IATI Delivering at National Level

In 2011, governments and development organisations began to publish timely, detailed data on their aid projects in the IATI format. Through a series of country-level projects, work has now begun to help understand how publication of such data can improve management and accountability in the countries that receive aid.

Each country has its own specific needs for information and data, with a range of stakeholders in and outside of government requiring aid information for different purposes. The IATI Standard has been designed to meet their varied needs, and was designed following consultations in 2009 with 72 governments and over 150 civil society organisations from all over the world.

With an increasing amount of data now being published in the IATI format, the IATI Secretariat is working in partnership with aid receiving governments and aid information management system providers to establish an automatic electronic feed of data from the donors record systems to those of the recipient country.

What is IATI?

IATI was launched in Accra, Ghana in 2008 as a multi-stakeholder initiative to address the challenges that developing countries continue to face in accessing information about aid flows and activities. It does this through a standard for reporting information on projects which is now being used by around 100 governments and organisations around the world.

> "An investment in better information is an investment in better development."
>
> **Eric Wyss, APC-Colombia**

Stakeholders who might want to access IATI information include:

Finance and Budget Ministries – they need data that can be easily integrated into their planning and budgeting systems, to improve planning and accounting processes. Their priority is timely, accurate and comprehensive data. Line Ministries require similar information, but with more specific focus on aid that is directed to their particular sectors, e.g. health or education.

Parliamentarians – play a vital role in holding governments to account for the resources and services provided to their constituents. For accountability mechanisms to work effectively, parliamentarians need access to detailed, timely, comprehensive and consistent data.

Civil Society Organisations – use aid information to support their advocacy and hold service-providers to account. They have a key role to play in tracking aid expenditure through the system. Donor Agencies and INGO's - operating in countries need better information about aid allocation to assist with better coordination.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Aid flows to the Democratic Republic of the Congo make up approximately 50% of the national budget. The Planning, Finance and Budget ministries monitor all aid flows into the country but each receives only partial and different subsets of the total aid picture, with some flows remaining completely unknown.

A key demand of the Government is to be able to capture information on the aid flows that feed into their national budget. Currently, data received is inconsistent and is not provided in a timely nor comprehensive enough fashion to enable the ministry to map out their annual budget.

In order to be able plan and budget efficiently the Ministries of Budget and Planning need access to good quality, timely and accurate data on resource flows from donors working in the DRC. IATI is working closely with the Government of DRC and Development Gateway to test how IATI-compliant data provided by donors can be used to complement and improve existing and planned systems for aid management. It was done in two ways: Firstly, we tested the automatic exchange of data from donors publishing IATI compliant data and secondly, we monitored the provision of aid flow data into the national budget.

A key demand of the Government is to be able to capture information on the aid flows that feed into their national budget. IATI meets many of the demands of the Plateforme pour la Gestion de l'Aide et des Investissements (PGAI) in terms of the data they require from donors to enable improved planning.
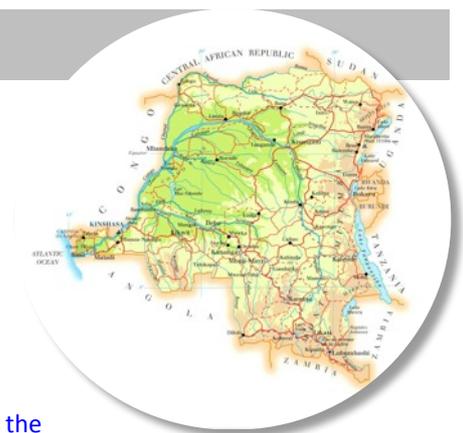
50% of national budget comes from aid flows.

3 different ministries receive different information on aid flows.

Automated processes should improve the extent, quality and accuracy of data being captured by the Government for planning and budgeting.

Colombia

The changing character of Colombia's development means an increasingly significant role for South-South Cooperation (SSC), NGO's and the private sector. With ODA flows now only accounting for approximately 0.4% of the budget the Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-COLOMBIA) increasingly need access to information on the development flows of other non-traditional aid partners, to enable them to better monitor and manage resource flows in the country. IATI is working with APC and its partners to explore how IATI is relevant to the improvement of access to data on SSC, NGO and private sector flows for development.

Nevertheless, ODA flows still remain relevant to APC, and IATI will be working closely with them to assess the feasibility of automatically importing data published in the IATI format, into the government systems, exploring how the IATI data might enable improved monitoring and managing of aid flows. APC currently monitor development flows through their aid information management system (SIAOD), which uses an external map interface (Mapa de Cooperación Internacional) to allow public engagement with aid monitoring. To enable effective monitoring, and evaluation of the impact on the communities to which aid is directed, APC require more detailed and better quality information from their development partners, which IATI has the potential to offer.

> Increasing significance of **South-South Cooperation** and **NGO's**.
> Strong culture of aid monitoring by both **government bodies** and **civil society**

Rwanda

Official development assistance to Rwanda in 2009 accounted for 20% of its GNI. Understanding the full picture of aid flows into Rwanda is essential for the effective management of projects and budget planning by government officials and departments. The Rwandan government face several problems with the data that is currently available for aid management purposes in Rwanda.

A key demand of the Rwandan government is to be able to capture information on the aid flows that feed into their national budget. Operational since 2005, the Development Assistance Database (DAD) is the Government's official online tool on development assistance.

The Government uses the DAD to collect data from development partners and publish official reports on ODA and the Donor Performance Assessment Framework (DPAF).

With the support of Synergy International Systems, the Ministry of Economics and Finance (MINECOFIN) is currently working to upgrade the DAD to improve the information captured from donors.

The standardised publication of data in the IATI format by donors to Rwanda, and automatic exchange of data between donor systems and government systems has potential to offer considerable value. In collaboration with MINECOFIN, Synergy (the company that provide the Development Assistance Database) and a group of donors, the IATI Secretariat will be further piloting the automatic exchange of data between donor and government systems, in order to test whether IATI data generates better quality, more timely, data and whether it increases the efficiency of the data publication and capture processes. IATI is part of a larger piece of work that is being carried out with the government of Rwanda and Synergy International to develop an interface that automatically links the Government's integrated financial management system, known as SmartFMS, and the Development Assistance database.

> "**If you cannot get your hands on the information, you cannot effectively quantify what you are going to do – what you are going to receive and what you are going to spend.**"
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> **Ronald Nkusi, MINECOFIN, Rwanda**
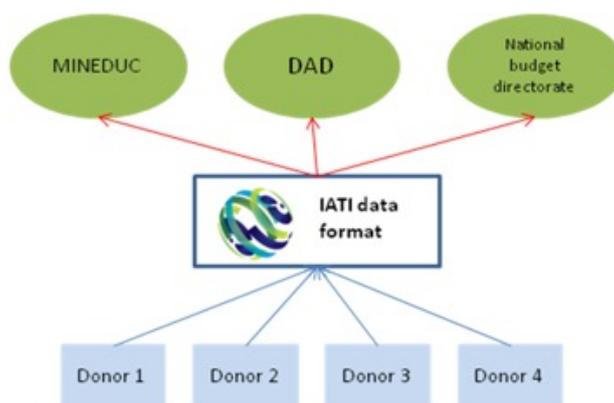
> **20%** of GNI comes from ODA
>
> At least **6** different ministries and departments receive different information on aid flows