Name of paper	Miscellaneous Issues Surrounding Rules & Guidelines
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Links to other relevant information (Discuss forum; Website etc)	Discuss: http://discuss.iatistandard.org/t/tech-paper-miscellaneous-rules-and-guidelines/546

1. Make Rules and Guidelines part of the IATI Standard

    a. The initial submission for Version 2.01 of the IATI Standard proposed that a number of 'best practice' rules and guidelines contained in IATI's general guidance should be included as part of the IATI Standard itself. A meeting of the Steering Committee in March 2014 agreed "that more work needs to be done on bringing general guidance into the formal Standard, so this should be excluded from the 2.01 upgrade."

There thus remains a need to consider how the Standard handles conditions beyond the enforceable scope of the schema that control the validity of IATI-xml. Examples include the timeliness of publishing, traceability and the use of hierarchies.

       i. **Proposal**
Rule (3.03): Rules and guidelines should be included as an integral part of the standard along with the schema and codelists

      ii. **Proposal**
Definition (3.03): A *rule* is a mandatory condition that cannot be defined in and enforced through the schema but is part of the standard and is validated through a machine-run procedure.

     iii. **Proposal**
Definition (3.03): A *guideline* is a description of recommended best practice that is implemented where applicable.

iv. **Proposal**

Action: A new text based *Rules* section should be added to iatistandard.org which will be recognised in Version 3.03 as a definitive part of the IATI Standard.

2. Implementation Schedules

a. [Implementation schedules] played a key role in capturing the intentions of publishers in the early years of the Standard. Their original purpose was to assist a publisher in determining
* its publishing policies to provide context to its published data files
* its plan of what,when and how they are publishing to the IATI Standard as indicating what they are not able to publish
* data users and others to confirm that an organisation is delivering on its publishing commitments.

The Implementation Schedule was initially designed to primarily support the needs of large donor organisations and therefore were not always suitable for use by other IATI publishing institutions such as NGOs etc.

Currently three different template versions of the Implementation Schedule (IS) exist.
* A generic version used by the majority of publishers
* A version for DFIs/ IFIs
* A 'common standard' version.

The 'Common Standard' version of the IS was created to support the organisations that were signatories to the Global Partnership 2011 Busan Outcome document. It was mandatory for all signatories to create, maintain and publish an IS. However, now that the Busan document target date of end of 2015 has passed, it is unclear if the 'Common Standard' IS is still required?

It is currently also a contractual condition of receiving certain types of DFID funding that an IS is produced.

However, it has been generally recognised that producing an IS has not always been helpful and has often been considered an unnecessary overhead for (particularly smaller) organisations or NGOs. Across all publishers, most ISs have been poorly maintained suggesting that they are not being used internally or 'of value' to the organisation with regard to managing their IATI publishing schedule and plans (particularly post initial reporting)?

Finally, many of the publishing policy fields of the Implementation Schedule

are also fields that should be maintained within a publisher's own IATI Registry publisher account.

    i. **Proposal**
Guideline (2.03) The need to produce and maintain an implementation schedule should no longer be a requirement of IATI publishing.

    ii. Proposal
Guideline (2.03): Publishers should improve and regularly maintain the content of all fields in their IATI Registry publishing accounts.

b. Consultation questions

Could/should the Organisation Standard be used or extended to hold contextual publishing information instead of the Registry publisher account?

3. IATI Registry Publisher Status

    a. The [Registry](#) reports that more than 500 Organisations have published. Our [publishing statistics](#) show that at least 100 of these are not regularly updating or reporting any current information.

Since its inception, it has been a principle of the IATI Standard that once committed to IATI publishing, data should be updated regularly.

However, an issue has arisen as a result of organisations being required to publish to IATI as a requirement of their funding contractual obligations. A number of these organisations have published information about their contractually binding project but no more (and they have no intention of publishing anything else at the moment). As a number of such publishers have concluded their projects and relationships with the funding organisations that mandated IATI publishing and there are now a number of 'dormant' IATI publisher accounts on the IATI Registry.

In addition, it is not uncommon that over time, organisations merge, rebrand, close down, go into liquidation etc. As a result, some historical IATI published information has been left in situ on the IATI Registry which is effectively unmanaged or no longer owned. Where organisations have merged or been taken over, the IATI Technical Support Team try to work with the 'new' organisation in order to get them to take over the management of the original information. However, depending on the arrangements of the merger or takeover this can be a long (multi year) complex process which in some instances can come to nothing particularly if the new organisation has not yet committed to IATI publishing.

There is therefore a need to better manage and classify publishers so that

data users are better informed as to the integrity and ownership of the published data on the IATI Registry.

Currently the status of an IATI Registry account is either 'Pending' (waiting for the account to be 'approved' by the IATI Technical Team) or 'Active' (the account has been approved so that the publisher can add the details of their IATI published files to the account).

    i.   Proposal
Rule: Introduce a new IATI Registry status of 'Dormant' for all accounts where no new information has been added within the most recent 12 months.

    ii.   Proposal
Action: Make the status of 'Active' or 'Dormant' visible to all data users of an IATI Registry account

    iii.   Proposal
Action: Amend the highlighted published 'count' on the IATI Registry to refer to 'Active' publishers.

(nb. The rollout of these proposed changes would require a communications effort to inform all affected publishers.)

b. **Consultation question**

Are there any other candidate IATI Registry account 'statuses' that might be useful to data users? Eg. Accounts that hold useful historical data.

4. Timeliness

a. Timeliness has two dimensions: frequency and timelag. The advice that the IATI tech team uses in supporting publishers is that the minimum requirement is for publishers to refresh their data at least quarterly (frequency), and that the data should not be more than a quarter out of date (timelag). Best practice is for monthly frequency and timelag. These assessments are reflected in the publisher statistics but are not documented clearly elsewhere. Timeliness has been one of the cornerstones of IATI from the outset and should be reflected in the standard.

    i.   **Proposal**
Guideline: Publishers should refresh their data at least quarterly with a timelag in the data of no more than one quarter.

ii. **Proposal**
Guideline: Best practice is for development data to be refreshed at least monthly with a month's timelag

iii. **Proposal**
Rule: Publishers who do not refresh their data for more than a year will be flagged as 'dormant' on the registry. (cf Registry Publisher Status above)