

Codebook and Methodology: Climate- and Disaster Risk-Related Project Level Aid Transparency Dataset

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COMPLEX EMERGENCIES
AND POLITICAL STABILITY
IN ASIA

Aid Transparency
Codebook and Methodology

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Introduction

This dataset investigates the availability and quality of project documentation for a randomly selected set of projects from five major donors and 11 countries. The database is available [here](#).¹ We expand on our motivations and results in an accompanying policy brief.² We downloaded project level data for 2007 – 2016 from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) registry.³ The five donors are the Asian Development Bank (ADB), U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank (WB). The 11 countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. We assigned random numbers to the downloaded dataset and use this to select up to 20 projects from each donor for each country, totaling 916 projects.⁴ We evaluated these projects' information across 18 indicators, assigning points according to a modified Aid Transparency Index (ATI) methodology.⁵ We find that despite commitments to aid transparency, donors vary widely in their reporting quality. The World Bank (15.74 or 87.4%) and the Asian Development Bank (13.85 or 77%) are the most consistent in making their documentation available for additional analysis. USAID (0.20 or 1%) and JICA (4.62 or 25.6%) are the least transparent, barely providing any information on their projects. This note highlights significant methodological details and dataset structure.

Dataset Details

Years	2004 - 2014
Donors	5
Projects	327
Activity Locations (rows)	1,741

Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ATI	Aid Transparency Index
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PWYF	Publish What You Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Methodology Overview

The raw data were downloaded from the IATI registry in January 2017, where signatory donors are required to report their aid activities regularly. We downloaded all projects between 2007 – 2016 for the five donors and 11 countries. Due to IATI query idiosyncrasies, we downloaded separate spreadsheets for each of the donor/country combinations, giving us 55 spreadsheets to work with.

Our aim here is to understand the availability and quality of basic project information and documentation. To do so, we sampled up to 20 projects from each donor for each country, giving us a sample size of up to 1,100 projects. We found that not all donors had activities in our 11 countries or 20 projects in their portfolio. In these cases, we included as many projects as we could in our assessment. For donors that had more than 20 projects, we randomly sampled their portfolio. We added an additional column to these spreadsheets and assigned each project with a random number, created by a random number generator.⁶ These random numbers were sorted in ascending order and we evaluated the first 20 projects. The resulting database had 916 projects, as Table 1 indicates.

Table 1: List of Projects by Donor and Country (2007 – 2016)

	ADB	DFID	JICA	USAID	World Bank	Total
Bangladesh	20	20	20	20	20	100
Bhutan	15	-	9	3	4	31
Cambodia	20	20	23	20	10	93
India	20	20	20	20	20	100
Laos	20	8	20	20	18	86
Myanmar	6	20	20	20	11	77
Nepal	20	18	9	20	20	87
Pakistan	20	20	20	20	20	100
Sri Lanka	20	20	20	20	20	100
Thailand	2	2	16	20	2	42
Vietnam	20	20	20	20	20	100

We evaluated each of these projects, using 18 indicators derived from Publish What You Fund’s Aid Transparency Index.⁷ The original ATI uses 39 indicators – we modified their methodology to focus on key dimensions that indicate the availability, accessibility, and quality of project documentation. These 18 indicators, their significance, and our coding approach are further explicated in Table 2. For each project, we evaluate available information against the following indicators, assigning a score of 0 or 1 and a maximum score of 18. The project receives an overall score of 0 if we are unable to find appropriate project documentation in ten minutes. This indicates that such documentation is not easily accessible and further evaluation cannot proceed. We search for project documentation using donor provided data, like titles, donor, year, and/or unique project identification numbers (available with our IATI downloaded spreadsheets).

Table 2: Indicators Evaluated

Indicator	Objective	Explanation
Accessibility	Can the data (i.e. project documentation) be found within a reasonable amount of time?	A coder will set a timer and attempt to find the file within 10 minutes. Files that are not found will be given a rating of 0 and we stop this project's continued evaluation.
Implementer	Is the name of the primary implementing organization available?	If the implementer is listed then the project will receive one point.
Unique ID	Can a unique identifying project number be found?	If the project's unique ID is plainly stated on the page then one point will be awarded. No points given for ID's that are only listed in the URL.
Title	Can a title be found for the project?	If the full name of the title, without acronyms is stated on the page then the data source will receive one point.
Activity Description	Are descriptions available for one or all activities?	If there is a description of the activity that is longer than 10 words, then the project will receive one point.
Planned Dates	Are planned start and end dates available?	If the dates for which the project is supposed to start and end on are present, including the month and the year for each, then one point will be awarded.
Actual Dates	Are actual start and end dates available?	If the actual dates are explicitly stated as actual dates (dates without an explanation are assumed to be planned dates), with month and the year for each, then one point will be awarded.
Current Status	Can the current status of the project be found?	Projects listed as under-design, being implemented, finished, or cancelled will receive one point.
Contact Details	Can contact details be found for the project?	Projects with contact information listed for the project manager, implementing or funding organization, will receive one point. Contact information can be an email address, telephone number, or mailing address.
Finance type	Is this project a grant, loan, export credit or debt relief?	Mention of the finance type on project document will receive one point.
Sectors	Is there separate and explicit mention of the activity's sector?	Explicit statements of the activity's sector will receive one point.
Sub-national Location	Can sub-national location information be found for the project?	Projects with subnational (e.g., town, village) activity location will be given one point. Projects that are for a country or province level can list the provincial capital or country capital as their location.
Evaluations	Can evaluations documents be found for this project?	Closed projects with evaluation documentation present will be awarded one point. If projects are ongoing or recently closed, then we do not code for this indicator.
Objectives	Are the objectives of the activity stated? They need to include the detailed description of the activity, the target sector/group and expected outcomes.	Projects with objectives included will be awarded one point.
Budget	Can a budget be found for the project?	Projects with budgets that detail the spending for activities and break it down on different lines will receive one point.
Commitments	Are high-level commitments to the project available?	Projects with high level commitments mentioned will be awarded one point.
Impact Appraisals	Can a pre-project impact analysis be found?	Projects that have pre-project impact analysis that describe the totality of positive or negative effects of the development intervention, will receive one point. Environmental impact assessments will count as a pre-project impact analysis.
Format	Can the appropriate format be found for the project?	Project information on a website or PDF document will receive 0.5. Project information made available on a website or document and a web-readable format will receive 1.



Thus, each project receives a score between 0 and 18: the indicators' scores are summed. For each donor/country combination, we averaged these scores. We also averaged the scores of each donor across all 11 countries, thus providing us with a donor transparency score. This indicates how donors performed across the 2007 – 2016 period across their regional portfolio.

Database Schema

The final dataset (in Excel format) contains 12 sheets. The sheet “all” quickly summarizes each donor/country transparency score. These transparency scores are averages of each donor's evaluated project portfolio. This sheet also includes the donor's average transparency score across all 11 countries. Each country also has its own sheet, where individual project-level scores are available. Table 3 summarizes each column and its significance.

Table 3: Database Schema for Country Sheets

Indicator	Significance	Source
IATI - Identifier	Project identifier	IATI
Project Title	Donor reported project title	IATI
Description	Donor reported project description	IATI
Donor	Funding organization	IATI
Year (start date)	Donor reported start date (usually planned, not actual)	IATI
Sector Classification	Donor reported sector	IATI
Total Commitment	Donor reported high level commitment	IATI
Currency	Currency of total commitment	IATI
Transparency Score	CEPSA calculated score based on Table 2 indicators	CEPSA

Results

We find that donors vary wildly in their transparency. Of the five donors evaluated, only the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank consistently make project documentation available. These donors, thus, score the highest according to our methodology. USAID and JICA are the least transparent. Both donors often do not provide unique or identifying titles for their projects, making it difficult to find accompanying documentation. Table 4 summarizes these scores. Further analysis can be found in our policy brief.⁸ Overall, we find that despite commitments to transparency, donors do not provide adequate information on their projects. We find that current documentation would not allow for further analysis of these projects or an evaluation of their relevance to climate change or disaster risk reduction, as was our original aim.⁹

Table 4: Aid Transparency Scores

Country/ Donor	# Evaluated	ADB	DFID	JICA	USAID	World Bank
Overall (%)		76.9%	57%	25.7%	1.11%	87.4%
Overall (Raw)	916	13.85	10.27	4.62	0.20	15.74
Bangladesh	100	15.67	11.40	3.55	0.00	14.08
Bhutan	31	16.17	N/A	1.78	0.00	14.50
Cambodia	93	12.10	10.28	1.67	0.00	16.60
India	100	16.00	12.93	4.35	0.00	17.00
Laos	86	15.85	5.00	7.65	0.75	16.97
Myanmar	77	15.00	11.88	1.08	0.00	16.05
Nepal	87	14.55	11.44	1.67	0.00	15.70
Pakistan	100	14.80	9.88	5.00	0.00	15.30
Sri Lanka	100	15.10	9.70	7.85	0.00	15.10
Thailand	42	15.00	9.50	5.69	0.00	16.00
Vietnam	100	15.95	10.73	10.53	1.45	15.80



Endnotes

¹ The Project Level Transparency Dataset can be found here: <https://www.strausscenter.org/cepsa/data.html>

² Weaver, Catherine E., Nisha Krishnan, and Caleb Rudlow. “Data Deluge or Desert? Assessing Availability, Quality, and Quantity of information on Climate Change Finance in South and South East Asia.” 2017. CEPSA Brief No. 11.

³ International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). IATI Data Store CSV Query Builder (Alpha Version). 2017. <http://datastore.iatistandard.org/query/index.php>

⁴ Not every donor had 20 or more projects per country. Where possible, we selected 20 projects; otherwise, we used all projects available.

⁵ Details about our modified ATI methodology are found in our policy brief ([hyperlink](#)).

⁶ We used Microsoft Excel for these operations. The software has a random number generator function (RAND), which we utilized for this purpose.

⁷ Publish What You Fund. “2016 Aid Transparency Index: Technical Paper”. 2016. <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2016-Aid-Transparency-Index-Technical-paper.pdf>

⁸ Weaver, Catherine E., Nisha Krishnan, and Caleb Rudlow. “Data Deluge or Desert? Assessing Availability, Quality, and Quantity of information on Climate Change Finance in South and South East Asia.” 2017. CEPSA Brief No. 11.

⁹ For more information on the CEPSA program motivation, methodology, and initial results, please refer to Weaver, Catherine E., and Nisha Krishnan. 2016. “Beyond Emergency Relief: Tracking International Aid for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.” CEPSA Brief No. 1. <https://www.strausscenter.org/cepsa-research-briefs?download=618:beyond-emergence-relief-tracking-aid-for-disaster-risk-and-reduction>

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