



## AidInfoPlus Aid Data Hotline

A free online service to fact-check aid data  
with support from data journalists and trainers

With the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals, there is wide consensus around the need to build capacity to use information and open data to raise accountability and improve efficiency in international aid. Measuring progress against the 17 goals and 169 targets and making donors and recipients accountable for their use of aid will require the combined efforts of numerous players.

While traditional training methods such as workshops and online courses are useful means towards achieving this objective, most potential beneficiaries (media and civil society representatives, aid workers, academics, etc.) are scattered and hard to reach, living and working in different social, political and cultural environments. Their needs and digital literacy vary widely. They often have little time for formal training or interest to become data experts.

In this context, AidInfoPlus (AI+) offers a way to complement existing training initiatives with a free 'aid data hotline' where users with questions related to aid information and data can get quick support from experts.

### Fact-checking aid with support from data experts/trainers

Experts not only provide answers to concrete/practical questions but explanations with links, screen shots and/or video captures to help people conduct research/analysis to fill similar needs on their own. In other words, **short step-by-step tutorials** describing how they got to that data/information on the Internet with a replicable methodology: clarifying the initial question, choosing proper online resources and search tools, drafting powerful search queries, double-checking results, scraping, cleaning, verifying and comparing data, visualizing results, etc.

Questions on any aid-related topic (food security, sustainable agriculture, health, education, migrants, refugees and emergency responses, gender equality, water and sanitation, environment, climate change, etc.) can be channelled through a simple form on a dedicated section of the AI+ [website](#). For example:

- *My group wants to start HIV prevention for injecting drug users. We need to know which organizations do similar work in Muslim countries, which ones get international funding and how much.*
- *Is there a list of countries rated for their human rights record with migrants? Where should I look?*
- *How can I know what impact official development assistance (ODA) has had on life expectancy in Bolivia in the past 15 years?*
- *I'm a journalist from DRC. I hear that my country has received over \$2.5 billion in ODA in 2012. How can I know where all this money went? More specifically, I want to find out which organizations are getting funding in the field of maternal, newborn and child health, how much, where and to do what.*
- *How can I keep track of what is said about my NGO on Facebook & Twitter?*
- *I am writing a report on the aftermath of relief efforts following earthquakes. Where can I find up-to-date data on the use of aid to rebuild infrastructure? As for the 2010 Haitian earthquake, I suspect that valuable information is only available in French but I don't speak that language. What do you suggest?*

In addition to the tutorials, AI+ publishes more **in-depth posts** introducing **individual agencies' data resources and tools** (World Bank, USAID, UNHCR, WHO, Global Fund, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.), **aid data search tools** (IATI, OECD, country specific aid information management systems, etc.), **data visualization platforms and apps**,



with concrete guidance, tips and tricks to make the most of them.

## **Project aim and objectives**

AI+ aims to support aid infomediaries in their work to raise accountability and improve aid efficiency. It will do this by pursuing four main objectives.

1. support people with no time or need for in-depth training with quick facts and answers
2. build basic skills and share replicable methodologies to help individuals to search on their own, in their particular area of interest and expertise
3. make AI+ a central reference to learn to search for aid data and information, a growing collection of small units of training that people can reuse depending on interests and needs
4. train trainers from the South to join the AI+ team and build local capacity to track aid flows

## **Experts and partners**

The AI+ [website](#) and social media channels are in place. A dedicated section will be created for visitors to ask questions either publically (using their FB, LinkedIn or Twitter profile) or anonymously by creating a new profile if needed (e.g. for potentially sensitive matters). Questions will be dispatched to a core team of contributors, depending on area of expertise and availability. Each will get editing rights to post answers on AI+ (a WordPress site) and get paid a pre-determined rate per article/tutorial.

AI+ intends to complement and build on existing initiatives by partnering with the main players in the field of aid data, transparency and accountability (e.g. Open Knowledge & School of Data, Development Initiatives, IATI & Publish What You Fund, Development Gateway, etc.).

A major part of the initial effort will go into promoting AI+ and informing priority users about the availability of this new service, groups such as civil society coalitions, associations of journalists from developing countries, journalism training providers, academics and international aid workers.

## **Impact and sustainability**

AI+ is an innovative, demand-driven and cost efficient method to deliver practical training on a global scale in the field of aid accountability. Its impact will be measured qualitatively through periodic surveys sent to users of the site, asking how they used the information they gathered from AI+ and what results their related work produced. It will also be evaluated quantitatively by inviting users to provide basic information (location, area of expertise, intended use of data), by asking them to comment/rate the answers and tutorials, and by measuring traffic on the website and participation in social media channels. As an independent service, AI+ will also serve as a feedback and quality assessment mechanism for providers of aid data and related tools.

Over time, AI+ will create a growing repository of small training units that can be used and reassembled to suit different types of needs. It will also identify and mentor local talents to expand the core team of experts and build capacity in recipient countries to track aid flows.

The free-lance experts and a small coordination team will work remotely, with limited travel and overhead costs. To widen the reach of AI+, the service will be offered in English and French from the start.

Depending on available funds, planned deliverables for 2016 could include up to 100 tutorials answering as many questions, 12 in-depth presentations of aid agencies' resources and tools, plus a series of posts introducing aid data search tools.