

The IATI Platform

Consultation Note on Technical Architecture and Data Formats

1.0 Introduction

IATI aims to improve the availability and accessibility of aid information by committing donors to agree common standards for publication of information about aid. It is anticipated that this standard will also be used by other providers of aid and resources for poverty reduction: NGOs; foundations; private sector organization etc.

IATI is not about creating another database on aid activities. It aims to establish common ways of recording and publishing aid information to create **a platform** that will enable existing databases – and potential new services – to access this information and provide more detailed, timely, and accessible information about aid.

The idea of openness is crucial to creating this platform and achieving transparency. Information must be openly available with as few restrictions how the information is accessed and used as possible. To this end, we need to design a technical architecture that enables information to be published and accessed in an open way. **The attached consultation paper ‘unlocking the potential of aid information’ covers three aspects of this:**

- Making aid information legally open
- Making aid information technologically open
- Making aid information easy to find

This consultation note outlines the high level objectives of the technical workstream of IATI, the type of information the standard will cover and identifies the main requirements the providers and users of aid information have from IATI.

This note, and the attached ‘unlocking the potential of aid information’ paper, has been written for open consultation purposes and is intended to stimulate debate around:

- 1) The objectives of the technical component of IATI
- 2) The target users and their requirements
- 3) What is required to meet the needs of publishing info
- 4) The technicalities of making aid information available, open and easy to find
- 5) Invite advice, comments and feedback on other aspects we should consider

- 6) Advice on where existing standards could be used and exemplars of similar initiatives

2.0 Potential IATI Information

Information	Type	Notes, & Possible Standards
Donor information		
Policies, strategies, procedural docs etc.	Documents (+metadat a)	Dublin Core?
Forward planning budgets by country, by sector	Data	XBRL?
Country strategies	Documents (+metadat a)	Dublin Core? ISO countries
Future procurement opportunities & tenders	Documents (+metadat a)	
Project / Unit of Aid information		
Project Documents	Documents (+metadat a)	Dublin Core?
Project identification information (ID, title, descriptions, dates, status)	Data	
Country & detail geo info	Data	ISO country Geo code (longitude/latitude) Administrative region/district (?)
Sector (Global & local)	Data	DAC sector codes / local country budget classifications
Type of Aid	Data	DAC standards
Project Contacts	Data	
Funding organization	Data	Standards for organization details?
Financial information (project budgets, commitments, individual disbursement data, value & recipient)	Data	XBRL?
Result/output indicators	Data	SDMX?
Implementing agency /channel of delivery	Data	Standards for organization details?
Details of contract issued	Data / Docs	Procurement standards? OECD good practice
Paris Indicators	Data	SDMX?
Conditions	Data / Docs	

3.0. Information Providers Requirements

3.1. Information providers

- Donor HQ

- Donor country offices
- NGOs
- Foundations
- Private organisations
- Infomediaries

3.2. Provider Requirements for an IATI platform

Requirements	Implication for design	Priority
The platform must meet the needs of most donor reporting requirements	There needs to be a way of handling DAC & FTS reporting as well as IATI requirements	
It should support automated publication of information		
Enable providers to add information in a decentralized way (e.g. HQ might publish info on past spend, but country offices could publish info on forward planning info)	How will we avoid or highlight duplication of data? We will need to highlight the source of information	
Allow providers to mark data as validated or non-validated	Metadata	
Allow providers to add additional non-IATI information (e.g. where data has been crowdsourced or improved)		
Providers should have a degree of choice in formats and licensing options	There should be an approved IATI list of acceptable options	

4.0. Information User Requirements

4.1. 1st Level Users

The focus of the architecture should be for information to be primarily accessible by experienced users of data who can repackage and repurpose it into more accessible formats. These include:

- Infomediaries - Complete aggregators of all aid information (e.g. DAC, AIDA, PLAID)
- Infomediaries - Sector/country/donor specific aggregators (e.g. Health portals, Uganda portal)
- Partner Government aid management systems administrators (e.g. DAD, AMP)

- Individual data specialist for one-off analysis (e.g. researchers, journalists)

4.2. User Requirements

Requirements	Implication for design	Priority
IATI data must be comparable regardless of the source	Schema is required	
There must be manual access to raw data in human-readable & machine readable formats (i.e. to meet need of researcher who wants raw data)	A simple format may be necessary (e.g. .xls) A mechanism to check for broken links	
There must be an automated way of accessing the information (i.e. for aggregators)	At least through direct access to data files Possibly by recommending API access	
Users should be able to be informed when information is updated	Rss feeds? Dashboard monitoring updates?	
The user must be able to distinguish between official and non-official sources as well as validated and non-validated	Metadata for data sets Should documents be in read-only format?	
The user must have the ability to use the information without constraints	Open licensing	
It should be easy to find data sets -by country -by donor - sector	How granular should datasets be? - A dataset for each donor country programme? - Separate datasets for forward looking data? - Etc. Finding data by sector is likely to be more challenging	
There should be an audit trail for changes and updates to data sets	How long should data be available for (retention schedule)? How important is having a timeseries?	
It should be easy to monitor the level of donor compliance to IATI standard - Completeness of info available - Correct formats		