

Q&A: IATI Validator

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Section 1: General information

What is the IATI Validator?

The IATI Validator is an online tool for checking if data complies with the rules and guidance of IATI Standard. The tool provides information on how to improve the quality of IATI data to ensure it is accessible and useful to anyone working with data on development and humanitarian resources and results.

When will the old Validator be switched off?

The old [Public Validator](#) will be switched off on 22 March 2021 and after this date, users will no longer be able to access this service.

How does the IATI Validator work?

There are two ways to use the IATI Validator:

1. An organisation can upload their files to be checked *before* publishing them using the [Check Data](#) option.
2. Anyone can check any IATI file that has *already* been published using the [Public Data Viewer](#).

The Validator undertakes multiple layers of checks to identify where the data does not comply with the IATI Standard. The Validator will then provide validation reports to indicate where errors have occurred and what specifically needs to be changed.

What happens when the IATI Validator identifies invalid data?

When the IATI Validator identifies invalid data, it returns a message to the user. Based on the issue the Validator has identified, the user will either receive an error or a warning message identifying what the invalid data is and where it occurs in the data file, and provide actionable/directive messages on how to fix it. If there are multiple repeated errors, they will be grouped as the same fix applies to all. For instance, if all activities in a dataset omitted the activity dates, then the user would receive one error message that applies to all activities.

How long does the Validator take to check IATI data files?

This depends on which option you use:

1. When using the [Public Data Viewer](#) to check files that have *already* been published, the validation reports are usually readily available to download. However, in some instances, your requests will go into a queue. It may take some time for the validation reports for all files to be available, so we advise that you leave the page open and return to check the progress. You can check the date of the queue for progress.
2. When using the [Check Data](#) option to check your files *before* publishing them, the validation report will usually be returned quickly on the page. You have the option of providing your email address to have the report sent you. As you will see on the

page, you also have the option of checking your published files by adding the URL of specific IATI data file(s).

The validation report for the same datafile will be identical in both the Check Data and Public Data Viewer.

What help and support can publishers access to correct their data?

When invalid data is identified, the IATI Validator provides an actionable error or warning message with instructions on how to correct the data. Help can also be accessed through:

- IATI Technical Team helpdesk support@iatistandard.org
- Webinars held by the IATI Technical Team on how to use the Validator. Details of upcoming webinars can be found at [IATI Events](#) and all webinars are posted on [IATI's Youtube Channel](#).
- Peer-to-peer support through [IATI Discuss](#) (online community forum)
- One-to-one calls with the Technical Team if required

Will the IATI Secretariat proactively engage with publishers to improve data quality?

Yes. IATI's Strategic Plan 2020-25 has prioritised improving the quality and use of IATI data. Therefore the Technical Team will use the IATI Validator to identify how publishers can improve their data and then proactively contact them to offer support. Through effective communications and engagement, the IATI Secretariat will sustain and increase the commitment from publishers to improve their data quality. This will include through blogs, raising awareness at meetings and requesting IATI members take a lead on improving their data, for which case studies can be based on.

How long does it take to correct invalid data?

It depends on the number of different types of errors identified. We expect that many publishers will have a range of corrections to make which may take considerable time. It is important to note that we do not expect data to be corrected immediately. Using the IATI Validator is the first step in the process to improving IATI data quality and you can use it to prioritise which fixes to make first.

How likely is it that an IATI publisher will have invalid data?

Very likely. The Validator undertakes rigorous checks of publishers' data against the rules and guidance of the IATI Standard. Therefore we expect that many publishers will find that their datasets contain invalid data.

Does the Validator check if datasets have complied with a donor's requirement to publish data to the IATI Standard?

No. Different donors have their own specific set of data requirements for their grantees that are additional to IATI's rules. Organisations need to refer to their donor's guidance and more information can be found on IATI's [website](#).

Can anyone check any publishers' IATI data using the IATI Validator?

Yes. As long as the link to the datafile is on the IATI Registry, anyone can check that data using the IATI Validator.

Can organisations check their data on the IATI Validator *before* publishing the files?

Yes. Organisations can upload their IATI XML files to the Validator to check their data and make necessary corrections before publishing their data to the IATI Registry.

Section 2: What will happen to invalid data? Will it still be available in public tools and services provided IATI data.

IATI Datastore

The [IATI Datastore](#) is now linked to the IATI Validator. The Validator undertakes multiple layers of checks of data against different parts of the IATI Standard:

- IATI Schema validation**
 Data that *fails IATI Schema validation* will contain a **critical message(s)** and will **not be included** in the IATI Datastore. For example, data that is not provided in an XML file (e.g. a PDF) will not be included in the IATI Datastore.
- IATI Ruleset validation**
 Data that *fails IATI Ruleset validation* will contain **errors** and **warnings messages** and **will be allowed** into the IATI Datastore.

For more information on the IATI Schema and Rulesets, see *Section 3: Technical information for developers and data services providers*.

Other IATI tools and services managed by the IATI Secretariat

All data published to the IATI Standard will remain accessible on the IATI Registry, regardless of whether datasets contain invalid data. There are no scheduled plans for any other tools managed by the IATI Secretariat to be linked to the IATI Validator (see table below).

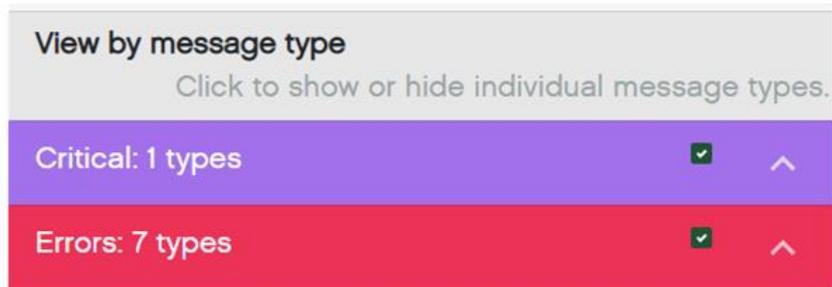
Tool	Impact of Validator	Notes
Registry	No change.	All data published to the IATI Standard can be accessed via the links on the Registry and through the IATI Registry API.
Old Datastore	No change.	The old IATI Datastore is due to be switched off on 22 March 2020 and is being replaced by the new IATI Datastore.
d-portal	No change.	No links with IATI Validator.
IATI Dashboard & Publishing Statistics	No change.	No links with IATI Validator.
Publisher and activity count on iatistandard.org	No change.	The publisher and activity count is linked to the IATI Registry. No links with IATI Validator.

Section 3: Technical information for developers and data services providers

Specifically what checks does the IATI Validator undertake?

The IATI Validator runs checks against version 2 of the Schema and [Rulesets of the IATI Standard](#).

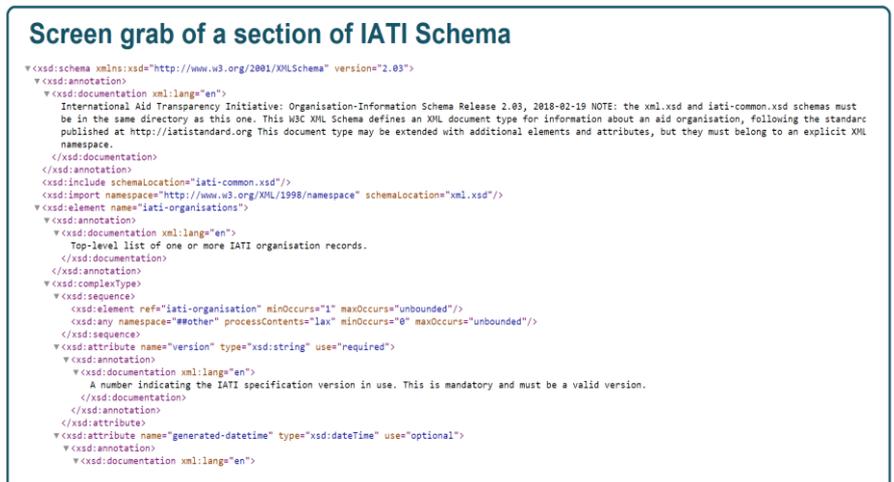
Check 1: Schema Validation (Critical) Purple



The IATI Validator checks if data adheres to the format set out in the IATI XML Schema. The IATI Schema provides the exact order and structure that organisations should provide their XML in. Full information about the IATI Schema can be found on [IATI's website](#).

Examples include checking if:

- ❖ IATI data is published in the XML file format (and not provided in other formats, such as a PDF or Excel file)
- ❖ all [mandatory IATI elements](#) (data fields) have been provided
- ❖ data follows version 2 of the IATI Standard (either 2.01, 2.02 or 2.03) as version 1 of the IATI Standard has been [deprecated](#).

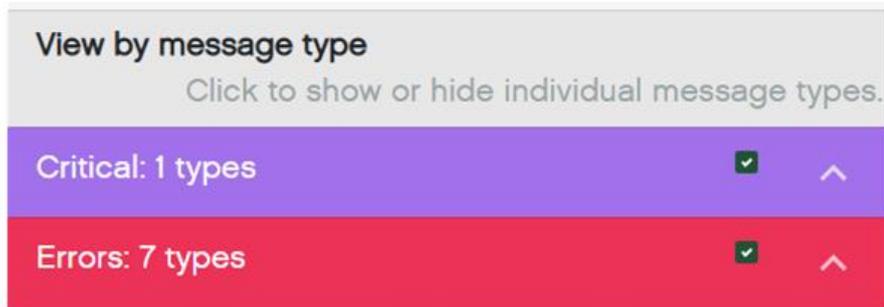


Check 2: Rulesets Validation

The IATI Validator also checks if the data follows IATI's Rulesets. These checks provide a more detailed review of the quality of data. To view the most up-to-date information about IATI's Rulesets please refer to [IATI Ruleset repository](#).

On the IATI Validator, there are two types of messages that are provided if the content of the data does not follow IATI's rulesets:

- ❖ **Error message (pink):** An error message is displayed if any of IATI's mandatory rules (rules containing the word '*must*') have been broken. For example, if an activity is allocated to multiple sectors, the percentage of finance allocated for each must add up to 100%. If the percentage is less or more than 100%, then an error message is displayed.



- ❖ **Warning message (orange):** A warning message is displayed if any of IATI's recommended rules (rules containing the word '*should*') are broken. For example, when reporting sectors, it is recommended that if a publisher uses a non-DAC classification system or systems, these should be used in addition to DAC 5-digit codes.

What is the tech stack powering the service?

All application code can be found in the [IATI Github repository](#).