IATI COVID-19 DATA:

INSIGHTS, ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

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OCHA CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN DATA

Executive Summary

Since November 2020, the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data (the Centre) has been investigating the usability and insight of COVID-19 funding data made available through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard. Our experience has given us a strong appreciation of the value of the IATI standard and its community of publishers. We have also seen where IATI falls short by making data use unnecessarily difficult and time consuming, and missing opportunities to make international aid data more transparent.

Over the course of this project, the Centre conducted research with IATI stakeholders and publishers to better understand their needs and capabilities. We developed and documented algorithms to deduplicate and aggregate IATI data into meaningful figures. We produced an IATI COVID-19 Funding Dashboard for users to visualize, explore and analyze all of the published IATI data that is related to the pandemic. And we created a data story to share key insights about COVID-19 commitments and spending.

In our engagement with IATI publishers, we found that they were mainly focused on their own data and whether it was accurate. The dashboard allowed publishers to see their data visualized, often for the first time, making data issues immediately apparent. We know of several publishers that made changes to their IATI data after using the dashboard, creating a positive feedback loop.

At the same time, our behind-the-scenes technical work to aggregate IATI data revealed a host of issues with data quality. We faced significant challenges evaluating whether data was loosely or strictly related to COVID-19. In attempting to use algorithmic processes to combine IATI data, we then had to spend time considering how confident we were with the outcomes.

We believe that the international aid community has just begun to tap the potential of IATI as a data source but that improvements are needed to the IATI standard, guidance and governance in order to reach the goal of aid transparency.

We have identified four high-level issues from using IATI COVID-19 data:

1. **Barriers to data use**: Those who use IATI data, as we attempted to, will always try to do so across a range of publishers. There is too much complexity and too many inconsistencies in IATI publishing for this to scale.
2. **No feedback loops**: IATI data users are left to resolve familiar problems time and again, with little chance to engage with publishers. The process for improving the IATI standard is unclear and slow.
3. **Individual focus**: IATI publishers focus on their own data which is then expressed in different approaches and uses of the IATI standard. There is little dialogue between and among organizations to use and improve each other's data. Pockets of collaboration do exist, but have been overshadowed by IATI being centered on compliance.

4. **The IATI standard is both too rigid and too flexible**: All IATI publishers have to put their data into an activity which may not translate to the reality of their operations. In working with the IATI data, we had to bypass activities to get to the financial flows. At the same time, it is often not possible to trace funding between organizations because publishers don't identify counterparties.

We recommend three high-level actions to improve IATI:

1. The **governance** of IATI needs to be more open to feedback from data users. The IATI Institutional Review, which is currently taking place, should consider ideas around user-led governance and feedback.
2. IATI **guidance** should be updated more often and include examples of best practice and good use rather than just instructions or definitions.
3. Rankings and indices for IATI publishers should include performance metrics on **collective and systematic data use** in addition to focusing on the data quality of individual publishers.

Many of our findings and recommendations are already covered in the IATI Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025 including a focus on data quality and data use. This report includes a detailed list of recommendations and suggested next steps (see Section 3). For each issue, we propose what changes would be most beneficial, and equally importantly, how the IATI community might implement them.

1. Introduction

The International Aid Transparency Initiative is a global effort to improve the transparency of development and humanitarian financing focused on addressing poverty and humanitarian crises. More than 1,300 organizations — bilateral and multilateral providers, international and local NGOs, civil society organizations, academia, governments, and other stakeholders — publish their data using the IATI standard.

Following the World Health Organization's declaration of a pandemic in March 2020, the IATI secretariat issued guidance on how to publish data on COVID-19 aid activities and financial transactions. Organizations were encouraged to add 'COVID-19' in additional fields of the IATI standard in order to track the response to the pandemic. As of September 2021, over 200 organizations have published their COVID-19 funding data using IATI.

Over the past nine months, the Centre has explored this data to understand the financial commitments and actual spending related to the pandemic. As part of this project, we developed an IATI COVID-19 Funding Dashboard (updated nightly) with financial transactions from 13,780 reported aid activities covering $134.5 billion in commitments and $84.8 billion in spending directed towards 200 recipient countries and territories.[1] We also created a data story which shows several insights from the data (as of 15 September).

This report details our experience using the IATI COVID-19 data to create the dashboard and related data story. We explain our goals with the dashboard and the methodology we used to parse and visualize the IATI data. The report concludes with a deeper look at the issues we encountered and offers recommendations for improving the IATI standard and related guidance.

The work covered in this project was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). We are grateful for the considerable contribution of USAID colleagues in reviewing and providing feedback on our work. We would also like to acknowledge the earlier effort to create a prototype visualization to track the COVID-19 response by Development Initiatives which was undertaken on behalf of the Grand Bargain Transparency Workstream.[2]

2. The IATI COVID-19 Funding Dashboard

The dashboard was created to visualize, explore and analyze all of the published IATI data related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We focused on two main entities in IATI reports: 1) **the activity**, which may represent any unit of aid action (such as a programme, project, or activity); and 2) **the transaction**, which represents a single movement of money (or promise) in or out of the activity (such as a payment

[1] All figures according to the dashboard as of 30 September 2021. These figures are updated nightly so will change.
[2] A snapshot of the earlier dashboard, developed by Mark Brough at Development Initiatives, is available at https://covid19.humportal.org/activities/ .

to an implementing partner, or a grant from a donor). (Read more about IATI transaction types in Annex A).

A guiding principle for developing the dashboard has been to 'hold up a mirror' to IATI data. Therefore, the dashboard presents financial information as reported, without attempting any reconciliation among different publishing organizations or verification of those numbers from other sources.

The dashboard has three target audiences:

- **IATI data publishers**: people involved in the production and distribution of data formatted to the IATI standard.
- **IATI data users**: people interested in IATI data more widely, either from an analytical or transparency perspective.
- **COVID-19 funding observers**: people interested in the response to the pandemic, but not necessarily in IATI itself.

We designed the dashboard to be open source and reusable, so that — with a certain amount of reconfiguration — it can be deployed to track other topics or crises using the IATI standard. (Read more about the algorithms and general methodology we used to process IATI data and find links to our GitHub repositories in Annex B).

The dashboard includes four tabs:

1. **Commitments and Spending** — visualization of money committed and actually spent overall, or filtered by organization, sector, or country.
2. **Spending Flows** — visualization of incoming and outgoing financial flows overall, or by organization.
3. **Data Story** — a link out to funding insights using COVID-19 IATI data.
4. **About This Dashboard** — detailed information about the dashboard, including sources, methodology, and licensing.

The dashboard allows users to pose questions about COVID-19 aid funding and discover IATI data to help answer them, such as: how much money have aid organizations committed to the COVID-19 response in Haiti?; what sector received the most COVID-19 funding?; or which organizations received funding from the African Development Bank? It is also possible to see only humanitarian-flagged funding, or to apply strict or loose rules for COVID-19 relevance.

Despite our best efforts and significant user consultation, use of the dashboard requires some degree of domain expertise to explore and understand the data. (See Annex C for more about our stakeholder consultations). To reach a broader audience, we produced a data story that provides a curated view of the major insights from the COVID-19 data over a fixed period from January to September 2021, including:

1. How quickly IATI publishers began sharing COVID-19-related data.
2. How organization type (e.g. NGO, multilateral, government) is correlated with the frequency of IATI publishing.
3. The uneven distribution of gaps between money committed and money actually spent for different countries.
4. The major aid sectors targeted with COVID-19-related funding.
5. The distribution of funding for the health sector over time.
6. Gaps in IATI data around organization-to-organization money flows.

Unlike the dashboard, which updates nightly, the data story is based on a snapshot of data from 15 September 2021 and will not be updated. However, up-to-date versions of all the data are available for download on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) in the dataset IATI COVID-19-related funding data.

3. Key Findings and Recommendations

During the course of this project, the Centre has become a significant IATI data user, and we have involved many members of our team who had previously had no exposure to the standard. Our experience has given us a strong appreciation of the value of the IATI standard and its community of publishers. We believe that the international aid community has just begun to tap the potential of IATI as a data source.

We have also had the opportunity to see where the IATI standard, guidance, and community practices fall short, making data use unnecessarily difficult, and missing opportunities to provide the information that could make international aid more transparent.

We have identified five issues related to the IATI standard and guidance. For each of these findings, we propose what changes would be most beneficial and how the IATI community might implement them.

Finding 1: False-positive matches for the IATI COVID-19 guidance

Focus area: IATI guidance

The IATI secretariat acted with speed to create and publish the IATI COVID-19 Guidance, and IATI publishers adopted it quickly, making IATI one of the first useful sources for COVID-19-related aid funding.

In making extensive use of the guidance, however, we have found areas where it introduces ambiguities and could potentially result in false-positive matches for COVID-19 funding. For example, IATI activity XI-IATI-CWSEC-YNCWG1051 from the Commonwealth Secretariat is entitled “A Resilient Blue Commonwealth: Blue Charter” and is not related to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it does include the following text in the project description:

> “Note: The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has altered some of the implementation plans described above (especially holding in-person Action Group meetings).”

Following the IATI COVID-19 guidance, this activity counts as a positive match because the string ‘COVID-19’ appears in the project title or description.

In our work, we attempted to minimise these false matches by classifying any activity with ‘COVID-19’ appearing only in the project description (and no other matching indicator) as a ‘loose’ match. As of 28 September 2021, there were $22.0 billion in commitments and $12.8 billion in spending that met only the loose criteria but not other, stricter criteria (differences of 20% and 18% respectively).

There were pragmatic reasons to keep the guidance flexible, including limited metadata available at the transaction level (see Issue 2) and the inability of many publishers to alter their information systems quickly to support anything but changes to project titles and descriptions.

Recommendations:

- Do not use free text in titles or descriptions as a flag in future IATI crisis-specific guidance (or at least, limit this to the transaction level).
- Focus future guidance on unambiguous, dedicated metadata elements like *tag* and *humanitarian-profile*.
- Modify IATI publisher data systems to support more-unambiguous flagging of crises or themes in the future.

Next steps:

- Work with the IATI technical team and secretariat to develop templates and best practices for future IATI crisis-/theme-publishing guidance.
- Modify the IATI standard to allow *tag* and *humanitarian-profile* at the transaction level (will need to start as an extension, as described in Issue 2).
- Inform IATI publishers about changes they can make to their information systems now to support crisis- or theme-specific publishing guidance in the future (since such changes can take several years to implement).

Finding 2: IATI publishers do not share their commitments consistently

Focus area: IATI guidance

One of the goals of our work was to show the difference between money *committed* by aid organizations toward the global COVID-19 response, and money actually *spent*. Unfortunately, IATI publishers are not consistent about publishing both commitment and disbursement/expenditure transactions.

For example, we found that WHO published information about $1.2 billion in spending, but no commitments at all. That leads to two issues:

1. There is a loss of aid transparency, because it is not possible to determine how fully or quickly the WHO has met its initial commitments.

2. There is a decrease in the accuracy of aggregate numbers, because WHO's spending (without corresponding commitments) exaggerates the global progress towards meeting COVID-19 commitments by $1.2 billion.

WHO is not unique. We found the same issue with many other publishers, including the Australian Government, World Bank Trust Funds, the British Red Cross, and Concern Worldwide.

Recommendations:

- Whenever possible, IATI publishers should share outgoing commitments as well as spending, even if they happen at the same time.

- When total outgoing commitments for an activity differ from spending, that should reflect the real-world situation, not simply a lack of reporting.

- The IATI community should discuss whether it is best practice to publish outgoing commitments for planned expenses (such as salaries and travel) as well as planned disbursements to other organizations, since IATI publishers often fail to distinguish the two properly.

Next steps:

- Update existing IATI guidance and training materials to emphasise the importance of publishing outgoing commitment transactions to support aid transparency, including use cases for data users.

- Advocate for IATI report cards and dashboards to include publishing outgoing commitments as a quality metric.

- Propose an IATI extension or change to the standard to add a 'no commitment' flag to transactions to identify legitimate exceptions.

- Draw attention to IATI publishers who already follow best practices with commitments as models for the rest of the IATI community.

Finding 3: Splitting IATI transactions by sector and recipient country/region

Focus area: IATI guidance

An IATI activity may target multiple sectors and/or recipient regions or countries, and it is often difficult to allocate commitments or spending accurately across those different entities. For example, IATI activity CA-3-P009467001 published by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) reports funding for agricultural interventions in response to COVID-19. The programme targets eight regions and five sectors, with a percentage value assigned to each.[3]

When GAC reported an outgoing commitment transaction of CA $6,000,000 to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), dividing the commitment by sector and region at the same time produces totals that are overly specific and unlikely to be accurate, for example $48,000 committed to Agricultural policy and administrative management in the Middle East (10% of 8% of $6 million).

In this case, GAC reported only one commitment and one spending transaction for the activity, but in many cases, IATI publishers provide default splits at the activity level when there are multiple transactions of each type, further adding to the allocation difficulties. For example, if GAC had made commitments to 3 different aid organizations, it would have been unlikely that 0.8% of each commitment would apply to Agricultural policy and administrative management in the Middle East.

Recommendations:

- If feasible, large IATI publishers (like government donors) should break programmes down into smaller, more geographically-targeted units by region or country, to improve aid transparency in general. Doing so would also improve the ability of donors to meet their Grand Bargain localisation commitments, by having programmes that a single local or national actor could apply to implement.
- When an activity contains more than one transaction of the same type, IATI publishers should include sector and recipient country/region information at the transaction level rather than the activity level, to make it easier to determine how much money is going to specific sectors or geographical areas.

[3] The regions are South of Sahara (70%); South & Central Asia (9%); Middle East (8%); Far East Asia (5%); North & Central America (2.5%); Oceania (2.5%); West Indies (2%), and South America (1%). The sectors are Agricultural inputs (25%); Agricultural services (25%); Agricultural financial services (25%); Agricultural development (15%); and Agricultural policy and administrative management (10%).

Next steps:

- Through the IATI Data Use Working Group, publish and circulate a guidance document on processing IATI transactions by sector and recipient country/region to establish common best practices, then propose that the IATI secretariat adopt it as official IATI guidance.
- Advocate for IATI report cards and dashboards to add transaction-level metadata about sectors and recipient countries/regions as a data-quality metric.
- Recruit two major publishers as peer advocates to model best practices and two major data users as advocates to demonstrate need.

Finding 4: Lack of information about transaction counterparties

Focus area: IATI guidance

With the exception of expenses, the IATI transaction types we considered all involve a *counterparty* (a provider organization for incoming commitments or funding, and a receiver organization for outgoing commitments or disbursements). IATI allows specifying each counterparty in up to three ways:

- by name (e.g. “UNHCR”);
- by organization identifier (e.g. “XM-DAC-41121”); and/or
- by organization type (e.g. “40” for *Multilateral*).

Including this information in transactions[4] is critical for aid transparency, and particularly for traceability — the ability to track aid funding from its source to an actual aid activity in the field.

In the Spending Flows tab of our dashboard, we were able to show the counterparties as named by each individual organization, but in most cases, we were unable to connect them, and could not reliably include information about an organization provided by third parties. IATI publishers rarely use organization identifiers in transactions (there are often none available for them to use), don’t specify the organization type, and use wildly inconsistent naming conventions.

For example, in a recent selection of IATI activities targeting Somalia, all of the following spelling variants appear for the same organization: “UNHCR”, "UNHCR/United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", "UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES", "UNO Flüchtlingshilfe", "United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", "United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)", and "United Nations Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees".

Even that inconsistency is better than the other common case, where IATI publishers do not name their counterparties at all, especially when they are local or national organizations.

[4] IATI also allows using defaults from the participating organizations specified at the activity level when a transaction does not specify a provider or receiver organization.

Recommendations:

- Include the provider or receiver organizations (as appropriate) for each applicable transaction, except where there is a serious security concern or other sensitivity.
- List *all* participating organizations, including upstream funding organizations and downstream implementing partners, for each activity, except where there is a serious security concern or other sensitivity.
- Name organizations as completely as possible (e.g. "Kenya Ministry of Health", not just "MoH").
- Use organization identifiers whenever available.
- Always include the organization type from the [IATI Organization Type Codelist](#) (e.g. code 24 for a local or national NGO), even when the organization name and identifier are redacted for security reasons.

Next steps:

- Work with the IATI secretariat to update traceability guidance to emphasise the importance of including information about transaction counterparties, and when/how to redact information when necessary.
- Improve the infrastructure for discovering organization identifiers and for creating or requesting new identifiers for those organizations that do not already have one.
- Leverage the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream as an incentive for IATI publishers to name partners more consistently (it is impossible to track localisation progress with IATI unless publishers share their partners).
- Identify IATI publishers who are already following best practices for traceability (e.g. Oxfam Novib, Cordaid) and share them as models for other publishers to follow.

Finding 5: Limited metadata at the IATI transaction level

Focus area: IATI standard

The IATI standard allows extensive metadata at the activity level — serving as a default for all transactions — but it allows much less metadata for individual transactions within an activity. For example, there is no way to associate a specific transaction with a global humanitarian crisis, a humanitarian response plan, or even a free-form IATI subject tag.

Since all of those were part of the IATI COVID-19 guidance, the result was that publishers did not have a convenient way to associate a single transaction within a large activity with the global COVID-19 response, other than by using ‘COVID-19’ in the transaction description text,[5] and there was likely significant overcounting of COVID-19 funding when only a small part of the spending in a large activity applied to the crisis.

Examples of other metadata that could be useful at the transaction level includes the original currency and exchange rate, and direct relationships with transactions in other activities.

Recommendations:

- Allow the inclusion of more metadata at the IATI transaction level, including tags and humanitarian profiles.

Next steps:

- Since IATI standard development is slow, begin by developing, documenting, and propagating an IATI extension[6] that adds a collection of useful metadata at the transaction level.
- Create an IATI extension registry to raise visibility and avoid duplicate work.
- Recruit two major IATI publishers to use the extension, to add credibility.
- Advocate for two key IATI data users (such as d-portal) to take advantage of the extension, to demonstrate its value.
- Once the extension is in use, present it as evidence to advocate for an official change to the IATI standard to support better transaction-level metadata.

4. Conclusion

The unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic shows why a global, multi-stakeholder data standard is needed. Our work to create the dashboard and data story about COVID-19 funding would not have been possible without the IATI standard and the hard work of its publishers. The Centre looks forward to collaborating with the IATI community to make improvements to the standard and related guidance so that valuable insights about aid activities are easier to generate and enable quicker decisions.

We are especially grateful to the many stakeholders who provided input and feedback over the course of this project. We would also like to acknowledge the guidance and support we received from the United States Agency for International Development.

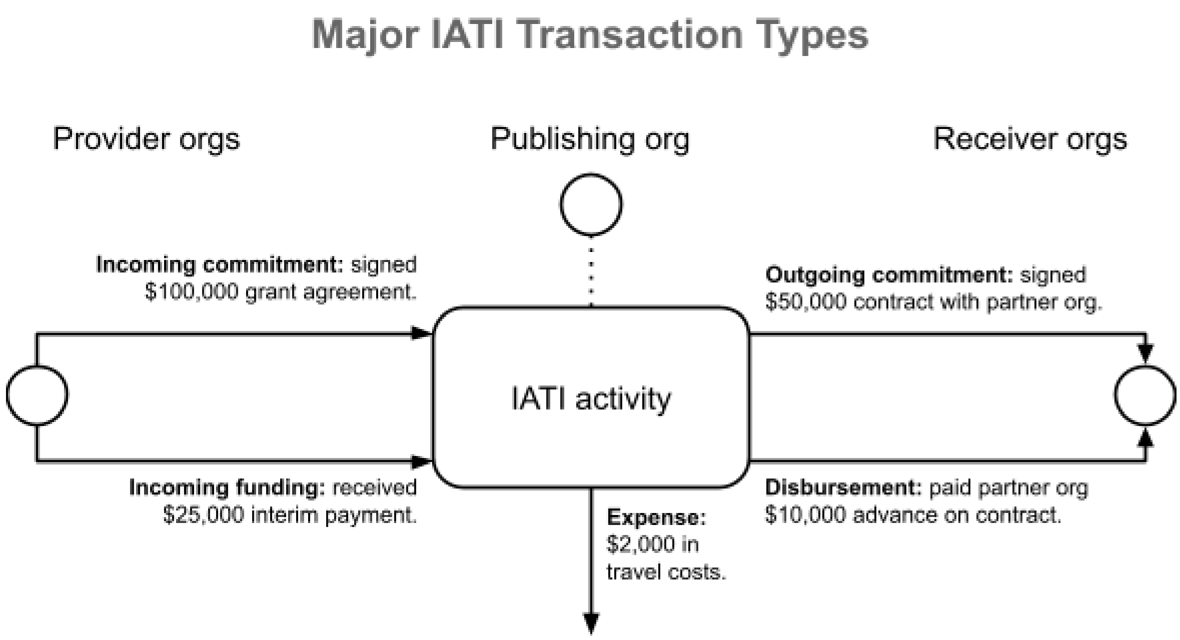
[5] Or later in the pandemic, via the use of a dubious OECD-DAC sector code for a COVID-19 pseudo-sector, which further confuses the sector breakdowns described in Finding #1.
[6] An *IATI extension* is a collection of additional markup that publishers can add to their IATI reports, using an XML Namespace to distinguish it from the primary IATI markup to avoid conflict or incompatibilities.

Annex A: IATI Transaction Types

The IATI transaction types that we were interested in for this project were **incoming commitments** (promises to pay money into an activity), **incoming funding** (actuals transfers of money into an activity), **outgoing commitments** (promises to pay money out of an activity), **disbursements** (actual transfers of money out an activity), and **expenses** (operating costs paid directly by the activity). Typically, transactions come from or go to a different aid organization than the one reporting the activity, but that is not always the case.

Because IATI publishers do not consistently distinguish between disbursements and expenses, we combine them in the dashboard and data story into a single pseudo-transaction type "**spending**."

Each activity contains zero or more transactions. Many types of metadata, such as the target sectors or recipient countries, may appear at either the activity or the transaction level.



Annex B: Methodology Highlights

This section describes the algorithms and general methodology we used to process IATI data to produce aggregate figures, and will be of interest primarily to software developers, information-management specialists, and financial professionals.

The Centre shares all of the source code for this dashboard as open source software. Data is extracted from d-portal.org and transformed every 24 hours.

For more information, view our public GitHub repositories:

- Data processing scripts
- Prepared data (automatically updated every 24 hours)
  - Activities and transactions — transactions.csv | transactions.json
  - Financial flows — flows.csv | flows.json
- Data visualization front end
- Data story source code

This section contains highlights only. For a full description of our processing methodology, see the dashboard's About page):

- **Data preparation:** We run GitHub actions daily to extract IATI data from the D-Portal service, transform it into CSV- and JSON-formatted reports, and then store it in GitHub Pages, accessible over the Web.

- **Date limit:** We include only outgoing financial transactions (types 3 or 4) dated after 2020-01-01, to ensure relevance to the pandemic.

- **Currency:** Unless they are already denominated in US dollars (USD), the dashboard converts all transaction values to USD before performing any other operations.

- **Relevance:** We follow the IATI COVID-19 Guidance for IATI Publishers and later additions to the OECD-DAC sector codes, and flag all matches as strictly-relevant, with the following exceptions:
  - If the string “COVID-19” appears only in the activity description, and the activity or transaction meets none of the other IATI guidance, we flag it only as loosely-relevant.
  - If the string “COVID” or “CORONAVIRUS” appears in the activity title or in the activity or transaction description, we also flag it as loosely relevant.

- **Spending:** The dashboard does not make a distinction between disbursement and expense transactions (types 3 or 4 in the IATI Transaction Type Codelist), but treat both as “spending” for the sake of this dashboard.

- **Sector simplification:** We have simplified the sectors, rolling them up to the top-level OECD-DAC sector groups, to make the aggregated totals more usable.

- **Allocation to sectors and recipient countries:** If an activity lists multiple sectors and/or recipient countries, the dashboard divides each transaction by the percentages given for both. The sectors and recipient countries for the transaction are used if provided at the transaction level, and otherwise the dashboard defaults to those used at the activity level.

- **Deduplication:** we subtract the larger of incoming commitments or incoming spending from outgoing commitments and from outgoing spending to determine the *net new commitments* and *net new spending* that an activity contributes to a sector, recipient country, or the overall response. We do not perform deduplication when showing results only for a single organization.

- **Internal transactions:** in the flows tab, we exclude internal transactions (where the provider and receiver organization are the same) whenever we are able to detect them.

Annex C: Stakeholder Consultations

The Centre conducted two rounds of stakeholder consultations, one before and one after the technical implementation of the IATI COVID-19 Funding Dashboard.

The first round of consultations, in late 2020, involved interviews with seven IATI stakeholders.[7] The main focus was on the earlier version of the dashboard and the extent to which it met the organizations' needs. From those discussions, the following key points emerged:

- A tool like this was important for donors and other aid organizations to understand the wider context of the COVID-19 financial response and the quality/usefulness of IATI data sharing.
- Key headline figures (like the total funding to date) are valuable.
- Users are most interested in looking at their own data first.
- The presentation of financial flows between organizations was valuable.
- IATI-specific terminology alienated many users.
- Users were disappointed at the lack of time-series data (in the context of an ongoing pandemic).
- There was little user retention: once users visited the dashboard once, they were unlikely to return.

In response to these findings, we made several changes to the dashboard:

1. We used only information from IATI publishers, so that all the data came from the same ecosystem, and we would be able to "hold up a mirror" to IATI data.
2. We simplified options for filtering and displaying data, and added pop-up help.
3. We removed most of the IATI-specific terminology and replaced it with more-broadly-accessible language.
4. We simplified pages to reduce the need for scrolling.
5. We preserved the ability of the original dashboard to bookmark specific data views, so that (for example) a user could bookmark their own data and come back to it later to see how it had changed.

[7] The stakeholders interviewed in the first round were Development Initiatives (DI), the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Aid Operations (DG-ECHO), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NL-MFA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The second round of consultations, in the second quarter of 2021, involved five IATI stakeholders, some of whom were also in the first round.[8] The main focus areas were demonstrating the updated version of the dashboard, soliciting feedback, and providing recommendations for each organization's own IATI publishing based on our findings. The following key points emerged from the second round:

- Stakeholders considered the dashboard useful, and could see ways to integrate it into their own planning and operations:
    - *"Eye opening, now I can go back and ask for extra capacity to make it so we can actually publish transactions."*
    - *"Our direct expenditure is remarkably large. That goes contrary to everything about local humanitarian leadership."*
- Simplifying the content (reduced scrolling) and using only IATI data significantly improved usability.
- Some users were able to find errors in their own IATI reporting quickly, in a way that they had not easily been able to do before.
- The new timeline chart was popular.
- The "quick filters" shortcuts that we added to help users get quick results were little used.
- The summary "doughnut charts" that we introduced caused confusion.
- While significantly simpler, the logic of results filtering was still not clear to all users.[9]
- Desire to see commitments as well as spending on the flows tab.

It was not possible to do a further major redesign after the second round of consultations, but we did make some improvements and recorded the feedback (positive and negative) to help us improve the usability of future dashboards, including possible later versions of this one for other crises and themes.

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[8] The stakeholders interviewed in the second round were the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), NL-MFA, Oxfam Novib, UNHCR, and WHO.
[9] It is possible that presenting users with a set of filters is *never* a good user experience for people who are not information-management specialists, no matter how a site presents them. This area deserves more user-experience research.