

# 2015 U.S. AID TRANSPARENCY REVIEW

Publish What You Fund is the global campaign for aid transparency. We work to make accessible, comprehensive, timely and comparable information about development flows available. The Road to 2015 campaign is a coalition of civil society organizations from around the world, coordinated by Publish What You Fund. It aims to push donors to deliver on the promise they made in Busan, Korea in 2011 to publish comprehensive and timely aid information by the end of 2015, whilst ensuring aid transparency remains an integral component of the post-2015 development landscape.

Visit [www.roadto2015.org](http://www.roadto2015.org) for more information.

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# WHY AID TRANSPARENCY MATTERS



**FOR SOME OF THE POOREST AND MOST AID DEPENDENT COUNTRIES, MORE THAN HALF OF U.S. DEVELOPMENT FLOWS ARE NOT PUBLISHED TO IATI**

Limited access to information on development flows is a challenge to both providers and users of information. Poor quality data hinders decision making at all steps in the development process – from aid allocation to planning domestic resources – which in turn adversely affects development outcomes. Far too much aid data is not published or “visible” to recipient countries, leaving them unable to effectively plan or allocate resources. Access to timely, comprehensive and comparable information is especially critical for those countries most dependent on aid.

**“As a country if you do not have control over resources or don’t know what resources you are getting, it’s harder to plan for them and be held to account for them.”**

HE Ernest Rwamucyo, Rwandan High Commissioner to India (2012)

The United States still remains the single largest bilateral donor, yet for some of the poorest and most aid dependent countries, more than half of the U.S. Government’s development flows are not published to IATI (see infographic on pp. 6-7).

When the U.S. signed up to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in 2011, it committed to make U.S. aid transparent by December 2015. The implementation of those aid transparency commitments four years later remains mixed. There is continued leadership from MCC, showing steady and high quality publication to IATI. USAID has improved its publication, moving into the “good category” for the first time. PEPFAR continues to improve, but has substantial work left to do. State’s data remains essentially unchanged over the past three years. The big disappointments are Treasury and Defense, both of which are becoming less transparent. The White House, with the exception of its work on the Open Government Partnership, has done little to move this agenda forward.

**Thus, there is some notable progress, but too many U.S. agencies are off track to meet their 2015 commitments. Renewed political commitment is necessary to make full transparency a priority.**

The global agenda suffers from the lack of U.S. progress. Given the importance of the U.S. as a donor, a gap in U.S. data affects the overall picture of aid flows. Issues with U.S. data quality also prevent data from being comparable with other donors. While technology has moved forward with new tools like data portals, platforms, and Aid Information Management Systems (AIMS), the data has not yet caught up.

Political leadership in the U.S. is needed to reaffirm the commitment to make aid transparency a priority. Aid transparency is not just good for recipient countries – it is a valuable business proposition that will help the U.S. deliver not only on its open data promises but will help the U.S. monitor and improve development outcomes. There will be no the data revolution without open data.

Rising to the top of the aid transparency ladder is a good start. Remaining a leader is the challenge.



**THE BIG DISAPPOINTMENTS ARE TREASURY AND DEFENSE, BOTH OF WHICH ARE BECOMING LESS TRANSPARENT**

# PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING AID TRANSPARENCY

2015 is a critical year for transparency, development finance, and open data. Preparations for the Financing for Development (FfD) conference in Addis Ababa in July are well underway. Likewise, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will frame the post-2015 agenda, are due for consideration in September. The Busan deadline for the implementation of IATI is December 2015. Transparency and open data should be at the core of these negotiations and a reaffirmed commitment by the U.S. to these principles is important to both successful outcomes and meaningful monitoring.

In October 2014, Publish What You Fund released the 2014 Aid Transparency Index (ATI). The Index ranks 68 donor organizations on how transparent they are about the aid they give, including the six main U.S. agencies that provide foreign assistance.<sup>1</sup> What progress has been made by these six agencies since then?

- In February 2015, MCC presented its “Principles into Practice” paper,<sup>2</sup> which sets out the six top lessons learned from increasing transparency. At this event, other leading donors discussed their experience of publishing aid data and shared constructive advice with their peers, such as their practice to “publish once, use often”.<sup>3</sup>
- The Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) bureau at USAID concluded its three country pilot study on data use. The report was presented in June 2015, complete with recommendations for how best to inform the U.S. Government’s aid transparency agenda.<sup>4</sup>
- MCC and PEPFAR announced a \$21.8m transparency partnership with country stakeholders to strengthen open data systems in order to encourage data use for better program management and increased mutual accountability. Initially, the partnership will focus on achieving impact through open data for HIV/AIDS and health, gender equality and economic growth sectors.<sup>5</sup>
- In its Open Government Plan 3.0 published in June 2014, USAID committed to producing a cost management plan detailing how the agency would meet its IATI commitments.<sup>6</sup> The plan has received internal approval for the implementation of phases I–III (out of IV) and marks a significant step forward for USAID’s efforts to publish to IATI.
- The State Department assigned a full-time Presidential Innovation Fellow to develop the Foreign Assistance Data Review. This is an internal stocktaking exercise of State’s current systems and data, due to be completed by the fall of 2015.
- With support from USAID and MCC, the aid on budget work being piloted by a group of IATI publishers (which allows the automated mapping of foreign assistance flows to domestic budgets) took several big steps forward, including positive outcomes from the five country pilots and a discussion at the OECD on the remaining steps needed for implementation.
- U.S. agencies are increasingly engaging with the aid transparency agenda by regularly attending the IATI Technical Advisory Group meetings, discussing data use and demands with different stakeholders, and engaging with other donors.
- The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) continues to push on a number of transparency and accountability issues, including improving the quality and accessibility of U.S agencies’ aid data, evaluations, and monitoring, both for U.S. and partner country citizens, as well as engaging with Capitol Hill to increase and institutionalize transparency.

1 The six U.S. aid agencies assessed are Department of Defense (DOD), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the President’s Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the State Department, Department of the Treasury, and USAID.

2 See: <https://assets.mcc.gov/reports/paper-2015001163301-principles-transparency.pdf>

3 See: <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/by-country/us/lessons-are-there-us-must-now-act-aid-transparency/>

4 See Aid Transparency Country Pilot Assessment: Final Report, May 2015, see: <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/progress-data/transparency>

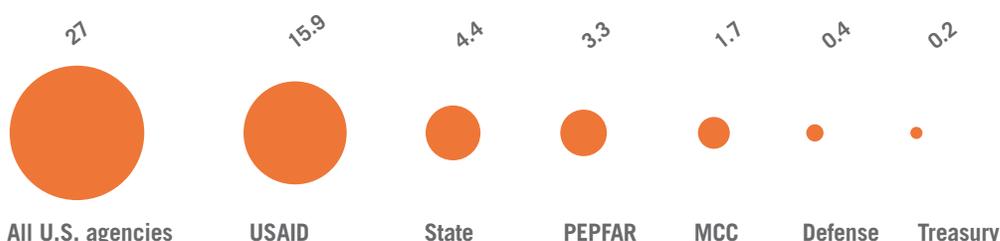
5 See: <https://www.mcc.gov/pages/docs/doc/fact-sheet-mcc-and-pepfar-partner-to-create-local-data-hubs>

6 See: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/USAID-Open-Gov-Plan-3.0.2014-07-23.pdf>

# ON OR OFF TRACK?

The U.S. provided \$27bn of development assistance in 2013, which represents over 17% of all flows reported to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).<sup>7</sup>

**Chart 1. Aid provided by six main U.S. agencies, USD billions**



Note: "All U.S. agencies" refers to the total combined figure of ODA reported to the OECD DAC in 2013 for over 20 U.S. agencies  
Source: OECD DAC CRS 2013

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THE U.S. PROVIDED  
\$27BN OF DEVELOPMENT  
ASSISTANCE IN 2013

In recognition of the United States' role as a major player in global development and the importance of U.S. leadership on the transparency agenda, this Review takes stock of U.S. agencies' progress on aid transparency. It assesses whether six U.S. donors are on or off track to meet their commitments by the end of 2015 and provides specific recommendations to get on track. The Review uses the same methodology as the 2014 Aid Transparency Index.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1. U.S. donors' progress with meeting the 2015 deadline to implement IATI**

ON TRACK		OFF TRACK		
VERY GOOD 80-100%	GOOD 60-79%	FAIR 40-59%	POOR 20-39%	VERY POOR 0-19%
MCC 86.8	<b>USAID 62.7</b>	<b>PEPFAR 56.5</b>	Treasury 34.0	
		State 41.3	Defense 23.2	

Note 1. On track = in the very good or good performance categories; off track = in the fair, poor or very poor categories.

Note 2. Bold text denotes that donor has improved the quality of its publication substantially since the release of the 2014 Aid Transparency Index.

Donors in the very good performance category publish timely and comprehensive information to IATI for the majority of their activities. Donors in the good and fair categories publish basic activity-level information to IATI, but timeliness and comprehensiveness varies. Donors in the poor or very poor categories publish limited current information either to IATI or elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

For this Review, and in line with the Index methodology, agencies are scored for information grouped in three categories: commitment to transparency, information at organization level, and information at activity level.

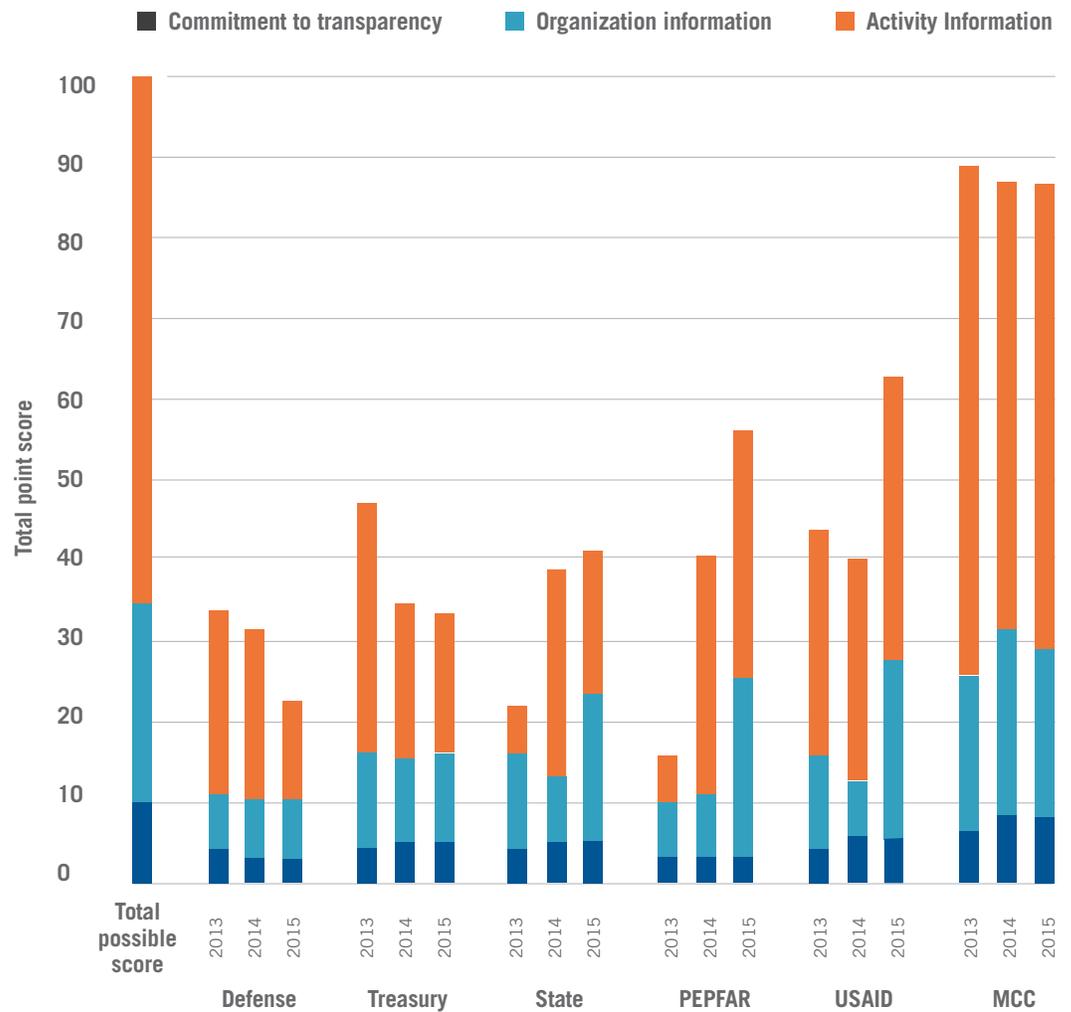
- **Commitment to aid transparency** reflects the extent to which organizations have demonstrated an overall commitment to making their aid more transparent.
- **Organization information** looks at the availability of general planning and financial information.
- **Activity information** reflects the extent to which organizations make aid information available on specific project activities in-country.

7 Based on OECD DAC CRS 2013 figures.

8 See: [http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/files/2015/04/Technical-paper-2015-review\\_FINAL.docx](http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/files/2015/04/Technical-paper-2015-review_FINAL.docx)

9 To download the full dataset and scores, please visit [www.roadto2015.org/us-review/dataset](http://www.roadto2015.org/us-review/dataset)

Chart 2. U.S. agencies' progress on aid transparency, 2013–2015



Progress by the six U.S. agencies on publishing aid information varies widely. The chart above shows the score for each agency in the 2013 and 2014 Aid Transparency Indexes, as well as the 2015 Review. Each score is broken down into the points scored in each of the three indicator categories: commitment, organization, and activity.

MCC has consistently performed well, showing sustained leadership into 2015. USAID made little progress between 2013 and 2014 but has improved its IATI publication in 2015, showing the biggest jump in score among the six U.S. donors. In 2015, PEPFAR continues to improve, but still remains off track. State remains largely unchanged. Treasury and DOD are off track and are moving in the wrong direction.

What does aid transparency look like from the beneficiary point of view? The infographic on pages 6-7 addresses this question for ten aid dependent countries. We reviewed how much of the total aid going to these countries was visible in the IATI Registry in the last year with available data. The analysis shows that less than half of U.S. aid to these countries was visible in IATI, leaving a gap of approximately \$2.8 billion to those countries alone.



## THE NUMBER OF INFORMATION ITEMS ON WHICH DOD SCORES HAS DECREASED YEAR AFTER YEAR

### Department of Defense: OFF TRACK

The Department of Defense scores 23.2%, placing it in the poor category. This score is an eight percentage point decrease from the 2014 Index. DOD first published to IATI in 2013 but since then the number of information items on which it scores has decreased year after year.

- **Data highlights:** DOD publishes some basic activity-level information to IATI, such as contact details, current status, project description, unique project ID, sector, and planned dates.
- **What is missing from IATI:** In 2014, DOD published data to IATI on actual dates, flow type, tied aid status, commitments and disbursements, and expenditures. None of these were published in 2015. Additionally, DOD is missing important information such as recipient country budgets, activity-level forward budgets, implementing agency, results, and objectives.

### Millennium Challenge Corporation: ON TRACK

MCC scores 86.8%, placing it in the very good category. It performs well across the board, scoring over 80% of the possible points available for each of the three indicator categories.

- **Data highlights:** MCC publishes good quality IATI data for 30 of the information items assessed in this Review. This covers all basic, performance and financial activity-level information.
- **What is missing from IATI:** Contracts, evaluations, and tenders, although this information is available elsewhere. Annual reports and total organization budget are published to IATI but these do not cover the period assessed in this Review. In 2015, MCC does not publish accurate sub-national location information.

### PEPFAR: OFF TRACK

PEPFAR scores 56.5%, placing it in the fair category. PEPFAR's score improved the most among the U.S. agencies in the 2014 Index and it has continued to make progress since then.

- **Data highlights:** PEPFAR gains 16 percentage points. This is largely due to an increase in their organization-level planning information available now in IATI.
- **What is missing from IATI:** PEPFAR does not score for nine activity-level information items, including sub-national location, impact appraisals, results, actual dates, disbursements and expenditures, and evaluations.

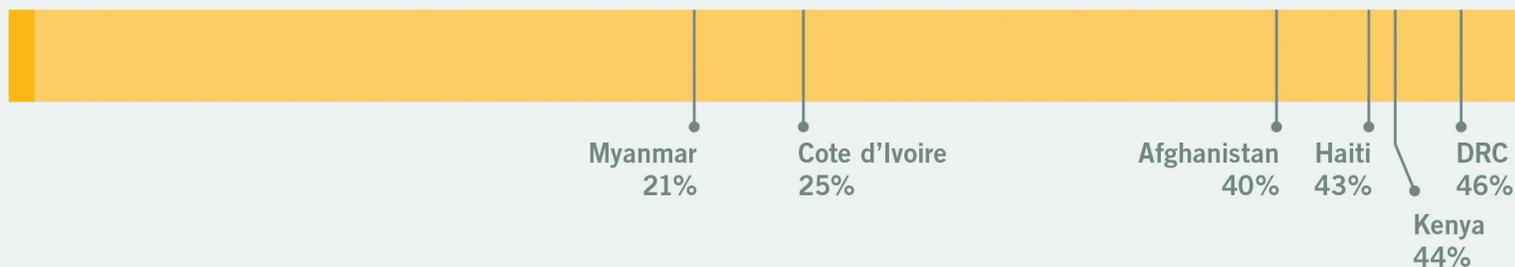
# PUBLISH WHAT YOU FUND

If you produce data, publish it.

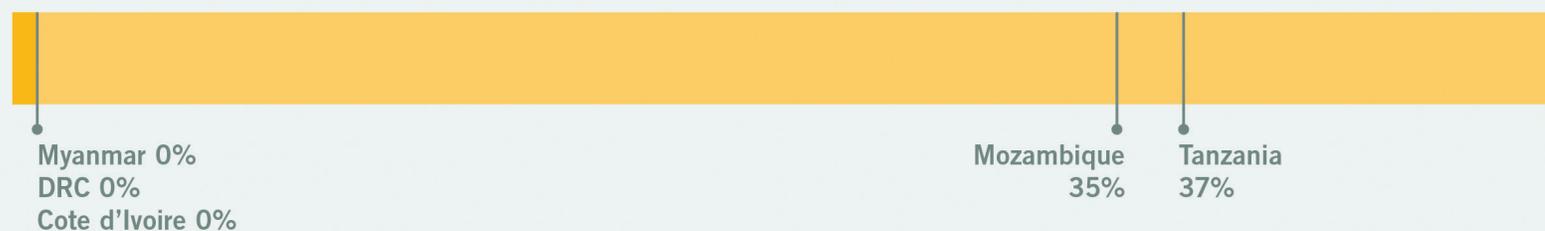
If you have data, use it.

If you don't have data, demand it.

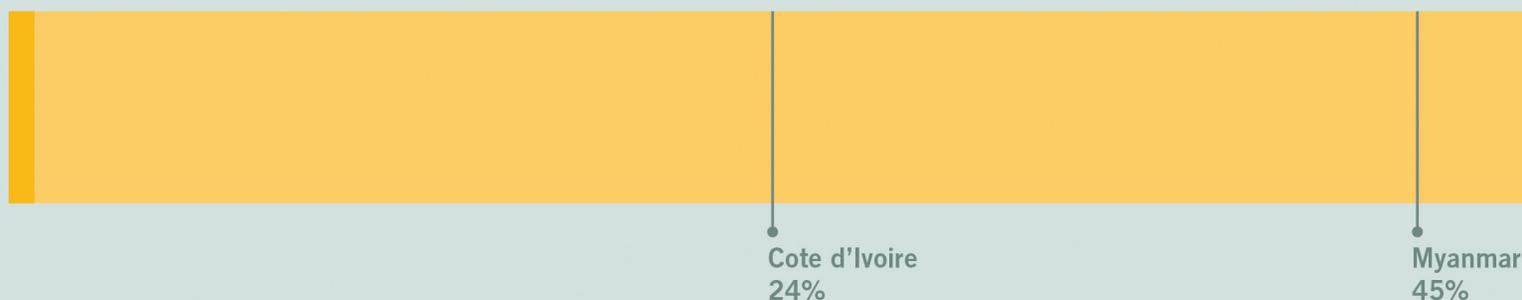
% of EU aid visible on IATI, selected countries



% of U.S. aid visible on IATI, selected countries



% of total aid visible on IATI, selected countries



All figures are for 2013

1. Data sources: OECD DAC's Creditor Reporting System and D-portal. Full data available at: [www.roadto2015.org/reportdata](http://www.roadto2015.org/reportdata)

2. All data is for the year 2013 and is based on ODF reported vs. Spend published/not published to IATI.

This includes information on donors that report to the OECD DAC's Creditor Reporting System only.

In 2013, for 10 of the most aid dependent countries

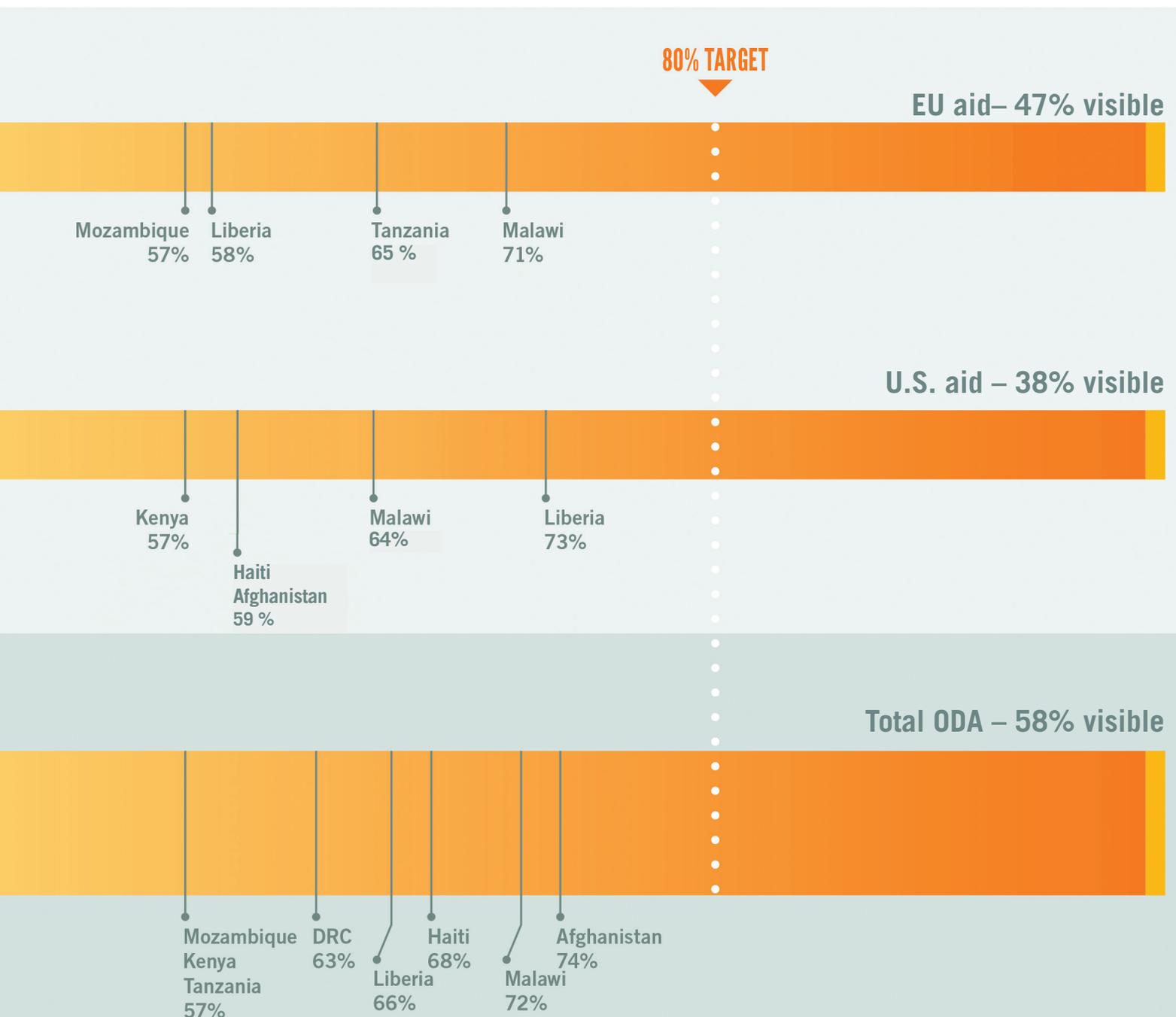
**\$4.8bn** of EU aid was not visible

**\$2.8bn** of U.S. aid was not visible

**\$13.4bn** of official donor aid was not visible

There may be aid money coming in, but if that money is not published in one place, on time and in full, then it is hard for governments to plan, donors to coordinate and civil society to hold them accountable.

**We believe over 80% of aid needs to be visible for it be to useful.**





## TREASURY'S SCORES REPRESENT A DECLINE IN THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE



## USAID IS THE BIGGEST IMPROVING AGENCY IN THE REVIEW

### Department of State: OFF TRACK

The Department of State scores 41.3%, placing it in the fair category. This score is a 2.5 percentage point increase from the 2014 Index and moves State from the poor to fair category.

- **Data highlights:** After beginning publication to IATI in June 2014, State has published seven further information items to IATI that are assessed as part of this Review, including financial and planning organization-level information, current status, and planned dates.
- **What is missing from IATI:** Half of the activity-level information assessed is not published, including forward budgets, evaluations, objectives, results, sub-national location, and actual dates.

### Department of the Treasury: OFF TRACK

Treasury scores 34.0%, placing it in the poor category. Treasury scores for five fewer indicators in the Review than it did for the 2014 Index, representing a decline in the amount of information available.

- **Data highlights:** Nine indicators are published to IATI, including allocation policy, unique project ID, project title, project description, planned dates, and current status. This represents an improvement from the 2014 Aid Transparency Index, when the Treasury failed to include current information for much of its data.
- **What is missing from IATI:** 27 information items assessed as part of this Review are not published to the IATI Registry. 14 information items could not be found in any Treasury publication or on its website. At the activity-level, this includes forward budgets, disbursements and expenditures, actual dates, finance type, sub-national location, results, impact appraisals, and conditions. Country strategy papers and recipient country budgets are also missing.

### USAID: ON TRACK

USAID scores 62.7%, placing it in the good category for the first time. USAID is the most improved agency among those assessed in the Review, increasing its score by 22 percentage points since the 2014 Index. This is primarily explained by the increase in information available in machine-readable format.

- **Data highlights:** All organization information and over half of the activity-level information assessed is now published to IATI. This includes basic activity-level information, disbursements and expenditures, commitments, and classification information such as sector or aid type.
- **What is missing from IATI:** A total of 12 activity-level information items including objectives, results, impact appraisals, forward-looking activity budgets, sub-national location, and actual dates.

# AID TRANSPARENCY HIGHLIGHTS



**TO PROPERLY TRACK  
AND MANAGE AID  
FLOWS, BANGLADESH  
HAS DEVELOPED  
A HOMEGROWN AIMS**

## GLOBAL

### Sweden

Sida makes a case for ‘publish once, use often’ through its online data platform – Openaid.se – which is entirely based on the data it publishes to IATI. This approach to improving the consistency of the data it produces not only involves meeting the requirements of the IATI Standard, but it increases accessibility to the information internally through ongoing communications with staff about daily project management and the issues that are raised as a result. Sweden has made the source code for this website public and offered to help countries adopt it for their purposes.

### Bangladesh

Up-to-date information on aid flows into Bangladesh is often only available off line. To provide a single entry window for all foreign aid related information and to properly track and manage the aid flows, the Economic Relations Division, with support from its Aid Effectiveness Project, has developed a homegrown Aid Information Management System (AIMS). The AIMS now acts as a one-stop-shop for all information related to foreign assistance in Bangladesh, covering all sectors, projects, and donors. Bangladesh AIMS was developed through an inclusive process involving the government, development partners, and civil society organizations over a period of 20 months.<sup>10</sup>

## U.S. AGENCIES

### MCC

It is the first U.S. agency to identify specific elements for putting transparency into practice in an effective and sustainable way.<sup>11</sup>

1. Transparency requires leaders and champions
2. Build a cross-cutting team of technical, data, and policy staff
3. Listen to external stakeholders to understand what information is needed and how it is used
4. Adapt practice along the way
5. For data to be used, it must be in useable formats, including for your own staff
6. Transparency requires both continual decision-making, as well as transparent decisions

10 For more information see: <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/news/developing-homegrown-aid-database-lessons-bangladesh/>

11 See footnote 2

12 See: <https://www.mcc.gov/pages/docs/doc/open-government-plan>

The agency is collaborating with Data 2X and the UN Foundation to work with donors to publish disaggregated results data to IATI. This will include the release of a report sharing lessons learned on collecting and publishing aid information.

As part of the Flagship Initiatives presented in the 2014 Open Government Plan, MCC is pursuing improved reporting and data publication by its Millennium Challenge Accounts.<sup>12</sup>

## USAID

USAID approved the first three stages of its cost management plan in June 2015, which will include adding a number of fields to USAID's IATI data and streamlining a number of processes to allow more timely publication. Eventually, IATI publication should be integrated into USAID's new Development Information System (DIS).

The agency concluded three country pilots on the demand for and use of information that the U.S. Government is making available in Ghana, Bangladesh and Zambia.

Main findings and conclusions: It found that data in IATI could, in principle, answer most of the questions that stakeholders raised, but there was not sufficient awareness for it to be widely used. The country pilot studies found that the quality and accessibility of the data were also cited as problems. The recommendations of the pilots were:

- Continue and expand support from senior leadership in order to elevate the importance of and accelerate aid transparency efforts
- Raise awareness about the existence of aid transparency data among different stakeholder groups in partner countries and within U.S. agencies
- Expand the IATI publication of U.S. agencies to meet demands for information, particularly sub-national geographic data, project documents and results data
- Further increase the quality of U.S. agency data publication and strengthen mechanisms to ensure high data quality
- Support data use in partner countries through trainings, tools and engagement with relevant stakeholders

## PEPFAR

PEPFAR is publishing 2014 program data disaggregated by age and sex on its Dashboard.<sup>13</sup> This represents the first round of data reported against the new PEPFAR Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting indicator guidance, which includes new and updated indicator definitions as well as revised definitions of PEPFAR support.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced a new three-year, \$21.8m partnership between PEPFAR and MCC to encourage country commitments to data transparency, citizen access, and the use of data to drive decision making and mutual accountability.

Country teams are collecting program data at a sub-national (district) level. They're using this to determine how to best allocate PEPFAR funding toward helping control the HIV/AIDS epidemic in each partner country.

13 See here: <http://data.pepfar.net/>



**INTERACTION ADOPTED AN OPEN INFORMATION POLICY AND NOW PUBLISHES ALL OF ITS GRANT-FUNDED ACTIVITIES TO THE IATI REGISTRY**

## U.S. NGOS

### InterAction

Over the past year, InterAction has taken several important steps in fulfilling its commitment to transparency. InterAction adopted an open information policy and now publishes all of its grant-funded activities to the IATI Registry. Its next milestone is to make NGO Aid Map IATI compliant. This will enable NGOs providing data to the site to easily publish to IATI. By aligning NGO Aid Map to the IATI standard, participating organizations will be able to combine their data with that provided by other organizations on the IATI Registry.

Since 2010, NGO Aid Map has collected information on over 10,600 projects from 133 organizations working in 173 countries. About 20,000 users currently visit the site each month. The site provides information about initiatives on the ground. For example, one organization opening a new office in El Salvador was seeking advice from other NGOs operating in the country and used NGO Aid Map to locate contacts in El Salvador to answer their questions.

### OpenTheGovernment.org

As a founding member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the U.S. is now working to develop its third National Action Plan (NAP). In the two previous NAPs, the U.S. has included a commitment to make its foreign assistance transparent by publishing detailed, timely, and high-quality information in an internationally comparable format.

The OpenTheGovernment.org coalition has been coordinating the U.S. CSOs involved in OGP by introducing them to the appropriate government leads, facilitating meetings where possible, and convening a space to consider new commitments and their effective implementation.

As of June 2015, there are more than 15 suggested model commitments being drafted by U.S. NGOs that will be shared directly with the White House for inclusion in the U.S. NAP, due to be released in October 2015. Crowdsourcing ideas and commitments means that the content reflects both the suggestions of the government and civil society. This open space is at the core of OGP and its mission.



**OXFAM AMERICA IS PREPARING ITS FIRST IATI PUBLICATION**

### Oxfam America

Oxfam America is working in collaboration with Publish What You Fund, the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, and other members of the IATI community to expand the knowledge base of use of development cooperation data by various stakeholders. Current activities include:

- Gathering information from civil society partners in countries where Oxfam works as to how they use development cooperation data, and what sources they use to obtain the data
- Assessing currently available U.S. IATI data to develop a methodology to use the data to track development funding to particular projects and results
- Working jointly with partners that use Aid Information Management Systems (AIMS) to identify and detail specific information needs and data use case studies across government and non-government stakeholders
- Preparing Oxfam America's first publication to the IATI Registry
- Supporting the work of the budget identifier with their country offices

# WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF GREATER PROGRESS?



**THE OVERRIDING ISSUE IS THAT, FOR TOO MANY AGENCIES, IMPLEMENTING TRANSPARENCY IS NOT A PRIORITY**

As evidenced by the data collected as part of this Review, different U.S. agencies face different challenges with making their aid transparent. This is reflected in what they publish and what is missing. While some agencies have improved their publication year after year, others continue to decline both in the quality and coverage of the data they make available.<sup>14</sup>

For many agencies, internal systems simply were not designed to collect and publish comprehensive, disaggregated data. Lack of internal expertise and resources also play a role. None of these challenges are insurmountable however. The overriding issue is that, for too many agencies, implementing transparency is not a priority.

The MCC's "Principles into Practice" paper outlines how it has achieved its success. Two of the most important lessons were having leaders who were transparency champions and assembling a team with the right set of skills. Other U.S. champions committed to open data have emerged, including the strong leadership at PEPFAR. Committed leadership willing to make transparency a priority remains an issue in other agencies.

The sustainability of publishing to IATI continues to be a concern. For too many agencies, this effort is treated as a reporting exercise. There is little appreciation for the potential of IATI specifically, and transparency in general, to make foreign assistance more effective. U.S. agencies, except for MCC and PEPFAR, have failed to embrace transparency as a business proposition. The value of open, comparable and timely information for internal management decisions is not understood, and none of the six agencies is using either their own or others' IATI data for internal management decisions. For example, DOD and Treasury have seen a drop in their score year after year. Within these Departments, publication relies heavily on limited staff manually collecting information and sharing it with the Dashboard without further engagement with their own data. For DOD, this is an annual exercise, even though the OMB bulletin calls for quarterly publication to the Dashboard.<sup>15</sup>

A 2013 survey of the user needs of AIMS in recipient countries found that 91% of those managing aid flows found the provision of at least one year forward-looking budgets to be critical for planning purposes.<sup>16</sup> The U.S. has a unique annual budgeting system that prevents publication of allocated aid funds that go beyond the current year. Nonetheless, indicative figures – which are available – can provide valuable information to recipients of aid.

Renewed political buy-in, including by the White House, OMB, and agency leads is required to put U.S. agencies on track. Making aid transparency a priority is not just about keeping the Busan promise for 2015 but about ensuring progress after 2015. Access to open data on all development flows will be fundamental to successful outcomes and monitoring processes for Financing for Development, the SDGs, and the "data revolution". This data needs to include basic information on donors' spending – including actual amounts, dates and the purpose of the aid given. Access to open data also paves the way for more exciting initiatives, such as joining up information on all development flows including aid, budgets, extractives and contracts. But before we can move to these initiatives, we first have to finish the job of publishing what we know. The U.S., as a whole, needs to reset its course to make sure it is on track to meet the December 2015 deadline.



**NO AGENCY IS USING THEIR OWN OR OTHERS' IATI DATA FOR INTERNAL MANAGEMENT DECISIONS**

14 For information to be considered high quality, it needs to be comprehensive, timely, accessible and comparable. See: <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/resources/papers/publish-what-you-fund-principles>

15 See: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/fy2012/b12-01.pdf>

16 See: <http://www.aidtransparency.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Paper-4a-Country-Survey-of-AIMS.pdf>

# CALL TO ACTION

**To ensure that the U.S. is on track to implement transparency by the end of 2015, donors must:**

## **Make aid transparency a priority**

- Demonstrate strong leadership to drive the agenda forward, coupled with internal agency specific knowledge and technical expertise. Renewed political commitment is essential to fully deliver on goals beyond 2015, including the FfD conference, the SDGs, and calls for a data revolution.
- Create and publish a management plan for full implementation of IATI. Map existing agency-specific information against the Standard and identify necessary new systems and/or processes.
- Drive improvements in data quality over time by setting specific benchmarks and milestones as defined in the management plan.
- Make efforts sustainable. Smart initial investments should automate data publication from the source and minimize manual processes. On-going efforts can then focus on efficiencies and quality improvements for maximum return on investments.

## **Realize the value of open data for their own business**

- Promote the value of quality data for improved internal management. A substantial consumer of IATI data should be U.S. agencies themselves and the U.S. Congress.
- Improve internal data collection processes so they deliver the best information for all stakeholders. Integrate financial and project management systems across headquarters and country offices and maximize automation of IATI data directly from these systems.
- Ownership must remain with those who know the data best for quality to improve and gaps to be filled.

## **Make the data accessible to all and promote its use**

- Encourage that data collected and published be used within an agency. Best practice demonstrates that used data leads to improved data.
- Forward planning data is extremely valuable so aim to include forward-looking information that goes beyond one planning year.
- Use data internally and promote it externally. Raise awareness both at headquarters level and in country offices on how to access, publish, improve, and use IATI data. Promote use of your data and build capacity for its use by other stakeholders. Seek regular feedback on how to best meet their information needs.

**Donors promised to make aid transparent by the end of 2015. In this year of the data revolution, it is time for the U.S. to deliver on its promise.**

**“...by opening up public datasets like budget data we can make it possible for civil society to use the data for monitoring and decision-making, and ensure that the government budget achieves its full potential.”**

Prakash Neupane is the ambassador of Open Knowledge Foundation's Nepal (OKFN) Local Group (2015)