



Foreign Assistance Reporting Guide for International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Data Users

Summary of USAID's Foreign Assistance Portfolio

USAID partners to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing American security and prosperity. USAID works in over 100 countries in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Africa, Asia, Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East to:

- Promote broadly shared **economic prosperity**;
- Strengthen **democracy and good governance**;
- Protect **human rights**;
- Improve **global health**,
- Advance **food security and agriculture**;
- Improve **environmental sustainability**;
- Further **education**;
- Help societies **prevent and recover from conflicts**; and
- Provide **humanitarian assistance** in the wake of natural and man-made disasters.

Data Source

Financial information for USAID's International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data fields comes from Phoenix, USAID's worldwide accounting system of record. Phoenix is a financial system that tracks obligations and disbursements; it is not a project management system that aggregates information by activity or project. Further, it is a federally compliant and secure financial management system that allows USAID staff to analyze, manage, and report on foreign assistance funds.

When possible, USAID tries to augment the financial information from Phoenix with more descriptive information in an effort to fulfill various reporting requirements. Additional descriptive information comes from GLAAS, USAID's procurement system; USAID Operational Plans, the Food for Peace Management Information System; the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), USAID's online collection of reports, evaluations and assessments, and other resources; AidTracker +, USAID's application for storing and managing information related to projects, locations, and results; and USAID.gov's mission directory, a repository of all USAID mission contact information.

USAID IATI Identifiers

In April 2017, IATI decommissioned USG-USAGOV as the USG IATI identifier prefix. USAID is now identified using the prefix US-GOV-1. The numeric identifier aligns with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) reporting code list for US government agencies.

Data Reporting

USAID draws the data for USAID's IATI file from the sources listed in the section above and compiles the data applying Agency business rules. It includes detailed information on obligations and disbursements made since FY 2013 and is updated each quarter. The data also include actions against obligations made in prior years. For example, if USAID obligates or disburses funds to a contract awarded in FY 2011 and makes payments for ongoing work performed in the current fiscal quarter, USAID will include those obligations or disbursements in the current data.



Data Reporting Details

Obligations

Obligations are defined as legal, binding and signed agreements between USAID and other entities that USAID agrees to pay for goods or services. These actions incur legal liability and a definite financial commitment of the U.S. Government. (Subsequently, disbursements occur when the money is actually spent.) USAID tracks obligations at three different levels:

- (1) ***Bilateral obligations*** are created through an umbrella agreement with the partner government that is receiving the assistance. Subsequent sub-obligations implement programs under the bilateral obligation.
- (2) ***Unilateral obligations*** occur when USAID directly issues a commitment to a grantee, vendor, contactor, supplier, etc. without an umbrella agreement with a host government. Examples include grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and purchase orders.
- (3) ***Sub obligations*** are transactions (the issuance of a contract, grant, cooperative agreement etc.) made to a specific vendor to implement programs.

Distinguishing among these three types of obligations is important for accounting purposes. Taken in sum, however, they can lead to a significant overestimation of total obligations over time. Therefore, USAID publishes unilateral obligations and sub-obligations and excludes bilateral obligations to avoid double-counting. The field titled “Obligation type” indicates whether the obligation is unilateral or a sub-obligation.

Aggregating Data

USAID has aggregated certain data rows to reduce volume and remove personally identifiable information. These primarily administrative records are funded from either program or operating expense accounts that include information on USAID personal service contracts, local and international travel, and office supplies. Data records are aggregated if the common vendor name is ‘Individual,’ ‘other,’ or is blank or unknown.

GLAAS Codes for Award Description

There are instances where formatted codes appear in USAID’s descriptive data. These codes are a mandate from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), in guidance dated December 19, 2011, which instructed civilian agencies to begin coding functions closely associated to inherently governmental functions, critical functions, and other functions in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS). For FPDS reporting, OFPP guidance requires that the “Description of Requirements” field on procurement for services include inherently governmental functions indicators that represent “Closely Associated Functions,” “Critical Functions,” or “Other Functions”.

The format codes include:

| <u>Designation</u> | <u>Formatted Code</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Closely | IGF::CL::IGF | Functions that are closely associated with inherently governmental |



| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Associated Functions | | functions; those contractor duties that could expand to become inherently governmental functions without sufficient management controls or oversight on the part of the Government. |
| Critical Functions | IGF::CT::IGF | Functions that are necessary to the agency being able to effectively perform and maintain control of its mission and operations. Typically, critical functions are recurring and long term in duration. |
| Other Functions | IGF::OT::IGF | Services that are neither of the above. |
| The combination of CL and CT | IGF::CL,CT::IGF | This is allowed if it is indicated that the services are both ‘Closely Associated Functions’ and ‘Critical Functions.’ |

Sector Assignments

Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure and Definitions program areas and elements are automatically mapped to OECD/DAC sectors.

USAID Forward

Information on vendor location is included in USAID’s IATI data, but it distinguishes only between U.S.-based, non-U.S.-based, and international organizations. As a cornerstone of the [USAID Forward reform agenda](#), USAID is placing a greater emphasis on public-private partnerships and has committed to channeling more funding to host country governments and local organizations that have the in-country knowledge and expertise to create sustainable change. Local organizations include host country governments, as well as non-profit, for profit, or academic institutions that are legally organized according to a country’s laws and satisfy other criteria of local ownership.

Data Reporting Limitations

There are some known data gaps in the data USAID currently reports to IATI. Efforts are currently underway to improve both the quality and scope of data reported as detailed by [USAID IATI Cost Management Plan](#). Known limitations include:

- Currently USAID enterprise-wide systems do not collect results information that USAID can link to the award-level financial information. USAID captures this information at the country level.
- Some data fields are blank when USAID pulls them from corporate systems. Other fields are blank because USAID rolls up many administrative fields. Additionally, USAID removes a very small amount of fields in accordance with the principled exceptions outlined in the Office of Management and Budget ([OMB Bulletin 12-01](#)) (see disclaimer below). See the chart below for more information:

| Data Value | Definition |
|---|--|
| This award is for services performed by an outside personal service contractor or an unidentified vendor. | When a vendor name is pulled from the USAID accounting system, it might be coded as ‘Individual’ or ‘Other’ which typically indicates a personal services contractor. For privacy purposes, these names are removed. In other cases, the vendor name is already blank when pulled from the system of record. |



| | |
|---|--|
| This activity is a direct administrative cost or operating expense of USAID. | USAID has many financially small records that are rolled up according to Agency business rules in order to reduce the number of records. These may include things such as the purchase of office supplies or training. These values may show up in the award description and activity description, implementing mechanism, and vendor name respectively. |
| Admin Costs | |
| Vendor implementing direct administrative services | |
| This vendor name has been redacted in accordance with the principled exceptions outlined in the Office of Management and Budget Bulletin 12-01. | USAID remains committed to a presumption in favor of openness balanced with the concerns for safety of staff and national security. See the Disclaimers section below for more details on Principled Exceptions. |

Disclaimers

- In accordance with OMB Bulletin 12-01, agencies may redact certain information under the appropriate principled exceptions. In the dataset, USAID identifies activity titles and descriptions it redacted in accordance with these principled exceptions. USAID remains committed to a presumption in favor of openness balanced with concerns for safety of staff and national security. Below is the list of principled exceptions.
 - a) When public disclosure threatens national security interests;
 - b) When public disclosure is likely to jeopardize the personal safety of U.S. personnel or recipients of U.S. resources;
 - c) When public disclosure would interfere with the agency's ability to effectively discharge its ongoing responsibilities in foreign assistance activities;
 - d) When there are legal constraints on the disclosure of business or proprietary information of non-governmental organizations, contractors, or private sector clients;
 - e) When the laws or regulations of a recipient country apply to a bilateral agreement and restrict access to information; or
 - f) When data reveal private information about individuals that must be kept confidential consistent with ethical guidelines and federal regulations.
- One award can have multiple transactions over multiple years. Therefore, in any given quarter, the sum of obligations and disbursements will not be equal.
- The U.S. Government's **Fiscal Year** is not the same as the **Calendar Year**. The U.S. Government fiscal year is October 1 – September 30.