Canadian International Development Platform: Primer on Open Aid Data Hierarchical Structure

The table below outlines various levels of open aid data, and examples of how they are analyzed and leveraged on the Canadian International Development Platform's (www.cidpnsi.ca) newly redesigned Foreign Aid Portal. The structure is organized top – down, from low level of disaggregation and detail, to higher levels of disaggregation.

Key source(s)	Level of aggregation and/or detail	Time series and lag	Use-cases	CIDP analytics
OECD-DAC, World Bank	Higher order; high quality; cross-country, region, sector data. Primarily aggregate data, with the exception of DAC-CRS.	Can be highly lagged as it is high quality (over 1 year).	Cross country comparative analysis at the project level; selective disaggregated data (e.g. DAC-CRS).	Data is used in analyses and commentary only; but not synced or visualized. See: Foreign Aid: Recovering After Crisis; Fiscal Austerity and Foreign Aid We privilege high quality Canadian sources for deeper analysis of Canadian flows.
DFATD Statistical Report(s)	Higher order data on Canadian flows; available through various reporting requirements including reports to parliament and reports on the ODA Accountability Act, as well as reporting requirements for the OECD-DAC.	Typically updated between March and April; i.e. lagged over 1 year. There have been instances of backward revision of the data.	Key advantage is that it encompasses all Canadian assistance (not just DFAD projects). Useful for drill-down analysis at the institutional level – e.g. to compare across countries, regions, income levels, how much is received from which Canadian dept. DFATD and beyond; in which regions; by income levels; compare bilateral/multilateral aid; and branches within DFATD and other departments, to name a few uses.	Raw data is directly routed into and visualized on the CIDP at Canada's Foreign Aid Data can be drilled into and exported directly, or downloaded as 'flat file'.

Budgetary, forward guidance and departmental data	Higher order data, not possible to disaggregate much further beyond the individual institutional level in terms of Canadian depts. and agencies. Data comprise Main Estimates, performance reports and reports on plans and priorities; budget statements (when relevant); parliamentary budget office data; as well as Public Accounts data (where relevant). Other related data include individual grants and contribution agreement data (subject to disclosure requirements).	Lags vary across sources, with the highest lag being the Public Accounts, which are also the highest quality (available in Nov, for the preceding fiscal year). Other sources such as Main Estimates (and IATI forward guidance) are forward looking.	Tracking forward guidance and commitments at the aggregate level; trends on where spending may be going; analysis of how spending tracked against expected/ budget and or parliamentary authorization.	Data is primarily used on a case basis for specific analyses only and not typically visualized on an ongoing basis. With the exception of recent analyses: Leveraging open data to analyse Canada's development spending (which sought to demonstrate what can be done using different sources to track in-cycle spending).
Secondary source Canadian data at the organizational level (e.g. through CRA filing)	Aggregate level data on Canadian civil society organizations, with charitable status, and projects overseas including with CIDA/DFATD funding. From Canada Revenue Agency (not a development data source typically). Not possible to disaggregate. Sourced from CRA, but filtered and limited.	Lagged, typically over 1 year from time of fiscal year filing to year of publication as 'open' data.	Useful to compare funding sources of various civil society organizations; the total value of their overseas operations; share of funding from government in overall revenue.	Linked, visualized and analyzed (periodically) at CIDA on: Canadian Charities Active Internationally.
DFATD open data (historical time series)	Dis-aggregated, project level data. Comprehensive, but only for CIDA/DFATD projects. Sourced directly from DFATD open data.	Lagged, over 1 year; updated following the Statistical report sources (which can be anywhere from April to June/ July, depending on revisions).	Useful for detailed analysis at the project level, by sector, country, and implementing/ partner organization. To analyze shares of actual project expenditures (as opposed to budgets) by type of partner and location (e.g. Canadian vs. non-Canadian; civil society vs. multilateral). Large volume presents challenge working in spreadsheet (as opposed to in-memory database).	Linked, visualized and analyzed at: Development Projects. Also used in specific analyses and on-demand requests (to address questions like which Canadian CSOs are working in which sectors etc.)

DFATD open data (real time browser)	Dis-aggregated project level data. Comprehensive but only for CIDA/DFATD projects. Sourced directly from DFATD open data.	Near real time, i.e. updated frequently within cycle (in some cases monthly, but regularly quarterly). Feeds data into the IATI publication.	Useful for analysis of very recent trends, e.g. recent project starts, associated sectors, geographies, implementing partners, results or expected results. Used primarily for real-time tracking (e.g. allocation to emergencies). Downside is that it only contains budget amounts in terms of financials, and not actual expenditure.	Linked, visualized and analyzed at: Development Projects (Real-Time).
IATI feeds (DFATD and others)	Dis-aggregated project level data, comprehensive, timely and comparative in that published to a global standard. Only for CIDA/DFATD projects. Sourced directly from the IATI registry and tools that work with the registry data directly.	Publication frequency commitment/planned frequency, is quarterly in the case of Canada (DFATD).	Useful for near-term tracking, and comparative analysis across publishing donors. E.g. to analyze how different donors are responding to a crisis/time-sensitive request (most recently – e.g. Syria). Data is at a detailed level, and XML. While this is a major downside for most non-technical users, there are interfaces and conversion tools available.	Visualized and analyzed on the CIDP primarily for near-term project level analyses and cross country comparisons, at: IATI Used to show e.g. how many projects started in a given year and their associated commitment amounts, sectors, implementer (where available).
Key thematic/priority/sector or commitment specific analysis: Muskoka, MNCH and health financing	Dis-aggregated project level data, comprehensive accounting for spending in specific sector, which in this case	Annual and lagged (over 1 year).	Useful for analyzing actual spending against stated commitments on Canada's main foreign aid priority.	Linked with other open aid data, and comprehensively analyzed and visualized at: Financing Global Health. Used to analyze spending per country, by partner, by thematic priority and more.

Monitoring and evaluation (ME) program/project level data	Highly detailed program/ project level data, collected by implementers/partners as part of project requirement.	Varied, depending on programming/reporting needs.	Key data from the perspective of program/project officers; highly varied and non-standardized. Rarely 'open' data. A key issue faced by most organizations is aggregating up project level tracking information in a meaningful way.	Not currently visualized or analyzed at CIDP; but by way of example, forthcoming analysis (Paying for Impact) leverages program level outcome data from a non-Canadian project to demonstrate possibilities in terms of connecting result/outcome/ impact data with financial information. CIDP can provide support to common data management needs and challenges faced by organizations looking to leverage this internal data for learning, sharing, improved programming and impact communication.
Contextual baseline and or trend data at the micro (sub-national) level	Highly detailed data at the sub-national (or lower regional, municipal level). Sourced primarily through household surveys.	Varied, depending on country/sub-national context. But even in some of the most difficult contexts survey frequency and quality has increased, in large part thanks to application of mobile technology, and new data collection/validation techniques.	Essential data that surrounds the project/intervention. Vital to understand measure and track effects - what changed by how much over what time.	Not currently visualized or analyzed at CIDP; but the platform is well placed to provide support to organizations by way of leveraging new data gathering and management tools; as well as further leveraging data for impact communication.