US$1.28 billion** of COVID-19-related outgoing commitments and
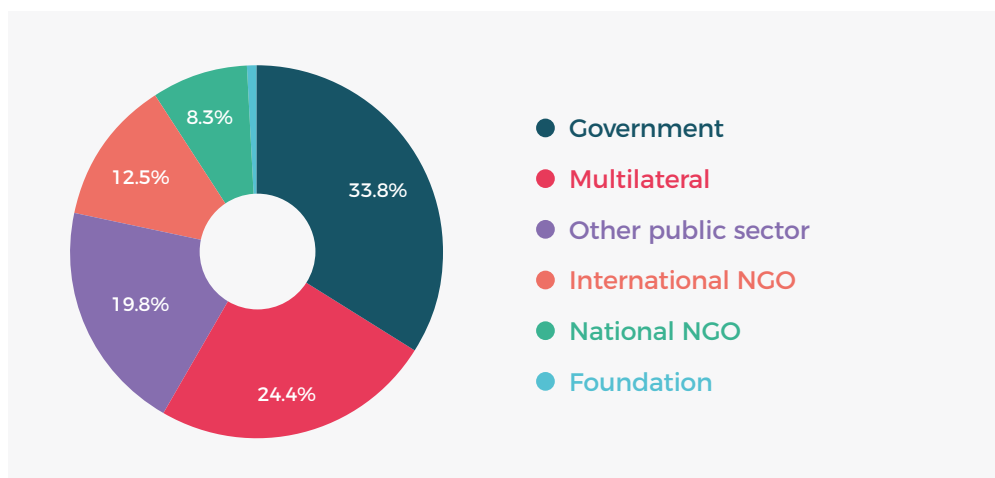- On **US$751 million** COVID-19-related disbursements.

This data is critical to avoid duplication, improve coordination and enable recipient governments to know what resources are flowing into their countries. By accessing real-time COVID-19 data, development and humanitarian actors are better able to plan, coordinate and evaluate their responses to the pandemic.

Number of COVID-19-related activities by recipient country (top 10)

Recipient country	Number of activities
Country name unspecified	1137
Ethiopia	305
Afghanistan	266
Kenya	225
Palestine, State of	212
Bangladesh	216
Uganda	217
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	204
Syrian Arab Republic	197
Sudan	192

Types of organisations publishing data on COVID-19-related activities

- Government — 33.8%
- Multilateral — 24.4%
- Other public sector — 19.8%
- International NGO — 12.5%
- National NGO — 8.3%
- Foundation

Disbursements (US$) by publisher in COVID-19-related transactions (top 10)

Country name	Volume (US$)
U.S. Agency for International Development	335,299,735
Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)	317,510,688
UN OCHA – Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	115,842,640
Sightsavers	5,085,411
British Red Cross	3,554,948
World Vision Netherlands	2,661,770
African Women's Development Fund	1,474,838
KPMG Advisory Limited Tanzania	768,900
The federal government of the United States	403,000
Terre des Hommes Netherlands	245,573

Disbursements (US$) by recipient country in COVID-19-related transactions (top 10)

Country name	Volume (US$)
Country name unspecified	129,983,139
Turkey	50,581,694
Afghanistan	39,169,043
Iraq	35,233,335
Syrian Arab Republic	34,406,208
Pakistan	33,385,201
South Sudan	30,523,427
Yemen	27,442,514
Chad	24,876,028
Sudan	19,547,103

IATI moved swiftly to meet demands for open data on the COVID-19 response

The open publication of a large volume of open data was made possible because IATI implemented rapid and effective action at the start of the pandemic. In March, IATI's Secretariat issued guidance on how to publish data using the IATI Standard on COVID-19 financing and activities. The launch of the guidance was accompanied by a webinar series that was well-attended, signalling a clear interest by IATI publishers to use the Standard consistently to provide accurate data in a timely way. Throughout the year, the initiative consulted and engaged development and humanitarian communities, resulting in the wide adoption of the IATI Standard for sharing COVID-19 open data.

As the volume of data increased, the Secretariat produced guidance and adapted its tools to enable users to more easily access the COVID-19 data. Mid-year, the Secretariat analysed the quality of data on COVID-19 and engaged directly and systematically with 65 organisations to improve the quality of their data. The IATI Helpdesk also received many requests for support to publish and access IATI data during the pandemic.

Responding to both development and humanitarian data needs

IATI aimed to capture open data on COVID-19-related activities by international development and humanitarian communities. The initiative created guidance that covered instructions on how to publish data for:

- Activities and/or transactions associated with managing a humanitarian emergency, for example a UN agency launching an international appeal to fund their response or an NGO delivering increased medical and food supplies.

- Longer-term development activities, for example a donor providing additional funding for debt relief to developing countries affected by public health disasters.

Rapid action to deliver open data on the COVID-19 response

March Launched *Guidance: Publishing data on COVID-19 using the IATI Standard*, which aligns with the UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service

April Added COVID-19 'quick search' button to IATI data platform d-portal.org

April Gathered development and humanitarian communities' needs for COVID-19 data in a wide reaching consultation

May Created and launched *Guidance: Accessing and using COVID-19 data*

May Reached 500+ COVID-19-related development and humanitarian activities published to IATI

June IATI data used in the COVID-19 data portals of the World Bank Group and Dutch government

June 1300+ COVID-19-related development and humanitarian activities published to IATI

July IATI COVID-19 data enabled groundbreaking real-time analysis by Development Initiatives on how the pandemic has impacted aid spending, achieving global media coverage (e.g. Japan Times, New York Times, The Times of India, Washington Post)

September Endorsement by the Open Government Partnership, Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency and UN OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data for use of the IATI Standard for publishing COVID-19 data

November Reached 5000+ COVID-19-related development and humanitarian activities published to IATI

December Reached 10,000+ COVID-19-related development and humanitarian activities published to IATI

5. Governance, membership and community

IATI is run by its members who govern and fund the initiative through membership contributions. Any organisation committed to improving the transparency of development and humanitarian resources and results can join IATI as a member.

New members

In 2020, IATI membership grew to 97 organisations including governments, multilateral institutions, philanthropic foundations, civil society and private sector organisations. IATI warmly welcomed four new members:

- Ajah (Civil Society Organisation)

- Luxembourg – Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs (Provider of development cooperation)

- Solidar Suisse (Civil Society Organisation)

- Switzerland – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Provider of development cooperation)

Governing Board elections

IATI's Governing Board meets quarterly to make recommendations to members on IATI's strategic direction, and it oversees the implementation of the Strategic Plan by setting and monitoring annual budgets and workplans.

In April, IATI members elected its Governing Board for a new two-year term. From the previous seven Board members, three were re-elected, namely the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Oxfam Novib. Four IATI members were elected to join the Board for the first time:

- Nepal – International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance

- Nigeria – International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Finance

- The Association of Freelance Journalists (Kenya)

- Sweden – The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (technical seat)

The Board members nominated Theo van de Sande from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands, as Chair for a second term, and Dr Sanjo Faniran (alternate Henry Asor Nkang) from the Ministry of Finance, Nigeria, as Vice Chair.

Financial Report

This year, information about IATI's finances have moved from the Annual Report to a new, separate Financial Report to improve the accessibility and transparency of this information.

Development of Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Results Framework

During 2020, the Results Framework for the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 was finalised in consultation with IATI members through a process led by the UNICEF Board representative. The IATI Secretariat will undertake annual monitoring exercises to measure progress against the Strategic Plan Results Framework, which will be used to assess progress and identify areas for further focus. This will in turn inform IATI's annual workplans to ensure the initiative remains on track to achieve its agreed objectives by 2025.

IATI Virtual Members' Assembly 2020

Virtual Members' Assembly

IATI members meet once a year at the Members' Assembly to steer the initiative's governance and strategic direction. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the Members' Assembly took place virtually for the first time. The online meeting was still able to attract impressive participation from its members, with 155 attendees from 69 organisations.

Strengthening engagement with partner country members

IATI's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 recognises the need for governments in developing countries to have a stronger voice in the initiative. In 2020, the Secretariat stepped up efforts to engage members from partner countries through a Partner Country Virtual Meeting Series. The series of three meetings held between October and November attracted around 70 participants for each, including some joining as observers for the first time (Chad and Kenya). IATI's Partner Country Virtual Meeting Series enabled partner country members to:

- Collaborate despite the cancellation of planned in-person meetings due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions.

- Provide input to the creation of a partner country Community of Practice (COPs; see below for more information).

- Receive training on the IATI Standard and how to access data on COVID-19-related projects in their countries.

- Provide specific details on the types of IATI data they need and how this information should be presented. This informed the creation of the new Country Development Finance Data tool enabling partner countries to access and engage with IATI data on projections and spending in a downloadable Excel format.

IATI Membership Pack launched

A Membership Pack was launched to provide information on how to become an active member of IATI. The pack is an animated, engaging resource including details on how IATI is run, the benefits of joining, and what role IATI members have in shaping the initiative. The pack has been shared with existing members and organisations considering joining.

Benefits of IATI membership

There are *many* benefits of joining IATI. As a member, you will be able to:

Show your commitment

- Learn and share best practice
- Get priority support
- Contribute to consultations
- Attend IATI member events
- Agree IATI's strategic direction
- Decide how IATI is governed and run
- Receive updates on members' news, stories and events

Show your commitment
to transparency to key stakeholders such as funders, taxpayers, civil society organisations, politicians and the wider international development and humanitarian communities

Reinvigorating the IATI Community

IATI is much more than numbers and data; at the heart of the initiative are its people. In 2020, in response to demand from its diverse and growing community, IATI transformed its structures to accommodate its rapidly expanding community of data publishers and users, transparency advocates, open data experts and technical specialists from across the globe. Following approval by its members, the initiative established a new structure for formal **Working Groups** to respond to specific advisory needs and **Communities of Practice (COPs)** to foster learning and networking across different stakeholder groups. This new structure was designed to be inclusive and accessible to the broader community, and replaces the former Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Working Groups

IATI Working Groups are specific and time-bound groups established to provide expert advice to the Members' Assembly or Governing Board. They include a balance of expertise with diverse representation from different constituencies and regions. Working Groups are formed of volunteers from the community, with their composition and balance of expertise approved by the IATI Governing Board in each case. In 2020 the first two Working Groups were established:
Data Use Working Group (formerly the Data Use Task Force)
IATI Community Event Working Group.

IATI Communities of Practice (COPs) and IATI Connect

In November 2020, more than 125 people joined the virtual launch of IATI's COPs with an event featuring Jens Wandel, UN Secretary-General's Designate for the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, as a keynote speaker. The COPs are designed as open and freely accessible communities focusing on thematic IATI interests, and the first COPs cover three broad issues: data use, data publishing and technical. IATI's COPs are housed on IATI Connect, a new user-friendly digital engagement platform for e-discussions and consultations, housing work spaces for different groups and sub-groups of IATI stakeholders, relevant upcoming events and a resource library. It provides automatic translation into 100+ languages and is mobile friendly even in areas of low bandwidth.
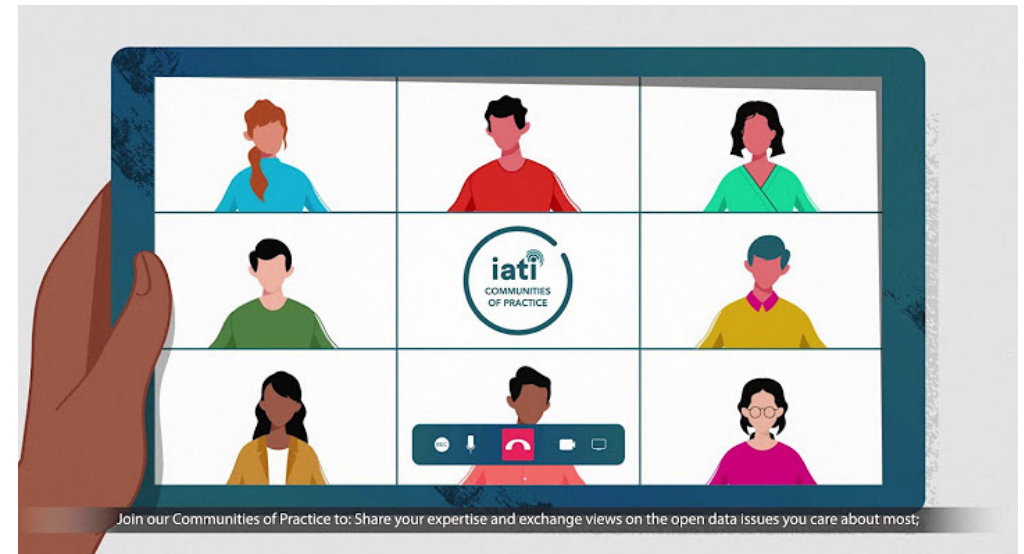
Content and users from IATI's former Discuss platform were migrated onto IATI Connect, preserving the community's existing wealth of knowledge and expertise. IATI Connect users exceeded 400 registered accounts by year's end..

"IATI Connect ensures I stay up to date on what is going on in the IATI Community in general, while it also allows me to focus on the topics of most interest to me and makes it easy to collaborate with those who share this interest."

- Melinda Cuzner, IATI Manager, Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and member of the IATI Governing Board

IATI COPs and IATI Connect video

Watch the video on YouTube

Engagement and collaboration with the open data sector

As an area for action in the Strategic Plan, IATI's Secretariat collaborates with other open data initiatives and organisations within the international development and humanitarian sectors.

- **TOSSD reporting:** The international Task Force on measuring the Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) released its Reporting Instructions in February 2020. It confirmed that the TOSSD dataset will include IATI data and cited IATI (along with the Creditor Reporting System database of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) as "particularly relevant data sources for TOSSD".

- **WP-STAT:** The IATI Secretariat continued to join meetings of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT), which oversees the delivery of OECD DAC statistics on development cooperation. Through this close collaboration, IATI keeps its data Standard closely aligned with the OECD DAC's codelists, ensuring there is interoperability of data between them.

- **UN System reporting:** The IATI Secretariat supported the launch of the UN Transparency Task Force, an inter-agency group made up of 30+ UN entities working to support more coordinated development cooperation data within the UN System. It also aims to promote best practice in publishing data amongst UN agencies. In response to the global pandemic, IATI's Secretariat held a dedicated webinar for UN agencies on how to report spending on COVID-19-related activities. IATI also worked with the UN System Chief Executives Board to align unique identification codes (identifiers) for development and humanitarian organisations with ones used by IATI and the OECD DAC.

- **Grand Bargain transparency workstream:** IATI continued to work with the international workstream seeking to implement the transparency commitments in the Grand Bargain agreement. The IATI Secretariat supported the development of their COVID-19 humanitarian portal and involved the workstream in IATI's humanitarian guidance consultation.

6. Looking ahead: Priorities and challenges for 2021

An ambitious workplan for the second year of implementation of IATI's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 sets out comprehensive actions to move the initiative closer to achieving its three stated objectives.

IATI Strategic Plan Objective:
Promote the systematic use of IATI data by development and humanitarian actors

IATI will continue its work to ensure that data users can access, analyse and use IATI data. Guided by a clear data use action plan, the Secretariat will pursue a more coordinated and systematic approach to making progress on data use, in collaboration with data use stakeholders such as the Data Use Working Group. Planned activities include:

- Ensuring all users can access the data they need in the formats and level of detail that they need by providing easier-to-use tools that meet the needs of IATI's diverse stakeholders. IATI will promote the use of the new Country Development Finance Data tool, particularly to partner countries, to provide a simple Excel-formatted set of data on projections and spending by country. The Secretariat will undertake an extensive consultation with the IATI Community to inform the creation of a semantic data layer and new version of d-portal.

- Understanding barriers to data use and developing and implementing strategies to eliminate them, including through a strategy to bridge the gap between publisher practices and data users' needs.

- Strengthening data literacy and capacity for use through targeted guidance and training and expanded direct support to data users.

IATI Strategic Plan Objective:
Drive a significant improvement in the quality of data published to IATI

As a key commitment of the IATI Strategic Plan 2020-2025, IATI will hold a consultation to inform the development of a new Data Quality Index that will focus on measuring the components of IATI data that matter most to the IATI Community. The Secretariat will continue to support organisations to use the Validator tool to eliminate errors from their IATI data and conduct a systematic review of how organisations are currently using the IATI Standard to publish data. Findings from this review, together with insights from data users, will inform a strategy to bridge the gap between current publisher practices and data users' needs. The IATI Secretariat will also work closely with the Data Use Working Group to implement agreed actions on creating feedback mechanisms between data publishers and users to drive up the quality of IATI data.

> **IATI Strategic Plan Objective:**
> Strengthen the IATI Standard by consolidating its technical core, maintaining its infrastructure and reinvigorating its community of publishers and members.

IATI will continue with community consultations to support the delivery of further guidance on publishing data to the IATI Standard to address issues such as traceability and answer questions such as how to use IATI data for tracking development and humanitarian funds through complex delivery chains.

IATI's technical work will focus on addressing the remaining recommendations from IATI's 2020 Technical Stocktake to consolidate and strengthen data publishing and data use services for the IATI Community. Work will be undertaken to optimise the performance of the IATI Datastore, ensuring it meets the needs of users for complex datasets.

Governance, membership and community

A new Institutional Working Group will be established in 2021 to advise the Board on governance matters such as sustainable financing of the initiative and future hosting of the Secretariat. The group is also expected to review IATI's theory of change.

Whilst travel restrictions remain in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IATI will provide its community with opportunities for exchange through new Virtual Community Exchange meetings and by building and strengthening COPs on IATI Connect. These approaches aim to establish connections across networks, supporting peer learning and knowledge sharing on transparency and open data topics. The Board and Secretariat will continue to actively recruit members and focus in particular on increasing the participation of partner countries as a key stakeholder group in IATI.

IATI will improve the information provided on its main website through a user experience project and work to expand the initiative's reach on social media.

Continuing to deliver open data during the COVID-19 pandemic

IATI will learn from and build on its successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that data remains useful and compatible with other open data initiatives. While IATI data covers a vast range of sectors spanning development and humanitarian activities, IATI can learn from its robust experience of enabling key stakeholders to easily access data on COVID-19-related spending and activities. Continual monitoring of data needs and provision of updated guidance for publishers will ensure IATI plays its part in driving the effective coordination and response to the current global pandemic and set IATI on a path to deliver further success in the face of future events on a similar scale.

7. Annex: Details on IATI Annual Report Data Analysis

Data presented in the 2020 overview was accessed from the IATI Registry on 22 February 2021. Data was processed using both Python and R studio. The number of organisations publishing to IATI presented in the report was counted as of 31 December 2020.

Budgets: Activity budget data has been analysed in the report. When an original and revised budget have been reported for the same period, only the revised budget has been used. Data for budgets commencing in 2021 reported as of 22 February 2021 has been analysed. Only budgets with recipient countries reported at the activity level have been included.

Spend: For the spend analysis, transaction types (3-disbursement and 4-expenditure) with transaction dates in 2020 have been analysed. For the sector analysis, only sector vocabularies 1 and 2 have been used. These refer to OECD DAC 5 digit and 3 digit sector codes. If the transaction level sector was missing, the activity level sector was applied to the transaction spend. The spend analysis by recipient country includes transactions where the recipient country is reported at either the activity or transaction level.
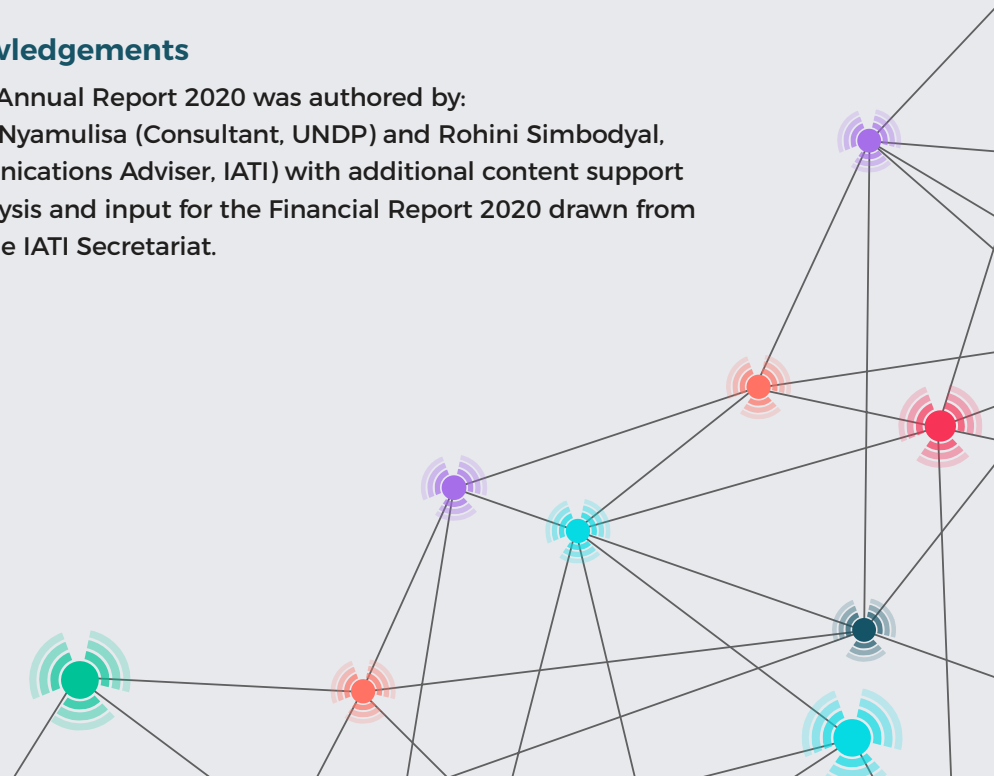
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): For the SDG analysis, SDGs reported at both sector and tag level have been used. All activities including SDG data as of 22 February 2021 have been counted.

Humanitarian: Activities have been classified as humanitarian if the humanitarian flag has been used at activity level. For the analysis of GLIDE and Humanitarian Response Plans, any activities that have used the humanitarian scope element and humanitarian scope vocabulary 1-2 (GLIDE) and 2-1 (HRP) were included. Emergency and appeal activity numbers have been counted by using the humanitarian-scope type.

COVID-19: Activities or transactions are included in the analysis if they follow the guidance on Publishing data on COVID-19 using the IATI Standard.

Acknowledgements

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