IATI Data Use Case Study: Somalia

1   Background & Context

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) – a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative – seeks to increase the availability of quality development cooperation information to all stakeholder groups. IATI was designed to serve the information needs of developing countries, while simultaneously supporting donors in meeting their commitments related to transparency.
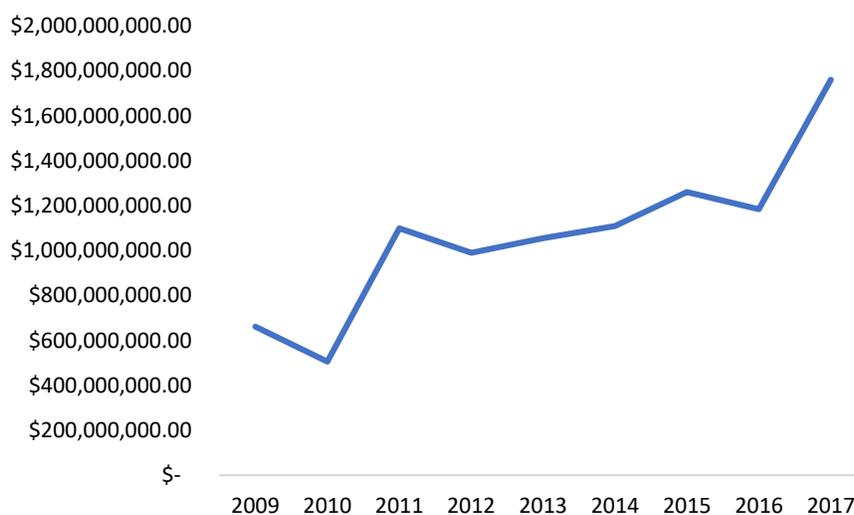
This case study was undertaken as part of the ongoing exercise to develop a new three-year IATI Strategic Plan 2019-2022. It aims to assess the development cooperation information needs of country-level stakeholders and understand how they are currently being met, with an overall view to informing ways IATI can evolve to better respond to country realities.

2   Country Development Cooperation Context

The Somalia National Development Plan (NDP) 2017-2019 builds on the New Deal Compact for Somalia to guide the country's recovery and development. The NDP not only outlines development objectives, but also includes security-related dimensions given the interconnectedness between these two sets of priorities. While the current iteration of the NDP is not costed, it does examine the country's medium-term fiscal situation, which recognises the important role of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

According to the 2018 report on Aid Flows in Somalia, total ODA has continued to increase in recent years, reaching its highest level in 2017, totalling 1.75 billion USD, which represents a 9 percent increase from 2016.

Figure 1. Official Development Assistance Trends

Source: World Bank Data Bank World Development Indicators

While the increase in 2017 was largely due to drought relief funds, preliminary results that will be published in the 2019 report on Aid Flows in Somalia show ODA levels were maintained in 2018 as a result of a 20 percent increase in development financing.

Of particular note is the increasing share of ODA that is delivered on treasury. In 2017, more than 100 million USD in grants, making up 14 percent of development cooperation, was delivered through the National Treasury.

The significant levels of ODA in Somalia require a robust cooperation architecture. The Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF) provides a coordination framework for the country. Like the NDP, the SDRF builds on mechanisms established under the New Deal Compact but makes adjustments to strengthen the effectiveness of these systems.

An SDRF Steering Committee, made up of senior representatives of the Federal Government of Somalia, Federal Member States, parliament, development partners and civil society, convenes regularly to discuss progress in NDP implementation. In addition to the Steering Committee, the SDRF establishes a series of Pillar Working Groups that support sector-level coordination.

In addition to its coordination function, the SDRF provides a common governance structure for three multi-partner trust funds (administered by the African Development Bank, the United Nations and the World Bank). This governance structured is detailed in the *Operations Manual for SDRF Funding Windows*." SDRF Pillar Working Groups are responsible for reviewing and endorsing project proposals received under these funding windows.

The Secretariat function for the SDRF is provided by the Aid Coordination Unit (ACU) within the Office of the Prime Minister.

3   Collection of Development Cooperation Data

Beginning in 2014, development cooperation flows in Somalia have been tracked through an annual aid mapping exercise. Earlier exercises were led by the ACU. The most recent exercise, undertaken in 2017, was led by the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development (MoPIED), with the support of the World Bank and United Nations.

The aid mapping exercise began following dissatisfaction with the Development Assistance Database (DAD) that was established in 2011. This system was criticised for being overly complicated and therefore was unused by Government and partners. To address these concerns, the new aid mapping exercise was restricted to the collection of a more focused dataset, while still including data both at the level of overall partner envelopes and at the project level. It has resulted in the collection of high-quality data and shows a strong willingness of development partners to engage in information sharing.

While the aid mapping exercise was considered a significant improvement from the DAD, the Government of Somalia requested support from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) to further strengthen the collection of development cooperation data in the country through the establishment of an Aid Information Management System (AIMS).

In developing the AIMS, an analysis of aid information management in the country was undertaken. There are several elements noted in this study that have informed the design of the new system. One of the key messages is the need to keep reporting simple, with no more than 20 fields to be collected & displayed, ensuring the system is user friendly. This can be supplemented by links to complementary sources of information for those requiring more in-depth information. Another key message is that no single data source can be expected to provide all the necessary information for each project – funders, implementers and beneficiaries all have information that together provide a full picture of development activities.

With this in mind, the new AIMS attempts to ease data entry for development partners and simplify the verification process for Government. Data entry will remain manual but will allow those inputting data to pull project information from IATI directly, if available. However, in cases where IATI data is not available or not accurate, the system will allow for manual adjustments[1]. Another key feature is the ability for multiple organisations engaged in the same project to enter data for that project, ensuring more complete information and reduced duplication.

During the mission, the beta launch of the AIMS took place. The system will undergo testing with a voluntary group of stakeholders and will be fully launched in later summer 2019.

4   Using Development Cooperation Information

There is strong Federal Government of Somalia, Federal Member States, parliamentarians and development partner commitment to participate in country-owned development cooperation data exercises and to use the resulting data to inform their work.

4.1   Government Perspectives

The mission met with Government officials from various teams within the MoPIED, including those responsible for Planning; Monitoring and Evaluation; and Information Technology (IT) – it is the IT team that is leading on the development of the AIMS. Consultations highlighted the importance of the use of development cooperation data for planning, including NDP implementation and coordination; budgeting, including allocations to sectors and Federal Member States; and for monitoring and evaluation of development results.

Consultations around the development planning process revealed the strong inclusive nature of this work – there are national level consultations with development partners, parliaments, civil society and the private sector, followed by consultations with the same variety of stakeholders at the Federal Member State level. It was noted that in the development of the current NDP, development statistics were used to inform the articulation of development priorities. However, development cooperation data was not used

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[1] During consultations with partners, the need for human capacity to maintain the quality of inputs was necessary. For example, when data is imported, a person is required to screen project titles as the same project may be named slightly differently in IATI versus the AIMS.

to inform the document, nor was the document it costed. This was done deliberately to avoid limiting the ambition of the document. This approach may be adjusted as the next iteration of the NDP is developed.

With regards to use of development cooperation data for budgeting, it was noted forward-looking information, if available at all, is often not tagged to specific sectors or activities, as it is intended to be responsive to emerging needs, as is common in conflict-affected settings. In terms of timing, it was noted by those responding for budgeting that it is important that development cooperation data be available in October of each year, as this is when the budgeting process begins.

Finally, consultations with representatives working on statistics and monitoring and evaluation, noted that there is a separate system used for these activities that collects much of the same information as the aid mapping exercise and the future AIMS. There is a willingness to explore the consolidation of these systems.

3.2   Local Government Perspectives

The mission met with officials from three Federal Member States: Jubaland, Puntland and South West State. Each of the Federal Member States has its own development planning and budgeting systems, including a state-level development plan. Federal Member State representative consulted noted that development cooperation has not generally been used in the past to inform development planning. However, there was a consensus on the need for increased availability of development cooperation information, including specific geographic information. This should go beyond Federal Member State allocations but also to the district level. This need is driven by the current duplication of efforts and the need for increased harmonisation across partners.

3.3   Parliamentarian Perspectives

The mission met with a member of the Federal Parliament of Somalia. This consultation highlighted the importance of access to development cooperation data in order for elected official to fulfil their oversight role and ensure that cooperation reaches all citizens equally. To do this, it is particularly important to have up to date information on the geographic distribution of development activities in the country.

It was also noted that parliamentary committees are responsible for overseeing specific sectors. As such, it is important that development cooperation data is disaggregated by sector, as defined in the NDP. In the same vein, it was suggested that additional training for sector ministries and parliamentarians would be beneficial to ensure officials are able to fulfil their verification and oversight roles. Finally, the issue of timing was discussed. The current aid mapping is released annually but it was noted that more up to date information would be helpful as review of policies and programmes does not happen on a set schedule.

3.4   Partner Perspectives

The mission met with officials from the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, Delegation of the European Union (EU), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

(SDC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Consultations with these development partners showed strong commitment to reporting on their development cooperation activities through the Government systems. Regarding the use of data, consultations revealed that it is used to support planning and coordination among partners in the country but as a supplement to dialogue, either undertaken through formal mechanisms or not.

When development cooperation data is used, it is often to assess which donors are working/investing in which sectors. Here, it was suggested that tagging to Creditor Reporting System sectors was not always helpful, as these are broad and do not align to the NDP. Another issue raised was that of the difference of the quality of data and ability to use data varies across sectors and that expectations need to be adjusted accordingly. There was a request to have more information on the geographic areas of investment, which was noted as especially important given the substantial amount of humanitarian funding, which often flows to specific regions.

It was noted that funders seem to be the biggest users of development cooperation data, as opposed to the Government or implementing agencies. There was a desire to see increased evidence of the use of this information on the part of the Government to inform planning and budgeting processes.

4 Implications & Opportunities for IATI

While the newly developed AIMS will draw on IATI data (in a sense the AIMS is fully integrated with IATI but not it is not automatically integrated), in order to provide the specific data required by in-country stakeholders and to ensure usability for these stakeholders, the national system cannot be replaced with only use of IATI. However, given the integration with the AIMS, there is substantial opportunity for IATI to learn from the Somalia experience to inform how it can better complement national systems to better serve the needs of country-level stakeholders. For example, this integration may shed light on which elements of the IATI standard are most relevant at country level and which are not used. It may also help to identify good practices in having more than one partner report on an activity.

Other areas to be considered by IATI are as follows:

- **Simplification of data collected.** As noted, based on the experience in using the DAD and intensive consultations undertaken in the development of the AIMS, it was noted that a reduction in the number of data fields collected was necessary to ease the reporting process and that this could be done while still providing the most essential information. IATI may wish to examine how it can streamline the standard, and at the same time, ensuring it is consistent with what data is commonly used by country stakeholders.

- **Build political momentum and support training.** As noted, while there is a strong understanding of the importance of the use of development cooperation data in government decision making but that actual use of data by government stakeholders, at all levels, is limited. Development partners are willing to support the development and use of data collection systems and to engage

in reporting, if there is demonstrated use on the part of government counterparts. IATI may wish to consider support to advocacy and training efforts around development cooperation data use generally, not only as specifically related to IATI data. This should extend to sector ministries and sub-national governments.

- **Increase focus at the sector and sub-national levels.** All stakeholders consulted noted that increased access to quality sector (as defined by countries) and sub-national data. IATI may wish to consider how it can facilitate reporting in these ways.

Annex A. Officials Consulted

Federal Government of Somalia

Mr. Abdirahman Farah, ACU
Mr. Mohamed Tahlil Ahmed, MoF
Mr. Abdukadir Arabow, MoPIED
Mr. Mohamed Gele, MoPIED
Mr. Ahmed Hassan, MoPIED
Mr. Jama Hassan, MoPIED
Mr. Miski Ibrahim, MoPIED
Ms. Faisa Kasim, MoPIED
Mr. Mohamud Said, MoPIED
Mr. Asad Yusuf, MoPIED

Federal Member States

Mr. Osman H assan Abdi, Jubaland
Mr. Jamap Rage Jama, Jubaland
Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Ali, Puntland
Mr. Mohamed Ali Isse, Puntland
Mr. Sharmarke Mohamed Kulow, South West State

Parliaments

Mr. Abdirisak Osman Jurile, Senator

Development Partners

Ms. Christina Christou, DFID
Ms. Joyce Mogane, DFID
Ms. Nancy Thuo, EU
Mr. Amid Malik, FAO
Mr. Saad Gilan, ILO
Mr. Henry Danso, ILO
Ms. Yuko Tomita, IOM
Mr. Jan Van't Land, IOM
Mr. Albert Abou Hamra, OCHA
Mr. Umikalthum Shkri Noor, OCHA
Ms. Anka Kitunzi, UNCDF
Mr. Saru Ongaro, UNCDF
Mr. Pau Blanquer, UNDP
Ms. Susanna Balbo, UNFPA
Ms. Purity Mjagi, UNHABITAT

Mr. Ygor Scarcia, UNIDO
Mr. Julius Otim, UNWOMEN
Mr. Joshua Vetter, USAID
Mr. Debesay Mulugeta, WHO
Mr. Rashid Ahmed, Consultant
Mr. Matthew Geddes, Consultant