



## Meeting of IATI Steering Committee Members and Observers

UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark 2014

### Paper 3c: Version 2.01: The first integer upgrade to the IATI standard

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#### INTRODUCTION

As agreed at the October 2013 Steering Committee, the Secretariat is in the process of preparing for the first integer upgrade of the IATI Standard. A call for proposals on the content of the upgrade was made at that time and a session was held at the recent Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting in Montreal (29-30 January).

This paper now seeks approval by the Steering Committee of the broad content to be covered by this upgrade. With this approval the technical team will draft the specific changes required to definitions, codes and xml formats - for further consultation. The envisaged timeline is for preparation and testing of the full technical details in time to seek formal approval of the upgrade at the October 2014 Steering Committee meeting. Following this timeline the upgrade will be ready to go live in early 2015.

#### CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN AN INTEGER UPGRADE

Unlike a decimal upgrade, an integer upgrade can include changes that are not backwardly compatible. It can also change the mandatory/optional status of an element. The standard allows for publishers to continue to publish using earlier versions, and upgrade at their convenience. For this reason the proposed timetable includes a three month delay between the final Steering Committee approval and the upgrade going live, to enable consumers of the data to process the changes and make necessary modifications within their own systems.



## TIMETABLE

For publishers and users of data alike, it is critical that a clear timetable is approved and followed. The following timetable is submitted for approval by the Steering Committee.

Milestone	Consultation	Timescale	Completion Date
Thematic proposals agreed by IATI Secretariat			13th March 2014
Publication of final thematic proposal, incorporating the recommendations of the Secretariat			24th March 2014
Technical Iteration 1 of the 2.01 standard is complete and is publicly available. A human readable version will be also be available via generated documentation.	Community <sup>1</sup> can follow progress and participate via github.	4 weeks	28th April 2014
First technical consultation. The community has until the due date to inspect the 2.01 Standard and comment.	During this time the community should be inspecting and testing the standard, and logging bug reports, comments and suggestions.	4 weeks	26th May 2014
Second iteration of the 2.01 standard is worked on to incorporate any changes, bug fixes, etc.	Community can follow progress via github, and may be able to help fix tricky problems.	4 weeks	23rd June 2014
Second technical consultation. The community has until the due date to inspect iteration 2 of the 2.01 Standard and comment.	During this time the community should be inspecting and testing the standard, and logging bug reports, comments and suggestions.	4 weeks	28th July 2014
Third and Final iteration of the 2.01 standard is worked on to incorporate any changes, bug fixes, etc.	Community can follow progress via github, and may be able to help fix tricky problems, and suggest pull requests	3 weeks	18th August 2014
The community has until the due date to inspect the final iteration of the 2.01 Standard and comment.	During this time the community should be inspecting and testing the standard and logging bug reports, comments and suggestions.	2 weeks	1st September 2014
Final Version of 2.01 completed and ready for the Steering Committee		1 week	Monday 8th September 2014
Steering committee formally accepts Version 2.01. 2.01 is set in stone. No more changes.			Mid September 2014
Go live	This period of grace between approval of the upgrade and go live is primarily to ensure that systems that use IATI data can make all necessary preparations and adjustments.	12 weeks	Mid January 2015

<sup>1</sup> The community referred to here is comprised of the technical/political teams responsible for the implementation of the Standard



## CONTENT

The consultation that has taken place to date can be found on the Knowledge Base and a summary of recommendations can be found [here](#)<sup>2</sup>. This summary contains links to the individual recommendations.

## STRENGTHENING THE CORE OF THE STANDARD

The current standard has very few mandatory fields. The main reason for this is that in Version 1.01 all mandatory validation was done via the XML Schema, and it is very difficult using XML logic alone to apply such rules. Additional validation procedures have since been established to now propose that all activities under all circumstances should always contain:

- A valid reporting organisation reference;
- A valid IATI activity identifier;
- At least one participating organisation;
- Title and description;
- At least one activity start date;
- A sector code;
- At least one transaction;
- In addition when budgets are present they must contain both a start and end date, and a planned disbursement must at least contain a start date.

A validation failure on a missing mandatory field will not stop the publication of an activity but will result in the activity being flagged in data quality tools and statistics.

## LANGUAGE ISSUES

There was a strong consensus at the TAG that the standard should, in all circumstances, be both language neutral and allow for multi-lingual text wherever required. A commitment to language neutrality will involve changing the codes for:

- Activity Date Type
- Organisation Role
- Transaction Type
- Sector Vocabulary
- Gazetteer Agency

These changes should be relatively easy for publishers (as in most cases this will involve a mapping between their system and IATI) but involves a level of complexity for users.

## ORGANISATION IDENTIFIERS

Two major changes to the standard are proposed in order for the technical team to ensure that it is possible for any organisation to be identified in a consistent, globally unique, machine readable

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<sup>2</sup> <http://support.iatistandard.org/entries/41586986-Overview-of-Version-2-01>



format. The inability to identify all organisations - particularly public institutions - is becoming a very significant problem within IATI data that must be resolved urgently.

There is a growing consensus for a methodology that recognises and codes all recognised registration agencies, and which then constructs an identifier consisting of the agency code and the registration number generated by the agency.

Two initiatives are required in order to achieve this:

1. Many publishers use OECD DAC Donor, agency and channel of delivery codes for identification processes. To standardise these the DAC needs to be recognised as a registration agency and a prefix needs to be applied to all identifiers currently in use;
2. Development of a methodology for the identification of government departments and public sector agencies. Despite extensive research over the last two years, the Secretariat has not found an existing standard or methodology for this work. It is therefore proposed that, in conjunction with other willing initiatives (such as the fledgling Open Contracting Standard) a methodology be developed for these entities.

### **INCLUDING GENERAL RULES IN THE STANDARD**

The standard is primarily governed by its XML Schema. This does not include rules or requirements that go beyond the structure of the data. There are a number of practices that currently exist as informal guidelines; the technical team proposes that these should be included in a rule document that is more specific than the current Framework for Implementation. These include:

- Timeliness and frequency of reporting;
- Units of aid;
- Multi-level hierarchical reporting;
- Reporting of aggregated financial balances of values excluded because of exclusions and thresholds.

### **OTHER PROPOSED ADDITIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. There have been requests for sectors and geographical elements to be reported at the transaction as well as activity level. This would be optional, in the same way as finance-type and aid-type are already allowed at both levels;
2. There is a need to improve the structure of sector and country data in the Organisation Standard;
3. There is a problem reporting activities that involve a split between countries and regions;
4. There is also a proposal to add an exclusion marker attribute to every element in the standard.



**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Approval by the Steering Committee is requested to approve proceeding with the proposed modifications (including consideration of those listed as 'other proposed additions'), and endorsement of the timeframe for consultation and implementation.