**Stargazing- Monitoring Icons**

Based on metrics within each of these phases, the Scorecard was born. As we’ve mentioned, organizations struggle most with metrics in Phases 2 or 3 despite having solid M&E policies in place. In future blog posts, we plan to dive deeper into these metrics and sub-metrics.

Though no donor in our sample is perfect, we have been encouraged to see donors exceling in the monitoring and reporting of project-level data. What follows is a promising list of some of the qualities of a truly exceptional donor system.

Table 2: Most Promising Practices

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality** | **Phase** | **Donor** | **Practice** | **Why it Matters** |
| Detailed M&E and data systems | 1 | WFP | WFP offers a plethora of information about monitoring and reporting procedures through its ["WFP M&E guidelines: What is RBM oriented M&E"]((http:/seachangecop.org/node/3226) manual. WFP further delineates the who, how, and when of monitoring and reporting in project-specific manuals, such as the ["Purchase for Progress Monitoring Manual"](http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp229261.pdf) | Carefully constructing policies, frameworks, and toolkits for project output reporting is often the first step to the eventual timely, valid, and robust reporting of these data. M&E systems and policies matter because they promote a collective understanding of the importance of output reporting across all projects and promote cultures of rigorous monitoring and learning. The existence of output reporting system frameworks and plans is typically a precursor to the development of more specific tools project managers can use to report outputs. |
| Using open formats | 2 | DFATD | All project information found through separated pages on the [DFATD site](http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/aidtransparency-transparenceaide/browser-banque.aspx?lang=eng) is offered in open .html format. | Much like monitoring templates, open formatting makes automatic data scraping much simpler for the end user, which enhances the robustness and scalability of extraction efforts. Offering data in proprietary (closed) formats can exclude some users from accessing and reusing those data. |
| Publicly offering operations and results information in database format | 3 | PEPFAR; USAID | PEPFAR offers direct downloads of planned funding, expenditures, results, and central funding standardized datasets through its [dashboard](https://data.pepfar.net/). Similarly, [USAID's Dollars to Results dataset](https://www.usaid.gov/data/dataset/a1ca9979-901c-4771-abe5-8ffb68223467) is a full dataset of outputs and expenditures, disaggregated by year, country, and sector. | Formatting data into database format allows end users to conduct their own statistical analyses without needing to clean the data or make judgment calls about ambiguous quantifications. In this way, systematically providing project-level information in a standardized database format keeps donors accountable to the public about operations, encourages collaboration, and opens the door for the innovative reuse of project data across sectors and by the general public. |
| Using monitoring templates | 3 | World Bank | 100% of projects report output information via a set of templates including the [Implementation Completion Reports (ICR)](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/12/24/000386194_20121224050237/Rendered/PDF/NonAsciiFileName0.pdf) and Implementation Status and Results Report (ISRR). Other non-output oriented standardized forms exist, such as the Project Information Document (PID) and Project Performance Assessment Report (PPAR). It appears all project teams have access to ICR templates and resources through Operations Portal. | Monitoring templates make automatically extracting data much simpler. Automatic extraction involves the computerized scraping of output information from project documentation, for example through a scraping algorithm. The ease of programming an algorithm to scrape output information automatically 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. |
| Publishing geospatial data | 4 | JICA | In spite of not including a geocoding requirement in its [M&E manual](http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/tech_and_grant/guides/management.html), JICA geographically disaggregates results for 100% of the projects for which monitoring data are available. Of these 11 projects, 6 (55%) disaggregate at the regional level, and 4 (45%) at the city level. | The greatest potential for collaboration exists where corresponding spatial data are available and accessible for all projects. Knowing what was done and where (outputs) helps track aid effectiveness trends, as outcome and impact indicators are often geographically disaggregated. Spatial information supports claims of causality between activities and outcomes. |

These are just some of the many ways donors have invested the resources, time, and care into crafting M&E and data systems that encourage transparency and collaboration. Note that there is no one best way to fulfill the phase requirements; PEPFAR and USAID, for example, met the challenge of offering data in database format with similar but distinct solutions. Both solutions, though, serve the underlying purpose of enabling end users to conduct independent analyses, and are therefore equally valid. The goal of the [Results Data Initiative](http://www.developmentgateway.org/expertise/results/) in general, and the Scorecard effort in specific, is *not* to tell donors how they must manage their projects and data. Rather, we aim to provide a look into how opening up data and adhering to M&E policies and improving data systems can lead to better outcomes. We also want to recognize the hard work donors have done to meet the challenges of monitoring and reporting project-level data. These difficult efforts serve as models from which other donors can learn and improve their own systems.