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International Aid Transparency Initiative Consultation Workshop for East and Southern Africa

CONSULTATION REPORT

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About IATI

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) aims to deliver a step shift in public availability and accessibility of information on aid flows and activities. It will do this by bringing together donors, developing countries and civil society organisations to agree common information standards applicable to aid flows, building on existing standards and definitions. Launched at the Accra High Level Forum in September 2008, IATI now has 16 donor signatories and a growing number of endorsements from developing countries. Further information on IATI can be found online at <http://www.aidtransparency.net>.

This workshop is one of a number of outreach events being organised in partner countries with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Further information on partner country outreach activities can be obtained from Ms. Danila Boneva, IATI Partner Outreach Coordinator (danila.boneva@undp.org).



Day 1: John Rwangombwa (Rwanda), left, and Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah (UNDP) welcome participants to the Kigali workshop.



Day 2: Pamphile Muderega (Burundi) (fourth from left) chairs a group discussion on priorities for the IATI Code of Conduct.

Executive Summary

This two-day workshop brought together representatives of eleven governments in the East and Southern Africa region for the first of a series of partner country outreach events on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). In addition to familiarizing partner country stakeholders with IATI, this series of events seeks to engage with partner country stakeholders and users of aid information with a view to ensuring that the IATI standards and Code of Conduct being planned respond to the needs of partner country governments as key users of aid information.

Partner country participants expressed their broad support for IATI as an initiative that is highly relevant in addressing a number of challenges faced by partner country governments in the effective management of aid. Participants identified clear linkages between IATI and the successful implementation of international agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action at the country level. The centrality of comprehensive, accurate and timely aid information in supporting domestic PFM processes and accountability was underscored throughout the discussions.

Whilst recognizing the potential benefits of IATI for partner countries, many participants voiced concern over the need to ensure that IATI is developed in a manner that responds directly to genuine country needs for aid information. Going forward, it will be important that country-specific needs for aid information are not undermined by the desire to achieve a degree of standardization and harmonization at the global level.

Discussion of the specific challenges with respect to aid information in post-conflict environments pointed not only to the potential of IATI in simplifying the tracking of aid in complex aid environments, but also to the need for the IATI process to consider different typologies of partner country, and the specific challenges with respect to aid information faced by them.

Limited donor compliance with partner country requests for aid information is currently an important bottleneck highlighted over the course of the consultations. At present, a number of governments do not receive regular and timely reports from donors on aid flows despite the existence of country-level tools or processes to encourage this. Furthermore, where donor agencies do comply with requests for information, this is often provided in a format or using definitions that do not meet the information needs of partner country governments. Participants supported the proposal that IATI should include a Code of Conduct by which donors would be bound, proposing that this should address both issues of timeliness and convergence around clear definitions.

In their initial discussions on the prioritization of types of information on aid, partner countries stressed the importance of key information on the “where”, “what” and “how” of aid flows, along with meaningful sectoral classifications that could be mapped to the structure of partner country budgets. The need to cover a wider definition of aid, and a wider range of actors (including NGOs) was highlighted, as was the importance of clear, commonly agreed definitions for a range of key terms.

In terms of the IATI process going forward, a number of participants indicated their desire that the IATI governance structure should be expanded in a manner that would further strengthen partner country participation and representation in the design of the IATI standard and Code of Conduct, recognizing the centrality of partner country governments as key beneficiaries of IATI. Some partner countries also identified the need for further in-depth technical consultations amongst partner country government officials with a view to achieving a clearer and more detailed understanding of, for example, how national budget classifications compare with each other, and the extent to which an IATI standard could deal with sector mapping

effectively. At this stage, it is anticipated that interested partner countries should be invited to engage in the work of the IATI Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

1. Introduction

The IATI Consultation Workshop for East and Southern Africa was held from 29th-30th June in Kigali, Rwanda, and was hosted by the Government of Rwanda with the support in-country of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The workshop was designed as a forum for initial consultation primarily with partner country governments in the sub-region on IATI. It was the first of a series of regional events around the world that aims to:

- Familiarize a larger number of partner countries and stakeholders with the IATI and its objectives as it relates to the Accra Agenda for Action, Paris Declaration and other international commitments on transparency and mutual accountability;
- Identify those information needs of partner country governments which are not currently being met, and make recommendations for areas to be included in the scope of potential IATI standards, drawing on the IATI scoping paper;
- Facilitate South-South learning and peer exchange on good practices, lessons learnt and challenges from the deployment of aid information management systems (AIMS), and how the IATI can help to improve the effectiveness of such systems, as well as how best practices and experiences with country AIMS can feed into the development of an IATI standard;
- Discuss how to take the IATI forward at country, sub-regional, regional and global levels, to include partner country needs in regard to capacity development.

Further details of the workshop, its objectives, anticipated outputs and agenda can be found in the Concept Note and Agenda (Annexes A and B).

A total of eleven partner countries in the sub-region were represented by a total of 32 government officials, primarily from ministries of finance, planning and foreign affairs, and other entities responsible for aid management. Experts from UNDP, Development Gateway Foundation and Synergy International Systems also participated, along with representatives of some donor governments and non-governmental organisations in Rwanda. A full list of participants is provided in Annex C.

The event was opened by John Rwangombwa, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of the Republic of Rwanda. In his opening remarks, Mr. Rwangombwa spoke of the importance of transparent, timely and comprehensive information on aid flows in the context of countries' own PFM reforms, and in supporting the implementation of the Paris and Accra commitments in the sub-region. Rwanda's remarks were supplemented by those of UNDP – as the key entity responsible for supporting partner country outreach on IATI – represented by Mr Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, Country Director. Mr Ohemeng-Boamah made the link between IATI and other country and regional initiatives designed to support aid effectiveness, and went on to stress the importance of south-south peer learning and partnerships in the implementation of international agreements on aid and its effectiveness.

2. Aid information in the broader context of ownership, accountability and implementing the AAA

The first plenary session was designed to offer an overview of IATI, and help to contextualise it in the problems faced by partner countries with respect to aid information, its sources, management and usage. Three presentations offered participants with key material on IATI and a country perspective (Tanzania), and these were followed by rich plenary discussions.

In his presentation on **Aid Information, Ownership and Mutual Accountability**, Mr. Alicem Matembele (Tanzania) offered an overview of initiatives to date in Tanzania designed to enhance access to information on aid flows. Recognising that aid information speaks to a wider range of issues, the case of Tanzania was presented as a starting point for exploring similar challenges in other partner countries. Reliable aid information was seen as a key planning input for the government as it attempts to implement activities outlined in its National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP/MKUKUTA/MKUZA). Therefore, it was paramount to have an efficient mechanism or channels for the recording and tracking of aid, as this would facilitate planning and budgeting processes. The Development Gateway Foundation (DGF) has supported the development of the Aid Management Platform (AMP) in Tanzania with a view to putting in place a mechanism to track and record ODA. This should also strengthen national ownership, mutual accountability and country-led partnerships which are among the key foundations of the NSGRP.

Robin Ogilvy (UNDP Rwanda) presented on the **Aims and Objectives of IATI in the Context of AAA Implementation at the Country Level** on behalf of the IATI Secretariat. This presentation offered participants with an introduction to IATI, its aims, structure and proposed process. It was explained that IATI does not seek to duplicate other processes or initiatives, but rather that it should be seen as a process through which partner country governments should eventually have access to the information that they need to see the Accra commitments on predictability and transparency implemented fully at the country level.

Rob Tew (DIPR) presented an overview of the **IATI Scoping Paper**, which sets out in broad terms the sorts of challenges faced by different stakeholders in their access to and use of aid information, potential gains for stakeholders – including partner country governments – from the adoption of an IATI standard and code of conduct, along with recommendations for consideration in the development of the standard, code of conduct and process going forward. The paper also set the scene by offering an overview of existing aid information sources, and examples of successful standard-setting in other areas that IATI could learn from.

These presentations led into a rich initial plenary discussion amongst participants. Key points emerging included:

- Concern over the need to balance the benefits of a global initiative against the need to respond directly to real country needs. One participant suggested that discussions on the “what/how/when” of aid information might be better placed at the country level to ensure that different country needs are taken into account, rather than pushing for over-standardisation. In this respect, the IATI process might be designed from a more “bottom-up” angle, starting with the point of aid delivery. Another participant countered this remark by proposing that a degree of HQ consensus amongst donors was necessary as definitions are often set at this level.
- How might IATI deal with information on private aid flows? A participant noted that for some countries, these flows constitute a significant share of resources, and the nature of this assistance can be quite different to bilateral and multilateral ODA.
- Broad consensus on the need to ensure that IATI fits into a broader global governance framework driven by existing (Paris) commitments, with linkages perhaps being made to OECD standards and definitions. It was proposed that whilst technical problems could be tackled relatively easily, the key challenges faced by partner countries in obtaining aid information are political, and that this needs to be dealt with within existing frameworks and agreements at a political level.
- Linkages with national budget processes and systems. One participant remarked that whilst aid information was important, it was equally

“We recently had a parliamentary question on how much is actually spent on the agriculture sector. The only way we could respond to this was to go to pull data from different sources and systems.”
- Burundi.

important to be able to contextualise it as part of national expenditure for the purpose of planning and accountability.

- Questions of ensuring accessibility of information on aid to all interested stakeholders. For example, a participant suggested that there is a need to examine carefully the needs of all government stakeholders (not only those of ministries of finance or planning), as too often coordination bottlenecks are internal on the part of partner country governments. Consideration should also be given to how members of the general public might have access to information (in rural areas, for example). Another participant asked how IATI might help to achieve the level of granularity in aid information needed to meet the needs of all users (for example, in budget preparation and macro planning).
- Post conflict countries face many of the same challenges as others, yet resolving them might be even more important to recovery / peace-building processes. For example, one country (the DRC) identified with the general challenges illustrated in the Tanzania example, but for this post-conflict country, overcoming such challenges is seen as central to development efforts given the particularly high dependency on foreign aid and the absence of strong national systems.
- Civil society involvement and linkages will need detailed consultation and consideration. A representative of a non-governmental organisation recognised the potential benefit of IATI, but proposed that further consideration be given to how civil society fits with the initiative.

3. Key challenges in accessing and using aid information

This session took the form of four sessions in break-out groups to ensure focussed, inclusive and action-oriented discussions. The stimulus paper for these discussions is provided in Annex D. A summary of the key points emerging from each group and the plenary discussions that followed is provided below.

3.1 Current sources of information on aid, and challenges associated with these

- Participants agreed on the clear need for improved aid information for better planning and budgeting. Also for looking at historical perspective and understanding evolution of aid environment. Aid information needed for holding donors accountable for their commitments. Also results management: knowing inputs, and then mapping to outputs and outcomes by MDG. Ability to assess implementation of PD commitments was proposed as an important use.
- One of the key challenges identified was the lack of an adequate central repository for all aid data for any given country, plus the multiplicity of donors, and different ministries and/or units dealing with aid within recipient countries. Put together this makes for an ad hoc and uncoordinated approach to the obtaining of data on aid (especially that relating to project support). Regardless of whether the country was stable (Tanzania) or post-conflict (Sudan) it was extremely difficult (if not impossible) to get comprehensive information on aid inflows.
- Aid information management systems (AIMS) are not, by themselves, the answer to these problems. Even countries who have implemented a DAD or AMP system have difficulty in obtaining comprehensive information on aid.
- Donor compliance with requests for information at the country level was seen as one of the most significant challenges faced. Donors frequently do not comply with the timeframe / schedule for reporting on aid as requested by the partner country and there is often resistance from donors who regard requests for information as unwelcome additional work. Some countries (e.g. Malawi) still request a monthly spreadsheet return, from donors, which is input into the AIMS by Malawi MoF staff. One of the most successful approaches seems to be matching a named individual who acts as the 'focal point' for aid information within the partner country government agency that deals with

aid management/coordination with a corresponding named ‘focal point’ in each donor. It is important, however, that these ‘focal points’ are the right people (i.e. those with a thorough understanding of the information).

- In considering the problems encountered with the content of the aid data available, partner countries identified a range of gaps, definitional issues and inconsistency. Participants proposed that aid data should not just be looked at in terms of economic classifications, but also in terms of accounting classifications in order to facilitate integration of this information into national charts of accounts. Inconsistencies between data provided by different donors included:
 - Inconsistent use of exchange rates
 - Inconsistent definition of projects
 - Inconsistent definition of disbursement
 - Inconsistent definition of parallel PIUs
 - Inconsistent definition of Humanitarian Aid vs. Development Aid
- Participants noted that in practice, the interface between AIMS and other government PFM systems has proved difficult to achieve, in part as a result of the sorts of inconsistencies highlighted above.
- Information on aid channelled through NGOs was cited as especially difficult to obtain, as was information on non-cash or in-kind ODA. Tracking assistance through some multilateral channels can also be challenging: double-counting of aid has occurred when aid via the UN system has shown up in both the data from the UN and that from the original donor.
- Participants noted that OECD datasets were not particularly useful in meeting the needs of partner country governments. This is in part because the data is always out of date when published, and also as a result of definitional differences with country-level processes. It was however noted that OECD data sets are sometimes used to validate historical aggregates collected in-country, or to facilitate cross-country comparison. One participant also noted that not even donor staff are able to explain differences between OECD and in-country figures report by them.
- It is often difficult to differentiate between types of aid that actually result in a transfer of resources to the partner country and others that do not. As one participant put it, “how do we distinguish *good* ODA from donor overheads?” Others proposed that a harmonisation of terminology (“disbursement”, “project” etc) might be necessary, along with adequate training of donor rapporteurs to ensure systematic application of definitions.

3.2 Priorities for partner countries for improving access to aid information

- Many participants felt that whilst timely reporting was important, the accuracy of data was even more important. In this regard, it was concluded that a transparent timeline with an agreed frequency for reporting was identified (recognising that reporting need not be “real time”). Preference was expressed for monthly reporting (for example, Malawi currently requires donors to report on a month’s aid flows (disbursements) by the 10th day of the following month).
- Information on future flows is important, but there was a need to qualify this. i.e. what constitutes a “pledge”?
- The “where”, “when” and “how” of aid flows is important (points 3 to 5 on the list of areas in Annex A of the Session 2 discussion paper), but some participants felt that this information should also be further qualified (i.e. do we focus on inflows or execution rates?)
- Project and sectoral information was deemed important, but participants were unsure as to how this might be implemented. There is a need, for example, to link aid data to budget classifications, and this would involve some agreement on sector codings. One

proposal was that donors should be forced to be more “sector-specific” in their reporting (for example, labelling a project as “energy and water” is too vague, as is “community development”).

- In discussions on the range of sources of aid to be covered (e.g. extending to NGOs, foundations...), participants considered the extent to which reporting thresholds might be appropriate. For example, would it be appropriate to ask donors to report only on projects over \$1m in value? Other participants felt that this could be problematic as any such threshold would be different for different countries (a “big” project for one country might be less significant for another).
- The importance of clear definitions was reiterated. What do we understand by a “disbursement”? For example, one participant noted that for a donor such as the Dutch government, funds are only considered disbursed once financial statements are approved by their accounting officer.

3.3 Potential impacts of better aid information

- Participants concluded that, on the whole, good data on aid does result in better decision-making on the part of partner country governments. A number of issues were identified as being of particular importance to strengthening planning, budgeting and execution:
 - Information on donor commitments is needed *prior* to national government budget cycle so that these resources can be included in development programmes for implementation. The challenge to date is that such commitments information comes too late and these resources are left out of the national budget.
 - There is a need to know the exact location of the aid and the sectors that the aid will be supporting at the national level. We often know the lump sum, but we don't have information on exact allocation to sectors.
 - Disbursement schedule information is lacking. Governments often have details of the committed amount of aid, but do not systematically have access to disbursement schedules.
 - Information on modalities is important (for example, technical assistance), so that such assistance can be better managed and prioritised.
- Participants deliberated on the ways in which better aid information might lead to enhanced ownership and strengthened mutual accountability. In doing so, they concluded that:
 - Where information is provided, this improves national ownership because countries would have a clear picture on the amount of aid coming in, what it is being spent on and when.
 - Detailed categorisation is important in this regard – e.g. understanding TA costs vs. actual programmable support for beneficiaries. Too often, programmable aid is reduced by embedded TA costs and other overheads which are not always broken down in sufficient detail.
- What information is needed to better hold donors to account for quality and volume of their aid?
 - The group felt that scope for holding donors to account remained a challenge. It was mentioned that donors often make commitments and do not always honour them.
 - One participant summarised the discussion as: “once the above [information] is all provided, this makes things more transparent and then donors will have to explain their commitments”.
 - Participants also considered the importance of domestic accountability. For example, when stakeholders are aware of where and how aid should be used, then people can use the info in support of PETS, PERs etc to ensure that intended beneficiaries actually do benefit from the assistance.

3.4 Particular issues and needs with respect to aid information in post-conflict and special development situations

A number of partner countries self-identified as post-conflict and participants from Burundi, DR Congo, Comoros and Sudan and South Sudan came together to exchange on the specific challenges that they face, and the often special informational needs arising in such development situations.

- A number of participants in this group proposed that transparent and accessible information on aid was even *more* important in a post-conflict setting, not least because of the often-high degree of dependency on foreign aid in these settings; particularly weak government systems; the need to achieve and communicate tangible development results relatively quickly as part of the peace-building process; the fact that in such settings, donor- or NGO-execution modalities often prevail, resulting in government having less access to information or reduced oversight of development projects.
- In terms of priorities for aid information, the group identified first and foremost with the need for basic “what, “how” and “where” information on development projects, citing that even this information is problematic at present and that access to and reliable coverage of such basic aid information would be most important to them. Whilst information on sectors of intervention was deemed important, participants saw integration with the national budget as a longer-term ideal for these countries.
- Details of procurement, contracts, conditionality and policy markers were seen as lower-priority information needs by this group of countries.
- Participants proposed that implementation of IATI by donors could be used as a basic principle for intervention in fragile states. This could build on the existing ten principles, and would reflect the fact that aid information is even more important to reconstruction and peace-building processes in these countries. Some felt that donors lacked political will, particularly when it comes to reporting to and being held accountable by post-conflict governments and that IATI might have a role in promoting this principle.

4. Solutions: Aid information management systems, IATI and complementary initiatives

Day two built on the previous day’s discussions by trying to contextualise some of the challenges identified – and possible solutions – in the experiences to date of a number of partner countries. Participants then went on to discuss the linkages between aid information and broader country-level PFM processes, and how IATI might help to support these.

4.1 Country experiences, lessons and challenges in aid information management

Three countries began the session by presenting in-depth case studies on the status of aid information management initiatives, opportunities and challenges to date at the country level, the aim being to share experiences with other countries, and to provide an idea of the sorts of initiatives in place at the country level that IATI could build upon and support.

The Government of **Burundi** presented on its experiences in the implementation of a national aid management system, setting the scene by explaining the post-conflict developmental context of the country and the need for the Permanent Secretariat of the National Aid Coordination Committee to be empowered with appropriate information to better play its role in coordinating the aid-related activities of a range of government institutions.

Burundi’s presentation pointed to the importance of a process for aid information collection and management conducive to comprehensive reporting, results and management, and

monitoring of the implementation of the Paris Declaration at the country level. Implementation of the Aid Management Platform (AMP) in Burundi led to the publication of Burundi's first comprehensive report on aid flows in 2007/08, despite the identification of ongoing bottlenecks including the limited willingness and capacity of development partners to engage in the system, and infrastructure problems. The Burundian delegation also highlighted the discrepancies observed between data captured in-country and that held by the OECD, and the challenges posed by varying interpretations of common terms and definitions in reporting on aid flows.

In its presentation, the Government of **Rwanda** explained that multiple in-country repositories of aid information exist: the Development Assistance Database (DAD), a project monitoring database maintained by CEPEX, and data on flows of aid to government accounts held by the central bank. This fed into a presentation of the needs of different users of aid information in processed including budget preparation, macroeconomic monitoring and public accountability. The Rwanda experience brought to the fore the need to harmonise in-country systems and processes for aid information management to ensure that all users' needs are met in a more efficient manner. Whilst Rwanda does use data at its disposal to hold donors to account for their commitments in the spirit of mutual accountability, the presenter also pointed to the challenges posed by inconsistent and untimely reporting on the part of donors, challenges in tracking non-governmental aid flows, and the need for common understandings on key terminology and definitions in reporting.

The Government of **South Sudan** explained, in its presentation, the particular importance of accurate information on resource flows in the context of its reconstruction, recovery and development programme. At present, aid information is held in a relatively fragmented manner across institutions operating in South Sudan, with the Budget Sector Working Groups acting as the main conduit for the communication of aid information and, more broadly, planning and budgeting processes. Budget sector plans are developed in a manner that seeks to capture assistance from a range of stakeholders, including UN agencies and international NGOs with a view to facilitating harmonisation of interventions and promoting accountability and transparency. Despite strong progress to date in this area, South Sudan lacks an aid information management system, and acknowledges that the flow of information between its Budget Sector Working Groups is at times incomplete. The Government of South Sudan is currently in the process of procuring an aid information management system, around which processes to enhance aid transparency and accountability will be developed further.

4.2 Panel discussion: How IATI could help to support country PFM and aid management systems

Representatives of the Governments of Malawi and Tanzania were joined by representatives of Synergy International Systems and Development Gateway Foundation for a panel discussion that deliberated on how IATI might help to strengthen the link between country-level aid management processes and systems and the broader country-level PFM framework. Discussions were then opened up to the plenary, and are summarised as follows:

- The Development Gateway Foundation representative opened the panel discussions while stressing the importance of utilising the national AIMS experience most of the participating countries have gone through for the IATI standard to be successful. All AIMS

“Some DPs are not really wedded to using the [national aid information management] system, though the majority have agreed to use it. Some say they have a system of their own and there is a concern that you want data in the system that you are proposing, it is as if you are adding costs on their part.”
... *“We need to ensure that there is a common format or standardisation where possible between governments and donors. If you don't standardise, you'll still have a problem: the DPs will still come with their own formats.”*
- Tanzania

countries have requested data from donors in a specific format, which could be used as a basis for the IATI standard. It is important that the IATI standard is helping governments with getting the data they need to account for all assistance they receive, and support their national budget process.

- Participants stressed that the problems facing countries with regard to aid information lies overwhelmingly with project aid.
- Tanzania noted that when it comes to the use of national AIMS, in some countries donors tend to report in their own formats when providing data, not always understanding the need to align data in a format that is useful to government. Non-resident development partners (i.e. those without offices in a partner country) can also be difficult to obtain information from.
- Malawi explained that in its case, the transition to design and refinement of the AMP was not always an easy process, and that there may be scope for IATI to support (e.g. through pre-agreed norms and standards to an extent) implementation of systems at the national level.
- Both countries spoke of the importance of differentiating between types of aid, particularly technical assistance. For example, in Malawi, the government has sought where possible to disaggregate TA from other types of assistance to omit it from the national budget, since the Government cannot be held accountable for such assistance.
- Synergy confirmed that any system is useless if the data put in it is no good. The issue of unsystematic donor reporting was raised, along with technical issues (e.g. some users do not have reliable internet connections).
- The representative of Synergy proposed that one area of added value to be derived from IATI would be the ability to create linkages between national AIMS and donors' own systems. If data collection is automated, this reduces transaction costs and reduces scope for non-compliance on the part of donors. A brief presentation on a pilot which sees DAD Pakistan linked with the World Bank's ClientConnection was made. However, discussions on this topic highlighted the challenges for governments to manage advanced technical integration of AIMS and donor systems. For instance, participants from Tanzania explained that ClientConnection does not contain all the information they need.
- There was a general consensus that the core of countries' systems and processes remain key PFM processes and tools (budget preparation, accounting...). Aid fits into this, but AIMS cannot be a substitute for core government systems and processes that take public finance in its totality. It was proposed that IATI might offer scope for deepening our understanding of how to match or integrate PFM and IFMIS standards, and how these might better inform the development of aid information standards.
- The Development Gateway Foundation representative confirmed that planned AMP and IFMIS integration will be based on budget codes, chart of accounts etc. and that the IATI standard will not be relevant in this area.
- Others felt that IATI might focus less on promoting the automated exchange of data from donor IFMIS to partner country AIMS insofar as the systems are ultimately designed to meet quite different needs, and it might not be realistic to expect donors to capture all the information a partner country government might need.

In Pakistan, Synergy International Systems is commencing work on integrating the DAD (national AIMS) with the World Bank's ClientConnection (a portal to financial management system for its clients).

The World Bank was cited as problematic in terms of the quality, accuracy and timeliness of data reported manually through DAD Pakistan. Synergy is now piloting the use of XML data exchange to "pull" aid data into the DAD. XML is a very common language used throughout many database applications. This pilot took 2-3 weeks to operationalise.

- Tanzania proposed that a number of countries implementing similar systems might come together to discuss in greater details the specific issues that they face, so that these could then be presented at a higher level to promote the sorts of changes necessary in donor behaviour to make national AIMS a success.
- Malawi emphasised the importance of timely reporting. For example, its economic programme with the IMF is monitored on a quarterly basis and donor data is needed more frequently (i.e. monthly) to avoid adverse “surprises” at the end of the quarter. Malawi expressed concern over the prospect of a standard on reporting frequency that could undermine the needs of some countries. Donors have to report according to what a country needs. We need to agree on needs for information globally, but need also to leave flexibility for localisation of needs and responses.
- The Development Gateway representative suggested a few key challenges that the IATI standard could help resolve for recipient governments:
 - The ability to exclude Technical Assistance from the national budget.
 - Resolve fiscal year differences by enabling donors to minimum report on a quarterly basis.
 - Base reporting on the Cooperation Agreement, which is the legally binding framework for the assistance provided, and agree to data reporting as part of the legal obligations of donors.
 - Help governments align assistance to budget and sectors, by avoiding multiple-sector programs.
 - Support budget planning by including planned disbursement schedule in Cooperation Agreement and data reporting.

“We collect information through Excel spreadsheets and after receiving that information we enter it into the AMP. But does that information meet the needs of our PFM systems? For budget support, yes, but for project support, I’m afraid what we tend to receive is mainly statistical information not backed up by other documentation. Some detail from donors would ensure that this information is meaningful. IATI comes in by ensuring that donors provide the detailed information that meets the needs of our countries.”
- Malawi

5. Taking forward the IATI: partner country recommendations

With the first day and a half focussing on partner country needs and expectations for IATI, and country experiences to date in aid information management, this final session focussed on next steps for IATI at the global, regional and country levels. A discussion paper (Annex E) provided participants with proposed questions which were then considered in groups and in plenary discussion. A summary of these discussions is organised by theme below.

5.1 How should IATI be developed? How should partner countries be involved?

Using an extract from the IATI Scoping Paper, participants were presented with a roadmap developed by the IATI Secretariat on the next steps that would follow on from this series of regional consultation workshops. There was general consensus on the direction of the activities outlined in this extract, however it was felt that there was need to insert more opportunities for dialogue in order for partner countries to actively engage in the process going forward.

Specific recommendations tabled by the group were as follows:

- There needs to be a revision of the composition of the Steering Committee to include more partner country representation to link implementation activities at the global level with needs as defined/articulated from the country level. Malawi requested to be included in the Steering Committee as a partner country.
- It was proposed that the IATI Secretariat should look at how staff from donor agencies' country / field offices could be included formally in the IATI consultation process, as their experiences and insights are likely to differ from those sourced through an HQ-centric donor consultation process.
- There is a need to revise the composition of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to include more regional representation for the same reasons as highlighted in the point above.
- There is need to convene more technical consultations, at regional level, in order to feed into the work that will be deliberated upon at the October 2009 IATI Conference at the Hague. Participants proposed that future event(s) could provide a forum for very focussed technical work on, for example, assessing and understanding the coverage of and constraints faced in partner country aid information management systems to date.
- On capacity development, participants sought clarification on how such activities might be implemented (i.e. by IATI and its Secretariat directly, or through other mechanisms and channels).
- Participants asked that IATI should become more accessible through a more comprehensive web resource (portal), which could also provide links to country web sites, reports and existing tools, as well as providing a forum for networking amongst partner country officials involved in IATI.

5.2 What needs for support and capacity development arise in partner countries?

This group considered some of the capacity constraints faced by partner country governments in their interface with IATI and aid information issues more generally, and discussions generated the following key points and recommendations:

- Some countries face infrastructural constraints that hinder effective aid information management (e.g. internet connectivity and bandwidth; server and equipment constraints).

"All of our countries have some existing frameworks or systems. IATI doesn't have to start from scratch: let's build on what we have."
- Partner country participant

- The issue of qualified IT staff in country was also discussed, and a number of countries cited limited IT skills in-country as a bottleneck to the full implementation of electronic aid information management systems.
- Participants identified the absence of consultation structures between different stakeholders on aid information issues at the country level as a bottleneck, as well as the absence of any legal / normative framework through which donors would be compelled to report on aid flows.
- Study tours and benchmarking exercises were proposed as a means of facilitating knowledge-sharing amongst partner countries. Suggestion that IATI should build to the maximum extent possible on what already exists in countries.
- Some participants suggested that IATI could create a fund that would provide access to financial resources for partner countries to support infrastructure improvements and skills development.

5.3 Towards a donor Code of Conduct: what are the key priorities for inclusion by partner countries?

The group tasked with identifying priorities for inclusion in the Code of Conduct began by reviewing some proposed starting points set out in the IATI Scoping Paper (para. 68) and expressed its broad support for the proposed scope set out in this. Particular points emerging from this discussion included:

- The desire that reporting calendars should be formalised. Clear calendars for donor reporting to partner country governments should be established (e.g. on a monthly cycle), but that these should also allow some delay for aggregation and validation. The timeframe for the production of all information should be a maximum of three months.
- In terms of the scope of the IATI Code of Conduct, it was proposed that all forms of ODA be included (and partner countries could then decide on the specifics for reporting on, for example, military assistance, support to civilian police etc). It was proposed that for some countries (e.g. post-conflict), certain types of “non-ODA” aid are very important and as such that these should be made available through IATI too, with countries then deciding what to use according to their information needs.
- All bilateral and multilateral donors must sign up to the Code of Conduct, and they should in turn be responsible for ensuring adherence to the Code by NGOs and other implementing agencies through which they channel funds.
- There was no clear consensus on the need for retrospective publication of historical information on aid flows. This may be best left to a country-level decision.
- In terms of validation, it was proposed that provisional data might be made available quickly, but that donors and other stakeholders then validate this as part of a cycle that would make validated (final) data available a bit later. It was proposed that donors should not be responsible on their own for declaring that their data is correct (e.g. for DBS, treasury should certify the data as accurate; this is more difficult for some types of project aid).
- The group did not have time to deliberate fully on how to enforce the Code at country level, but made reference to the Paris Declaration as a framework within which this could be done (e.g. a similar framework to that used in the monitoring of the Paris Declaration).
- One participant proposed that in terms of implementation, we might consider a phased approach that would see large donors and large aid flows being subjected to the IATI Code first, with others following over time.

Annex A. Concept note



IATI INTERNATIONAL
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International Aid Transparency Initiative Consultation Workshop for East and Southern Africa

**Hôtel des Mille Collines, Kigali, Rwanda
29th-30th June 2009**

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is a new initiative which aims to make information about aid flows more available and accessible to all stakeholders, particularly partner countries. Launched at the Accra High Level Forum in September 2008, IATI now has sixteen donor signatories¹ and endorsement from a growing number of partner countries².

IATI aims to make information about public and private aid more available and accessible, in compliance with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, in order to increase the accountability, predictability and effectiveness of aid and reduce transactions costs. In the Doha FfD outcome document the UN member states noted that *“the aid architecture has significantly changed in the current decade. New aid providers and novel partnership approaches, which utilize new modalities of cooperation, have contributed to increasing the flow of resources... There is a growing need for more systematic and universal ways to follow quantity, quality and effectiveness of aid flows, giving due regard to existing schemes and mechanisms.”*

IATI seeks to respond to the concerns raised by partner countries and civil society organizations that information about aid flows is not sufficiently timely, detailed or accessible. The 2008 Paris Declaration evaluation found that partner countries face *“continuing serious difficulties involved in securing and providing timely, transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows that enable [them] to fully report on budgets to their legislature and citizens...this basic contribution by donors to mutual accountability is widely found to be missing or inadequate, even in relatively strong systems.”* Challenges in accessing information on aid flows were also raised during the regional consultations ahead of the Accra HLF.

Through IATI, donors will also implement the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action to *“publicly disclose regular, detailed and timely information on volume, allocation and, when available, results of development expenditure to enable more accurate budget, accounting and audit by developing countries.”*

¹ UK, Germany, Netherlands, UNDP, Finland, Denmark, Ireland, EC, World Bank, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Hewlett Foundation, GAVI, Norway.

² So far, the governments of Central African Republic Colombia, Ghana, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Viet Nam have endorsed or expressed their interest in the initiative.

IATI aims to bring together donors, partner countries, CSOs and other users of aid information to agree common standards for the publication of information about aid flows. It does not envisage the development of a new aid information database, but rather the adoption by donors of ways of recording and reporting information that will enable existing users and databases – and potential future services – to access more detailed, timely and accessible information about aid.

Agreement of common information standards will help partner countries improve planning and budgeting and promote mutual accountability by:

- Committing donors to publishing more detailed, timely and up to date information in a form that enables partner countries to more easily incorporate aid into their budgets and aid management systems, and strengthen macroeconomic management. For example, IATI is expected to commit donors to providing more detailed information on expected and actual disbursements;
- Committing donors to provide more detailed information about which donors are delivering which projects, and where, to enable partner countries to better co-ordinate development efforts;
- Reducing the time and effort taken by partner countries in collecting and collating information on expected and actual aid flows from different donors;
- Developing common electronic formats to enable automatic data exchange, for example between donor systems and country aid information management systems (AIMS), helping to ensure more accurate and up-to-date data and reduced transaction costs;
- Committing donors to publish indicative future aid flows, to the extent possible, to facilitate medium term budgeting by partners;
- Agreeing a code of conduct for the publication of information which will enable partner countries to hold donors accountable for compliance;
- Providing capacity development support to enable partner country governments and other stakeholders to better access and make use of current and future sources of information on aid.

Workshop Objectives

IATI aims to respond to the needs of all stakeholders, particularly partner country governments. In order to inform the development of the IATI standards, UNDP – as a member of the IATI Steering Committee³ - has been tasked with facilitating detailed consultations with partner country government officials and Parliamentarians in order to better understand their priorities and aid information needs. This will help to ensure that IATI is developed in a way that meets as many of those needs as possible.

The Kigali workshop is one of a number of regional events that aim to:

- Familiarize a larger number of partner countries and stakeholders with the IATI and its objectives as it relates to the Accra Agenda for Action, Paris Declaration and other international commitments on transparency and mutual accountability;
- Identify those information needs of partner country governments which are not currently being met, and make recommendations for areas to be included in the scope of potential IATI standards, drawing on the IATI scoping paper;
- Facilitate South-South learning and peer exchange on good practices, lessons learnt and challenges from the deployment of aid information management systems (AIMS),

³ The IATI Steering Committee comprises of 18 representatives from donors, partner countries, CSOs and aid information experts.

and how the IATI can help to improve the effectiveness of such systems, as well as how best practices and experiences with country AIMS can feed into the development of an IATI standard;

- Discuss how to take the IATI forward at country, sub-regional, regional and global levels, to include partner country needs in regard to capacity development.

Expected Outputs

- Enhanced awareness of and understanding of the aims and objectives of IATI, and its relationship to the AAA and WP-EFF, by partner countries;
- Peer learning on aid information management and shared discussion of challenges and how to address them;
- Guidance from partner countries as to the current sources of information on donor flows and activities, and an assessment of the usefulness of those sources;
- Prioritised list of areas/categories in which further and/or more detailed information on aid flows and activities is required. This should draw from, but not necessarily be limited to, Appendix C of the IATI Scoping study;
- Guidance and leadership from partner countries as to how they would like to see the IATI developed, and the role they see partner country members playing;
- Guidance from partner countries on key areas for inclusion in the Code of Conduct.

Follow-up activities

It is anticipated that the outputs of this workshop should be shared in a number of ways, including:

- Full reports to be available online at <http://www.aidtransparency.net>
- Partner country representatives and UNDP feed back to the IATI Steering Committee in September 2009;
- Key messages from the regional consultations to be presented at the IATI Conference in October 2009;
- Partner country representatives and UNDP provide inputs and guidance to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Resources / Inputs

- The IATI scoping study will be the major background reading for the consultations. The paper will be circulated to participants ahead of the meetings, along with other relevant readings and background materials;
- Representatives of partner country governments will be invited to present on and share their respective experiences and challenges to date with respect to aid information.

Participation

This sub-regional workshop is aimed at government officials involved in aid management and tracking activities from countries in east and southern Africa. A parallel workshop will be held in Accra, Ghana, for west and central Africa.

It is anticipated that participants will come from a range of partner country institutions (Ministries of Finance, Planning, and possibly central banks and interested line ministries). Participation is aimed at heads of units responsible for aid management / tracking and their staff.

The following countries have been invited to attend the Kigali workshop: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho,

Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Government of South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Annex B. Agenda



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International Aid Transparency Initiative Consultation Workshop for East and Southern Africa

Hôtel des Mille Collines, Kigali, Rwanda
29th-30th June 2009

AGENDA

<i>Time</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Speaker/facilitator</i>
DAY ONE – MONDAY 29th JUNE 2009		
Session 1: Introduction: aid information in the broader context of ownership, accountability and implementing the AAA		
<i>Chair: Mr John Rwangombwa, Permanent Secretary & Secretary to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda. Co-chair: Mr Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, Country Director, UNDP.</i>		
9.00 – 9.30	Welcome and opening remarks Aims and objectives of the meeting	Mr. John Rwangombwa, Rwanda. Mr. Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, UNDP.
9.30 – 10.00	Aid information in the broader context of ownership, alignment and mutual accountability	Mr. Alicem Matembele, Tanzania.
10.00 – 10.30	Plenary discussion	
10.30 – 11.00	Introduction to the aims and objectives of IATI in the context of AAA implementation at the partner country level.	Robin Ogilvy, UNDP Rwanda (on behalf of IATI Secretariat)
11.00 – 11.30	Plenary discussion	
11.30 – 11.45	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.45 – 12.15	IATI scoping study: key messages and findings	Rob Tew, DIPR (on behalf of IATI Secretariat)
12.15 – 13.00	Discussion	
13.00 – 14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
Session 2: Key challenges in accessing and using aid information		
<i>Co-chairs: Mr Josef Aipanda, Namibia and Mr Fidèle Mokuté, D.R. Congo.</i>		
14.00 – 14.15	Introduction to break out groups	Michel Sebera / Robin Ogilvy
14.15 – 16.00	Break out groups to discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current sources of information on aid, and challenges associated with these • Priorities for partner countries for improving access to aid information • Potential impacts of better aid information • Particular issues with respect to aid information faced by countries in special development situations 	Each group to nominate a partner country participant as chair/rapporteur to feed back key points of discussion to plenary.

16.00 – 17.30	Report back from break out groups	
18.00 – 20.00	<i>Cocktail reception (Ground Floor Terrace, Hotel des Mille Collines)</i>	

DAY TWO – TUESDAY 30th JUNE 2009

Session 3: Solutions: Aid information management systems, IATI and complementary initiatives

Chair: Mrs Alféine Soifiat Tadjiddine, Comoros.

9.00 – 9.15	Introduction to Day 2	MINECOFIN / UNDP
9.15 – 10.15	Country experiences, lessons and challenges in aid information management <i>Brief country presentations (20 mins each) on successes, challenges and lessons learned in the use of aid information as it relates to ownership and accountability.</i>	Mr. Emile Nimpaye, Burundi Mr. Zephy Muhirwa, Rwanda Mr. Moses Mabior, South Sudan
10.15 – 11.00	Plenary discussion	
11.00 – 11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.30 – 12.00	Panel discussion: How IATI could help to support country PFM and aid management systems <i>(to include a preliminary discussion and identification of capacity development needs).</i>	Panelists: Mr. Mark Temu, Tanzania Mr. Stan Nkhata, Malawi Mr. Aasmund Andersen, Development Gateway Foundation Mr. Richard Bradley, Synergy International Systems
12.00 – 13.00	Discussion	
13.00 – 14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>	

Session 4: Taking forward the IATI: partner country recommendations

Co-chairs: Mr. Stan Nkhata, Malawi and Mrs. Maya R. Munesh Iswaree, Mauritius.

14.00 – 14.15	Introduction to afternoon break-out sessions on IATI process and code of conduct.	Dereck Rusagara / Rob Tew
14.15 – 16.00	Break-out groups: <i>“What are the key issues you would like to take to the global IATI conference in October?”</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should IATI be developed? How should partner countries be involved? • What needs for support and capacity development arise in partner countries? • Towards a donor Code of Conduct: what are the key priorities for inclusion by partner countries? 	Each group to nominate a partner country participant as chair/rapporteur to feed back key points of discussion to plenary.
16.00 – 17.00	Report back from the break out groups	
17.00 – 17.30	Closing remarks	Mr. Fred Mujuni, Accountant General, Rwanda.

Annex C. List of participants

Burundi

Mr. Pamphile Muderega, Permanent Secretary, Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Aid Coordination.

Mr. Emile Nimpaye, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Aid Coordination.

Mr. Nestor Ntahorwamiye, Director of Programming, Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction.

Ms. Anthe Vrijlandt, Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Aid Coordination.

Comoros

Mr. Kailane Salim, Manager for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ms. Alfeine Soifiat. S. Tadjiddine, Commissaire Générale au Plan, Office of the President.

Development Gateway Foundation

Mr. Aasmund Andersen.

Mr. Jethro Buttner.

Development Initiatives Poverty Research

Mr. Rob Tew, Economics and Statistical Advisor.

D.R. Congo

Mr. Fidèle Mokute Mopolo, AMP Manager, Ministry of Planning.

Malawi

Mr. Stan Nkhata, Deputy Director, Ministry of Finance.

Ms. Verity Outram, Economist, Ministry of Finance.

Mauritius

Mrs. Maya R. Munesh Iswaree, Analyst, Ministry of Finance Economic Empowerment.

Namibia

Mr. Josef Aipanda, Chief Economist, National Planning Commission.

Netherlands

Mr. Jolke Oppewal, Head of Cooperation, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Rwanda.

Rwanda

Mr. Elias Baingana, Director of National Budget Unit, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Donatien Bwabo, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Pierrot Cyubahiro, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Michel Gatete, Ministry of Health.

Mr. Theogene Karake, Executive Secretary, Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities.

Mr. Placide Muhirwa, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Zephy Muhirwa, Aid Management Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. John Munga, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Prosper Musafiri, Director General for Economic Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Jean de Dieu F.N., ICT Specialist, CEPEX.

Mr. Ben Rutsinga, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Ms. Elise Rusingizandekwe, Desk Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. John Rwangombwa, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Mr. Michel Sebera, Director External Finance a.i., Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.
Ms. Rose Uwimana, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Rwanda Civil Society Platform

Mr. Thadee Karekezi, Spokesperson.

Rwanda Network of International NGOs

Mr. Tilaye Nigussie, Country Director, Concern (on behalf of the NINGO Executive Committee).

South Sudan

Mr. Moses Mabior Deu, Director of Aid Coordination, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Sudan

Mr. Faisal Guma Abdelrahman Adam, Director of Aid Management and Coordination Unit, Ministry of International Cooperation.

Ms. Sara Mohammed Ahmed Hamed, Project Coordinator, Ministry of International Cooperation.

Swaziland

Ms. Lungile Mndzebele, Economist, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

Ms. Patience Nkambule Ntombifuthi, Assistant Economist, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

Synergy International Systems

Mr. Richard Bradley, Aid Management Advisor.

Tanzania

Mr. Ashery Alicem Matembele, Financial Management Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Mr. Mark Charles Temu, Principal Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

United Kingdom

Mr. Serge Wyclef, DFID Rwanda.

United Nations Development Programme

Mr. Attoumane Boina Issa, Economist, UNDP Comoros.

Mr. Philippe Chichereau, External Resource Management Adviser, UNDP / Ministry of Planning, D.R. Congo.

Ms. Maggy Gatera, Head of Public Management Unit, UNDP Rwanda.

Mr. Ibrahim Koroma, Aid Management Advisor, UNDP / Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, South Sudan.

Mr. Robin Ogilvy, Aid Effectiveness Specialist, UNDP / Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda.

Mr. Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, Country Director, UNDP Rwanda.

Mr. Dereck Rusagara, AIMS Specialist, UNDP / Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda.

Mr. Arthur Rushemeza, National Economist, UNDP Burundi.

Mr. Christian Shingiro, Governance Consultant, UNDP Rwanda.

Ms. Yuko Suzuki, Aid Coordination Specialist, UNDP Tanzania.

United States Agency for International Development

Mr. Diogene Ndazigaruye, Programme Specialist, USAID Rwanda.

Annex D. Proposed points for group discussions (Session 2)



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International Aid Transparency Initiative Consultation Workshop for East and Southern Africa Kigali, Rwanda 29th-30th June 2009

SESSION 2: KEY CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING AND USING AID INFORMATION PROPOSED POINTS FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Having engaged in plenary discussions around IATI, some of the challenges it seeks to address, and the initial proposals contained in the IATI Scoping Paper, it is proposed that participants should come together in smaller groups to engage in more detailed discussions with a view to identifying more concretely the sorts of challenges faced by partner countries which IATI could address.

It is proposed that each group should nominate a chair and/or rapporteur, who will take stock of the rich discussions over the course of the session and feed back key conclusions and recommendations to the plenary.

The questions below are offered as possible starting points to guide group discussions, though participants should not feel in any way restricted by them. A list of types of aid information is also provided in Annex A. The presentations from session 1, along with the Scoping Paper and its Executive Summary (included in your workshop folder) may also provide a useful basis for discussions.

GROUP DISCUSSION A: CURRENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON AID, AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THESE

The IATI Scoping Paper makes reference to a number of existing sources of aid information that are accessible to partner country governments (DAC-CRS; national aid information management systems; ad-hoc data collection efforts at the country-level; accessibility of some aid information via the web sites of donors and other services such as AiDA). Reflecting on what currently exists, and the degree to which it meets partner countries' needs, will be important in informing the development of the IATI standard and Code of Conduct.

Proposed starting points for discussion:

- ❖ How do you currently access information on aid to your country?
- ❖ Which sources of aid information are you familiar with, and to what extent do they meet your needs? (A range of typical needs are listed in annex A and might help to stimulate discussion around this point).

- ❖ What are the key challenges you face in using existing sources of aid information, and how might your experiences translate into recommendations for the development of the IATI standard?
-

GROUP DISCUSSION B: PARTNER COUNTRY PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO AID INFORMATION

The IATI Scoping Paper refers to a number of areas which could be addressed by the IATI standard (see page 1 of Executive Summary in workshop folder). IATI calls for more detailed information on where aid is spent, when, how, on what. It requests that this information be timely. It calls for reliable information on future aid flows, expected outputs, and sufficient detail so it can be used in national budgeting systems. It is important however that partner country needs and priorities are fully understood, and are reflected in IATI's programme of work. Prioritisation of needs will be important in this regard.

Proposed starting points for discussion:

- ❖ What aid information do you need, and what you see as the most (least) important? (The list provided in Annex A might offer a useful starting point for this).
 - ❖ Are there any information needs that you consider important that are not covered by the scoping paper?
 - ❖ Within the broad categories proposed, are there any more specific information needs that should be detailed?
-

GROUP DISCUSSION C: POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF BETTER AID INFORMATION

The IATI Declaration and scoping paper make reference to the potential benefits of an IATI standard and code of conduct. Central to the development of these will be a clear understanding of the intended benefits for partner country stakeholders. Identifying clearly how the improvements in aid transparency facilitated by IATI will be translated into results at the partner country level will also be important in mobilising the support of donors and other stakeholders in this initiative. This group is invited to discuss the key areas in which better information on aid will impact on partner countries, prioritising these issues and outcomes where possible.

Proposed starting points for discussion:

- ❖ Does good data on aid result in better decisions? What data do donors and partner country governments need to strengthen planning, budgeting and execution?
- ❖ How might improved information on aid support national ownership and strengthen mutual accountability processes? For example, what information might partner country

governments need to better hold donors to account for their commitments on the quality and volume of aid?

- ❖ How might better aid information strengthen domestic accountability?
-

GROUP DISCUSSION D: PARTICULAR ISSUES AND NEEDS WITH RESPECT TO AID INFORMATION IN POST- CONFLICT AND SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT SITUATIONS

Post-conflict countries often face additional and particular challenges in the implementation and localisation of the global aid effectiveness agenda, and within this, in obtaining and making full use of information on aid flows. Many of these countries benefit from significant flows of assistance provided by and delivered through an increasingly complex range of actors and mechanisms. The complexity of these situations, combined with bottlenecks in terms of human and institutional capacities to lead on aid management and broader PFM processes, may add to the burden faced by national governments – and other stakeholders – in ensuring sound PFM, and in supporting ownership, alignment and accountability.

Participants with first-hand experience of aid tracking in post-conflict countries may wish to consider further how IATI relates to any “special” or additional challenges and information needs they may face.

Proposed starting points for discussion:

- ❖ How would you prioritise partner countries’ aid information needs in post-conflict situations? What information is most important? (The list in Annex A might offer a starting point for discussions here).
 - ❖ How does the complexity of actors and mechanisms render aid tracking more complex at the country level?
 - ❖ What do you see as the key issues or challenges specific to post-conflict countries that might inform the work of IATI and other initiatives working on aid transparency going forward?
-

ANNEX A: SAMPLE INFORMATION NEEDS FOR CONSIDERATION AND PRIORITISATION

What additional aid information do you need, and which of these are your priorities?

The list below is intended to offer a starting point for reflection, discussion and prioritisation. It is by no means comprehensive though, and you may wish to make other recommendations.

Please indicate this by rating each of the following on a scale of 1-3, 1 being a top priority, 2 being good to have, and 3 being something that is not important to you.

1. Information that is more up-to-date;
2. Reliable information on future aid flows, at country, sector and project level;
3. More detailed information about precisely *where* aid is spent, from sub-national down to community level, with ability to map to administrative areas;
4. Better information about exactly *when* aid is spent, including donor commitment and disbursement and project expenditure dates ;
5. More information about *how* aid is spent, including channels of delivery, and ability to map spending through the system from initial commitment to final expenditure;
6. Better information on *what* aid is spent on, including detailed project data, descriptions and dates;
7. Improved information on *which sectors* aid is spent on, including ability to map sector classifications to national budgets;
8. Details of aid agreements, including any conditions attached and the terms of any concessional loans;
9. Contract and procurement details;
10. Better coverage from a wider range of donors, including non-DAC donors, all multilateral agencies, large NGOs, foundations and private donors;
11. Ability to map aid spending against commonly agreed policy markers such as gender or climate change, and against Paris Declaration targets;
12. Information on anticipated outputs and outcomes;
13. Non- statistical information about aid such as documents relating to strategy, policy, procedures and evaluations;
14. Other (please specify)

Annex E. Proposed points for group discussions (Session 4)



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International Aid Transparency Initiative Consultation Workshop for East and Southern Africa Kigali, Rwanda 29th-30th June 2009

SESSION 4: TAKING FORWARD THE IATI – PARTNER COUNTRY RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED POINTS FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Following the earlier sessions focussed on the identification and prioritisation of aid information needs, the exchange of country experiences, and linkages with ongoing country initiatives and processes, it will be important that participants come together as a sub-region to provide concrete guidance and recommendations for the IATI process and Code of Conduct going forward.

It is anticipated that key recommendations emerging from this sub-regional event should be fed back by partner country representatives and UNDP to the IATI Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Group. The forthcoming IATI Conference (October 2009) will also bring together all key IATI stakeholders, and today's discussions should help to shape this forum so that it responds to their needs and interests.

The questions below are offered as possible starting points to guide group discussions, though participants should not feel in any way restricted by them.

GROUP DISCUSSION A: IATI PROCESS – HOW SHOULD IATI BE DEVELOPED? HOW SHOULD PARTNER COUNTRIES BE INVOLVED?

At present, IATI is governed by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee comprised of bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society organisations, a number of partner countries (Ghana, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Vietnam) and other experts in aid information. A Technical Advisory Group reports to the Steering Committee. UNDP, DFID and DIPR form the IATI Secretariat, with UNDP tasked with facilitating partner country outreach activities.

The continued involvement and ownership of partner countries – who are key beneficiaries of aid and therefore have important information needs – throughout the design of IATI will be critical to ensure that the initiative helps them to overcome the sorts of challenges identified over the course of this consultation workshop. A summary of the proposed next steps in the consultative process is provided in Box 1 below.

Proposed starting points for discussion:

- ❖ To what extent does the existing IATI governance structure meet partner countries' needs and interests? How might it be further refined or improved?
- ❖ In which areas do you feel that you would like to consult further on, or add weight to, in the IATI process?
- ❖ What are the key issues that you would like to take to the IATI Conference in October?

Box 1: Extract from IATI Scoping Paper Executive Summary (the next steps to be taken in the consultative process for the development of an IATI Standard and Code of Conduct).

From June to September 2009, the IATI Steering Committee is organising detailed consultations with partner countries, civil society organisations and other key stakeholders to determine their priorities in terms of aid information. The recommendations in the scoping paper will be refined in light of the findings from these consultations. The suggested next steps are for IATI to:

- *analyse the costs and benefits of complying with the IATI standard and the support donors may require*
- *define what information should be included in the 'IATI standard' (phase 1 – information likely to be currently available in donor systems and meet basic needs of most stakeholders; phase 2 – to cover additional information needs)*
- *agree common definitions—extend existing reporting formats and standards to respond to the needs of a broader range of stakeholders; involve partner countries to be sure the standard is compatible with their systems*
- *establish a data format and appropriate technology for sharing information effectively*
- *agree code of conduct—to set out what, when, how and where information should be published, how users can access it, and how donors will be held accountable*
- *define how the IATI standard should be implemented, supported, managed and updated*
- *support donors to implement the IATI standard—provide technical support and, where necessary, additional labour to enable donors to report against the standard*
- *build capacity for users to access and use the information—for example training local stakeholders to access data and helping organisations to design systems that meet users' needs identify short-term opportunities for improvements in data accessibility.*

Source: IATI Scoping Paper Executive Summary (page 4).

(continued overleaf)

**GROUP DISCUSSION B:
WHAT NEEDS FOR SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ARISE IN
PARTNER COUNTRIES?**

For IATI to be useful to partner countries, it will be important that (i) partner countries are able to engage constructively in the process of developing an IATI standard and Code of Conduct in a way that ensures that the initiative responds to their needs as important users of aid information; and (ii) once they are developed, partner countries are able to localise and use the standards and Code of Conduct developed under IATI at the country level in a way that helps them to overcome the challenges identified with aid information at present.

Partner countries are invited to reflect on the sorts of capacities that may be needed to support IATI at the country level, considering also the broader context within which aid information is used in partner countries. Capacities might be societal, institutional, human..., and a better understanding of needs – and existing constraints – should lead to the development of solutions and the identification of means through which to assist partner countries in overcoming these constraints.

Proposed starting points for discussion:

- ❖ What are the constraints and opportunities for effective partner country participation and influence in the IATI process? How might these constraints be overcome?
- ❖ What sorts of capacity constraints and bottlenecks do you currently face in the area of aid information management at the country level?
- ❖ What do you see as key needs for additional support in implementing an IATI standard and Code of Conduct in your country?

**GROUP DISCUSSION C:
TOWARDS A DONOR CODE OF CONDUCT – WHAT ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES
FOR INCLUSION BY PARTNER COUNTRIES?**

The IATI Scoping Paper recommends that a Code of Conduct should be developed, and that this should act as the framework within which donors should be bound to implement the eventual IATI standard and any other commitments agreed under IATI.

A summary of the Scoping Paper recommendation on the Code of Conduct is provided in Box 2 below. In their discussions, participants may wish to consider the following questions as starting points:

- ❖ What are, in your opinion, the key priorities that should be addressed in this code of conduct (Box 2 lists some ideas, but you may have others)?
- ❖ How do you see a Code of Conduct being implemented at the country level? How would you monitor implementation of such a Code and hold donors to account?

(continued overleaf...)

Box 2: Extract from IATI Scoping Paper (some points for consideration in the development of a Code of Conduct).

Recommendation 5

IATI members should agree a Code of Conduct, drawing on findings from consultations, that sets out what information they will publish, plus how and when it will be published. Points to address might include:

- *Agreement on a publication timetable for the agreed information set.*
 - *Consideration should be given to phasing implementation, starting with the publication of a core set of information at an early date, and extended in a later phase.*
 - *Appendix C highlights which information could be included in this core set, that is information that: a) meets a basic need for most stakeholders and b) is likely to be currently available within donor systems, as validated by the analysis proposed in recommendation 1 .*
- *The scope of IATI beyond ODA. It is proposed that the scope of IATI includes all development assistance, including private flows. As a starting point, it is recommended that IATI focuses on ODA as a minimum, but could ultimately apply to all development assistance flows.*
- *Consider whether it is appropriate to specify mandatory information, that all signatories undertake to publish as a minimum, and voluntary information which goes beyond this*
- *The extent that retrospective information should be reported using the IATI standard*
- *How information should be validated and how validated and unvalidated information should be distinguished: for some donors, the publication of information in a timely manner may require the publication of unvalidated information.*
- *Consideration might be given to a minimum threshold (e.g. projects over \$1million) to which the IATI code applies to ensure compliance is proportional and manageable*
- *Consideration should be given to whether there could be valid exemptions to disclosure, e.g. for staff security reasons*
- *How these transparency standards are pushed through the supply chain, by requiring similar standards of reporting by implementing agents.*
- *How this information should be made available (e.g. through the donor website)*
- *Agree how users should expect to access information.*
- *Whether to enable users of the data to comment and/or correct published information, thereby providing opportunity for independent coding and decentralised verification.*

Source: IATI Scoping Paper (para. 68).