

## Aid Transparency Index visibility assessment

Aid organisations publishing in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Standard should publish data for the entirety of their aid and development portfolios. This visibility is critical for a number of reasons and for a number of stakeholders. Citizens in aid donor and partner countries need to see the full extent of aid flows including where and how aid money is spent. Complete data underpins all of the use cases of aid data including coordination among donors and with partner governments, accountability for aid delivered, and research and learning from the results and impacts of aid activities.

The Aid Transparency Index undertakes a visibility assessment to ensure that a sufficiently high proportion of the portfolio of an organisation's aid spending is being published. The assessment is made using a secondary source of annual total spend as well as the IATI dashboard frequency assessment.

Research into the visibility levels of agencies assessed in the Aid Transparency Index is not new. Publish What You Fund has been monitoring visibility for a number of years using a method developed from the IATI secretariat's [coverage approach](#). We have always reserved the right to address any issues and, with this briefing paper, are formally setting out our process and any scoring consequences. We begin this research three months before the start of Index data collection and continue to monitor visibility until the final data collection. The steps for assessing visibility include:

1. **Check Frequency:** we check the IATI dashboard for the frequency of publication. If an organisation has 'Less than Annual' it means they have not updated or published any data in the last year and should therefore be assessed in the manual survey. Organisations are warned that they will be moved into the manual survey if they do not improve publishing.
2. **Check historic coverage calculation:** We carry out research comparing total amounts recorded in the most recent OECD DAC CRS data with the total transaction amounts recorded in IATI for the same year. In the case of the 2024 Index we made the comparison with 2021 CRS and IATI data. This research is initially completed three months before the start of Index data collection. If further monitoring is required there will be follow up checks ahead of each Index data download.
  - a. For those organisations that do not publish data to the CRS we look for an alternative source for total annual spend such as an annual report.
  - b. We then identify organisations which have historic IATI total spend **lower than 85%** of total spend recorded in the CRS. Where this is the case, we carry out additional research on the current year data, as outlined in step 3 below.
  - c. Total spend (disbursements & expenditure) and/or total commitments (whichever are available) in IATI can be extracted with the [Dataset tool](#).<sup>1</sup> Data will be split by year using the '*transactiondate\_isodate*.' (unless another date field is suggested).
3. **Check current year coverage calculation:**

Agencies which are identified to have poor historic coverage (below 85%) are further investigated. To determine if the coverage value is 'low' for the current year we make a rough comparison with the historic ODA total (typically CRS). We do this on a pro-rata basis based on the time of year and publication arrears of the publisher (so if the

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<sup>1</sup> Adjust the '*transactiondate\_isodate*' the '*reportingorg\_ref*' and the value currency for future iterations of this research. The '*Sum(value) can be used*' to find local currency totals across the transactions (particularly useful for EU agencies).

organisation publishes a quarter in arrears and we are in Q3, we expect 25% of the annual spend to be published).<sup>2</sup> The threshold is set at 65% for the current year to account for variations in ODA funding amounts and the fact that the year is not yet complete.

4. **Identify organisation results for notification:**

- a. Organisations that have *historic* IATI transactions lower than 85% of the total spend recorded when comparing *the previous years*.
- b. Organisations which have current data lower than 65% of the historic baseline totals.
- c. Those organisations with no transactions in the current year identified by their 'Less than Annual' frequency.

Communicate results with publishers. At this stage we are seeking an explanation for the discrepancies.

5. **Assessing responses:** depending on the response we may then impose penalties.

- a. If a response is received which explains that more data will be published soon we will monitor the situation
- b. If an explanation resolves the issue – e.g., there is a different policy for IATI publication compared with CRS publication and this is defensible, no further action is taken.
- c. If we receive no response or an inadequate response then we will monitor the situation.

6. **Continued monitoring:** After we carry out the final data pull, we will review the 2023 data for those organisations being monitored.

- a. For those organisations that have **over** 85% coverage in *historic years* and **over** 65% in the *current year*, no further action will be taken as their data visibility consistently meets the thresholds.
- b. For those organisations that have **under** 85% in historic years and **over** 65% in the current year, no further action will be taken since their current visibility is sufficient.
- c. For those organisations with **under** 85% coverage in historic years and **under** 65% coverage in the current year will face a penalty in the Index (see below).
- d. For those agencies with 'Less than Annual' frequency and which have not published more data, they will be assessed in the manual survey.

7. **Imposing penalties:**

- a. For organisations we are monitoring, if their current data is still under 65% when we test visibility at the point of the final data pull and they have consistently poor historic data we will apply a “data incomplete” penalty to

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<sup>2</sup> Current year thresholds

	Q2 expected coverage amount	Q3 expected coverage amount	Q4 expected coverage amount
One month in arrears	25%	50%	75%
A quarter in arrears	0	25%	50%
Six months in arrears	0	0	25%
One year in arrears	0	0	0

their Aid Transparency Index assessment and include reference to the issue in the organization profile.

- b. The penalty will be an additional 20% reduction in IATI activity scores. This will be applied in the same way, and alongside, any timeliness multiplier discount.
- c. We will reference the incomplete data in the organisation profile and in the final Index report.