

Overview

In December 2010, Development Gateway (DG) hosted the **third “AMP Best Practices Workshop”** for countries using the Aid Management Platform (AMP). Delegates from **14 AMP countries** (Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nepal, Senegal, South Sudan and Tanzania) and one observer (South Africa) attended the conference.



This workshop, held in Nairobi, Kenya, was the third in a series of annual workshops for AMP countries. The purpose of these workshops is **to promote the exchange of good practices and lessons learned on aid information management through the use of AMP**; facilitate discussion of key issues and challenges in aid information management and aid coordination; foster partnerships among AMP countries; and capture user feedback to strengthen the AMP application and program.

The workshop was designed around a series of thematic discussions and country presentations on key issues related to aid information, aid coordination, and AMP usage. This report tracks the key outputs and conclusions of the workshop.

The workshop was introduced by Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, CEO of Development Gateway, who referenced the growth in the **number of countries participating in the annual AMP workshop - from seven in 2008, to twelve in 2009, and fourteen in 2010**. Mr. Sarbib highlighted the importance of focusing on development results when addressing issues related to aid information, and reiterated Development Gateway’s commitment to providing tools that help aid practitioners better perform their jobs.

I. Data Collection and Entry: Centralized or Decentralized?

The session on “Centralized vs. decentralized data collection” included presentations from Burkina Faso, Malawi and Tanzania. Each country outlined a specific process for collecting aid data and highlighted the benefits and challenges related to their specific procedures.

Burkina Faso first recalled its main achievements with AMP. The system now contains more than 1400 projects covering the period 2000-2010, providing a 10 year-vision of development assistance in the country. The annual aid reports (called the “Development Cooperation Reports”) for 2007, 2008 and 2009 were produced by the government using AMP, and are accessible online at the following address: <http://www.dgcoop.gov.bf/rapports/rapport-sur-la-cooperation-au-developpement.html>. AMP is administered entirely by the government, with the system server and the access to the platform managed by various government departments.

Burkina Faso then described the benefits of a centralized data entry process. These benefits include stronger government leadership and ownership of aid information; the fact that the data are perceived as more reliable (as data collection and entry are managed by a unique government department); improvements in the quality of data entered; and harmonization of aid terminology. Limitations of centralized data entry include the fact that less information is available on projects’ direct management aspects (i.e. project objectives, appropriate sector

scheme, and area of execution), and that donors may send the requested information later than in a decentralized setting.

Malawi then described how they are moving from a centralized to decentralized data collection process. Malawi's Ministry of Finance (MoF) plans to give its Development Partners (DPs) the ability to input and extract AMP data. This new system will allow DPs to directly access the most recent data on all donor activities across Malawi, helping to improve sectoral planning and promote donor harmonization and collaboration. Donors will also have access to the data required to analyze their own behavior, contributing to a more informed debate on the efficiency of aid delivery to Malawi.

Opening AMP to DPs will allow government staff to focus on analyzing donor programs, improving the quality of DP data inputs, and boosting the timeliness and consistency of donor reporting.

The Government of Malawi (GOM) also recalled its main objectives in implementing AMP. These objectives include increasing transparency and accountability by broadening access to AMP; using aid mapping to promote a more efficient division of labor by sector and among DPs; aligning aid with MDG priorities; generating donor confidence in government systems; and enhancing government-led coordination and ownership of the development process. Key annual and quarterly aid reports are now produced on a regular basis, and can be accessed in print and on the MOF website (www.finance.gov.mw).

The GOM, however, still faces a number of challenges. In particular, Excel is still used to collect data before it is uploaded into AMP, and each month the government must prepare 28 separate donor spreadsheets. Some donors may report late or not report at all, undermining the quality of GOM fiscal management and affecting the comprehensiveness of the budget.

Madagascar presented another model for managing aid information: decentralized data entry through AMP workspaces. The Government of Madagascar has assigned AMP workspaces to GTZ, KFW, USAID, UNDP, the ADB, and line ministries for the purpose of editing aid information. In these workspaces, DPs can view information on individual projects, produce aid reports, and edit part of the data (in the financial section) of their own portfolio. DPs, line ministries, Regional Authorities and universities can also use the "Data Analysis" workspace to generate statistical tables and aid reports. Thanks to these workspaces, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) can now identify off-budget aid projects and register them in the Finance Law (State Budget). The MOF can also monitor budget execution on a quarterly basis.

In the Q&A session that followed the presentations, Burundi indicated that they use both centralized and decentralized data entry. Several delegates made suggestions on how to best incentivize donors to provide data, and how to manage divergent fiscal calendars.

II. Data Management Plans

To ensure that an aid management system is sustainable and produces results, it is necessary to organize and institutionalize processes around the system. These processes are collectively known as the Data Management Plan (DMP).

In this session, Development Gateway presented the definition, usefulness, and content of an AMP DMP. The DMP is a **key document that details the roles and responsibilities of all actors to collect, enter, validate, and disseminate aid information.** The DMP, often referred to as the "guidance note" or "AMP Operational Manual," must be discussed and agreed upon by all relevant actors. It is neither a Joint Assistance Strategy (JAS) nor an Aid Policy, but describes the "rules of the game" of managing aid information, specifically as they pertain to the AMP system.

The DMP clarifies the roles of actors involved in aid information management. The document describes who is responsible for providing what information at what time during the year, and determines who is in charge of collecting, entering, validating, and disseminating information. The document also outlines key definitions and assumptions of the system, a detailed calendar, and a process for providing aid information. The DMP is useful for DPs in a variety of ways: it reduces the number of information requests to donors by the AMP host government, helps DPs respond to headquarters, and clarifies the division of labor amongst DPs. In line with the principles of the Paris Declaration, producing a DMP illustrates the commitment of development actors to move towards greater aid transparency.

III. Management of AMP Permissions

In this session, Development Gateway conducted a presentation on permissions and data management. DG staff used the presentation to clarify key concepts related to permissions (e.g. the notion of “role-based permissions,” through which customizable rights are given to users of a specific organization to read/edit/validate projects based on their role in the aid information flow), and prerequisites for setting up the permissions system.



The permissions system has many benefits: it eases decentralized data entry, assigns accountability to all the editors of a project, improves data quality, reduces the burden on government desk officers for data entry, reduces overheads associated with data gathering, and improves project coordination and trust among stakeholders. Permissions allow administrators to simplify and secure AMP data, and make aid actors, including donors, more accountable for the data they provide. The system ensures that only the users with the most accurate information are able to edit project details.

During the session, DG also described the prerequisites for setting up permissions; for example, the data management process must be finalized, and stakeholder responsibilities must be fully outlined. The government is responsible for leading this process, and must comprehensively define the roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors. In the Q&A session that followed the presentation, DG staff mentioned that permissions are not easy to implement in emergency situations, and that the Data Management Plan must be finalized before the permissions system can be implemented.

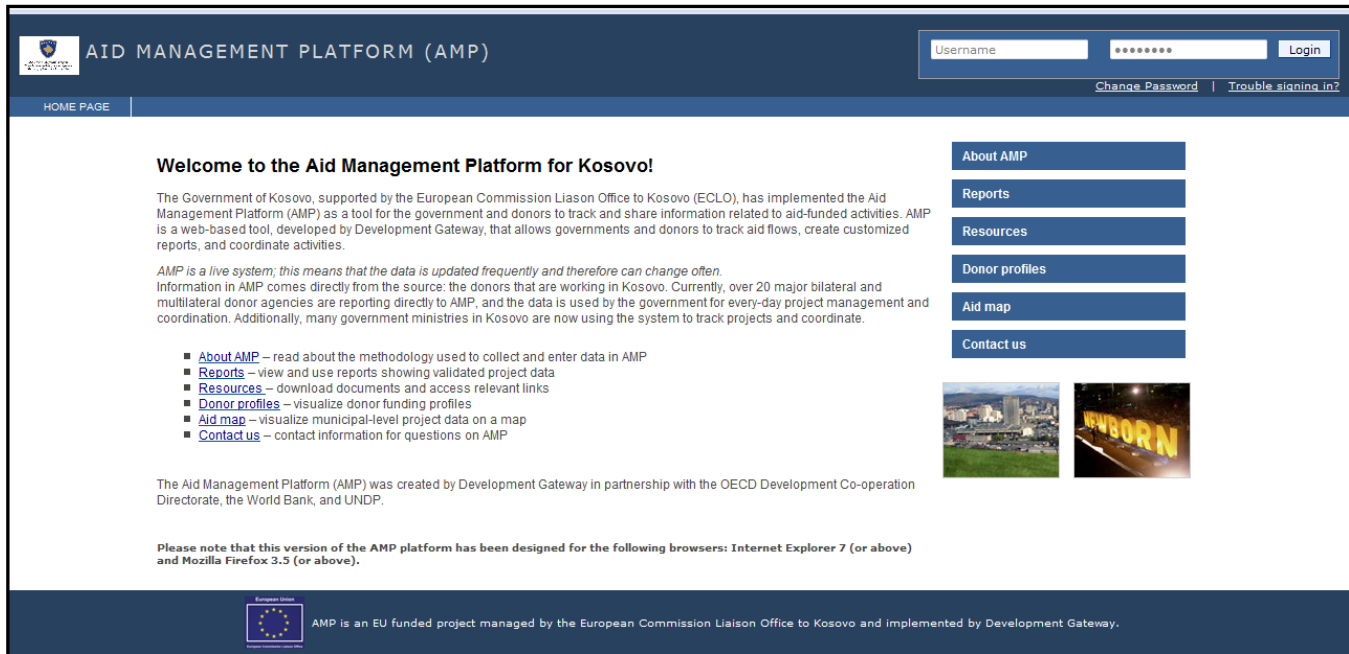
IV. Public View

Countries that have implemented AMP have the option to publicize information gathered in and produced through AMP. During this session, Development Gateway presented on the benefits of making AMP data public using the example of Kosovo.

A primary reason for making aid information public is to increase the transparency of aid flows. On an AMP “Public View” website, any citizen can see aid information (i.e. commitments, disbursements, and project activities) organized in a number of ways (by sector, geographical location, MDGs, etc.). This transparency should encourage aid actors to provide accurate data and hold themselves accountable for the information they produce.

Many governments currently publish ODA reports on a quarterly or annual basis. AMP public view has several advantages over these print reports: data are interactive (users can drill down on reports, charts/graphs, aid maps,

and export the resulting record sets), data are automatically updated and thus more timely, and data can be showcased in various visual and user-friendly formats, including charts, graphs, and maps.



A screenshot of Kosovo's AMP Public View platform, accessible at <https://www.amp-mei.net/>.

During the session, presenters outlined the key steps that must be taken before making AMP public, such as technical and logistical preparations for an official launch. Kosovo launched AMP in October 2010, as part of a multi-year project supported by the European Commission, and this session was used to describe its experiences and lessons learned from the launch. The AMP Kosovo public view is available at <https://www.amp-mei.net/>.

V. International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)

During this session, a representative from the IATI Secretariat described recent changes in the aid environment, and how the new IATI initiative can help the international community solve challenges related to aid transparency. For the past two years, IATI has partnered with donor and recipient governments, multilateral aid agencies, private organizations, and NGOs to develop, elaborate, and test a standard language for aid information reporting. In July 2010, the IATI Steering Committee achieved a consensus on the design and implementation of the standard, and agreed to initiate pilots for the standard in 2011. IATI is currently trying to define and agree on a governance structure and funding arrangements for the initiative after 2011.

The presentation consisted of the following elements:

- *The business case for this initiative*, which focuses on supporting the transparency agenda and meeting the needs of stakeholders in partner countries related to aid information, while helping to meet the transparency commitments outlined in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA).
- *The objectives of IATI*, which include: developing common definitions and reporting processes; providing accurate, high-quality, timely and meaningful information for governments, parliamentarians, civil society, the media, and citizens; publishing legally-open information, with as few barriers to access and reuse as possible; and aligning aid information with national budgets of developing countries.
- *What IATI will not do*: It will not duplicate the work of the OECD's Creditor Reporting System (CRS) or AidData by creating parallel definitions or sector classification schemes.

- *The IATI standard is comprised of 4 different parts: Scope of information, Definitions, Framework for implementation, and Common electronic format. IATI's goal is to have a common aid reporting standard, helping to simplify and harmonize reporting efforts, and ultimately reducing reporting time at the country level.*

In the Q&A session that followed the presentation, it was clarified that country-specific technical requirements (e.g. monthly reporting vs. quarterly reporting) should prevail over IATI recommendations.

Countries can contribute to IATI by officially endorsing the initiative (to date, 19 countries have done so), raising awareness on IATI at the country level, or by incorporating IATI in political and technical discussions on aid transparency. They can also demand that donors and other development actors deliver on their aid transparency commitments defined in the Accra Agenda for Action. Even though IATI does not have any sanction mechanism, the exposure given to the signatories will put pressure on DPs to comply.

VI. Practical applications of visualizations and mobile technology in aid management: What can public data do?

For this session, Development Gateway invited the non-profit organization Ushahidi (www.ushahidi.org) to address the growing interest in crowdsourcing as an innovative method for gathering and managing aid information. Crowdsourcing involves gathering information from a large group of stakeholders (or even the general public) in a wiki-style format rather than centralizing content creation or data collection. In this context, it means providing populations that are far from decision centers with tools (mobile phones, PCs, etc.) that allow them to report development information gathered at a local level. Local NGOs, for example, could use crowdsourcing technology to instantly report village health data to national authorities, enabling faster responses to disease outbreaks.



Conceived in the aftermath of Kenya's controversial 2007 elections, Ushahidi's software platform facilitates access to various types of locally-gathered information that can be useful for government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private citizens. The information is sent to a central server by email, online, or by phone. The information is then linked to precise geographic coordinates using GIS tools, so that users can view maps that pinpoint the localities from which the information was gathered. Ushahidi technology is open-source - it can be used outside of the Ushahidi website, integrated with other web platforms, and customized depending on user preferences.

In the past three years, the Ushahidi platform has been used for medical stock tracking in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia, for election monitoring in Mexico, Afghanistan, Namibia, Togo, Sudan, Burundi, Lebanon, India and Kenya, and for various types of information aggregation in Haiti's post-earthquake environment.

VII. Using AMP for the Paris Declaration Survey

During this session, Burundi presented their efforts to use AMP to track progress in fulfilling the principles of the Paris Declaration (PD). Their presentation highlighted the following results:

- *Indicator 3 (Percentage of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on partners' national budgets): all contributions were recorded in the budget for the ADB, IFAD, OPEC, and the IMF. Other donors, such as the WB, the EU, and Belgium also achieved good scores.*

- *Indicator 5a* (Percentage of aid flows that use the 3 national financial reporting procedures): the analysis stressed the reluctance to use national reporting procedures at this stage.
- *Indicator 5b* (Percentage of aid flows that follow national procurement procedures): only the OPEC and the IFAD funds use national procedures, while Belgium also displays a willingness to do so.
- *Indicator 6* (Number of parallel Project Implementation Units): the analysis showed a decrease in the number of parallel units, mainly due to the closure of some projects (12 parallel units in 2008 and 2 in 2009).

These results are reported in Burundi's 2009 ODA report, available at <http://bit.ly/hNbTjH>. In the Q&A session that followed, Burundi clarified the process used to validate data provided by DPs.

VIII. Designing a national sector classification

During this session, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) presented issues related to their sector classification scheme. In 2002, the DRC began using the OECD classification scheme; many donors, however, considered this scheme inadequate, and developed their own unique classifications. As a result, it was difficult for the government and donors to coordinate activities at the sector level. To solve this issue, the DRC organized a national workshop to develop and harmonize a new national classification scheme. Participants to the workshop agreed to use this new classification in AMP in conjunction with the OECD's scheme.

IX. The “Marketplace”

During this session, workshop participants held one-on-one discussions on issues of common interest. The “marketplace” format allowed each country to set up an individual workstation; delegates could visit other countries' workstations to discuss best practices and lessons learned. Each country displayed its annual aid reports and other outputs (including videos, research papers, donor questionnaires or scorecards, etc.) to initiate discussion. The session proved to be an excellent and fast-paced opportunity for participants to share good practices on aid information management and learn about practical, hands-on approaches to aid information issues.

X. Managing Off-budget Aid

This session was focused on issues and challenges faced by countries while trying to manage off-budget aid. Development Gateway presented on how to define off-budget aid (based on internationally- as well as locally-recognized interpretations), and how to classify aid projects by donor, geographical scope, and type of aid. In several cases, governments have noted that collecting information on off-budget aid requires a level of effort disproportionate to the expected benefit of analyzing this information. Some of the off-budget data may also not be available, simply because donors are unwilling to provide the data.

Malawi used the session to present its methods for tracking different types of off-budget aid in different categories and positioning AMP to monitor previously untracked aid. By identifying the types of aid that are on/off planning, on/off budget, and on/off treasury records, the government is more capable of tracking and recording off-budget aid.

XI. AMP Extension and Impact

This session focused on the process of extending AMP to local authorities at the provincial level. DRC officials presented their plans to pilot AMP programs in several provincial governments (including Kinshasa and Katanga), carried out in coordination with the government's forthcoming decentralization policy. Provincial government employees will be trained on aid coordination and the use of AMP, focusing on collecting and entering data at the provincial level. The central government will establish aid coordination focal points for each province that will be able to provide comments and feedback on project execution on the ground. Data collected

and entered into the system by provincial focal points will be validated by the AMP team at the National Ministry of Planning. This team will also define roles and responsibilities between provincial administrations and central government in the management of the data.

Due to their extension efforts to date, the DRC government can more effectively organize the division of labor among donors and has a better understanding of the impact of donor activities on the ground.

XIII. Feedback from workshop participants

To wrap up the sessions described above, DG conducted a survey to evaluate participant satisfaction with the workshop. As in previous years, survey results were very positive, and elicited informative feedback on participant recommendations for future workshops. **With regards to the overall satisfaction with the conference, 100% of the participants were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”** No participants responded “neutral,” “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.”

About ninety percent of participants indicated that they found the workshop “very useful.” All the participants agreed that hearing about AMP experiences in other countries was “very useful” (87%), or “useful” (13%). These results are reported in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1: Participant Rating of Usefulness of Workshop

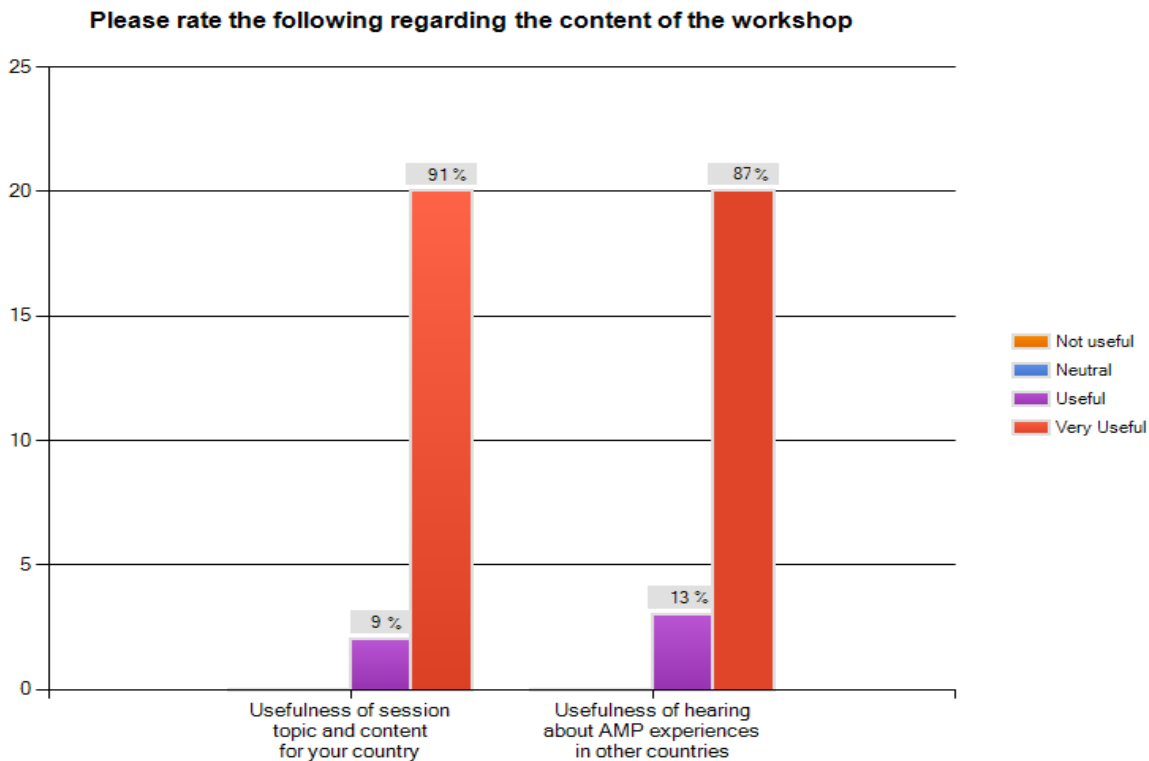


Figure 1: Likeliness of Applying Lessons Learned

In addition, **96% of the participants responded that they would “likely” or “very likely” apply the lessons learned from other countries to their own usage of AMP** (See Figure 1).

The overall level of satisfaction with AMP workshops remains high—results were comparable to the survey outcomes from the previous workshop in Dakar in 2009, a positive outcome especially considering its expansion (2 more countries and 13 more participants were present at this workshop).

When asked to describe the most useful lessons learned at the workshop, participants mentioned Malawi’s presentation of off-budget aid tracking, Burundi’s presentation on the Paris Declaration, and Kosovo’s presentation on the AMP Public View. Participants were also prompted in the survey to provide feedback on the organization of the workshop; their very informative suggestions will be taken into consideration during preparation for the 2011 workshop.

