Publish WhatYouFund
The Global Campaign for Aid Transparency

Aid Transparency Index

2022

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Ten years of the Aid Transparency Index

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the Aid Transparency Index. The first edition of the Index aimed to capitalise on the momentum for greater aid transparency that came out of the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. We have now run seven full indexes, the results of which provide a detailed map of the progress made towards greater aid transparency. The trend of overall improvement shows significant steps forward in aid transparency over the last 10 years.

All but four of the organisations assessed in 2022 are now publishing standardised data for their aid activities, meaning that data about the policies and activities of most of the world's major aid organisations are available from a central registry in a format that is open, comparable, timely and machine readable. Over the ten years of running the Index we have seen how pressure and vigilance need to be maintained in order for standards to remain high. Good quality aid data publication requires good systems, a culture of transparency and continued effort by publishers.

Aid data can be used to track financial flows, analyse future expenditure, monitor individual projects and assess development impact. To do this at scale requires trust in the data. The incremental improvements in quality of aid data over the last ten years have resulted in a dataset that has reached maturity, and governments, CSOs and researchers are now using standardised data in their work.

At a time of climate, hunger, health and debt crises, and some worrying trends in the way official development assistance (ODA) is counted, transparency is more important than ever. Transparency continues to have an important role in demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of aid, in supporting improvements in the quality and effectiveness of aid, and in helping the aid community to learn from both successes and failures.

The 2022 Aid Transparency Index

The organisations assessed in the 2022 Index published a total of 147,319 aid activities that were current in 2021 and included transaction data totalling US$221.7bn in commitments and US$154.6bn in disbursements and expenditure over the course of the year.

The Index scores major aid organisations against 35 indicators, each corresponding to the availability and accessibility of a particular type of information. We assess five components of transparency: Organisational planning and commitments, Finance and budgets, Project attributes, Joining-up development data and Performance. We weight the scores awarded for each indicator based on the perceived importance of the information for users of the data, and a total of 100 points is available.

To ensure the Index continues to raise the bar and reflects current aid transparency standards, we make regular enhancements to the assessment method. One of the changes made this year was the introduction of the Networked data indicator to assess and encourage the use of consistent references that can be used to map the organisations in the aid system (funders, implementers and coordinators).

Key findings

Aid organisations have largely maintained their transparency at pre-pandemic levels. The overall picture of the 2022 Index results is broadly similar to the 2020 Index. The average score has dipped slightly (61.8 in 2022, compared with 63.4 in 2020). This year 31 of the 50 organisations we assessed scored in the 'good' or 'very good' index categories, meaning they are consistently publishing high-quality aid data.

VERY GOOD

Ten organisations were in this category, compared to 11 in 2020. At the top of the rankings there were notable risers and fallers. African Development Bank – Sovereign Portfolio climbed four places to top the Index. UN OCHA achieved 'very good' for the first time, increasing 12 points from the last assessment. Asian Development Bank's non-sovereign portfolio, assessed for the first time, scored at the bottom of 'very good'. Three organisations dropped out of this category – The Global Fund, Global Affairs Canada and UK FCDO.

GOOD

This is now the largest category, containing 21 of the 50 assessed organisations. As well as those that dropped down from 'very good', four newly assessed organisations scored 'good' (AfDB – Non-Sovereign, EBRD – Non-Sovereign, the WHO and UK BEIS). Notable climbers include US PEPFAR, which increased its score by almost 9 points and moved up from 'fair' to the middle of the 'good' category. France AFD and the Gates Foundation moved up from 'fair'.

FAIR

Five fewer organisations were in the 'fair' category this time. While some improved and moved into 'good' some fell into the 'poor' category (Saudi Arabia KSRelief, Norway MFA and Japan JICA). This suggests they had not prioritised improving their data nor acted on our previous recommendations.

POOR

More organisations are in the 'poor' category this year. This includes two new entries, Germany's Federal Foreign Office and IDB Invest.

VERY POOR

We continue to see China MOFCOM, UAE MOFAIC and Turkey TIKA at the bottom of the rankings. Their current absence from the global aid dataset is a significant gap.

Key trends

- The majority of major aid organisations are now publishing aid data that meets important use cases.
- The Index continues to drive improvements – but there is a need for constant vigilance as quality drops between indexes.
- There is a lack of improvement among those in 'fair' and 'poor' categories, indicating a lack of concerted effort to embed a culture of aid transparency and systems for the publication of high-quality aid data.
- The non-sovereign portfolios of development finance institutions scored significantly lower than their sovereign portfolios. The difference in average scores was 25 points.

Recommendations for aid organisations

- **Organisations remaining in the 'fair' category in the Index need to prioritise transparency.**
- **Publish more project budgets to enable good planning and coordination.**
- **Implement government entity references and develop referencing approaches for private sector companies to facilitate the networking of data and tracking of aid flows.**
- **DFIs need to publish more financial and performance data about their non-sovereign portfolios.**
- **Publish comprehensive data about project performance, to show whether objectives have been met and to share learning.**
- **Publish project budget documents, project procurement information (contracts and tenders), conditions and pre-project impact appraisals to assist project monitoring and accountability.**

Overall Scores and ranking

Chart showing overall scores and ranking, with categories VERY GOOD, GOOD, FAIR, POOR, and VERY POOR across a 0–100 scale.

VERY GOOD: AfDB – Sovereign, World Bank, IDA, IADB, AsDB – Sovereign, US, MCC, UNICEF, UNDP, Gavi, UN OCHA, AsDB – Non-Sovereign

GOOD: Germany, BMZ-GIZ, AfDB – Non-Sovereign, Korea, KOICA, EC, ECHO, EC, INTPA, UK, FCDO, Canada, GAC, UK, BEIS, WHO, US, PEPFAR, Sweden, SIDA, Global Fund, Netherlands, MFA, EBRD – Sovereign, US, USAID, New Zealand, MFAT, EC, NEAR, France, AFD, Belgium, DGD, Gates Foundation, EBRD – Non-Sovereign

FAIR: US, State, EIB – Sovereign, Italy, AICS, World Bank, IFC, Denmark, MFA, EIB – Non-Sovereign, Finland, MFA, Ireland, Irish Aid, Switzerland, SDC, Australia, DFAT, Spain, AECID

POOR: Saudi Arabia, KSRelief, Germany, FFO, Norway, MFA, IDB Invest, Japan, JICA

VERY POOR: China, MOFCOM, Turkey, TIKA, UAE, MOFAIC

Introduction

10 years of the Aid Transparency Index

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the Aid Transparency Index. The first edition of the Aid Transparency Index was compiled in 2012, after a pilot in 2011. It aimed to capitalise on the momentum for greater aid transparency that came out of the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. In Busan the world's major aid organisations had committed to implementing a "common, open standard" for aid transparency, including publishing high-quality open data in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Standard. The Aid Transparency Index would track progress towards this aim.

We have now run seven full indexes (2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022), complemented by other, smaller assessment exercises (the 2015 Aid Transparency Reviews of US and EU donors and the 2020 UK Aid Transparency Review). The results of these exercises provide a detailed map of the progress made towards greater aid transparency, with contours that show the peaks and valleys of performance by the major aid organisations. While each organisation has charted its own aid transparency path, in aggregate the scores in the Index show a steady ascent towards more comprehensive, higher quality published information. The following graph tracks the average total scores over iterations of the Index since automated scoring of standardised data was introduced (in 2013).[1]

FIGURE 1: Change in average Index score over time
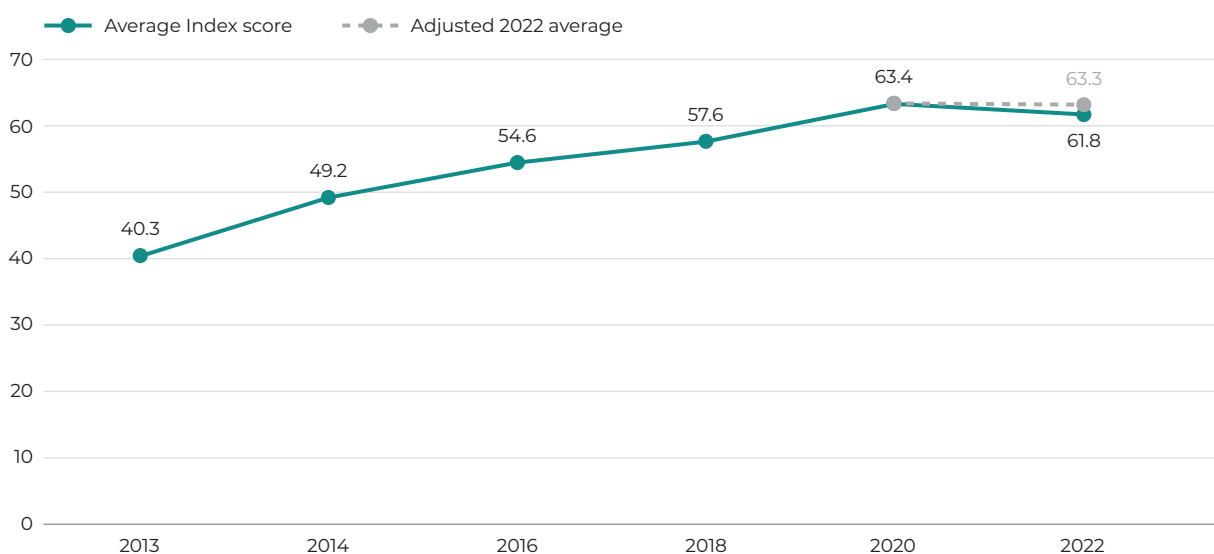
In order to continuously raise the bar we have made the scoring approach more demanding over iterations of the Index.[2] These changes are endogenous in this graph. Therefore, the real increase in scores (with the scoring approach kept constant) would be slightly steeper. Illustrating this we have included (in grey) an adjusted 2022 average score, calculated based on the 2020 scoring approach. While the 2022 score has dipped slightly compared with 2020, the adjusted score levels out (63.3 in 2022 and 63.4 in 2020). This shows the decrease is attributable to the 2022 change in scoring approach rather than a slight decline in aggregated performance.

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1   To make the comparison like-for-like, we have calculated the average scores of only those organisations included in later iterations of the Index. The earlier iterations of the Index included many more, smaller aid organisations – reaching 72 in total in the 2014 Index. This was pared down to the smaller set, fluctuating between 46–50 organisations included in 2016–2022.
2   The publication frequency tests were made more stringent and we introduced manual sampling in 2014. In 2016 we increased the relative weight given to the publication of performance-related data, which we had identified as lagging but an important area requiring greater transparency.

Regardless, the trend of overall improvement shows significant steps forward in aid transparency over the last 10 years. All but four of the organisations assessed in 2022 are now publishing standardised data for their aid activities, meaning that data about the policies and activities of most of the world's major aid organisations are available from a central registry in a format that is open, comparable, timely and machine readable. This year 31 of the 50 organisations we assessed scored in the 'good' or 'very good' index categories, meaning they are consistently publishing high-quality aid data. The organisations assessed in the 2022 Index published a total of 147,319 aid activities that were current in 2021 and included transaction data totalling US$221.7bn in commitments and US$154.6bn in disbursements and expenditure over the course of the year.[3]

Aid data can be used to track financial flows, analyse future expenditure, monitor individual projects and assess development impact. To do any of these at scale requires trust in the data. The incremental improvements in quality of aid data over the last ten years have resulted in a dataset that has reached maturity. We are now seeing governments, CSOs, researchers and analysts using standardised data in their work. Examples include:

- The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation conducted a study of global health spending from 1990 to 2050, published in The Lancet, which used standardised aid data as one of its sources.

- The Liberia Project Dashboard, run by the Liberian Ministry of Finance & Development Planning, publishes and visualises detailed information about aid and development projects in Liberia.

- Connected Development, a Nigerian NGO, runs a "Follow the Money" programme that uses aid data to help communities monitor delivery of local development projects.

- Both Development Initiatives and Save the Children used standardised data to analyse cuts to the aid budget made by the UK government in 2020 and 2021.

- The Centre for Humanitarian Data built a dashboard to analyse aid in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At Publish What You Fund we have also been using aid data to carry out analysis. This work has included:

- Using large country-level datasets, combining both IATI and OECD CRS data, to track funding that contributes to women's economic empowerment. This research has formed the basis for advocacy with national and international stakeholders.

- Tracking climate finance at the country level using large datasets.

- Using standardised data to analyse implementing partners and assess progress towards aid localisation goals.

See page 29 for more detail about these projects.

As well as tracking progress the Aid Transparency Index has also driven improvements in the quality of aid data. The mechanisms by which the Index incentivises change have been explored and documented in a 2019 academic paper.[4] The Publish What You Fund team sees first-hand how aid organisations change policies and publish more and higher quality aid information in order to climb the Index rankings. Through our collaborative approach, the Index has also helped to define the norms of good quality aid data. By assigning value to aspects of transparency policy and data publication, the scoring approach doubles as guidelines for good practice. The Index is one of the few processes that provides feedback to aid organisations on their publishing. This helps identify areas for improvement and builds political pressure to make policy and resourcing changes.

3   Data extracted from the IATI registry using IATI Kit and D-Portal on 30th May 2022.
4   Honig, D., & Weaver, C. 2019. "A Race to the Top? The Aid Transparency Index and the Social Power of Global Performance Indicators. International Organization. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/abs/race-to-the-top-the-aid-transparency-index-and-the-social-power-of-global-performance-indicators/FBF57E06B892D98D687E1AF05878B39C#

Over ten years of running the Index we have seen how pressure and vigilance need to be maintained for standards to remain high. Good quality aid data publication requires good systems, a culture of transparency and continued effort by publishers. The Aid Transparency Index supports publishing systems by providing technical guidance, incentivises effort and promotes a culture of excellence in aid transparency practice. As the data is increasingly taken up and used for development planning, project monitoring and research, the Aid Transparency Index should continue to play its role in maintaining the integrity and quality of the dataset.

The global aid context

As countries around the world began to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, new storm clouds appeared on the horizon. At the end of February 2022 Russia illegally invaded neighbouring Ukraine to widespread condemnation in Europe and North America. Russia is a major supplier of energy to Europe and these supplies began to reduce, as European countries imposed sanctions on Russian oil and Russia began withholding gas supplies to some countries, pushing up fuel prices. At the same time the conflict has had a worrying impact on food resources. Both Ukraine and Russia are major exporters of grains (the two countries supply 12% of globally traded food calories) and agricultural inputs such as fertilisers. The conflict has disrupted these supplies.

Rising inflation, partly driven by these factors, as well as the lingering economic effects of the pandemic, is being seen in various parts of the world. High inflation can have a catastrophic effect on people living close to the poverty line as basic goods including food and fuel become unaffordable. We are already seeing emerging hunger crises in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, Yemen and Afghanistan, where food shortages caused by droughts and local conflicts are being compounded by the disruption to global supply. The International Rescue Committee projects 47 million more people across these regions will experience acute hunger in 2022. This emerging crisis will require concerted efforts by aid organisations to provide emergency food aid as well as longer term development efforts to strengthen social protection and national agriculture so that countries are less dependent on food imports and populations are less vulnerable to price fluctuations.

Central banks are beginning to raise interest rates, in response to inflation. This will exacerbate the existing developing country debt crisis. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, levels of public debt in low and middle-income countries were already worryingly high. Government borrowing to pay for the pandemic response has pushed debt levels even higher. In early 2022 these stood at the equivalent of more than 250% of government revenues.[5] This means low-income countries will have to pay increasing amounts to service debts, diverting funds away from spending on basic needs such as health, education and basic services. According to the World Bank, we are now facing the prospect of up to a dozen developing countries unable to service their debts in the coming year, potentially leading to defaults and further economic distress. The fallout and impacts on human development could be severe.

This is all taking place against the backdrop of the unfolding climate crisis which has serious implications for both energy and food. The changing climate is already affecting food supplies with unseasonal rains in China and heatwaves in South Asia seriously impacting crop production. To mitigate worsening effects in the future the transition to a low carbon economy will need to accelerate. How this happens should be done in a way that shields vulnerable populations from rising energy costs. Development and climate finance will play an important role in this process, with development banks increasingly funding climate change mitigation projects. Development aid should also look to support countries as they adapt to the coming changes, helping to build resilience so their populations are not buffeted by unpredictable global events.

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5   Marcello Estevão. March 2022. "Are we ready for the coming spate of debt crises?" https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/are-we-ready-coming-spate-debt-crises#:~:text=Following%20up%20on%20a%20decade,at%20high%20risk%20of%20it

Overall ODA trends

According to the latest figures from the OECD, total official development assistance (ODA) reached its highest recorded level in 2021 (US$179bn) up by 4.1% (US$7bn) from 2020. However, much of this increase is accounted for by the donation of COVID-19 vaccines to ODA eligible countries, which were valued at US$6.6bn. Total ODA spending on COVID-19 related activities was US$18.7bn. This suggests that record high levels may not be maintained once the emergency is over.

Most development assistance committee (DAC) countries moderately increased their ODA in 2021. The US made the largest increase of US$5.1bn, consisting of higher payments to multilateral organisations and the purchase of vaccines donated to developing countries. Other notable increases were made by Japan (US$2bn, mainly an increase in COVID-19 related aid), Germany (US$1.5bn, bilateral and multilateral COVID-19 aid) and Italy (US$1.5bn, debt cancellations, in-donor refugee costs and contributions to the multilateral pandemic response).

However, despite the increases, there were some outliers. The biggest cut in ODA by volume was made by the UK, which reduced aid by US$3.9 billion. This was a result of the decision to decrease its ratio of ODA to GNI from 0.7% to 0.5%. Sweden and Norway also reduced their overall aid from 2020 levels, by US$1bn and US$0.49bn respectively. However, these were largely due to exceptional COVID-19 spending in 2020 not being maintained, and both remained well above the 0.7% ODA to GNI target.

These headline figures also mask some concerning aspects of the way ODA is counted. The definition of ODA is decided by the OECD DAC, a group made up of the aid donors themselves. Decisions about what to count as ODA and how to measure it at times deviate from the spirit of development aid. The recent move to monetise donations of excess COVID-19 vaccines and count these as ODA has been criticised, for example (among other reasons, they weren't purchased for the purpose of development aid).[6] This adds to the previous decision to count in-donor country refugee costs as ODA. While hosting and supporting refugees is clearly an important use of public funds, it is not clear that this meets the ODA definition of promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries as a main objective.

In the face of emerging crises, the inclusion of new types of expenditure in ODA totals could start to displace funds from overall aid spending commitments. For example, there is currently no internationally agreed way to identify where the line is drawn between development finance and climate finance. It is not clear that spending to meet climate finance pledges will be new and additional to existing development aid targets.

Also, the way the OECD counts ODA when aid is given as loans (using the "grant equivalent" approach) has recently come under heavy criticism for exaggerating donor effort. This is particularly concerning since overstating the aid component of loans skews incentives towards lending over grant-making in a context of severe developing country indebtedness.

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6   Ranil Dissanayake argues that excess vaccine donation does not represent additional donor effort, nor does it have any positive incentive effects on vaccine markets, or benefits in terms of efficient distribution. See. June 2021. "What's the Right Price for Surplus COVID-19 Vaccines? The Answer Is Closer to Zero Than You Might Think.": https://www.cgdev.org/blog/whats-right-price-surplus-covid-19-vaccines-answer-closer-zero-you-might-think

> **BOX 1: The Publish What You Fund Aid Transparency Principles**
>
> The Aid Transparency Principles are at the core of our work. They cover all forms of aid and related development activities. Over 100 civil society organisations endorsed these principles in the 'Make Aid Transparent' campaign in 2011.
>
> **Information on aid should be published proactively.** Not just in response to requests.
>
> **Information on aid should be comprehensive, timely, accessible, and comparable.** Not just a glossy brochure.
>
> **Everyone should be able to request and receive information on aid processes.** Not just officials in governments or aid agencies.
>
> **The right of access to information about aid should be promoted.** Not published once and forgotten.
>
> The Principles in full can be read here.

The continued importance of transparency

Aid transparency has an important role to play in facing current global challenges. It will be as important as ever to be able to monitor aid flows as the world rebuilds following the COVID-19 pandemic and responds to the direct and indirect impacts of the conflict in Ukraine. Financial challenges in donor countries, with the rising cost of living putting pressure on the public purse, could start to add pressure to justify aid spending. Timely, detailed data that demonstrates what aid is spent on and with what results, will be increasingly important in this context. Demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of aid to the public will help to ensure international commitments are maintained.

Transparency continues to have an important role to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid. Tracking what aid is going where can feed into government and donor planning processes, helping to coordinate efforts, meet identified needs and reduce duplication. Tracking aid flows can also help to show the extent to which aid donors are meeting their commitments, and identify where aid and other international flows overlap.

Transparency and information sharing can help the aid community to learn from successes and failures. With many actors working on overlapping or complementary issues, there is potential to create a culture of learning in the aid community which could make a significant contribution to aid quality and effectiveness. Consistent publication and sharing of reviews and evaluations would be an important element of this.

2022 Aid Transparency Index Results: Key highlights and findings

Overall trends

In spite of the global health crisis unfolding over the last two years, aid organisations have largely maintained their transparency at pre-pandemic levels. The overall picture of the 2022 Aid Transparency Index results is broadly similar to the 2020 Index. The average score has dipped slightly (61.8 in 2022, compared with 63.4 in 2020)[7] and the number of organisations scoring in the 'very good' category was one less (10 compared with 11 in 2020). Further down the rankings there was greater movement with significantly more organisations in the 'good' category (21 compared with 15 last time), five fewer in the 'fair' category and an increase in the number of organisations scoring 'poor'. Three organisations scored in the 'very poor' category, one fewer than in 2020.

FIGURE 2: Comparison of scoring categories, 2022 and 2020 Indexes
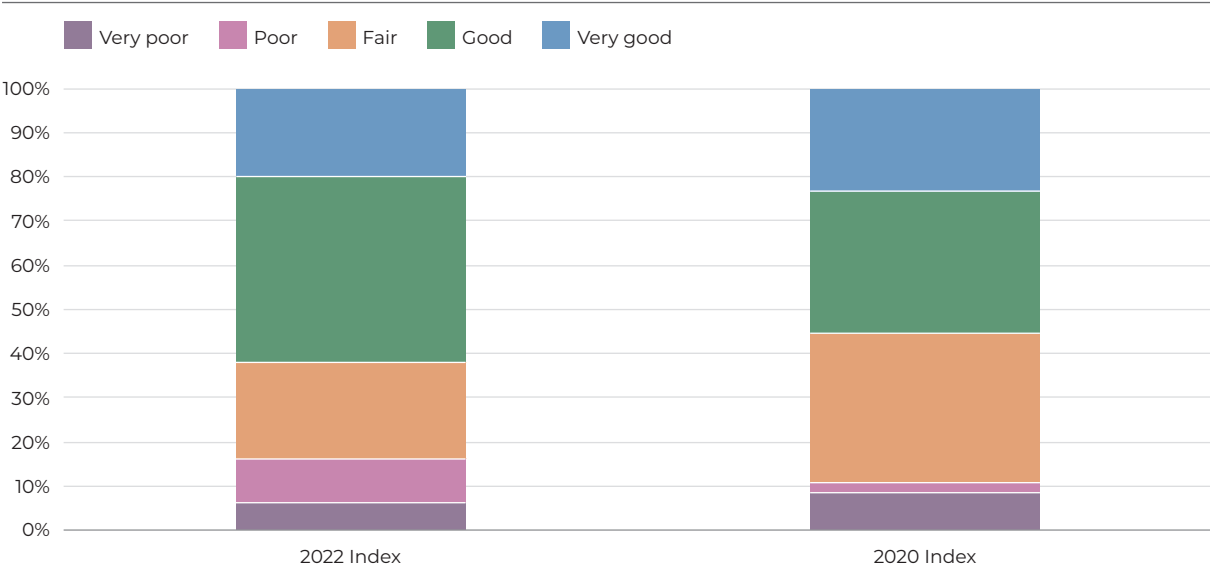
At the top of the rankings there were notable risers and fallers. African Development Bank (AfDB) – Sovereign Portfolio climbed four places in the ranking to top the Index, setting the standard for high-quality data publication. UN OCHA was ranked 'very good' for the first time, increasing almost 12 points from the last assessment. Asian Development Bank (AsDB) – Non-Sovereign Portfolio, assessed for the first time, scored at the bottom of 'very good'.

Three organisations dropped out of the 'very good' category: The Global Fund, Global Affairs Canada and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).[8] The Global Fund was the biggest faller, scoring almost 19 points below its 2020 score and dropping 14 places in the rankings. Global Affairs Canada scored almost 10 points less than in 2020 and is now in the middle of the 'good' category. UK FCDO fell 13.5 points compared with the UK Department for International Development (DfID) in the previous Index, and is now ranked 16th compared with its previous ranking of 9th. These examples illustrate the importance of continued effort and prioritisation of good quality data publication in order to maintain standards and avoid backsliding.

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7 This dip in scores is attributable to the change in scoring approach implemented in 2022. In 2022 we changed the scoring structure for IATI data so it would range from 33.33 to 100 points per indicator rather than the previous 50 to 100 structure. This change was made to remove incentives to publish very small amounts of IATI data for an indicator in order to receive an IATI score but without being transparent across a dataset. In order to make a more consistent comparison we also calculated the 2022 scores using the 2020 approach and the overall average was then the same as in 2020.

8 UK FCDO was created in September 2020 following a merger between the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development. We previously assessed both of these in the Aid Transparency Index. For this analysis we compare FCDO with previous performance by DFID. This is because most of the projects are former DFID projects and the transparency and publishing systems are largely those that were previously under DFID.

The 'good' category is now the largest, containing 21 of the 50 assessed organisations, six more than in 2020. As well as the organisations that dropped down from 'very good', four newly assessed organisations scored 'good' (AfDB - Non-Sovereign, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) - Non-Sovereign, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)). There were also some notable climbers: The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) increased its score by almost 9 points compared with 2020, moving up from 'fair' to the middle of the 'good' category. The French Development Agency (AFD) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) also made important improvements; both having ranked 'fair' in 2020 they are now categorised 'good'.

This increased number scoring 'good' means that 62% of the assessed organisations are in either the 'good' or 'very good' category. This is up from 55% in 2020 and shows that more aid organisations are publishing high quality data which is timely, forward looking and detailed, and includes data for the majority of the index indicators.

Fewer organisations were in the 'fair' category this time. While some improved and moved into 'good' some fell into the 'poor' category (Saudi Arabia KSRelief, Norway MFA and Japan JICA). This suggests that these organisations had not sufficiently prioritised the improvement of their data and they did not act on our recommendations from the 2020 Index. Two new entries are in the 'poor' category, Germany's Federal Foreign Office and IDB Invest. Both are publishing standardised data for their activities and we hope to see them build on their scores from this first assessment.

We continue to see China MOFCOM, UAE MOFAIC and Turkey TIKA at the bottom of the rankings. These organisations are not publishing standardised data and are making limited information available through their websites. We hope they are able to publish standardised data about their ongoing activities in the near future since their current absence from the global aid dataset is a significant gap.

BOX 2: Publication frequency

The organisations in the Index have largely maintained the frequency of data publication over the period we assessed. 30 published to the IATI registry on a monthly basis, firmly establishing this as the norm for major aid organisations. 12 published every quarter and just four were publishing less frequently than this (four others had no recent standardised data). This is broadly similar to the publication frequencies we found in 2020.

FIGURE 3: Frequency change over time
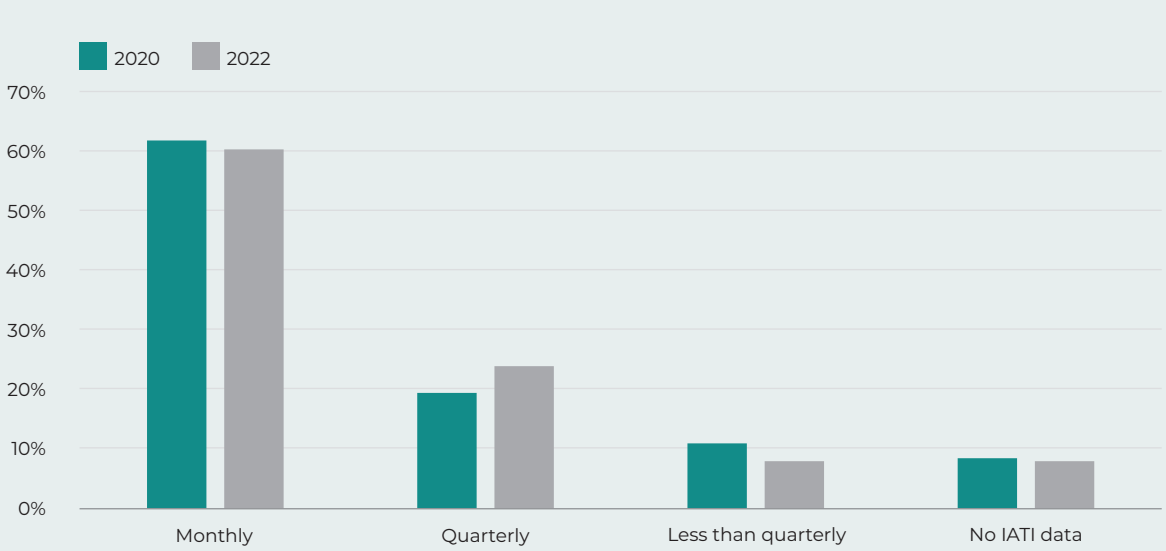
Majority of major aid organisations now publishing aid data that meets important use cases

There are many use cases for aid data including financial tracking, project monitoring and accountability, learning, research, networking of data to analyse delivery chains, country AIMS systems and analysis of implementing partners. Each case requires a different set of data fields, depending on the specific parameters and purpose being pursued. Based on our experience of using data in research and advocacy projects we can sketch out three broad sets of use cases and the data types (and corresponding Index indicators) that are used for these. These are not exhaustive and depending on the specific use being pursued, the indicators we identify may vary. They do, however, give a general idea of how aid data can be used.

Financial tracking

The first use case example is financial tracking of aid flows. This could include tracking at the country, regional or global level. Analysis could be done on flows from specific organisations or types of organisation and flows could be disaggregated by sectors, types of financial instrument, flow types or aid types. Financial tracking could be used to record how much aid has flowed and for what purposes. It could identify gaps and areas of overlap or, (with forward looking budget information) help with planning and programming. This type of tracking would use basic project information and financial data. Examples include Publish What You Fund's work to track aid that supports women's economic empowerment at the country level (see page 29), The Liberia Project Dashboard and the Centre for Humanitarian Data's COVID-19 funding dashboard. The minimum set of data for these types of exercise would be:

Actual dates	Finance type
Aid type	Flow type
Budget alignment	Planned dates
Commitments	Project budget
Current status	Sectors
Description	Title
Disbursements and expenditures	Unique ID

At least 80% of the organisations assessed in the 2022 Index are publishing good quality standardised data for all but one of these indicators. This means their data can be included in financial tracking and that analysis can be done of their data. 62% are publishing forward looking project budgets, this is an area for improvement. At present analysis of forward planning can only be partial until a higher proportion of organisations begins publishing comprehensive, forward looking project budgets.

FIGURE 4: Financial tracking use case data publication
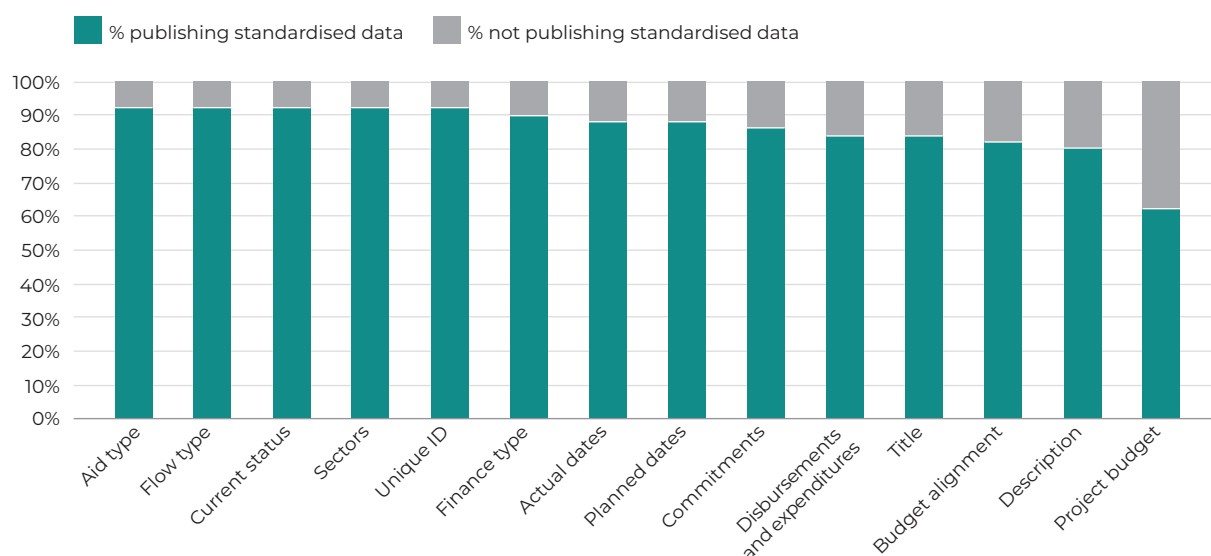
Impact assessment and learning

The second use case is development impact assessment and learning. As well as financial flows, analysis of international aid should include an assessment of what has been achieved; the outputs that result from the financial inputs. This includes analysis of the impact of aid projects, reviewing progress towards targets and learning from project success and failure. Results data can be analysed alongside financial data to make value for money or return on investment calculations. Results and outcomes could be analysed at the level of country, sector or organisation-type. Evaluations could be reviewed and compared at the sector or country level to facilitate learning and support project design.

This type of analysis would require the basic project and financial data used for financial tracking in addition to objectives, results and reviews and evaluations data, from the Index **Performance** component.

FIGURE 5: Impact assessment use case data publication
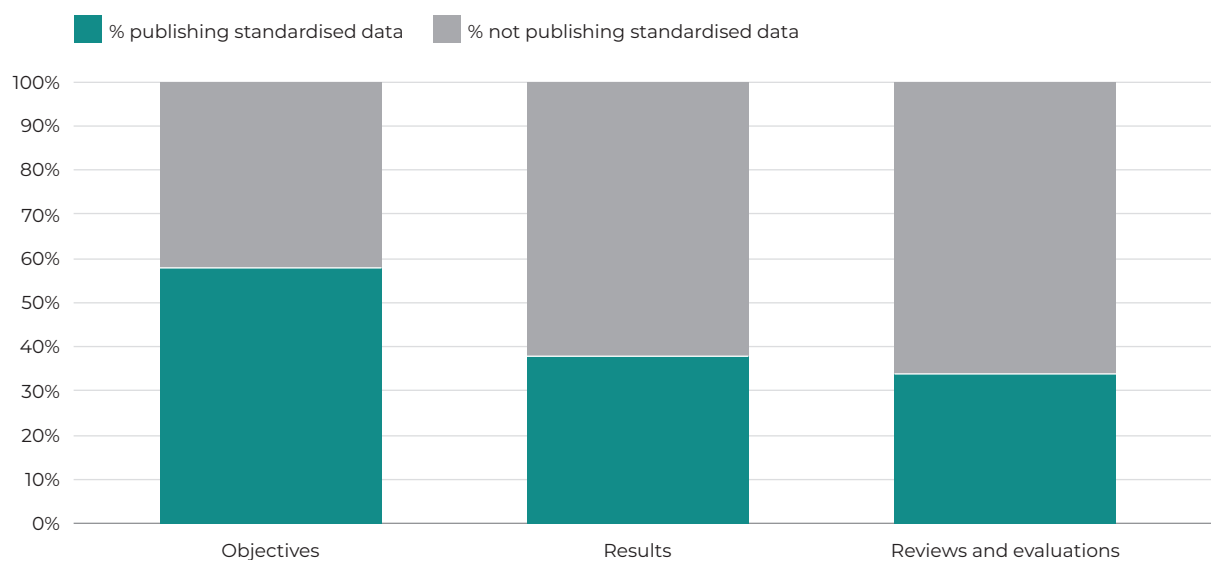
Far fewer organisations are publishing standardised impact data, compared with basic project information. While a majority are publishing project data for objectives, only 38% of the organisations reviewed are publishing results and 34% are publishing evaluations. This means that analyses of development impact can be made, but these will be partial. Some organisations are publishing objectives, results and evaluations as non-standardised data, so more of the picture could be pieced together by searching on organisational websites.

Project monitoring and accountability

The third use case is project monitoring and organisation accountability. All of the remaining Index indicators relate to data that can be used to hold aid organisations to account or to monitor specific projects. Publishing organisational policies and reports enables stakeholders to understand what an organisation plans to do, how it works and where it spends its resources. Detailed documentation for projects allows these to be monitored by local, national and international stakeholders. Publishing documents including line-item budgets, contracts and conditions on delivery partners, pre-project impact appraisals and subnational locations allows users to understand how projects are intended to be implemented, what should be expected and how to hold organisations to account for project delivery. An example of this type of use is the work done by Connected Development in Nigeria through their "Follow the Money" programme. These indicators relate to documents and data used for accountability and monitoring purposes:

Accessibility	Procurement policy
Allocation policy	Project budget document
Annual report	Project procurement - Contracts
Audit	Project procurement - Tenders
Conditions	Quality of FOI legislation
Contact details	Strategy (country/sector) or Memorandum of Understanding
Disaggregated budget	Sub-national location
Networked data	Tied aid status
Organisation strategy	Total organisation budget
Pre-project impact appraisals	

FIGURE 6: Monitoring and accountability use case data publication

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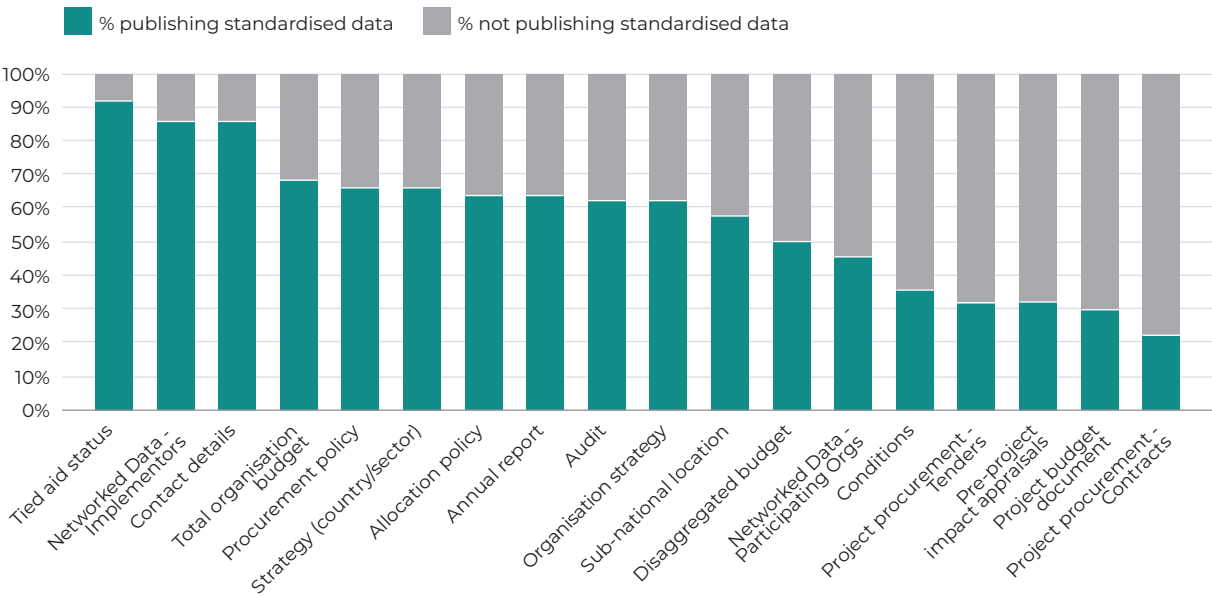
There is still significant progress to be made before organisations are publishing standardised data for all of these indicators. Lagging furthest behind are the publication of conditions, pre-project impact appraisals, contracts, tenders and project budget documents. We encourage organisations to make efforts to publish this information in the IATI Standard so stakeholders can monitor development projects, hold aid organisations accountable and access data about projects that affect them from a centralised, easily accessible, open data source.

Networked data indicator

The international aid system involves a complex network of actors that disburse and receive funds and collaborate on development projects. Many organisations can be involved in an aid project either as a funder, implementer or coordinator, and these relationships can be mapped in order to gain a deeper understanding of how aid is delivered.

Using aid data to map relationships requires consistent referencing of organisations. Organisation names are not standardised in the aid dataset and multiple names can be used for the same entity (eg, names in different languages, names with or without acronyms or changes of name when organisations are rebranded or reorganised). Challenges with inconsistent names can be overcome by using standard reference codes to identify organisations. To assess how standard references are being implemented and to encourage their use and development we introduced the **Networked data** indicator in the 2022 Index.

The new indicator is an amalgamation of the existing **Implementer** indicator and a new test that assesses whether a publisher uses recognised references to identify organisations that are involved in their aid activities. Organisations that work exclusively with partner country governments or by investing in private companies were excluded from the test since there was no recognised approach to referencing these types of entities when the Index assessment began.

Of those included in the test 64% published at least some valid organisation references. The top 10 scores (out of 1.67) for the test were as follows:

FIGURE 7: Networked data references test scores
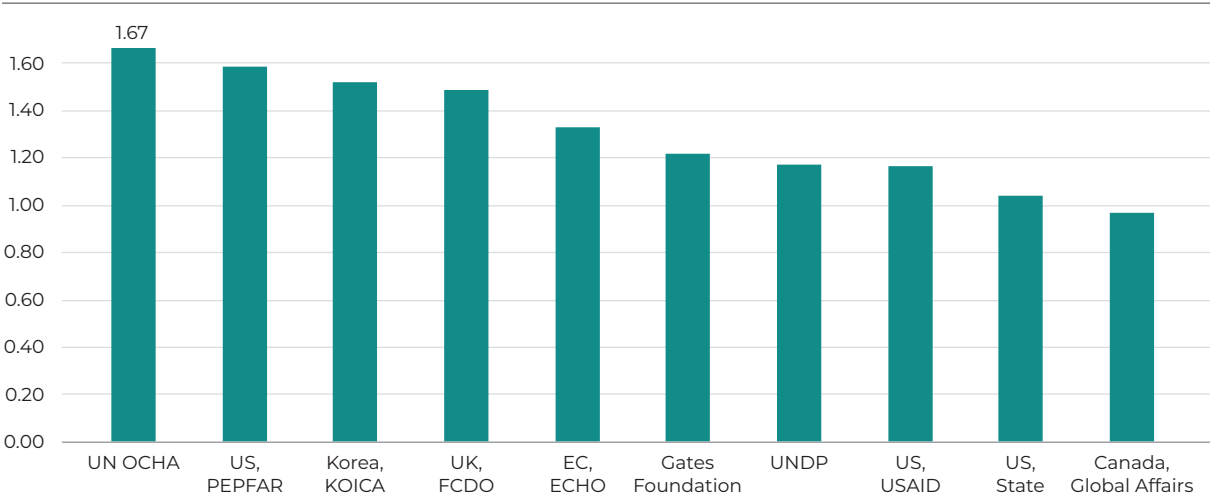
We saw organisations significantly improve their use of references between the first and second round of data collection. Among organisations publishing references we saw an average increase of 12% in scores between the first and second rounds of data collection.

Use of references also contributes to a common resource; a catalogue of recognised approaches to organisation references. During the Index process, as organisations were improving their data, we saw the introduction and adoption of new approaches to referencing government entities (ministries and government agencies) using references based on charts of accounts. As referencing continues to improve a number of use cases emerge. These include tracking funding along aid delivery chains and carrying out analysis of implementing partners to measure progress towards aid localisation goals.

The Index drives improvements but there is a need for vigilance, as quality drops between assessments

We continue to see the Index driving improvements in data quality. The long-term trend of improving scores has been outlined in the introduction to this report. There is also strong short-term evidence of the Index driving improvements. The Index assessment has two phases of data collection and time in the interim for organisations to make changes and enhancements to their data. After the first download of data, Publish What You Fund provides feedback to organisations on their assessments and guidance showing how they can increase scores. We see significant improvements made during this interim period. In this iteration of the Index scores improved by an average of 6 points between the first and final round of data collection.[9]

We also saw significant improvements in the quality of documents and data we manually sampled. Overall we sampled over 11,000 activity documents and data points across 46 of the organisations in the Index. In the first round of sampling 62% of the indicators we sampled passed and 38% failed. Where indicators failed in this first round we found that in many cases documents hadn't been updated, data was wrong or links to documents were broken. Having provided detailed feedback on indicators that failed or were close to failing sampling, in the second round we saw a significant improvement. 72% of the indicators passed the second round of sampling, while just 28% failed.

As well as activity-level documents we also review organisation-level documents published as standardised data. Across both rounds of data collection we reviewed 2,100 of these documents. In the first round 43% of the organisation indicators passed these manual checks, while 57% failed. In the second round, after we'd provided feedback, 66% passed and 34% failed.

FIGURE 8: Percentage of indicators passing manual sampling in first and second data collection rounds
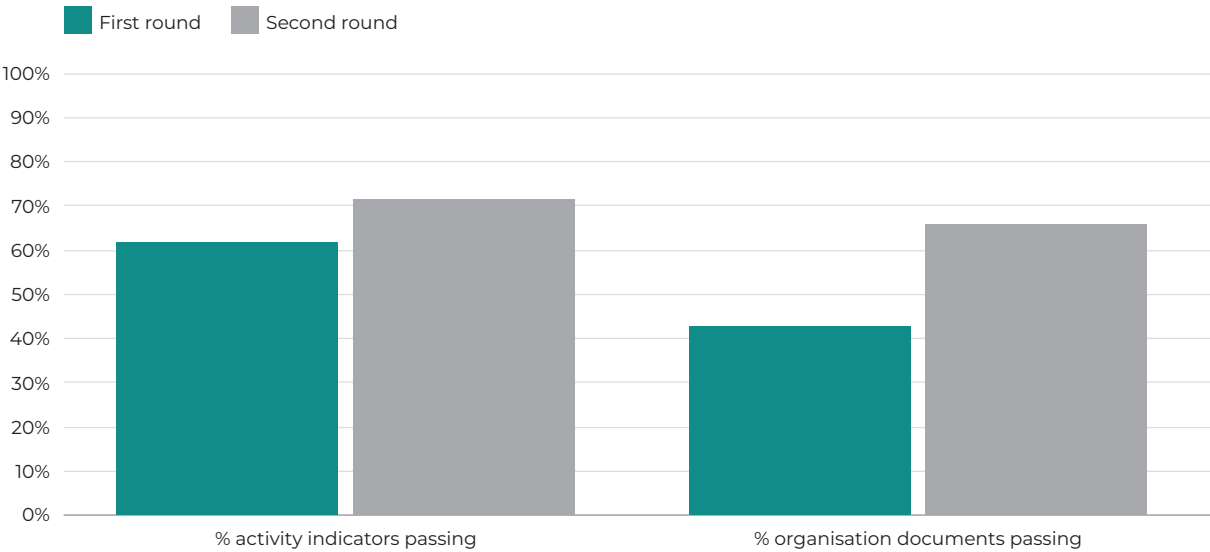
These observations also indicate the need for continued vigilance. When we carry out the first data pull of the index assessment we see that data quality has declined since the previous assessment.[10] We then see scores improve over the course of the assessment as organisations improve their data in response to the Index. This is a regular pattern we've observed across iterations of data collection. In the absence of the Aid Transparency Index we would likely see a continuation of this decline. At present we see no other compelling source of public pressure to push organisations to continue publishing good quality, timely IATI data.

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9   This average masks more significant improvements between the first and second round of data collection by specific organisations. UN OCHA, EC ECHO, UK FCDO, Japan JICA, WHO, World Bank IDA, IADB, US MCC, AfDB Non-Sovereign Portfolio, GAVI and Korea KOICA all increased their scores by over 10 points. Several of these moved up a category. All of them made significant improvements to the quality and availability of their data, making it more complete and usable.

10   And this decline has likely been attenuated to an extent as organisations go some way to improve their data in preparation for the index assessment.

FIGURE 9: Average Index scores across rounds of data collection
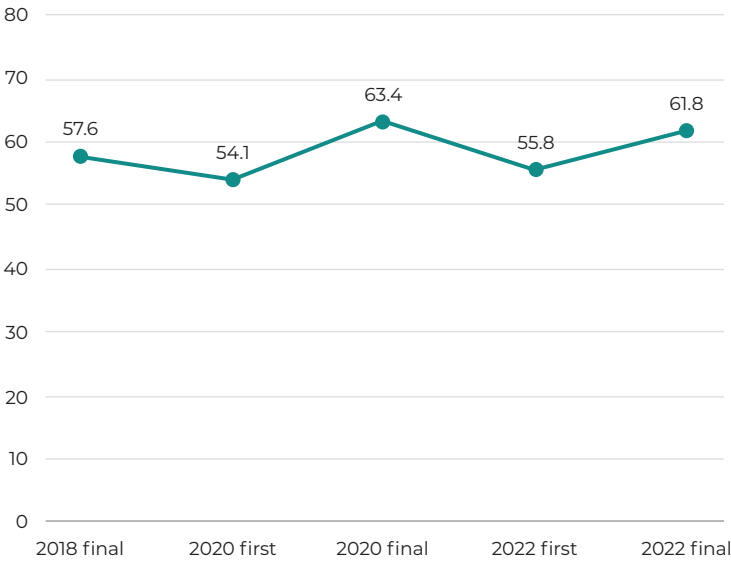
Lack of improvement among those in 'fair' and 'poor' categories

While we consistently see efforts being made by organisations to score in the 'very good' Index category and have seen a significant increase in the number of organisations scoring 'good' this year, there are also some trends that are cause for concern. Those that rank in the bottom third of organisations in the Index (scoring in the 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor'[11] category) have not shown significant improvements over the past three iterations of the Index (2018, 2020 and 2022).

FIGURE 10: Changes in scores over Index iterations of those in 'fair' and 'poor' categories
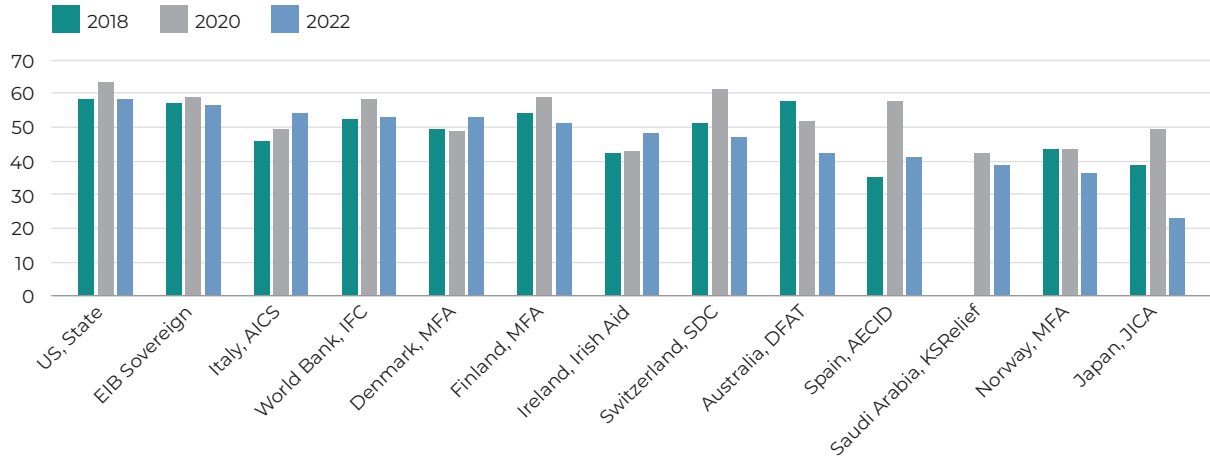
The graph above shows the changes in scores over the last three iterations of the index for those organisations that ranked in 'fair' or 'poor' in 2022 (excluding those that were assessed for the first time this year). These show trends of either little to no improvement, gains which have not been maintained or steady incremental decline over the past three iterations of the Index. Each of these cases indicates a lack of concerted effort to embed a culture of aid transparency and systems that would facilitate publication of high-quality aid data. In future we hope to see these organisations prioritising aid transparency over the long term in order to make a lasting shift into the 'good' or 'very good' categories.

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11   The three organisations in 'very poor' (China MOFCOM, UAE MOFAIC and Turkey TIKA) continue not to publish standardised data and have little engagement in the Index process. We hope they choose to engage with the international standard and assessment in the future.

Methodology

Over the 10 years we have been running the Aid Transparency Index we have reviewed and adjusted the assessment method. We have made incremental changes so that the Index continues to raise the bar and reflects current aid transparency standards. We have also introduced new tests and indicators to incorporate emerging practice.

Prior to the 2022 Index we conducted a thorough review of the assessment method. This was a highly consultative process in which we sought input from aid transparency stakeholders and experts, including the aid organisations assessed in the Index. We made a number of updates to the approach. The principal changes were:

- A change in the scoring structure based on accessibility

- The introduction of the **Networked data** indicator (which also incorporates the **Implementer** indicator)

- A change to the data quality sampling process

- Changes in the definitions of the **Conditions** indicator and the **Pre-project impact appraisals** indicator

- Small adjustments to some indicator weightings (to incorporate the **Networked data** indicator)

While we had considered introducing a number of other new measures, including tests for how organisations engage with stakeholders and communicate with the public, an enhancement of the accessibility indicator and activity-to-activity traceability, our review concluded that these were not viable at this time. The changes we made have enhanced the assessment approach. The scoring structure change improved the accuracy with which scores reflect levels of transparency and the introduction of the new **Networked data** indicator has introduced an important aspect of aid data to the assessment. The other changes have tightened up definitions, making our guidance clearer.

While these changes are significant, the approach remains broadly the same as for previous assessments and so the results are comparable with scores from previous Aid Transparency Indexes. The overall average score from 2022 calculated using the scoring structure from 2020 is 1.5 points higher (an overall average of 63.3 compared with an average of 61.8 using the new approach).

As well as the review of the assessment method we also carried out an online consultation on the indicator definitions. This is something we do prior to each Index assessment to check that the ruleset tests are still up to date and incorporate any changes to the IATI Standard, and that the definitions of the indicators are still clear and current. This can involve excluding certain activity types from particular indicator tests where these are not relevant. We invite all of the organisations we are assessing as well as other experts to comment on the indicators and make changes where relevant.

Following the online consultation we made adjustments to the **Results**, **Networked data**, **Unique ID**, **Sub-national Location**, **Sectors** and **Description** tests. We increased the weighting of the **Description** indicator to reflect the increased importance of descriptions for data use we had identified through our own financial tracking work as well as other user experiences.

Index assessment approach

The Aid Transparency Index scores major aid organisations against 35 indicators, each corresponding to a question about the availability of a particular type of information. These relate to an organisation's activities or policies, and points are awarded based on whether and how much of an organisation's information is made available and accessible. We weight the scores awarded for each indicator based on the perceived importance of the information for users of transparency data. The indicator weightings add up to 100 total points that are available for each organisation to score. We group the indicators (based on what type of information they relate to) into components of aid transparency. The five components of transparency we assess in the Index are: **Organisational planning and commitments**, **Finance and budgets**, **Project attributes**, **Joining-up development data** and **Performance**.

Each indicator is scored 0 to 100 points based on publication format and data quality. When data is published in the IATI Standard it is awarded between 33.33 and 100 points depending on the frequency of updates and coverage across activities. For data published in other formats that is accessible publicly through a website or data portal up to 50 points can be awarded for that indicator depending on the format of publication and whether data can be found for all or just some of the organisation's activities.

Interactive data collection process

An important feature of the Aid Transparency Index assessment is the interaction we have with the organisations we are assessing during the data collection and scoring process. We provide detailed feedback and opportunities to respond and provide additional evidence during the data collection process. This is important as a check on the accuracy of our findings and it also provides guidance for organisations to improve their transparency as we carry out the assessment.

There are two main phases of data collection during the assessment. At the start of the process (in November 2021 for this Index) we run the index scoring against the data available at that time. We then provide initial scores to the assessed organisations along with feedback about how these can be improved. At the end of the process (in March 2022), after organisations have had a chance to act on our feedback, we run the exercise again and these results make up the final Aid Transparency Index scores.

We collect and score data published in the IATI Standard using our bespoke Aid Transparency Tracker software which runs automated tests against each organisation's data. We also manually review samples of documents and data points for a number of the indicators with qualitative elements, to ensure that the documents or data meet the indicator criteria. This includes checking that documents are actually available, are in date, relevant to the activity in question and contain the information specified for that indicator. In total we reviewed over 13,000 documents and data points over the course of this assessment. This is the only existing systematic manual check of IATI data quality and we use it to provide detailed feedback to organisations about the documents and data they are publishing.

For indicators where standardised data isn't available we carry out a manual search of websites and aid information portals. The assessed organisation can also provide links to publicly available data if we have been unable to find it.

A particularly important part of the Index assessment is the independent review process. 32 independent reviewers participated in the 2022 Index. These reviewers are aid and transparency experts who are independent of Publish What You Fund and of the organisations they assess. They are mostly from civil society organisations, research institutes or academia. They carry out their reviews on a voluntary basis. The independent reviewers provide a third party check of our assessments, and provide additional evidence in cases where we may have missed or overlooked data. As independent experts they also help to reach decisions on contentious judgements about particular indicator scores. We would like to thank the independent reviewers who offered their time to support the 2022 Index.

Focus on development finance institutions

The assessment of development finance institutions (DFIs) in the Aid Transparency Index was enhanced in 2022. For this edition of the Index we differentiated our assessments of sovereign[12] (public sector) and non-sovereign (private sector) investment portfolios. In the 2020 Aid Transparency Index we found that several of the development banks we were assessing were only publishing data about their sovereign activities and not their non-sovereign investments. To incentivise publication of non-sovereign investment data we took the decision to assess these portfolios separately in 2022. This would also allow us to compare the transparency of sovereign and non-sovereign activities across DFIs.

This edition of the Index continued to assess the sovereign portfolios of AfDB and AsDB but added their non-sovereign portfolios to the assessment. We have introduced the Inter-American Investment Corporation (IDB Invest) which is the non-sovereign arm of the Inter-American Development Bank Group. For the European Investment Bank (EIB) and EBRD, we had previously assessed their sovereign and non-sovereign activities together, as they publish data for both portfolios. In 2022 we have assessed their sovereign and non-sovereign portfolios separately. For the World Bank Group we have always run separate assessments for their sovereign International Development Association (IDA) and non-sovereign International Finance Corporation (IFC) activities.

Sovereign activities are generally concessional (below market rate) loans to government ministries or agencies for large public works projects. These are often infrastructure projects such as roads, ports or energy projects, but can also include technical support for things like governance reform, investment promotion or IT infrastructure. A typical example is the AfDB's Cameroon Agricultural Value Chain Development Project, a five year EUR 115m project in partnership with Cameroon's Ministry of Agriculture which aims to boost economic growth, employment and state management of the sector by building rural infrastructure and providing technical and business support for farmers.
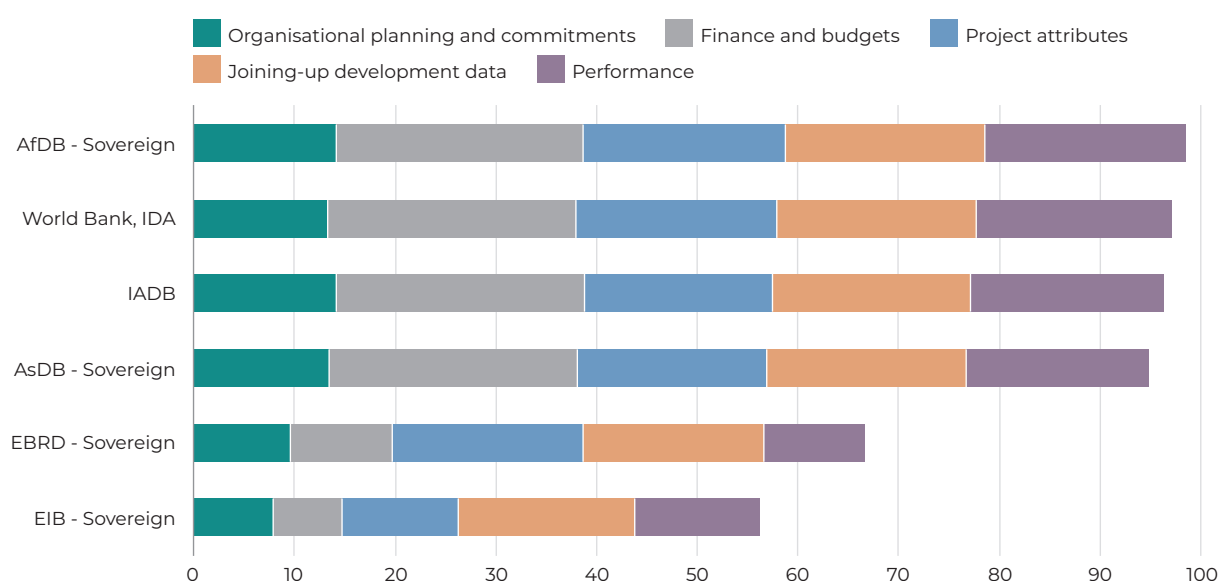
Non-sovereign activities are loans or equity investments in businesses that operate in developing countries. Investments can include additional benefits such as technical assistance. They can also leverage additional finance from private banks or investors. Development banks support these projects as ways to promote private sector growth, increase government tax receipts and generate employment. They can also create markets and supplies of goods and services for other sectors of the economy. A typical example is the Asian Development Bank's Sermsang Khushig Khundii Solar Project, a US$9.6m loan to a construction company to build and operate a solar power plant supplying electricity to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital city.

The sovereign portfolios of the development banks are top performers in the 2022 Index. Three of the regional development banks and the World Bank IDA occupy the first four spots in the ranking. These are all publishing high-quality, comprehensive, timely data about their organisations and activities, including detailed performance information (objectives, results, pre-project impact appraisals and evaluations) and forward looking budgets.

Further down the rankings the sovereign portfolio of the EBRD scored in the "good" category. We found detailed data for its sovereign investments but its score suffered because it is not publishing forward looking activity or country budgets. We found no standardised results or evaluations data and these were not found consistently on EBRD's website. The EIB sovereign portfolio scored in "fair". Its data was generally of lower quality and we found no forward looking data for activities or organisation level budgets. Up to date organisation-level documents weren't published in a standard format and we weren't able to find up to date results data.

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12   The terms "sovereign" and "public sector" are interchangeable, as are "non-sovereign" and "private sector". The terms refer to the guarantor of the investment. In the case of sovereign investments this means the loan or other financial instrument is backed by a sovereign entity (government). Non-sovereign investments are not guaranteed by a government and are loans or other investments made in private sector companies or funds.

FIGURE 12: DFI sovereign portfolio scores

Legend:
- Organisational planning and commitments
- Finance and budgets
- Project attributes
- Joining-up development data
- Performance

Categories (top to bottom): AfDB - Sovereign, World Bank, IDA, IADB, AsDB - Sovereign, EBRD - Sovereign, EIB - Sovereign

X-axis: 0 to 100

Development banks generally publish less information about their non-sovereign operations. They argue that some of the information that organisations publish about aid projects or sovereign operations would be commercially sensitive if published in relation to an ongoing business. For example, details of loan disbursements or up to date results could be indicative of the client company's performance and therefore affect market valuations. Permission would need to be obtained from the client before publication of this type of information. Since commercial loans do not have transparency requirements of this type, development banks often choose not to require publication of this data for fear of making their loans uncompetitive. Other stakeholders dispute whether these commercial sensitivities apply in a blanket way across non-sovereign activities.

The demand-led business models followed for this type of lending also make it difficult to provide forward planning and budgeting information. Private sector DFIs respond to demand for loans and finance from companies in their focus regions but they are not able to plan where this demand will come from. Accounting for these realities, we have adapted the Aid Transparency Index indicators to the private DFI business model,[13] meaning they should be able to provide equivalent documents where these are available. For some of the indicators that DFIs struggle with, we take a position that information should be made available regardless, in order for DFI activities to reach a level of transparency in line with aid transparency standards.

The non-sovereign DFI portfolios scored significantly lower than the sovereign DFI portfolios. The difference in average scores between the sovereign and non-sovereign portfolios was 25 points. While four out of the six sovereign portfolios ranked in the "very good" category, the non-sovereign portfolios were spread across the "poor", "fair" and "good" categories, with one scoring at the bottom of the "very good" category (AsDB non-sovereign portfolio). At the component level the non-sovereign portfolios scored worse particularly for **Finance and budgets** and **Performance**, reflecting the commercial confidentiality issues mentioned above. Assessment and evaluation of development performance is also less widely implemented for non-sovereign DFI operations, something we encourage them to improve upon.

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13   This includes allowing redactions for commercially sensitive information in documents, allowing either sector or country strategies for country-level planning and budgeting documents, accepting an investment policy instead of an allocation policy or procurement policy and accepting publication of total estimated cost instead of project budgets.

FIGURE 13: DFI non-sovereign portfolio scores
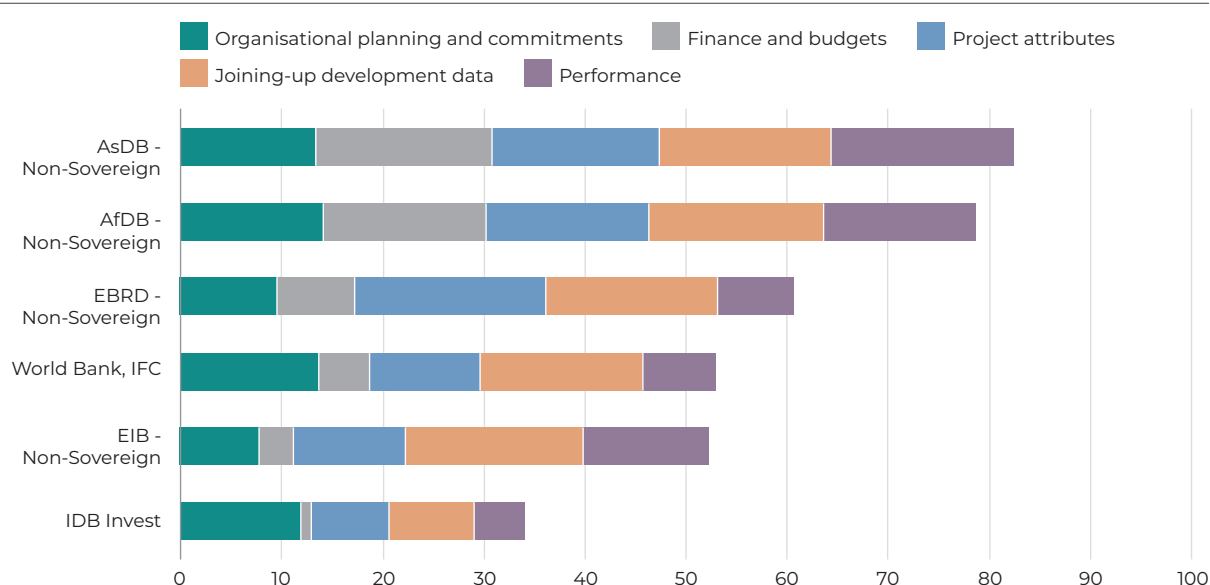
AsDB and AfDB non-sovereign portfolios both performed well. AsDB leads the non-sovereign portfolios and is publishing detailed disbursement data for its private sector operations (evidence that this information could and should be made available). Both are also publishing some forward looking budgets and good performance data. IFC performed slightly worse than in 2020 reflecting little change in their publishing practices over the last 2 years. IDB Invest began publishing standardised data for the first time just prior to the 2022 Index assessment. While they came last among the non-sovereign DFIs and placed in the "poor" category, it is encouraging to see them begin publishing standardised data and we hope to see them build on this foundation in the future.

Why this is important

DFIs channel the largest international flows of development finance. The DFIs in the Aid Transparency Index reported US$67.2bn of disbursements across sovereign portfolios and US$20.2bn of non-sovereign disbursements in their 2020 OECD reporting. It should be noted that these disbursements are for loans, equity and other returnable capital instruments, so most of it will be repaid. All the same, these are very large flows of public money that have a significant impact on the societies and economies that receive them.

We are likely to see an increase in development finance in the coming years as rich countries increase their climate finance contributions alongside their commitments to provide development aid. A large proportion of climate finance is given as loans, particularly for climate change mitigation projects which often involve low carbon infrastructure such as renewable energy plants or energy efficient public transport systems.

The current target, as outlined in the 2015 Paris Agreement, is for rich countries to provide developing countries with US$100bn a year in climate finance (this amount will be renegotiated at upcoming UN Climate Change conferences and is expected to increase). In 2019 US$34.1bn of the US$79.6bn climate finance recorded by the OECD was delivered through multilateral development banks (MDBs), with a further US$28.8bn of mobilised private finance. The OECD projects that climate finance could reach US$117bn by 2025, an increase of US$37bn compared with 2019. A large proportion of this is likely to be delivered by MDBs.[14]

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14   OCED. 2021. "Forward-looking Scenarios of Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2021-2025." https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/a53aac3b-en.pdf?expires=1654183014&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=3C0FC37AEC2D36C31730FF248E7C8790

In this context, transparency will be important for several reasons. As publicly owned entities, mandated to promote economic development and tackle poverty, DFIs have a responsibility to be transparent and accountable to the public. Transparency of public funds is important to ensure that flows are not mismanaged or misused. DFIs have a development mandate and transparency about their development impacts opens these up to scrutiny. Therefore stakeholders can gauge the extent to which DFIs live up to their claims.

Development banks also have an unfortunate history of funding projects that have had negative impacts on the environment and local populations. Disclosure of pre-project impact appraisals is important to show that measures are taken to avoid and mitigate negative impacts in the future.

Publish What You Fund has a major project digging deeper into the transparency of DFIs and has developed an enhanced set of DFI transparency guidelines. These are more specialised than the criteria set out in the Aid Transparency Index and are tailored to sovereign and non-sovereign DFI operations. We will be assessing the transparency of the DFIs assessed in the Aid Transparency Index against these criteria, alongside a number of other multilateral and bilateral development banks, in a DFI Transparency Index, forthcoming in early 2023.

Transparency of aid to the COVID-19 pandemic

The 2022 Aid Transparency Index assessed activity data that was current in the 12 months prior to the assessment. During this period, from April 2021 to March 2022, large quantities of aid were spent on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally organisations moved quickly to begin publishing data about their COVID-19 activities. The IATI Secretariat issued guidance in April 2020 soon after the WHO declaration of a global pandemic. Aid organisations began using the guidance to publish their COVID related activities shortly after that. By September 2021, 201 organisations had published their COVID-19 funding data, many of them NGOs. The Centre for Humanitarian Data developed the IATI COVID-19 Funding Dashboard that aggregates COVID-19 transaction and activity data and provides visualisation and data download tools. We used this dashboard for our analysis of COVID funding below.

In total the organisations assessed in the 2022 Index recorded US$42bn[15] in commitments for COVID-19 related activities in the data we reviewed (from April 2021 to March 2022). This includes grants and loans at face value and ODA and other financial flows. Broken down by sectors, the highest amount committed was to the health sector, as to be expected, but there were also a number of other sectors that received significant COVID-19 response funding. This was the top ten:

FIGURE 14: Aid in response to COVID-19 by sector (commitments in US$ millions)
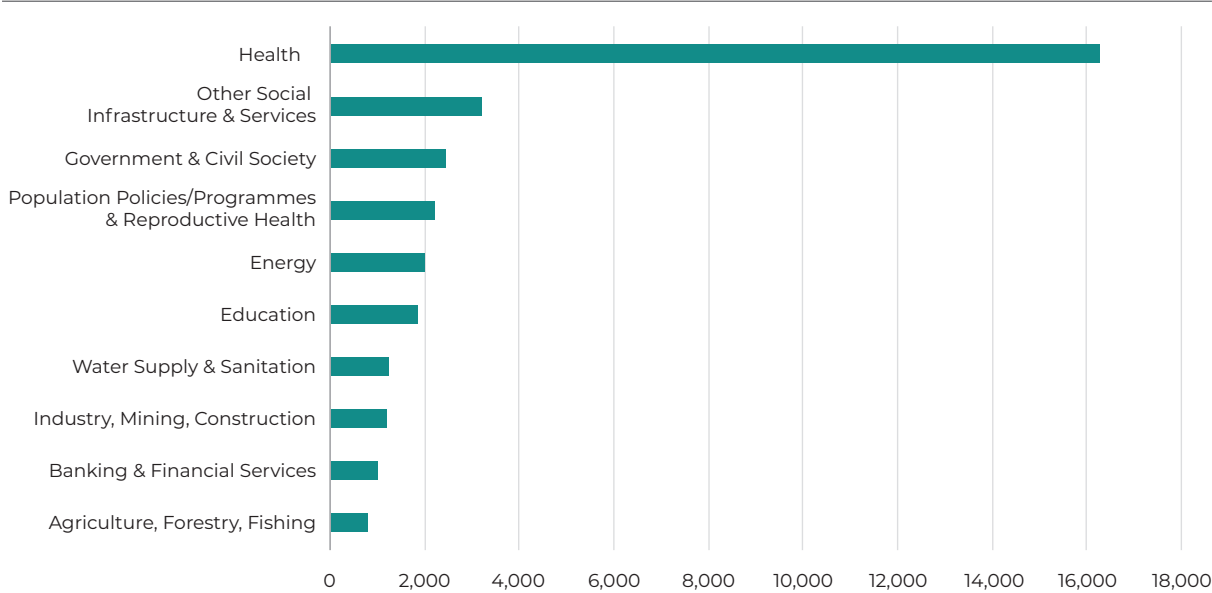
This illustrates the multi-faceted response to the pandemic. Alongside direct aid to provide vaccines, health care and support to health systems, aid was provided so that people could access basic services. Funds were also directed to support economic and productive sectors that were hit by measures taken to control the spread of the virus (US$75m was committed to the tourism sector, another important source of employment and revenue for many developing country economies that was severely hit by pandemic travel restrictions). As well as activities that directly responded to the pandemic, aid organisations also included pandemic response objectives in the design of other development activities.

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15 Some of these funds flowed through assessed organisations and so would have been double counted (once when a commitment was made by the provider and again when the commitment was recorded by the implementer, for example). Removing double counts the total aid flow recorded was US$37bn.

Of the recorded COVID-19 aid a small proportion was marked as humanitarian funding, US$3bn out of the US$42bn total. The majority of this was committed by specialised agencies including the WHO, EC ECHO, UNICEF and UNDP. WHO recorded the highest humanitarian spending, US$1.3bn in the Index current data period. These funds were spent across WHO member states and territories on strengthening essential health services and systems, the provision of vaccination supplies and service delivery, case management, clinical operations and therapeutics, as well as overall pandemic prevention strategies.

The WHO was included in the Aid Transparency Index for the first time this year and made significant enhancements to its transparency data in response. These led to a score in the 'good' category in the final assessment. Improvements WHO made to its data included:

- Adding sub-national location information to its activities
- Adding forward-looking organisational budgets to its IATI organisation file
- Adding outgoing commitments and disbursements and expenditure data to activities
- Ensuring all activity dates and statuses are updated and correct
- Adding contact details to activities
- Improved activity descriptions

These improvements mean it is now possible to include WHO activities and transactions in analysis using standardised data. WHO could further improve its score in the Index and facilitate deeper analysis of its aid projects by including activity specific performance data in its IATI publication.

COVAX transparency

COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) was set up in the wake of the pandemic as an initiative to vaccinate high risk and vulnerable populations in countries that would struggle to afford the vaccines without international support. It was co-led by Gavi, WHO and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) with UNICEF as key delivery partner. The initiative helps to identify, source and deliver vaccines. By working at scale, COVAX has been able to support vaccine production and drive down prices, passing these savings on to participating countries. COVAX has been funded principally through contributions from bilateral ODA, with support also coming from philanthropies and the private sector.

COVAX transparency has been led by Gavi which has added country COVAX programmes to its aid data. So far they have published 92 COVAX country activities with transactions totalling US$11.5bn in commitments and US$14.8bn in spending (as of June 2022). They are publishing detailed disbursement data and technical plans, as well as up to date results, tracking the number of vaccines that have been shipped to each benefitting country. This means the data can be used for detailed tracking of progress made by the COVAX programme.

According to Gavi, COVAX did face several transparency challenges early on. As a newly formed joint initiative, they first needed to decide who would be responsible for publishing IATI data. After deciding that Gavi would take the lead on IATI publication given its role hosting the COVAX Facility, there were additional technical difficulties. One of these related to financial confidentiality concerns. As COVAX was getting underway there were ongoing negotiations between countries and pharmaceutical companies for bulk purchase of vaccines. Cost information released by Gavi could have impacted negotiations and COVAX's ability to secure competitive prices for its participants. These commercial concerns needed to be taken into consideration, so once the market had stabilised, COVAX pushed manufacturers for price transparency and published prices.

Additional challenges arose around securing real-time data at scale from countries under emergency response conditions. While it was possible to track COVAX deliveries, it was much more challenging to track COVAX doses administered, with many countries' rollouts including vaccines from both COVAX and non-COVAX sources. To better understand countries' needs in real time, COVAX funded additional vaccine management specialists in lower-income countries and enhanced systems to track stocks available in-country.

PWYF using the data: tracking funding for women's economic empowerment and climate finance

The IATI dataset is a vast store of information about aid and development projects around the world. Major aid donors, multilateral organisations, development banks, NGOs and companies have published IATI data for over a million activities. This data includes over 8 million transactions and many thousands of documents and data points that provide a detailed picture of financial flows across the international aid system. In total the raw IATI XML code amounts to 11.6GB of data.[16]

As with all big data the real value comes from the combination of the dataset with lenses to focus and filter the information. At Publish What You Fund we have been using aid data to carry out analysis of specific types of aid in particular contexts. We are linking this up with stakeholders and providing information to support advocacy and programming.

For our Women's Economic Empowerment project we have built custom datasets and used these to extract detailed information about aid projects and programmes in three focus countries (Bangladesh, Kenya and Nigeria). We developed an intricate definition of which projects support women's economic empowerment for the project and have used this as our lens to analyse the data. We extracted a subset of activities that meet this definition from the dataset. We then sorted and analysed these projects to develop a high-resolution picture of international aid spending on women's economic empowerment in our focus countries.

Working with country stakeholder groups we have provided detailed information of activities which has helped to shine a light on how much has been spent on women's economic empowerment, by which organisations and for what type of projects. Using the granularity of the standardised data we have been able to provide breakdowns by sector, aid type, financial instrument, intended beneficiaries and funder. We also identified sectors for which there was little or no funding as well as the gender intentionality of the projects. This information can now be fed into national level advocacy to push for more funding where it is needed and shared with aid donors so they can better coordinate their activities that support women's economic empowerment.

Climate finance tracking

We are currently planning to use a similar approach to track climate finance at the national level. As parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, developed and developing countries have made pledges to take action to tackle climate change. Developed countries have agreed to provide large amounts of finance to support developing country efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and developing countries are developing climate action plans that outline the necessary steps they need to take so they can both develop sustainably and adapt to the changing climate. This includes outlining their international financing needs.

Both donors and recipients should include details of funding given in official reports. However, reporting is often patchy and it is difficult to get a clear picture of the climate funding landscape at the country level. The aid dataset presents a massive opportunity to shed light on climate finance flows to developing countries. By clarifying where money has been allocated, developing countries will be able to adapt plans and requests for additional support, improving the efficiency of financial flows.

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16   This doesn't include the huge numbers of documents and webpages that are linked from the data, or subsequent treatment to disaggregate or otherwise build out the information contained in the raw data. For example, exercises to put the IATI activity data into an SQL database and disaggregate transactions have doubled the size to 22GB.

Building datasets

To carry out our research for the Women's Economic Empowerment project we needed to first build country datasets. We used data published in the IATI Standard as the basis for the datasets and added data from other sources where IATI data was not available or where data quality was not sufficient for it to be useful. One of our main secondary sources was OECD CRS data. Several important aid organisations publish data to the CRS that are still not publishing in the IATI Standard. We also found better quality CRS data in some cases where IATI data was poor.

After putting together the data from the different sources and selecting the data fields needed for our analysis we had country datasets with close to 100,000 rows of data per country that were over 30MB in size.

To sort the data we were interested in, isolating the activities that met our definition of women's economic empowerment projects, we filtered the data using policy markers and word searches on descriptions and titles. Activities were picked up where the title or description mentioned that the project empowers women. Finally, we carried out manual reviews of activities, carefully reading descriptions to check that we weren't picking up false positives.

All of this was a significant undertaking, requiring complex data merging and sorting and a lot of manual work to review and clean the data. The process has also been a valuable learning experience, documented in our data collection methodology. Among the lessons learned are a number of recommendations for improving the IATI dataset.

- **All major aid organisations should publish data in the IATI standard**. Holes in the dataset mean that in some cases we have to work with OECD data which runs 18 months to 2 years out of date.

- **Some organisations already publishing in the IATI Standard need to improve the quality of their data**. Where data quality was poor we also had to use other data sources. This was particularly the case where descriptions were missing or non-functional. The 2022 Aid Transparency Index increased the weighting for the **Descriptions** indicator to reflect the importance of this data for analysis.

- **Financial tracking exercises should build in data quality feedback loops by checking the accuracy of findings with publishers**. We shared our findings with the aid donors publishing data about their activities to check that our findings were accurate. We recommended this type of iteration in the 2020 Aid Transparency Index report as a way to create continuous improvement processes through use of the data.

- **Aid organisations should prioritise regular publication frequency to provide users with up to date data about their aid activities**. One of the main advantages of standardised data was being able to carry out up to date analysis for aid activities taking place in the current year, many of which are ongoing.

- **Organisations should publish more forward looking data**. Publishing more forward looking budgets would allow us to provide detailed planning information as well as backward looking reports on what has been spent, where.

- **Performance data will allow us to do deeper analysis of outputs**. While we have been able to carry out in-depth and granular analysis of inputs (funding) to development projects it has not been possible to do the same for outputs. Comprehensive publication of objectives, results and evaluations would allow us to construct a more complete picture of aid funding and its effects in our case study countries. It would also allow for identification of those investments which are catalytic as well as those that were unsuccessful.

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings from the 2022 Index, Publish What You Fund makes the following recommendations to the international aid community:

- **Organisations remaining in the 'fair' category in the Index need to prioritise transparency; all organisations need to pull their weight**.
  While we see efforts to improve and maintain data quality among those organisations that score higher in the Index rankings, we have observed stagnation in the lower categories, 'fair', 'poor' and 'very poor'. We encourage these aid organisations to raise standards and make efforts to publish high quality, timely, standardised data.

- **Forward looking data; publish more project budgets to enable good planning**.
  Forward looking budgets are particularly useful for planning and coordination purposes. Budget publication is an area that is lagging at the moment among the organisations we assess in the Index. We encourage organisations to publish forward looking budgets for their activities whenever possible.

- **Networked data; implement government entity references**.
  During the Index data collection period we saw the introduction of an approach to reference government entities. We encourage all aid organisations that work with partner governments to use this approach to reference partner government entities in their data.

- **Networked data; develop approaches for private sector companies**.
  Approaches to referencing investee companies are still limited. We encourage aid organisations that invest in the private sector to further develop and implement approaches to referencing these companies to facilitate the networking of data and tracking of aid flows.

- **DFIs need to publish more financial and performance data about their non-sovereign portfolios**.
  At present transparency of DFI non-sovereign portfolios is lagging behind the transparency of their sovereign portfolios. They could significantly improve these scores by publishing good standardised financial and performance data. The Asian Development Bank is already publishing disbursements made for its non-sovereign activities, others should look to follow this lead.

- **Publish comprehensive data about project performance**.
  A lack of performance data continues to be an issue among the organisations assessed in the Aid Transparency Index. This data is particularly important for aid and development projects to show whether and how they have met their aims, what challenges they have faced and to disseminate learning among the development community. We encourage all aid organisations to publish standardised objectives, results, reviews and evaluations.

- **Publish project conditions, pre-project impact appraisals, contracts, tenders and project budget documents**.
  To be accountable to the taxpayers in donor countries and stakeholders in the countries where they operate, aid organisations should publish comprehensive information about their projects. At present a majority of the organisations we assessed are not publishing standardised data for their project conditions, pre-project impact appraisals, contracts, tenders and project budget documents. We encourage the comprehensive publication of this information so projects can be properly monitored.

Annex 1: Table of 2022 Aid Transparency Index results and comparison with 2020 scores

2022 rank	Organisation name	2022 score	2022 category	2020 score	2020 Category	Difference 2020–2022
1	AfDB – Sovereign Portfolio	98.5	Very Good	95.5	Very Good	3.0
2	World Bank, IDA	97.1	Very Good	97.1	Very Good	0.0
3	IADB	96.3	Very Good	95.4	Very Good	0.9
4	AsDB – Sovereign Portfolio	94.8	Very Good	98.0	Very Good	-3.2
5	US, MCC	92.0	Very Good	92.1	Very Good	-0.1
6	UNICEF	89.1	Very Good	92.9	Very Good	-3.8
7	UNDP	88.1	Very Good	96.6	Very Good	-8.5
8	Gavi	87.1	Very Good	80.8	Very Good	6.3
9	UN OCHA	85.9	Very Good	74.0	Good	11.9
10	AsDB – Non-Sovereign Portfolio	82.3	Very Good	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Germany, BMZ-GIZ	79.3	Good	72.3	Good	7.0
12	AfDB – Non-Sovereign Portfolio	78.6	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	Korea, KOICA	77.7	Good	70.7	Good	7.0
13	EC, ECHO	77.1	Good	68.2	Good	8.9
15	EC, INTPA (formerly DEVCO)	72.4	Good	76.5	Good	-4.1
16	UK, FCDO	71.9	Good	85.4	Very Good	-13.5
17	Canada, Global Affairs	71.1	Good	80.9	Very Good	-9.8
18	UK, BEIS	69.9	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A
19	World Health Organisation (WHO)	69.3	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	US, PEPFAR	68.6	Good	59.8	Fair	8.8
21	Sweden, Sida	68.0	Good	63.7	Good	4.3
22	Global Fund	67.9	Good	86.5	Very Good	-18.6
23	Netherlands, MFA	67.2	Good	71.2	Good	-4.0
24	EBRD – Sovereign Portfolio	66.6	Good	69.1	Good	-2.5
25	US, USAID	65.2	Good	76.7	Good	-11.5
26	New Zealand, MFAT	64.4	Good	77.6	Good	-13.2
27	EC, NEAR	64.0	Good	78.7	Good	-14.7
28	France, AFD	63.5	Good	58.5	Fair	5.0
29	Belgium, DGD	63.3	Good	63.4	Good	-0.1
30	Gates Foundation	62.0	Good	57.9	Fair	4.1
31	EBRD – Non-Sovereign Portfolio	60.6	Good	N/A	N/A	N/A

2022 rank	Organisation name	2022 score	2022 category	2020 score	2020 Category	Difference 2020–2022
32	US, State	58.0	Fair	63.2	Good	-5.2
33	EIB – Sovereign Portfolio	56.2	Fair	58.9	Fair	-2.7
34	Italy, AICS	53.9	Fair	49.3	Fair	4.6
35	World Bank, IFC	53.0	Fair	58.1	Fair	-5.1
36	Denmark, MFA	52.9	Fair	48.6	Fair	4.3
37	EIB – Non-Sovereign Portfolio	52.3	Fair	N/A	N/A	N/A
38	Finland, MFA	50.8	Fair	58.6	Fair	-7.8
39	Ireland, Irish Aid	48.0	Fair	42.6	Fair	5.4
40	Switzerland, SDC	47.0	Fair	61.1	Good	-14.1
41	Australia, DFAT	41.9	Fair	51.8	Fair	-9.9
42	Spain, AECID	41.1	Fair	57.8	Fair	-16.7
43	Saudi Arabia, KSRelief	38.7	Poor	42.0	Fair	-3.3
44	Germany, Federal Foreign Office	37.2	Poor	N/A	N/A	N/A
45	Norway, MFA	36.2	Poor	43.5	Fair	-7.3
46	IDB Invest	34.1	Poor	N/A	N/A	N/A
47	Japan, JICA	22.9	Poor	49.3	Fair	-26.4
48	China, MOFCOM	5.0	Very Poor	1.2	Very Poor	3.8
49	Turkey, TIKA	1.6	Very Poor	6.3	Very Poor	-4.7
50	UAE, MOFAIC	1.1	Very Poor	17.7	Very Poor	-16.6

Acronyms

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFD	French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement)
AIMS	Aid Information Management System (of recipient country)
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (of the United Kingdom)
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung)
CEPI	Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CRS	Creditor Reporting System (of the OECD)
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (of Australia)
DFIs	Development Finance Institutions
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (European Commission)
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (of the United Kingdom)
FFO	Federal Foreign Office (of Germany)
Gavi	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
Global Fund	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative

IFC	International Finance Corporation (World Bank)
IDA	International Development Association (World Bank)
INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships (European Commission)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOICA	International Cooperation Agency (of Korea)
KSRelief	King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (Saudi Arabia)
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (of New Zealand)
MOFAIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (of the United Arab Emirates)
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce (of China)
NEAR	Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (European Commission)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEPFAR	US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States (of America)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

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The Global Campaign for Aid Transparency