



How Can We Improve Agricultural Funding Data?

Key Recommendations

The Initiative for Open Ag Funding supports efforts to tackle hunger and food insecurity by improving the availability and quality of agricultural investment data. We know that in 2014 roughly \$8.3 billion of official development assistance (ODA) was disbursed for agricultural-related development. However, we cannot accurately say where it was spent, who benefited or what that assistance achieved. The Initiative for Open Ag Funding is aimed at ensuring that agriculture and food security practitioners have the data they need to answer those questions, with the ultimate goal of increasing the effectiveness of efforts in the sector. By improving access to this data, organizations will be better able to coordinate, find partners, identify promising approaches and target their assistance.

Based on conversations with donors, foundations and NGOs working in the sector, we have identified the need for action in several areas:

1. Ensure that organizations publish high quality data on 20 priority fields for all their agriculture and food security-related activities.
2. Extend existing sector classifications and pilot the use of agriculture-specific vocabularies to make it easier to identify the nature of the work being done.
3. Improve tools and methodologies for assigning organizations a unique identifier to determine which organizations are involved in which activities.
4. Develop better guidance and tools to help organizations publish data on the sub-national location of their activities, and advocate for better provision of authoritative, open reference resources for sub-national geo-data.
5. Improve guidance for how data on activities should be provided to enable users to trace the flow of funds along the “aid chain” and identify relationships between activities.

Next Steps

We are now testing our recommendations through a set of consultations to: (1) determine whether organizations are able to publish the data we've identified as a high priority for users; and (2) confirm that our recommendations will result in data that meets the needs of practitioners and decision-makers.

Get Involved

We are currently conducting in-depth conversations with interested parties. To arrange a call, meeting or to join our Working Group please contact David Duffeck at dduffeck@interaction.org. We are also gathering input via a short online survey which can be found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/openag>.

Further Information & Background

A key principle of the Initiative for Open Ag Funding is to build on existing frameworks whenever possible. Our landscape analysis identified that the most promising framework for comprehensive and timely project-level data is the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). IATI is used by the majority of OECD DAC donors and hundreds of civil society organizations, which have collectively published data on over 35,000 agriculture-related activities. Our primary objective is, therefore, to improve the quality of the data published to IATI and to encourage greater use.

A second key principle of the initiative is to be user-driven, and only make recommendations that respond to real world needs identified through user research. To that end, between March and June 2016 we conducted consultations with potential users. The majority of respondents spoke of the challenges they face finding the data they need. Respondents highlighted the need for data on what is being funded, the location of activities and who the target populations are, as this will enable them to more effectively direct resources to areas where there are currently gaps. They also highlighted the need to know which organizations are involved in implementation at the local level to identify partners, as well as data on expected and actual results.

Based on the consultation feedback, we identified 20 priority fields for which data needs to be provided to make agricultural funding data useful. The 20 fields are:

1. **Reporting Organization**
2. **Metadata** (default language and currency)
3. **Activity ID** (unique identifier for the activity)
4. **Activity Title**
5. **Activity Status**
6. **Activity Start and End Dates**
7. **Activity Description** (including objectives and target groups)
8. **Aid Classifications** (type of assistance being provided)
9. **Sector(s)**
10. **Participating Organizations** (such as funders and implementers)
11. **Contact details** (someone that can be contacted to learn more about the activity)
12. **Related Documents**
13. **Country/Region**
14. **Sub-national Location**
15. **Budget** (year-by-year project budget)
16. **Transactions** (commitments, disbursements and expenditures for the activity)
17. **Transaction Classification** (information on what a transaction relates to)
18. **Transaction Parties** (organizations providing and receiving funding)
19. **Transaction Traceability** (information on related activities)
20. **Results Information** (including indicators and results-related documents)

Once we have finalized our recommendations, we intend to work closely with organizations throughout 2017 to improve their data by providing guidance, bespoke tools, and technical assistance.

