Results: recognising partner contributions

Note: This suggestion addresses Principle 6 from a consultation driven by Monitoring and Evaluation experts from UK CSOs Jan – Mar 2017 – see
http://discuss.iatistandard.org/t/results-discussion-space-and-tag-2016-17-path/502/ (copied below as justification). Technical suggestions were devised by technology specialists at the Nethope Athens conference March 2017. In all around 30 M&E and technical specialists were involved in this consultation and it builds on a previous consultation by Bond 2015-16
(https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/publishing-results-to-iati - also on discuss.iatistandard:
https://discuss.iatistandard.org/t/sharing-results-using-iati-data-standard-will-it-improve-learning-and-accountability/431).

Items beginning with ***Standards day minimum suggestion*** and highlighting in yellow indicates minimum suggestions per IATI TAG Standards Day

Technical suggestion:

1) Preferred suggestion:
   To be consistent with iati-activity/location element (where location is defined once and referenced in results) add *participating-org* (0..*) to
      i.   result
      ii. result/indicator
   with:
      i.   ref attribute to link to iati-activity/participating-org
      ii. optional free-text to describe how the organisation is relevant to the results or indicator
   and add ref attribute to iati-activity/participating-org
   Alternative suggestion a:
   add participating-org (0..*) (per iati-activity/document-link) to:
      i.   result
      ii. result/indicator
   Standards day minimum suggestion Alternative suggestion b:
   add participating-org (0..*) to:
      i.   result
      ii. result/indicator
   with *ref* attribute to link to iati organisation identifier
2) Add "Partner Approach" section to organisation "about" entry in registry
   https://iatiregistry.org/publisher/about/<organisation name>

Justification:

- **Issue:** Currently attribution is only possible for entire projects, not individual results or indicators.
- **Why is this a problem?:** An increasingly large proportion of our projects involve working in partnerships, be it from working with community groups, governments, other NGOs, the private sector, academia, our funders etc. This presents a practical tension for reporting IATI as the standard requires a single reporting organisation that is responsible for representing each project and for publishing these projects on their website. This tension is compounded, as there is currently no means to attribute specific project results to specific organisations, leading to a number of undesirable reporting practices. For example, some organisations are unrecognised for their input, or all implementing organisations are assumed to have inputted

equally or the project is split into many smaller replicated projects (one for each combination of implementing partners). Each of these practices hinder opportunities for learning, accountability and transparency and causes confusion when trying to understand and use IATI data. Further they can disempower some organisations through the reporting process and they can create high reporting burden and opportunity for error through forcing organisations to artificially split and repeat their reporting of project results (and corresponding finances) into multiple sub-projects just for the purpose of IATI.

- **Suggestions:** To simplify reporting expectations, although not explicit in the standard, there is a growing convention that each organisation reports only their own results (per section 1.2 of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) guidelines: https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2015/12/01/open-data-and-development-cooperation). Further, where there are *overarching results* (e.g. where multiple organisations' contributions cannot be separated) these results are reported by the lead organisation (as determined by e.g. funding agreement structure). This convention helps to avoid double counting and clarifies the interrelatedness of organisations' activities. However, this convention only partially solves the practical tension above. For example, some organisations do not have the capacity to report directly to IATI (think of the tiny pop-up organisations that are funded to take on specific causes such as Ebola but that do not have computer/internet access). Rather than completely removing their voice from IATI publishing we suggest it is preferable that the funding/reporting organisation, which will already be collecting the required IATI information as part of their funding agreement in many cases, is able to report and recognise the organisations efforts. This is also important for overarching results, where it is common that not all results apply to all members of a consortium. Here the ability to recognise contributions to results would avoid the additional reporting burden, risk of error, confusion and lack of traceability from artificially replicating and fragmenting projects.
Specifically, we suggest that "light touch" attribution should be possible by adding the names of participating organisations that are involved in a result, indicator or even value for a given project (in the same way that is possible for the overall project). In addition, and although not technically part of the IATI standard, the NMFA conventions should be adopted into IATI reporting guidelines to ensure universal understanding and use of the standard.

For previous and related discussions:

- Related discussion on importance of allowing attribution at project level: http://support.iatistandard.org/entries/82377659-Add-activity-id-attribute-to-participating-org-element