iati

International Aid Transparency Initiative

Update series: Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Enabling the use of IATI data
September 2021

FACTSHEET TWO · 2 · FACTSHEET TWO
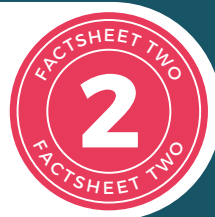
Welcome to the second in a series of factsheets from IATI's Secretariat providing IATI's members and community with updates on progress against different objectives of IATI Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (ES / FR).

Four factsheets have been created to outline key progress since the beginning of 2020 in implementing IATI's five year Strategic Plan:

Factsheet #1: Improving the quality of IATI data

Factsheet #2: Enabling the use of IATI data

Factsheet #3: Strengthening IATI technical infrastructure, tools and services

Factsheet #4: Reinvigorating IATI's Community

Factsheet #2: Enabling the use of IATI data

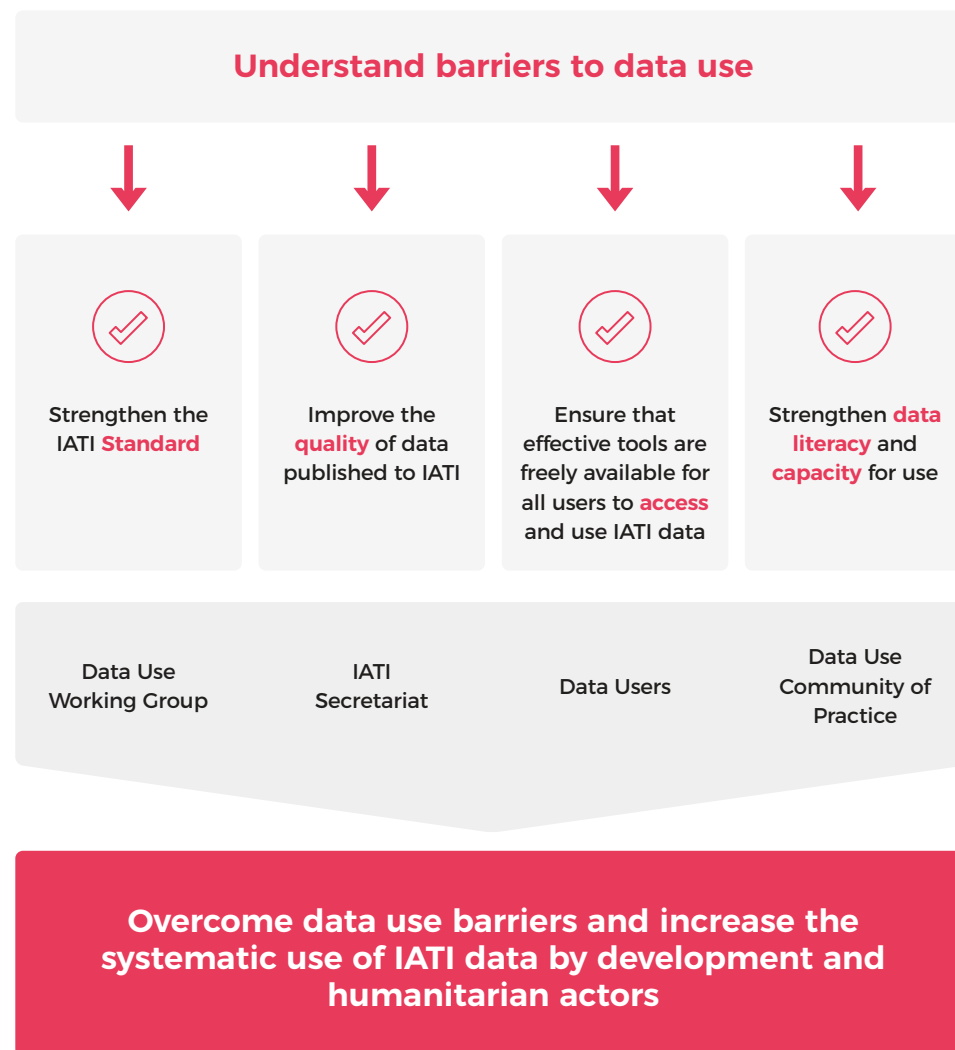## Progress on enabling the use of IATI data

This update focuses on progress towards achieving the Strategic Plan's second objective:

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

Since the start of 2020, the IATI Secretariat, in partnership with the Data Use Working Group and IATI's growing community of data users, has been steadily making progress towards enabling increased systematic use of IATI data.

As shown in the diagram to the right, making progress on this objective is interlinked with progress on IATI's other core objectives, including strengthening the IATI Standard and improving the quality of data, and ensuring that this work is guided by the needs of data users. It is also dependent on the availability of effective data access tools and strengthened data literacy and capacity for use among IATI's data users. This update will review the many areas in which progress has been made so far, as we work to put in place the necessary enablers to achieve increased data use.

How will we enable increased data use?

Understand barriers to data use

Strengthen the IATI **Standard**	Improve the **quality** of data published to IATI	Ensure that effective tools are freely available for all users to **access** and use IATI data	Strengthen **data literacy** and **capacity** for use
Data Use Working Group	IATI Secretariat	Data Users	Data Use Community of Practice

Overcome data use barriers and increase the systematic use of IATI data by development and humanitarian actors

Factsheet #2: Enabling the use of IATI data

❯ Improving access to IATI data

Access ➔ **Analysis** ➔ **Use**

- **Development and launch of Country Development Finance Data tool**

  In an effort to meet the needs of data users, particularly partner countries, for a simple Excel-formatted set of data on projections and spending by country, a new data access tool was launched in March 2021. The design of the IATI Country Development Finance Data (CDFD) was informed by work in 2020 to support partner country governments to access and use IATI data, along with a series of consultations. Between March and September 2021, users from 85 countries downloaded data from CDFD.

- **Enabling more customised searches on d-portal**

  IATI's data access tool d-portal was updated in 2020 to enable filtering by an additional 14 data fields and a new COVID-19 'quick search' button was added to the home page, enabling users to easily view data on COVID-19-related activities.

- **Assessment of user requirements for new data portal**

  A desk review was undertaken in 2021 to list and analyse existing research on user needs, in order to confirm user requirements for the new data portal (planned for 2022). The Secretariat reviewed and carefully documented user issues and needs from more than 80 items, including research, inputs on Github, Discuss, Connect, the Helpdesk, and recommendations from the 2020 Technical Stocktake. These findings will be used to conceptualise the requirements for the new data portal.

Factsheet #2: Enabling the use of IATI data

Strengthening data literacy and capacity for use

Access	→	Analysis	→	Use

Resources developed to support data users to access and analyse IATI data

- **IATI Country Development Finance Data tool Guidance and Analysis Dashboard**

  Two new resources were developed and launched in July 2021 to support data users to understand and analyse the data available via CDFD. The Guidance, available in English, French, and Spanish, provides users with key information needed to understand the data, including descriptions of each of the data fields and guidance on how to analyse the data, including how to set up a PivotTable. The Analysis Dashboard enables data users to easily analyse and visualise the data in an Excel workbook that automatically populates with a series of graphs, charts, and tables, when the data from CDFD is added.

- **Data Use Query Corner on IATI Connect**

  A one stop location was launched on IATI Connect in August 2021 for data users to learn about queries with IATI data, ask the Community their questions, and discover the latest opportunities to engage with one another. The Data Use Query Corner includes suggested approaches for answering specific data queries, space to ask questions to the IATI Community and links to additional resources.

- **Guidance on Accessing and Using COVID-19 data**

  In May 2020, guidance was launched on how to search and analyse COVID-19-related activities using IATI's data access tools.

Support provided to data users to access and analyse IATI data

- **IATI Helpdesk**

  The Helpdesk continues to provide ongoing dedicated support to data users to access, understand, and analyse IATI data. 2020 saw an increase in the number of data users reaching out to the Helpdesk, with this trend continuing through 2021.

- **Monthly Data Use Drop-In Sessions**

  Launched in May 2021, these sessions provide an opportunity for data users to bring their questions and receive on-the-spot support from the IATI Secretariat and other data users who join the sessions. It is an informal opportunity for data users to engage, discuss, and learn from each other.

- **Dedicated partner country support**

  The Secretariat continues to provide dedicated support and prioritise the needs of partner country governments as key data users. An IATI Partner Country Virtual Meeting Series replaced a planned in-person meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions as an opportunity to maintain engagement with partner country stakeholders. In 2020 dedicated support was provided for governments including the Governments of Chad and Nigeria to access and use IATI data to analyse external inflows in their development cooperation reports, to inform national budget planning.

  The focus for partner country support so far in 2021 has been training and supporting governments to understand and analyse the data available via the Country Development Finance Data tool. An initial training session was held in June 2021, followed by a series of one-to-one training sessions, with follow up activities to support governments to make use of IATI data in various country-level processes.

Factsheet #2: Enabling the use of IATI data

Building a community of data users

● **Data Use Community of Practice on IATI Connect**

Launched in November 2020, IATI Connect provides a space for data users to come together to share knowledge and engage with one another. More than 75 members have already joined the Data Use Community of Practice by September 2021.

● **Data Use Working Group (DUWG)**

This multi-stakeholder group of IATI community members continues to support the advancement of IATI's data use objectives. In 2020, this group oversaw the delivery of three projects from IATI's Data Use Fund on exploring traceability, strengthening feedback mechanisms, and creating an inventory of IATI training materials and data use tools. In 2021, the DUWG and Secretariat developed a joint Data Use Action Plan and has continued to hold biweekly meetings which have featured a series of knowledge sharing presentations on how community members are using IATI data.

While work got underway in July 2021 to upgrade and integrate the IATI Datastore into IATI's new unified single platform, the Datastore API and Query Builder were unavailable. To support continued access to IATI data, during this period the DUWG began supporting Datastore Classic (a version of the original IATI Datastore updated/improved by Code for IATI). The tool allows data users to search data by a set of key filters and download activities with all data fields in .xml and .json formats, or with a subset of data fields in .csv. During the planned downtime of the existing IATI Datastore, all API calls are redirected to IATI Datastore Classic.
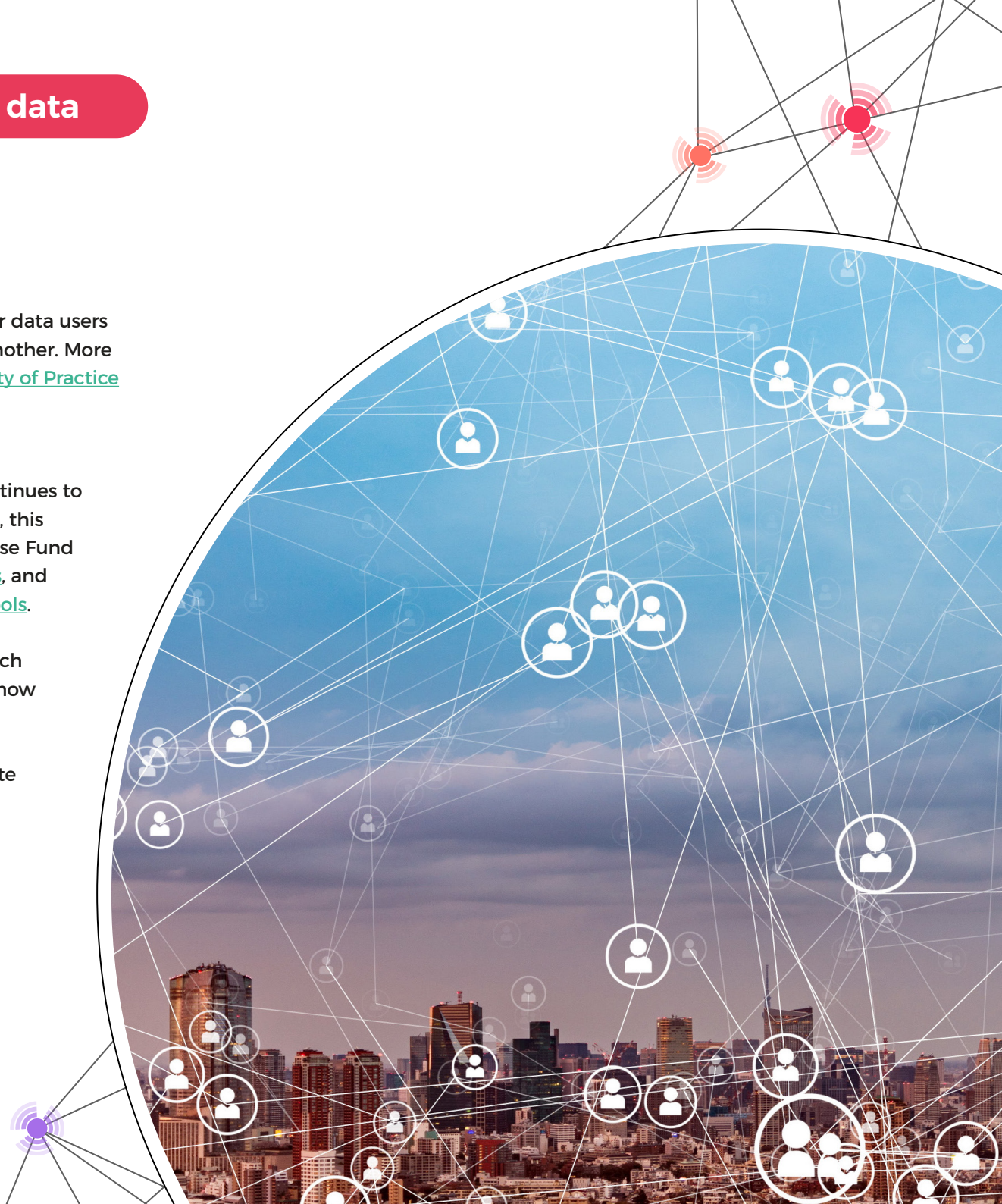
Factsheet #2: Enabling the use of IATI data

❯ What's coming up

The IATI Secretariat will continue our ongoing support to data users, along with delivering the following activities.

● **Improvements to CDFD and updates to Guidance and Analysis Dashboard**
Following a series of training sessions and engagement with data users, a set of modifications to the CDFD spreadsheets and interface were identified and will be implemented in October 2021. The Guidance and Analysis Dashboard will also be updated to reflect these changes.

● **Targeted data use support sessions**
During the fourth quarter of 2021, two targeted data use support sessions will be held, including one in October for African journalists, on understanding what information is available from IATI along with how to access and analyse the data for use in their work.

● **Virtual training to be developed**
Led by the DUWG and funded by the Data Use Fund, work has begun to develop virtual training for civil society organisations and national-level actors in partner countries on how to access, understand and use IATI data.

● **Video guidance for data access tools**
Led by the DUWG and funded by the Data Use Fund, work is planned to develop video guidance on how to navigate and use the functionalities of IATI's data access tools.

● **Launch aid information management system (AIMS) research**
Since the start of 2020, the focus has been on ensuring that partner country governments were able to directly access needed data, now largely addressed through the availability of the CDFD tool. Building on work that started in 2020, we will systematically review challenges with integrating IATI data into partner country governments' AIMS and identify strategies to better support the use of IATI data via these systems.
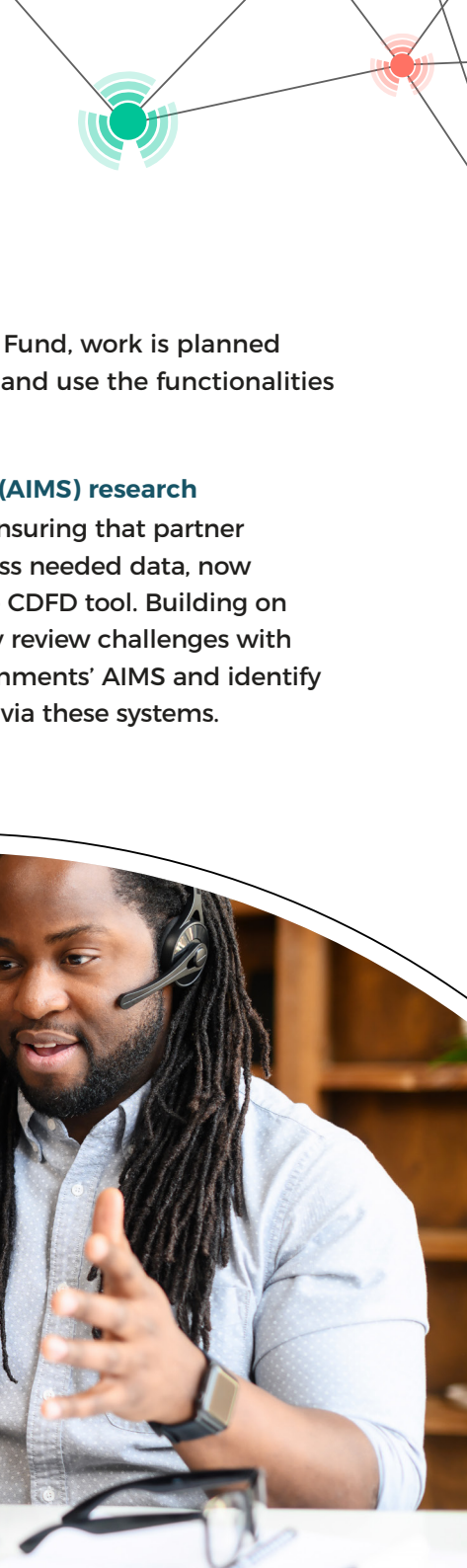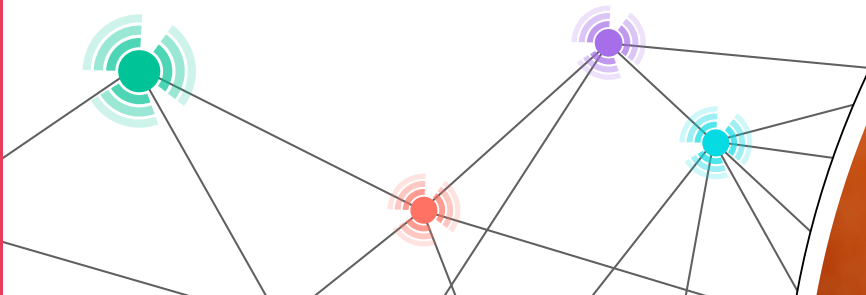
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How to get involved

- Visit the new Country Development Finance Data tool or IATI's other data access tools and begin exploring IATI data.

- Join the Data Use Community of Practice on IATI Connect.

- Join biweekly meetings of the Data Use Working Group.

- Visit the Data Use Query Corner to share a data query, ask a question, or learn about upcoming events.

- Join IATI monthly Data Use Drop-in sessions.

We're here to help

As always, please reach out to us for support via the IATI Helpdesk:
email: support@iatistandard.org