



**Final Summary**  
**IATI West and Central Africa Regional Workshop**  
**21-23 June 2022**  
**Abuja, Nigeria**

On 21-23 June 2022, IATI held an in-person, multi-stakeholder workshop in Abuja, Nigeria entitled, “*Strengthening IATI Data Use in West and Central Africa*”. The meeting was co-hosted by IATI together with the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, the incoming IATI Governing Board Chair. The three-day meeting engaged potential data users from 14 partner country governments across West and Central Africa, and development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) based in Nigeria. Each group attended a dedicated session to receive training, and join discussion, on how IATI data could meet their development finance information needs.

Opening the workshop, **Dr. Sampson Ebimaro, Director of International Cooperation, Nigeria Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning** said, “I wish to state categorically that despite the challenges of availability of data in many countries, data and data standards have always been critical.... This regional workshop is a unique opportunity to raise awareness, and strengthen the use of IATI data in national budget, planning and accountability processes”.

In his welcome address, **Henry Asor Nkang, Development Assistance Database Manager at the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning**, and incoming IATI Governing Board Chair, remarked that, “this workshop represents a step forward in IATI’s quest to improve usage of its data. Data on more than one million development and humanitarian activities has been published by over 1,400 organisations using the IATI Standard, including from bilateral partners, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations and others...The government of Nigeria sees immense value in the International Aid Transparency Initiative and is using IATI data to track millions of dollars of development finance flowing into our country. We used IATI data to inform Nigeria’s 2021 Development Cooperation Report, which monitors development financing to our country and informs government decisions about the future coordination of these resources”.

### **Partner country government session**

Over a day and a half, representatives from 14 partner country governments<sup>1</sup> from West and Central Africa and nearly a dozen representatives from the Government of Nigeria came together to learn how the data could be potentially used in their specific contexts. As this segment focused primarily on governments with little to no experience with IATI and its data, during the workshop, participants received an introduction to IATI as an initiative, and hands-on training on how to access, analyse and use IATI data. In addition, the governments

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<sup>1</sup> Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Mauritania, Moldova (attended as they were not able to attend the previous partner country member workshop), Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, the Gambia and Togo.

of Nigeria and Liberia presented on how they are accessing and using this information to help meet their countries' development finance information needs.

**Key takeaways:**

**1. IATI data is increasingly in demand to complement data available at the country level, especially as development partners have become less responsive to requests by governments to provide timely data on their activities.**

Participants at the workshop shared and discussed ongoing challenges in meeting their development finance data needs at the country level. As has historically been the case, it is often difficult for governments to obtain data on resources that are channelled outside of government (e.g. through CSOs). Many participants also shared increasing challenges around their ability to source data from in-country partners. Representatives also noted the importance of validating IATI data at the national level where possible to ensure consistency between what is reported at a global level (by organisation headquarters) to IATI and country-level realities. This is largely due to differences in what headquarters report to IATI and what is reported to the government. Many participants were able to identify potentially useful data in IATI and expressed their interest in using this data to supplement their own national data going forward.

**2. While the quality of IATI data is steadily improving, long-standing issues still present a challenge to use of the data at the country level.**

Several participants who had previously engaged with IATI and its data applauded the work of IATI publishers and the Secretariat to continually improve the quality of IATI data over the past several years, and many noted that they find the data substantially more useful than when they have attempted to use it in the past. However, attendees continued to raise common challenges and roadblocks to more systematic use of IATI data at the national level, including:

- Gaps in data, due either to individual publishers' publishing timelines, absence of important publishers in their own country context, or publishers not reporting data into particular data fields that are essential for enabling use of the data by governments (e.g. finance type);
- Variation in the way that publishers publish to IATI, especially given the inherent flexibility of the IATI Standard;
- Lack of data from important emerging providers, including from the private sector and South-South Cooperation providers, which still present a challenge in terms of demonstrating an accurate picture of financing flows at the country level;
- Data that is either outdated or not present, from major providers of development cooperation (e.g. Japan, IMF);
- The need for validation of IATI data by governments, to overcome discrepancies between what is published at the HQ and country level;
- The issue of being able to identify whether resource flows are channelled inside or outside of government (i.e. whether they use country systems versus are channelled via a CSO); and
- How to overcome potential issues of double-counting throughout the delivery chain.

**3. Participants underscored the usefulness in accessibility and granularity of IATI data available through IATI's new Country Development Finance Data (CDFD) tool, but noted that there is more work to be done on streamlining IATI's tools and services to make the data more useful at the country level.**

Representatives received training on accessing and analysing IATI data, specifically focused on using IATI's new [Country Development Finance Data \(CDFD\) tool](#). This tool was

developed in 2021 in collaboration with national stakeholders, with the aim of providing the data most needed by partner country governments and other country-level data users. Participants had an opportunity to get hands-on experience using the tool and learn how to analyse the data using pivot tables and appreciated the accessibility and granularity of the data available.

However, the session on CDFD pointed to the need for more streamlining of IATI tools, as many participants expressed confusion about which tool was most useful for what purpose (and where they could find the IATI data they needed, as well as the ability to build reports, visualisations, etc.). In order to be more useful to partner country governments (and other national stakeholders), they noted that tools for accessing IATI data should be simplified and consolidated into a single user-friendly data portal.

### **Development partner session**

More than 25 representatives from partners who fund development activities in Nigeria, along with representatives from the Government of Nigeria, joined the second, half-day session of the regional workshop. **Dr. Christopher Pyrcroft, Head of the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in Nigeria**, and Co-Chair of the National Development Partner Group (NDPG), alongside UNDP, opened the meeting. He noted that, "development is a complex process requiring all agencies to work in partnership to deliver resources effectively. Open and transparent information about development resources, how they are used and what they are delivering, has never been more important...it is therefore critical that we drive as much value as we can from every pound, dollar and Naira, and transparency is crucial for our collective efforts."

During the event, development partners learned about IATI and its data, including its potential usefulness for their own internal processes. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning also presented how they are using IATI data to inform their annual Development Cooperation Report and other important government processes. Through this presentation they underscored the importance of receiving high quality data from development partners, especially through their national system, the Development Assistance Database (DAD). Representatives of the Ministry called for increased commitment by development partners and especially the members of the NDPG, to provide timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information to the DAD. This led to fruitful discussion on how to improve donor accountability in Nigeria.

### **Civil society session**

The third, full-day workshop session was an opportunity for civil society organisations (CSOs), including local nongovernmental organisations, transparency advocates, journalists, etc., located in Nigeria to learn more about how IATI data can be used in the CSO context. More than 50 representatives joined the workshop to learn how they could use IATI data to support the aims of their organisations, including holding national authorities to account; reducing overlap and gaps in services; campaigning for more effective development cooperation; and finding innovative funding opportunities and new partners. The CSO representatives received an introduction to IATI and its data; and hands-on training in using the data to solve their specific questions around accountability, coordination, advocacy and funding.

Those in attendance expressed appreciation for the workshop noting that the information available from IATI is critical for their work, particularly for promoting transparency and good governance. One participant expressed optimism about "the ways this new knowledge can support our work in the civil society space in Nigeria". There was also considerable interest for further capacity building and the opportunity to build a stronger community to promote transparency in Nigeria.

## **Key takeaways:**

**1. The workshop provided an opportunity for the IATI Secretariat to discuss with CSOs and confirm that the most common use cases for CSOs wishing to use IATI data, which will be extremely useful for the IATI Secretariat in designing and delivering future civil society trainings and materials:**

- **Ensuring accountability of partners in the delivery of resources and results:** providing feedback on whether particular projects are working successfully or not, and making sure resources are spent as planned.
- **Carrying-out evidence-based advocacy for changes in the allocation of resources, reprioritisation, better coordination etc.:** seeing what donors are funding in a specific country / region and making the case for a different allocation of resources (e.g. more funding for health or education, or more funding for a particular region).
- **Supporting targeted coordination in particular sectors, policy areas, or locations:** understanding which organisations are working in similar sectors or locations, in order to find new partners or work more efficiently.
- **Undertaking research to inform policy, advocacy, etc.:** uncovering expenditure issues or better understanding the actions and priorities of donors, governments and civil society organisations in different countries.
- **Finding funding opportunities:** seeing which organisations are active in a specific country / region and which organisations and areas of work they fund, making it possible to discover funding opportunities or trends.

**2. The workshop pointed out the need for further training and streamlining of IATI's tools to be relevant for the needs and capacities of national-level civil society organisations.**

Many participants during the workshop were beginner-level data users, relatively new to using Excel, pivot tables, etc. As such, some participants struggled with holistically analysing IATI data using CDFD, especially to carry out data analysis that cannot be conducted with d-portal. As such, the Secretariat committed to bringing these experiences back to the Secretariat and IATI Governing Board, emphasising the need to further streamline and improve IATI's data access tools for non-expert users.