

## Scorecard: Output reporting and accessibility

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USAID

**2.6** / 4

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**2.5** / 4 – Output accessibility

- Are project-level data centralized and accessible?

**1.6** / 4 – Ease of extraction

- Are project-level reports standardized and available in open formats?

**2.5** / 4 – Output reporting clarity

- How frequently and consistently are outputs reported?

**2.4** / 4 – Output Dataset Transparency

- Are tabular and/ or spatial datasets gathered and available?

**4.0** / 4 – Output Reporting System

- Are there project-level reporting policies in place?

\* Scores based on one-country sample (Ghana)

### Next steps/ suggested improvements:

1. Use open formats (e.g. .txt, .docx, .csv)
  - Open formatting eases the automatic scraping of output information; this increases the robustness (ie- generating maximal amounts of accurate data) and scalability (able to be applied to the greatest number of projects) of the output extraction process
  - The more robust and scalable the extraction process, the fuller the resulting output database, and the easier it is to draw conclusions about project operations
  - USAID publishes almost all documentation in closed formats such as .pdf
2. Upload documentation for all projects
  - Though USAID is committed to transparency and accountability (ex- [ADS 579](#)), currently only 33% of projects in our sample have documentation
  - The DEC lacks advanced search and filter functionality
    - Users should be able to search and filter by fields such as time period, sector, region, document type, project keyword, and subcontractor
3. Report with templates and make these templates public

- Existing templates include the [Performance Indicator Reference Sheets](#) or [Project Performance Reporting Templates](#). The E3 Bureau site host a set of [standardized output templates](#). Further resources can be found on Country Office pages, such as the [Vietnam page](#)
  - In spite of this, very few projects include these templates in their public documentation
  - Templates facilitate cross-project and cross-agency comparisons and ease the construction of databases
4. Improve the Dollars to Results dataset
- One of the most promising tools across all donors
  - Though the dataset currently disaggregates outputs and expenditures by year, country, and sector, a data need still exists
    - Include metadata and protocols
    - Link expenditures and outputs to specific projects and/or DDL datasets
    - Clarify how comprehensive the output data are: "Data are illustrative and do not reflect the entirety of impact achieved from the overall funds disbursed."
5. Support the Development Data Library (DDL) database
- A very promising tool for supporting USAID'S rigorous learning standard and commitment to transparency and accountability
  - However, as most datasets are not open to the public, it is difficult for the public to make use to these data
  - Similar to the DEC and Dollars to Results platforms, DDL could be improved
    - Open all possible datasets publicly
    - Enable better filter and search functionalities, such as by country, dataset/document type, public vs. restricted, time period, and sector
    - Include metadata and protocols
6. Link project data across platforms and dashboards
- It can be difficult to find all associated materials for a project across the many USAID subpages
  - To improve the quality of project documentation, USAID should link project pages, DEC materials, and Dollars to Results entries, and DDL datasets whenever possible
7. Make the reporting of spatial data standard
- Spatial data, or geographic or data referenced at the most local level possible without breaching ethical standards, allows users to better understand what activities, outputs, and outcomes happened where. Disaggregating outputs and outcomes spatially helps field staff make

more informed program management decisions. It may also support eventual causal analyses to answer the questions of attribution.

- Only 3/16 (19%) of all projects with outputs contain spatial disaggregation, which is 3/24 (13%) of total projects
  - Of these 3 projects, 2 (67%) contain outputs disaggregated at the regional level, and 1 (33%) at the town level
  - Further, we could not locate any USAID policies that include mention that project teams should geocode output data
- Whenever possible, project staff should report the most precise locations possible for all project activities, outputs, and outcomes, and release this information publicly
- Once spatial reporting becomes the norm, USAID could explore user-centered ways to summarize and visualize this geographic information

### Subcomponent breakdown and justifications:

Category	Component	Score	Discussion
Monitoring Data Accessibility	Site Stability	2	At regular points through multiple visits to the site over the course of 4 months, the team experienced missing pages and slow load times. In particular, the <a href="#">"Results and Data"</a> page was broken for a period of months, and the <a href="#">"Data Publication Process"</a> document remains broken after months. In addition, the site contains multiple broken or faulty links. The <a href="#">project map for Ghana</a> , for example, contains link rerouting for Guatemala, not Ghana.
	Site Navigability	1	USAID does not provide a searchable and sortable database of projects. Rather, users must use <a href="#">the Interactive Map</a> to search for projects, which are displayed in pin form one by one, and not list form. This complicates generating project lists. The DEC lacks basic search and filter functionality. For example, users must select a sub-category of documents through which to search before even being taken to a page through which filters are offered. USAID policy documents are also difficult to navigate. Many critical links in the <a href="#">USAID Open Government Plan</a> , are broken, forcing the user to manually search for tools and pages on the USAID site instead of following direct links to those locations.
	Central Portal or Site	4	USAID's <a href="#">Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)</a> is a central portal of project documentation
Ease of Automatic Monitoring Data Extraction	Use of Open Formats	0	Documentation for all projects available only in PDF format
	Distribution of Monitoring Template to Project Teams	4	The E3 Bureau site host a set of standardized <a href="#">output templates</a> . Further resources can be found on Country Office pages, such as the <a href="#">Vietnam page</a> .

	Use of Standardized Monitoring Template	2	Though USAID's toolkit does include standardized output templates, the use of these templates is not widespread through project documentation. Evaluations are largely narrative in format and make only limited use of tables to display results.
Monitoring Data Reporting Clarity	Legibility of Results Documents	4	Output documents for all projects are available as .pdf files; no scanned forms exist
	Completeness of Monitoring Reporting	2	No output information found for 8/24 (33%) of all projects included in the sample
	Internal Consistency with Results Terminology	3	Multiple evaluations in our sample, many of which contain over a hundred projects, did not contain the word "output" in their documentation. When the word is used, however, it tends to be used consistent with the official USAID definition.
	Precision of Monitoring Reporting	1	Though sometimes outputs are precisely reported, in other cases, USAID relies on vague language, such as "medical equipment procured for over 100 health facilities" or failing to provide baseline and/or endline values for a "30 percent increase in participating farmer income."
Monitoring Dataset Transparency	Availability of Monitoring Datasets	3	In 2015, USAID released a new <a href="#">development data policy</a> that mandates that all datasets created through projects be submitted to the <a href="#">Development Data Library (DDL)</a> . The DDL is a publically searchable database of USAID datasets. Though requiring that any created datasets be submitted to the DDL is an important first step, the policy does not mandate the creation of any datasets in particular. However, USAID's <a href="#">Dollars to Results dataset</a> is a full dataset of outputs and expenditures, disaggregated by year, country, and sector. Though this is a very encouraging step, the dataset fails to link expenditures and outputs to specific projects. It is also unclear how comprehensive the output data are, as the dataset carries a warning that, "Data are illustrative and do not reflect the entirety of impact achieved from the overall funds disbursed."
	Accessibility of Monitoring Datasets	3	In 2015, USAID released a new <a href="#">development data policy</a> that mandates that all datasets created through projects be submitted to the <a href="#">Development Data Library (DDL)</a> . The DDL is a publically searchable database of USAID datasets. Though requiring that any created datasets be submitted to the DDL is an important first step, the policy does not mandate the creation of any datasets in particular. However, USAID's <a href="#">Dollars to Results dataset</a> is a full dataset of outputs and expenditures, disaggregated by year, country, and sector. Though this is a very encouraging step, the dataset fails to link expenditures and outputs to specific projects. It is also unclear how comprehensive the output data are, as the dataset carries a warning that, "Data are illustrative and do not reflect the entirety of impact achieved from the overall funds disbursed."
	Availability of Monitoring Spatial Data	2	3/16 (19%) of all projects with outputs contain spatial disaggregation, which is 3/24 (13%) of total projects. Of these 3 projects, 2 (67%) contain outputs disaggregated at the regional level, and 1 (33%) at the town level. Further, we could not locate any USAID policies that include mention that project teams should geocode output data.
	Accessibility of Monitoring Spatial Data	1	3/16 (19%) of all projects with outputs contain spatial disaggregation, which is 3/24 (13%) of total projects. Of these 3 projects, 2 (67%) contain outputs disaggregated at the regional level, and 1 (33%) at the town level.
Monitoring Reporting System	Standardized Terminology	4	Glossary of Evaluation Terms <a href="#">here</a>
	Monitoring Reporting Policy or Framework	4	USAID's <a href="#">Performance Management Plan's (PMP's) Toolkit</a> includes plentiful information about who should monitor and report outputs, how, and when.

	Free Public Access to Monitoring Information Policy	4	USAID's <a href="#">Open Government Plan</a> sets forth a vision of data openness, including the submitting of projects and operations data into the DDL and IATI databases. More specific information about the types of data that must be made publically available is found in the official <a href="#">ADS 579 policy</a>
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