

Guidance: Accessing and Using IATI COVID-19 Data

1. Introduction

In the midst of a global pandemic where response time is critical, decisions on resource allocation need to be made quickly. Development partners want to know what activities are already being funded and implemented to address COVID-19 in order to avoid duplication and enable coordination of responses, and recipient governments want to know what resources are flowing into their countries to support them in their COVID-19 response and allocate national resources. To ensure *informed* responses, decision makers need access to timely, good quality data on these resources and activities.

To help meet this need, the [International Aid Transparency Initiative](#) (IATI) has developed guidance to help organisations publish data on their international development and humanitarian projects responding to COVID-19 in a standardised way (using the IATI data Standard, a set of rules and guidance for publishing data to IATI). These projects, referred to as ‘activities’ are published by organisations involved in the international effort to address the pandemic, such as donor governments, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.

The purpose of this guidance is to help potential users of this data, including recipient country governments, development partners, and members of civil society, among others, to understand how to access and analyse data on activities responding to COVID-19.

2. Understanding and using IATI data on COVID-19

How do I know an activity is related to COVID-19?

Activities related to COVID-19 can be found by searching for COVID-19-specific values within certain data fields using IATI’s online tools. Organisations have published one or more of the following COVID-19-specific values in their COVID-19-related activities and/or transactions:

- 1) “COVID-19” is included in the activity title, activity description, or transaction description.
- 2) COVID-19-specific codes are included in humanitarian scope (globally recognised codes) or tag (“COVID-19” code) data fields.
- 3) The Humanitarian flag is included in an activity or transaction (in addition to the inclusion of the above, the humanitarian flag allows you to check if the activity or transaction is “humanitarian”).

Publishers have the option of choosing which of these COVID-19-specific values to publish, to best align with their existing reporting practices. **More details about these values and the data fields in which they are published can be found in Annex 1.**

What should I keep in mind when using IATI data that relates to COVID-19?

Availability of data

IATI is currently working to encourage all organisations that are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to publish data on their activities, and the number of activities is increasing on an almost daily basis. However, many activities are yet to be published or classified, and the list of activities retrieved through a single search likely presents only a partial picture of **COVID-19-related activities**.

Analysis of data using current tools

The data analysis that can currently be carried out is determined by what data has been published, and the ways in which COVID-19-specific values have been included in published activities. The following information is intended to guide users in their analysis:

What is possible?

Identification of **COVID-19-related activities** published to IATI and analysis of the recipient countries, funding organizations, etc., for these activities.

What is not yet possible?

Analysis of financial data (e.g. commitments or spending) for **COVID-19-related activities**.

It is not yet possible to assess the percentage of funds that are allocated to COVID-19 within an activity. This is because the inclusion of a COVID-19-specific value (e.g. using COVID-19 in the title) does not mean that 100% of funds committed or spent under that activity are allocated to COVID-19. Double counting is also a challenge for analyzing financial data, since the same resources can be reported by multiple organisations in IATI (e.g. an organisation funding an activity and an organisation implementing that same activity). While not specifically related to COVID-19 data, this can create double counting when aggregating resources.

3. Accessing IATI data on COVID-19

There are currently several ways to search for **COVID-19-related activities** using IATI's suite of tools. To find all **COVID-19-related activities**, your search must look for COVID-19-specific values in all relevant fields, as different organisations may publish their COVID-19-specific values in different fields. This section provides guidance on how to filter activities using each of IATI's data access tools.

Recommended for users who are new to IATI:

- [d-portal](#) - Activities can be filtered by various data fields in IATI and are presented in charts, graphs and maps. ***Search for all COVID-19-related activities in IATI.***

Recommended for users familiar with the IATI Standard:

- Datastore (currently in pre-launch phase¹)
 - [Datastore Query Builder](#) – Activities can be filtered by a wider range of data fields and the data can be downloaded in CSV, JSON and XML formats. ***Search for COVID-19-related activities with COVID-19 in the title and activity description.***
 - [Datastore API](#) – Using the API, activities can be filtered by all data fields. ***Search for all COVID-19-related activities in IATI.***

3.1 Using d-portal

Use pre-defined COVID-19 search

Using the ‘trending’ pre-defined search in d-portal, it is possible to retrieve and display **COVID-19-related activities** that include the following COVID-19-specific values:

- “COVID-19” included in the activity title, activity description, or transaction description.
- COVID-19-specific codes included in humanitarian scope (globally recognised codes) or tag (“COVID-19” code) data fields.

This is the recommended approach for searching for **COVID-19-related activities** in d-portal as the search will retrieve all **COVID-19-related activities** in IATI. Please note that the pre-defined search does not search for terms such as “coronavirus” as the inclusion of this in a title or description does not follow IATI’s publishing guidance (publishers have been advised to include the specific term “COVID-19”).

How to use this approach:

1. Navigate to the [homepage](#) of d-portal.
2. First click on the [COVID-19 button](#) at the top of the page.
3. Click on “Refine Search” to select the relevant filters – e.g. select a recipient country from the dropdown. Note: The COVID-19 button must be selected before applying the filters.

¹ As of the publication date of this guidance the Datastore is in the pre-launch phase which means you may encounter issues as final bugs and fixes are addressed. Any issues can be raised on [Github](#).

Search results

Using this search method will allow you to easily access a list of **COVID-19-related activities** that can be exported to a CSV file. Clicking on the activity title will enable you to explore the activity details further.

3.2 Using IATI Datastore Query Builder

There are two primary options for searching for **COVID-19-related activities** in the Datastore Query Builder.

Option 1: Use free text search box.

The search box enables searches of **COVID-19-related activities** that include the following COVID-19-specific value:

- “COVID-19” is included in the activity title or activity description.

The free text search box does not search for keywords in the transaction descriptions, nor does it search for COVID-19-specific codes in the humanitarian scope or tag fields, which means that the search will give you some, but not all, **COVID-19-related activities** in IATI

How to use this approach:

1. Navigate to the *Additional Filters* tab of the [Query Builder](#).
2. Enter relevant keywords into the search box (i.e. “COVID-19”). Only one keyword should be searched at a time.
3. Navigate to the *Output Format* tab and select the *Each Unique Activity* row format and select the columns to be included in your output.
4. Navigate to the *Results* tab and download your data in your preferred format (CSV, JSON, XML).
5. To refine your search – e.g. search for **COVID-19-related activities** in a particular recipient country – select any desired additional filters in the *Core Filters* or *Additional Filters* tabs.

Option 2: Filter by Humanitarian Scope and search CSV file for COVID-19-specific code.

To search in the Query Builder for activities that include a COVID-19-specific code in the humanitarian scope data field, it is necessary to export activities that include data in this field and then search for the relevant codes within the CSV file.

How to use this approach:

1. Navigate to the Additional Filters tab of the [Query Builder](#).
2. Click on “Add Filter” and select “Humanitarian Scope Vocabulary.”
3. From dropdown, select “1-2 Glide” or “2-1 Humanitarian Plan.”
4. Navigate to the Output Format tab, select the Each Unique Activity option, and select the columns that you want to include in your CSV file. Make sure that you include Humanitarian Scope.
5. Navigate to the Results tab and click on “Download CSV.” The CSV should return all activities with an Appeal or Emergency code but you will then need to filter based on the COVID-19-specific Appeal code.
6. In the CSV, find the column with the heading humanitarian_scope_code. Using filters in Excel (under the Data tab), filter this column by either the Appeal Humanitarian Response Plan code of HCOVD20 (if you selected “2-1 Humanitarian Plan”) or the Emergency Glide code of EP-2020-000012-001 (if you selected “1-2 Glide”). This will give you only the activities that have this COVID-19-specific code.

As this search method is only looking for activities that include COVID-19-specific codes in the humanitarian scope data field, the results will only include a subset of **COVID-19-related activities**. This same method (searching the CSV output) can be used to filter out activities that have a COVID-19-specific code in the tag data field or in the transaction description.

Search results

Using these search methods will enable you to find a list of **COVID-19-related activities** in your selected output format. It is important to note that if multiple criteria are used, the activity will have to meet all of these criteria in order to be returned in the output. For example, if you enter “COVID-19” in the free text search box and you select “1-2 Glide” in the Humanitarian Scope filter, the activity will have to have COVID-19 in the activity title or activity description and it will have to include an Emergency Glide code in the Humanitarian Scope data field to be included in the output.

3.3 Using IATI Datastore API

The [Datastore API](#) documentation allows more technical users to search for all **COVID-19-related activities** in IATI as it can query all COVID-19-specific values in relevant data fields. For example, a [Direct API Query](#) could be set up to include the following:

Title contains “COVID-19” (or “COVID” or “coronavirus”)

or

Activity Description contains “COVID-19” (or “COVID” or “coronavirus”)

Or

Transaction contains “COVID-19” (or “COVID” or “coronavirus”)

or

Humanitarian Scope Code = "EP-2020-000012-001"

or

Humanitarian Scope Code = "HCOVD20"

or

Tag Code = "COVID-19"

How can I receive further support?

If you have any specific questions on accessing or using IATI data on COVID-19, please do get in touch with the IATI Secretariat by emailing the IATI Helpdesk (support@iatistandard.org).

2.

Annex 1: Details on publication of COVID-19-specific values in IATI data using the IATI standard

This annex provides a summary of guidance for publishers and is included here to ensure that those accessing and using data understand the scope and parameters of available data.

IATI's [COVID-19 Publishing Guidance](#) guides IATI publishers on how to signify that the activities they publish to IATI are related to COVID-19. Different options can be used by publishers to give them the ability to choose the option that best aligns with their existing reporting practices. This means that publishers may select to report one or more of the following COVID-19-specific values in these specific data fields: For both humanitarian and development activities, organisations can report the following:

1. **Title and Description** – Organisations can include “COVID-19” in the title of reported activities. If organisations are unable to specify COVID-19 in the activity title, they can include “COVID-19” in the activity descriptions and/or transaction descriptions.
2. **Humanitarian Scope** – Organisations can include a specific COVID-19-related code in this data field. These can include one or both of the following: 1) Emergency - GLIDE: EP-2020-000012-001; 2) Appeal - Humanitarian Response Plan: HCOVD20.

For **development activities only**, organisations can report the following:

3. **Tag** – If an organisation does not permit the publishing of data in the Humanitarian Scope for their development activities, they can publish “COVID-19” within the Tag data field. In order to do this, publishers use vocab="99", treat it as free text, and add “COVID-19”.

For humanitarian activities only, organisations can report the following:

4. **Humanitarian Flag** – Organisations can indicate that an activity or transaction is a humanitarian activity by including this “flag” in their activity. The use of the humanitarian flag does not specifically indicate that the activity is related to COVID-19.