

February 2024

# Uganda's aid information management platform: the data landscape

Report

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# Key terms and acronyms

## Key terms

**Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP).** An online repository that tracks and manages all information on externally financed projects from the point of approval by cabinet to the point of execution of the project. The system is also referred to as the Aid Management Platform (AMP) or the [Uganda Aid Information Management System](#) (UAIMS).

**Data landscaping.** Data landscaping is Development Initiatives' systematic process of mapping, analysing and understanding the availability, quality and usability of data in the development sector.

**Development partners.** This term has been used interchangeably with donors throughout this paper.

**Real-time data.** Real-time data refers to data that is available as soon as it is created and acquired by the data collector.

**External finance.** This refers to funding or resources that flow into the Uganda from sources outside its borders, including grants, loans and other private sector flows.

**Foreign aid.** Foreign aid refers to financial, technical or material assistance provided to Uganda by other nations, international organisations or non-governmental organisations.

**Data standards.** Data standards refer to agreed-upon conventions, rules, or guidelines for representing and formatting data in a consistent and compatible manner.

## Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| EU     | European Union   |
| IATI   | International Aid Transparency Initiative              |
| IBP    | Integrated Bank of Projects                            |
| IFMIS  | Integrated financial management information system     |
| MoFPED | Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development |
| NITA-U | National Information Technology Authority in Uganda    |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| PBS   | Programme Budgeting System                    |
| UAIMP | Uganda Aid Information Management Platform    |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |

# Overview

Presently, there is a substantial demand for external finance data in Uganda and in many other African countries. This is driven by concerns about the country's debt sustainability, overall economic landscape, investment choices and the need for monitoring both public and private sector performance. Various stakeholders, including government entities, businesses, investors, media and researchers, rely on external finance data to inform their decisions.

This report is part of a series of data landscaping reports from Development Initiatives (DI), covering Kenya and Uganda. These explore the use by the government and development partners of data derived from aid management platforms and provide insights, recommendations and cross-learning to enhance aid management practices by the national government in the three countries.

These reports complement another series of work from DI, also led by national demand, on international finance data and evidence on its most appropriate use in specific development sectors in [Kenya](#), [Ethiopia](#) and Uganda (forthcoming). You can read those country case study reports that consider where aid has been more effective, including trends, the factors that unlock the value of aid and the challenges that lie ahead.

The paper provides a pioneering review of the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP), employing qualitative research methods and key informant interviews (KIIs). It offers a thorough examination of the online database, which is designed to track and manage aid-funded projects and programs in Uganda.

Section one provides an overview of the platform, including its coverage, the data it houses and the technology underpinning its functionality. Section two examines the legal and institutional framework surrounding the system. Section three explores the data sources, data update mechanisms and the user demographics of the platform. Section four considers how the platform integrates with other online systems used in the management of public finances. Following these, sections five and six discuss the benefits derived from using the platform and the challenges with the system. We then present a literature review of Nepal's aid management system, and this case study highlights some practices that could be used in Uganda.

This report concludes with a summary of findings, noting especially low user adoption, the restriction of access to just government and donors, and poor coordination between the government and donors. It then presents a set of recommendations for government, donors and civil society organisations. These suggest that the government:

- provides of a clear data standard for data entry

- opens the platform up to the public
- addresses donor concerns on systems design, and
- all the stakeholders within the ecosystem improve their coordination.

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## About the data landscaping approach

The study used the [data landscaping methodology](#) developed by DI. Data landscaping is a systematic process of mapping, analysing and understanding the availability, quality and usability of data in the development sector. Through data landscaping, we assess existing data sources, identify gaps and explore opportunities for data integration and collaboration. The approach incorporates KIIs and a qualitative research approach.

The objective of data landscaping is to provide comprehensive insights into the state of data, enabling evidence-based decision-making and promoting transparency, accountability and contextual understanding.

DI has previously undertaken data landscaping processes in the disability sector in [Uganda](#) and [Kenya](#) and continues to inculcate the [data landscaping](#) to strengthen subnational data ecosystem.

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# Executive summary

## Key findings

- **The Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) manages information about bilateral funded projects with on budget support;<sup>1</sup> however, it excludes information about excluding multilateral funded programmes and all off budget support.** Information captured by the system includes project descriptions, objectives, location, level of funding, finance type, approval status, disbursement details, project status and the recipients.
- **The platform is accessible only to the two types of actors who key data into the system: the government and development partners.** This has raised concerns among the interviewed donors, who believe allowing access to civil society organisations and the public will increase credibility and transparency.
- KII highlighted a strong demand for data from other actors, including the public, media, researchers and civil society organisations, but they are **restricted to using consolidated and incomplete information produced from the platform by government and development partners.**
- **There are policy frameworks specifically designed for the aid information management system.** These are the Aid Information Management Policy, 2020 and the Uganda Aid Management Platform Policy Framework, 2013. Other laws that support the system include: Constitution of Uganda, 1995; Budget Act 2001; Access to Information Act, 2005; the Public Finance Management Act, 2015.
- **The National Information Technology Authority in Uganda (NITA-U) hosts the platform.** It does so with operational support from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), some donors, Development Gateway (the non-profit organisation that developed the platform) and government agencies and line ministries.
- **The UAIMP is integrated with two other key national financial systems: Uganda's Programme Budgeting System (PBS) and Integrated Bank of Projects (IBP).** This integration streamlines data sharing and coordination. However, it could be further integrated with other financial systems such as Integrated financial management information systems (IFMIS) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Increasing and strengthening integrations with other systems would ensure all systems managing public finances are interconnected and can communicate with each other.



- **There has been both slow uptake of the system and irregular updates from both donors and government.** This has made it impossible to access timely information on projects for key decision-making.
- **There has been low user adoption by the donor community and poor reporting on the system both on the side of the government and donors.** This means the credibility of the data contained in the platform is weak.
- **There is poor coordination between government and development partners, undermining regular project updates on the platform.** This is made worse by the lack of proper channel to address the grievances of donors about the platform usability.

## Recommendations

### Government

- **Accessibility.** The platform should be made accessible to the public to enhance transparency. Simultaneously, it should also be adapted to address donor access concerns by increasing its bandwidth capacity to accommodate increased web traffic and automating password management procedures to facilitate smoother user access.
- **Technical challenges.** A comprehensive online manual with instructional videos should be provided and a dedicated technical support person should be appointed to address queries and send reminders to donors on data submission. Moreover, periodic training sessions should be rolled out to enhance new and existing users' proficiency in using the UAIMP.
- **Data.** It is vital that the government establishes clear data standards, provides users with data-entry training and shares a comprehensive data format manual with minimum data entry requirements. Additionally, expediting data validation meetings involving ministries and donors will help ensure accurate data inputs and enhance overall data quality in the UAIMP.
- **Coordination.** The government should proactively enhance coordination among its line ministries and development partners to increase awareness and importance of the platform – this will increase its credibility and data quality. Proper coordination will also ensure communication of user feedback both from the government ministries and donors, and boost user involvement of the system.
- **System design.** The user experience of the platform should be improved by enhancing user research and the interface, offering more user support, streamlining submission requirements and providing context-specific training as well as testing new use cases. The government should also make it optional for

partners to indicate the names of implementing partners, as doing otherwise can create challenges with the procurement process.

- **Reporting.** Provide more regular reports on the content of the system and ensure inclusion of crucial information required for decision-making, especially by donors, is included.
- **Increase user adoption** by raising awareness of the platform and providing onboarding training for donors, other government ministries and departments.
- **Develop a long-term funding strategy.** The government should expedite the development of a long-term funding strategy in partnership with stakeholders, while also establishing a dedicated budget line to support the system.
- **Further integration between core financial systems and other related systems.** The government should expedite proper and further integration between its core financial systems and related systems – for example the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) – to facilitate seamless data exchanges, eradicate duplication of efforts and foster proper governance and effectiveness of development initiatives.
- **The government must take steps to ensure the transparency and accessibility** of policies related to external financing to empower the public to actively engage with these policies

## Donors

- **Data quality and availability.** Donors should collaborate with the government to establish data quality standards and a minimum set of consistently reported data. Real-time<sup>2</sup> data reporting should be encouraged among both donors and the government to enhance the credibility of the information available.
- **Coordination and collaboration.** Regular meetings between donors and the government should be encouraged to address challenges, provide feedback and enhance the system through collaborative efforts and brainstorming sessions.
- **Strengthening governance and oversight.** Donors should advocate for independent oversight of the aid information system, including the establishment of an oversight body, public access to the system and civil society participation in aid monitoring and evaluation.
- **Resource support.** Donors should consider providing technical and financial support to ensure the sustained functionality and development of the UAIMP. They should gradually transition maintenance and support responsibilities to the government for long-term sustainability.

## Civil society organisations

- **Advocacy for an open aid information management platform.** Civil society should advocate for open access to the aid information management system, enabling public scrutiny and ensuring effective oversight. This will increase the transparency and accountability of aid management in Uganda.
- **Raising awareness about the system.** Civil society organisations should educate the public about the aid information management system and its role in promoting transparency and accountability.
- **Providing oversight and monitoring of the UAIMP.** Civil society organisations should use the aid data within the system and/or the analysis from the system to hold the government and donors accountable for aid contributions, identify and report misuse, and advocate for enhanced transparency from the government.

# Introduction

Uganda, like many developing countries, relies on external finance to support development initiatives and outcomes. The funding supports various projects geared towards the eradication of poverty, human capital development and infrastructural support. The external financing comes from a mix of donors, including multilateral organisations, bilateral donors and the private sector. Funding is typically provided as loans, grants, other official flows or private development finance.<sup>3</sup>

Presently, there is a substantial demand for external finance data in Uganda, much like the situation in many other African countries.<sup>4</sup> This is primarily driven by several factors, including concerns about the country's debt sustainability, the overall economic situation, public and private investment choices and the need for monitoring both public and private sector performance. Various stakeholders, including government entities, businesses, investors, media and researchers, rely on external finance data to inform various decision-making processes.

The growing need for external finance data – especially regarding understanding the nation's debt status and externally funded initiatives, alongside the desire for a centralised data access point – served as a catalyst for the creation of the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP). This was established in 2014 to streamline and consolidate all existing information regarding externally financed projects in Uganda, serving as a 'one stop shop' for aid development project information. Its primary aim is to enhance transparency and accountability in aid management, both from the government's perspective and that of the donors. The UAIMP facilitates project tracking, covering the entire project lifecycle, from approval to project closure.

A proper, functioning aid information management system is crucial for the Ugandan government to ensure transparency, improve planning and coordination and enhance efficiency and cost savings. By making information on aid projects more readily accessible, the platform not only ensures that donors and other stakeholders are informed about the use of their resources but also provides crucial support to the government in managing aid resources more effectively. Furthermore, the UAIMP has contributed to improved aid management efficiency by offering a centralised system for monitoring and reporting on aid projects.<sup>5</sup>

# Section 1: An overview of the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform

The Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) was developed by Development Gateway<sup>6</sup> with financial support from the Government of Uganda and the European Union. Development Gateway is an organisation that responds to requests for proposals made by countries seeking assistance in the development of aid information management systems, such as Uganda. Development Gateway has supported the development of aid information management systems in over 30 countries.

Unlike other countries (such as Ethiopia,<sup>7</sup> which opted for a system charging subscription fees annually), the Uganda system involves a one-time payment, eliminating recurring subscription charges. However, the system requires periodic updates that incur upgrade fees borne by the Government of Uganda.

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**“The platform serves as a comprehensive tool for gathering information related to externally funded programmes, starting from the approval stage by the cabinet and continuing through the stages of implementation and impact on the population. It offers insights into disbursements or commitments made to specific projects, facilitating effective tracking and management of such initiatives.”**

Government of Uganda respondent

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The system is an online repository, housing information on externally financed development projects from the point of approval by cabinet to the point of execution of the project. It runs on a proprietary software owned by Development Gateway and hosted by the National Information Technology Authority in Uganda (NITA-U), with management and ownership of data controlled by the Government of Uganda under the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED). The system helps both the government and donors to monitor the allocation of resources and the implementation and impact of projects. It is seen by both the government and development partners as a way to increase transparency and accountability in aid management by not only tracking the financing component but also improving reporting and coordination.

Although the platform was initially designed to be open access, the Government of Uganda has restricted use to authorised government personnel and donors exclusively.

Both civil society and donor community have raised concerns over this, as they want the system to be open for accountability and transparency. According to the government, the platform is not available to the public due to the sensitivity of some of the information it contains. However, the government (through MoFPED) annually extracts and synthesises information from the platform for the public. This information pertains to: loans, grants and guarantees financing various projects; the overall debt; and the status of Uganda with regards to external financing. These reports provide partial transparency and accountability from the Government of Uganda on aid and external financing.<sup>8</sup>

These reports are used by stakeholders across government, the general public and the donor community. Various government departments and agencies use the information to understand the funding status of projects within their departments and also to inform various budget and development plans. Businesses use it to assess their external financing options and to make investment decisions. Investors use it to identify investment opportunities and to assess the risks associated with those opportunities. Donors use the information to track their own aid spending, coordinate with other donors and to monitor impact. Researchers use the information to understand Uganda's economic outlook and to develop evidence-based policy recommendations.

As mentioned, due to the sensitivity of some of the information contained in the system, only authorised staff from the government and donors are allowed to access and key data into the system (and this step is subject to verification both from the government and donors). According to MoFPED, the government conducts reconciliatory meetings both internally and externally to harmonise the data entered in the system.

- Internally, monthly meetings take place between the Central Bank of Uganda, which serves as the primary custodian of funding support, and MoFPED. These meetings aim to reconcile financial data and ensure the data on received funds is harmonised with the project details. This process ensures that the information stored in the system is as accurate as possible.
- Externally, quarterly meetings are held between MoFPED and donor partners to reconcile and harmonise the disbursement figures, ensuring the consistency of the data entered. However, it is important to highlight that some of the donors we interviewed were unaware of these reconciliation meetings and did not participate in them. This raises potential concerns about the accuracy of the information stored in the system.

During interviews with some of the donors, it became evident that they face ongoing challenges when trying to navigate the user interface and understand the approval hierarchies within the system. Presently, the system employs a multi-level approval process that lacks clarity, especially for new users. Additionally, new users found navigating the system a challenging task. The representatives of the donor community we spoke to unanimously agreed on the need for transparent communication from the government regarding the approval hierarchy and submission requirements. They also recommend that the government introduces first-time user training, potentially complemented by online videos. These measures would offer effective guidance to users, helping them navigate the system with greater ease and confidence.

There is in fact a system training manual, however, some donors were unaware of its existence. Even for those who were aware, the manual was not found to be tailored to meet the specific user needs, such as navigation and minimum data input requirements. This situation is exacerbated by government staff, who are slow to address queries posed by donors. Additionally, there is a lack of consistent instructions, as evidenced by the absence of clear guidance during the initial migration from Excel spreadsheets to the online system.

Requests for further system upgrades have also been made to the government by development partners, who collectively requested the government to anonymise the names of implementing partners to safeguard their identities. They argue that these identities should not be disclosed due to procurement issues. Publicly naming implementing partners on the platform could have several negative consequences, including reduced competition, increased risk of collusion, security concerns, data quality issues, increased administrative burden and reputational concerns. These issues could deter potential partners from participating in projects, hindering project implementation and increasing costs. One way to address the concern is to provide the option to list spending by activity rather than by delivery partner name (as it is currently structured within the system). Additionally, the system would greatly benefit from a comprehensive quality assurance mechanism that ensures the accuracy of the data and information it contains and addresses typographical errors.

#### Key features of the platform

- **Coverage.** The platform captures historical and current information on externally funded, on-budget projects, especially those funded by bilateral donors.<sup>9</sup> The system provides project descriptions, objectives, location, level of funding, type of financing, approval status, disbursement details, project status and the recipients. Ideally, the platform should include both on-budget and off-budget support; however, the complexity associated with tracking both multilateral funded and off-budget programmes, coupled with limited staff capacity required to input programme information into the system, constrains the volume and accessibility of information pertaining to these programmes. Thus, the system does not provide a comprehensive overview of the aid landscape in Uganda.
- **Data accessibility.** According to MoFPED, the platform provides a user-friendly interface that allows authorised users to access and retrieve relevant information easily. Access is reserved for government agencies and donors. According to government, the platform provides a variety of search and filtering options that make it easy to find information. Donors interviewed have disputed this, asserting that there is a need for user guidance manual or training on navigating the system.
- **Real-time tracking.** According to the MoFPED, the platform offers real-time tracking and reporting capabilities for aid projects. This feature would allow stakeholders to monitor project progress, identify potential issues and make timely adjustments to help ensure successful project outcomes. However, donors are concerned by the unreliability of the data contained within the platform. They

claim that neither donors nor government make regular data updates, with some updating information only annually.

- **Data analysis and reporting tools.** The platform offers tools for data analysis and reporting, allowing users to generate customised reports and insights. These tools can support evidence-based decision-making, aid allocation and project evaluation. The donors we interviewed expressed concerns about their capacity to generate these reports using the system.
- **Integration with other systems.** The UAIMP is integrated with two other key national finance systems: Uganda's PBS and IBP. This streamlines data sharing and coordination. Integration with additional systems such as International Aid Transparency Initiative could further enhance efficiency, reduce manual data entry and provide accurate and up-to-date information for budgeting and planning purposes.
- **Centralised data repository.** The UAIMP is a centralised repository for official data related to aid-funded projects and programmes. The platform provides a single point of access to all aid information, allowing authorised users to easily search, filter and analyse data across different sectors, agencies and funding sources. This makes it easy for authorised users to access and retrieve information, promoting transparency and informed decision-making.
- **Registration and log in.** Due to the sensitivity of the content within the platform, there are access controls. Just two individuals from the donor side are given registration and log-in passwords for data entry and verification of the information in the platform. The government has multiple logins, but this is restricted to only authorised users within MoFPED and other ministries, departments and agencies within the government.
- **Data input.** Data input involves collaboration between donors and MoFPED staff. Donors are obligated to input information on their external support, covering commitments or disbursements to various sectors and projects. The government enhances this by reviewing project details and supplementing the data with additional information, including project description, approval status and expected impact. Initially, data was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet and then transferred to the UAIMP; currently, all data is directly input into the platform. Ideally, regular updates would allow users to obtain real-time data on disbursements or commitments; however, donors point out time lags between these financial actions and the reporting of data.



# Section 2: The underlying legal and institutional framework

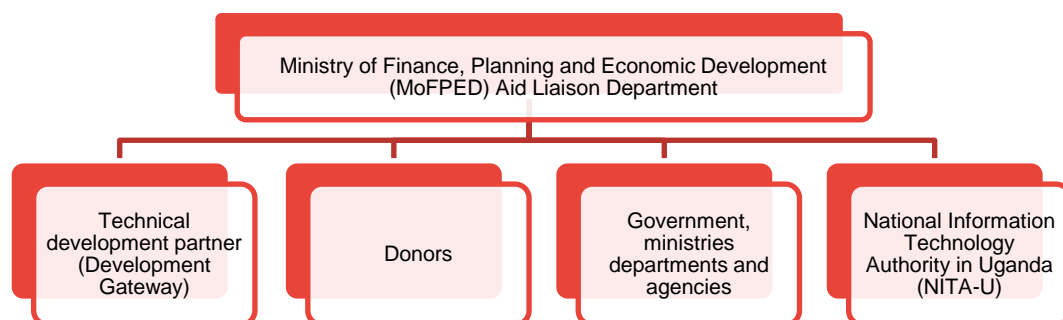
## Institutional framework

The institutional framework for the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) operates using three key approaches:

- **Multi-stakeholder governance.** The UAIMP is governed by a multi-stakeholder steering committee that represents the interests of the Government of Uganda, donors and implementing partners. This ensures that the platform is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.
- **Technical expertise.** The UAIMP is managed by a team of qualified professionals who have the expertise and experience to manage the complex system. This ensures that the platform is operated effectively and efficiently.
- **Transparency and accountability.** The UAIMP is subject to a number of laws and policies that ensure that the platform is operated in a transparent and accountable manner.

The institutional framework was a work in progress at the time of writing, and is expected to consist of agencies within the government, donor community and the development partners who work together to ensure efficient and effective management of the platform.

**Figure 1: The institutional framework governing the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform**



The platform is hosted by the **National Information Technology Authority in Uganda (NITA-U)**.<sup>10</sup> This government agency is responsible for coordinating, promoting and monitoring information and technology developments in Uganda. It provides a number of IT services to the government, including hosting and managing government websites and applications such as the UAIMP. Some UAIMP system updates are carried out by the staff of NITA-U in close collaboration with Development Gateway. At the time of writing, there are discussions with the German Embassy to provide support<sup>11</sup> that will be more content driven and less focused on technical or maintenance matters.<sup>12</sup>

**MoFPED**<sup>13</sup> is the ministry with overall responsibility for managing the UAIMP, and its Aid Liaison Department is specifically responsible for technical operations and maintenance of the system. The ministry undertakes the following roles: setting the UAIMP's strategic direction and priorities; overseeing the development and implementation of the UAIMP's work plan; ensuring that the UAIMP is aligned with the government's aid management policies and priorities; providing financial and technical support required from management of the system; and promoting the uptake of the UAIMP among government agencies and donors. MoFPED also plays a key role in collecting and publishing data on the platform, preparing and synthesising the information for public to better understand the external financing and debt situation of Uganda.

**Development Gateway**<sup>14</sup> partnered with Uganda to create the UAIMP. Its role is to provide technical support, training and ongoing support to the Government of Uganda with regards to UAIMP system updates. Development Gateway works on the creation of tools and design processes that help collect, visualise and use data for a more equitable world. Their work improves the effectiveness of international development through technology and data. Development Gateway is a leading provider of aid information management systems (AIMS) and has worked with over thirty countries to develop or improve their aid information management systems.

**Donors are another stakeholder within the institutional framework.** The European Union financed the initial development of the system, and other donors key information into the system and provide financial support for maintenance of the system.

**Within the government,** Uganda's Auditor-General provides regular audits of the system, and the Central bank of Uganda is the primary recipient of the disbursements by the donors. The various ministries, departments and agencies use the information contained in the system.

Donors have previously expressed concerns on the institutional framework. The absence of a dedicated staff member responsible for managing system queries and maintaining communication with donors to ensure data entry has been a major hindrance. The current scheduling practices of MoFPED, particularly last-minute meetings and inadequate time allowances, hinder participants' ability to prepare effectively and contribute meaningfully. A shift towards longer notice periods and realistic timeframes would greatly improve the overall effectiveness of meetings. Donors emphasise the importance of holding meetings

and providing regular updates to the Local Development Partners Group<sup>15</sup> to keep all donors informed about the system's developments. In addition, there is a prevailing sentiment among donors interviewed that the government should involve more sectors in data entry – allowing more line ministries to access the system and input data.

Donors continue to raise these concerns, which have already been communicated to the government. However, recommendations coming from such discussions are yet to be implemented, giving the impression that the system has been deprioritised within government.

Owing to the number of stakeholders and institutions interacting with the UAIMP, coordination meetings are scheduled between the government, represented by the MoFPED and the donors.<sup>16</sup> Ideally, these meetings should occur regularly; however, both the government and donors acknowledge that this is not currently the case. The primary purpose of these meetings is to receive feedback from donors regarding challenges associated with the aid information management system. Additionally, the gatherings aim to collaboratively devise solutions to address these challenges and establish channels for sharing updated information on the systems. According to the donors, these meetings have not been consistently held, and even when convened, the recommendations made during the sessions have not been implemented by the relevant authorities.

## Legal framework

The laws, policies and guidelines that govern the operations and functioning of the Uganda aid information management platform include:

**The Constitution of Uganda, 1995**<sup>17</sup> under article 41 guarantees the right of access to information in the possession of the State or any other organ or agency of the State. UAIMS provides information on external financing, and it is the responsibility of the state by law to provide this information contained herein to the public.

**Budget Act, 2001**, requires the government to prepare and submit an annual budget to parliament for approval. The budget must include a detailed breakdown of all expected revenue and expenditure, including external resources. This helps to ensure that aid is aligned with national priorities and used to support programmes and projects that have been approved by parliament. The Budget Act of 2001 and the UAIMP are complementary instruments: the Budget Act provides the legal framework for the management of external resources, while the UAIMP provides the information system needed to track and monitor aid flows.

**The Access to Information Act, 2005**,<sup>18</sup> gives Ugandans the right to access information that is held by government (pursuant to Article 41 of the constitution of Uganda). The act also prescribes the different classes of information and the procedure for obtaining access to this information. Externally financed projects being one of the areas of interest of the public, it is the obligation of MoFPED to provide information on the content of the UAIMP to the public, including details of external financing and debt sustainability.

**The Uganda Aid Management Platform Policy Framework, 2013**, sets out the principles and guidelines for the operation of the UAIMP. The framework emphasises the importance of transparency, accountability and effectiveness. However, at the time of writing, the policy was absent from online government platforms, with only limited sources providing an overview.<sup>19</sup> The complete policy document remains inaccessible. There is a need for the government to ensure that such policies are accessible to the public so that they can interrogate the content, as it affects some of the key issues on external financing.

**The Public Finance Management Act, 2015**, provides a legal framework for the management of public finances in Uganda, including external financing. The law requires that all government spending be transparent and accountable. The aid management platform operates in accordance with this fundamental principle of transparency.

**Aid Information Management policy, 2020**,<sup>20</sup> this policy was developed by the Government of Uganda in consultation with development partners. It outlines the government's framework on management of external finances, including the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. It forms the Aid Liaison Department (within the MoFPED) which has responsibility for the coordination and management of external resources. Other functions of the department include:

- providing a first point of contact within the government for all development partners;
- servicing development partner missions;
- providing advice and technical analysis on external aid financing;
- developing, maintaining and constantly updating the government database of all donor commitments and disbursements for all loans and grants;
- providing regular reports on aid flows to Uganda, including the annual [Report on Loans, Grants and Guarantees](#) (as required by the Budget Act, 2001);
- monitoring aid effectiveness in Uganda;
- conducting government-led country portfolio performance reviews;
- and ensuring the Aid Liaison Department monitors and ensures compliance with specific requirements and expectations attached to aid.

The Aid Information Management Policy also establishes a number of other institutions and mechanisms to support the effective management of external resources, including the Aid Management Committee, the Aid Management Technical Working Group and the Aid Information Management System.

# Section 3: Data accessibility, sources, updates and users

## Accessibility

As mentioned in section one, access to the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) is limited to authorised personnel from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), other government agencies and donors. However, even within the government there are several ministries, for example the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, who do not use the system due to a lack of awareness, or of the skills/capacity to operate the system.<sup>21</sup> It is important that the ministry rolls out training to at least a select few members from each of the ministries in government.

Government staff allowed on the system are given prior training to enable navigation and data entry. They are given access controls to the system, including usernames and passwords. These access controls are specific to individuals and are not to be shared to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the data. On the donor side, staff are given access controls to allow the keying in of information on disbursements and related project details. According to donors, access controls are limited to two staff members, one for the staff allowed to key information into the system and the second for the quality assurance lead – ideally the two should be a Finance Analyst and a Finance Manager.

While relevant training is continually being conducted by the government to provide familiarity with the system, there is a need to broaden the training to cover additional core staff at MoFPED. This would cater for challenges of staff turnover and also to increase the ministry's knowledge of the evolving nature of the external finance landscape. Moreover, training should be extended to ensure that all staff members dealing with the system across ministries and government departments have knowledge and understanding of the system's principles and features.

To improve the uptake of the system on the donor's side, the government should provide regular capacity-building sessions to donor focal points assigned to input information into the platform. This will increase the accuracy of the information entered and so the reliability and usability of the data contained in the platform. This will enable the donors using the system to see which projects other donors are channeling their resources to, thereby avoiding duplication and identifying areas of synergy to enhance complementarity.

Both the public and donors have expressed concerns that the adoption of the system has been less than satisfactory on the donor side, with accessibility highlighted as one of the hindrances to full adoption.<sup>22</sup> Among the public, there are calls to make the system accessible to all, albeit with restrictions on data editing. This would enable watchdogs, civil society organisations, researchers and think tanks to scrutinise the data, particularly in terms of expenditure in comparison to the developmental outcomes outlined in project descriptions. Opening the system to the public would also facilitate a better understanding of financial trends across various government departments, the broader economic situation (in the context of public debt), and external financing within the country.

A summary of the information contained in the platform is released by the government to the public annually as [consolidated reports](#), aggregating data on loans, grants and guarantees. This report is accessible on the MoFPED website as part of the debt sustainability and external financing reports. However, there have been complaints regarding the report's content and frequency. Several donors interviewed pointed out that it does not offer meaningful insights and does not include all the information necessary for decision-making. They also suggest that the annual frequency of these reports should be reconsidered and possibly reduced to either quarterly or biannual releases to provide more up-to-date information.

In addition, donors have expressed concern that report generation within the system is a time-consuming process, requiring a certain level of technical knowledge on how to use the system that donors currently lack. Consequently, donors often have to rely on reports published by the government, which frequently lack essential information. This missing information includes: details on funding allocated by sector, activity and location; the allocation of funds to specific districts; project progress; and the Government's contribution to some of these projects – all of which are important for decision-making.

Donors noted they had already expressed concerns about the system's infrastructure, specifically its inability to handle heavy website traffic. The system becomes inaccessible during periods of high demand, and access is restored outside of working hours. This limitation has discouraged donors from providing timely updates and reports through the system.

Furthermore, the process of generating or resetting passwords currently relies on a third party – the system administrator (an employee of Development Gateway). This often results in delays as it takes some time to address password-related issues, subsequently increasing the waiting time for entering information into the system.

## Sources of data in the UAIMP

The platform benefits from data provided by both the government and donors. On the donor side, there is a requirement to input data regarding their external support, including disbursements and commitments (with the exception of funds that are channelled through multilateral organisations, as these are managed separately).<sup>23</sup> This information is typically provided by finance analysts or finance managers. The government's

responsibility is to augment this process by thoroughly reviewing project documents and supplementing them with additional information about project particulars, including project descriptions, approval status and anticipated impacts. Such information is provided by the staff at the Aid Liaison Department within the MoFPED (or any other government agency or ministry).

According to the donors we interviewed, the platform's data input process lacks a standardised methodology that could be used for documenting agreed-upon terms and procedures. Such a methodology would ensure that data entry from the government and development partners is seamless and consistent. Certain terms would benefit from clear definitions to avoid confusion. For instance, 'start date' is variously interpreted by donors to mean either the date of contract signing, or when the funds are committed, or when work on the project began.

Additionally, there are concerns from donors regarding the extensive amount of information they are required to input into the system, which can discourage updates. It is crucial for both the government and donors to engage in negotiations and come to an agreement on the minimum information needed in the system. This collaborative effort is essential to ensure that the system contains, at the very least, the information vital for its proper operation.

## Data updates

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**“We update data in the system on an annual basis, but we also make updates as needed when there are significant changes.”**

Donor respondent

**“The real problem of the system stems from the fact that donors are failing to update data on the system”**

Donor respondent.

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According to the government, data updates to the system should ideally be real-time: as and when a project is approved. However, the donors interviewed had different responses about the timeliness of updates. Some mentioned that data updates on the system – both by the government and donors – were not regular and sometimes (particularly on the part of the donors) were done on an annual basis with iterations as and when there are significant changes within the project. This challenge stems from capacity constraints both from the government and on the donor side.

The accuracy and quality of data updates is another crucial aspect. According to MoFPED, data entered into the system undergoes two levels of verification within the ministry. First, a junior staff member assigned to the platform conducts daily checks to verify the accuracy of the information entered by comparing it with the original agreement. Second, final checks are performed by an economist. These final checks occur monthly or as needed. Furthermore, reconciliation meetings are meant to be held monthly with the



Central Bank of Uganda and quarterly with development partners to guarantee the accuracy of the data entered into the system. Nevertheless, our key informant interviews with donors revealed they were not aware of any reconciliatory meetings held so far.

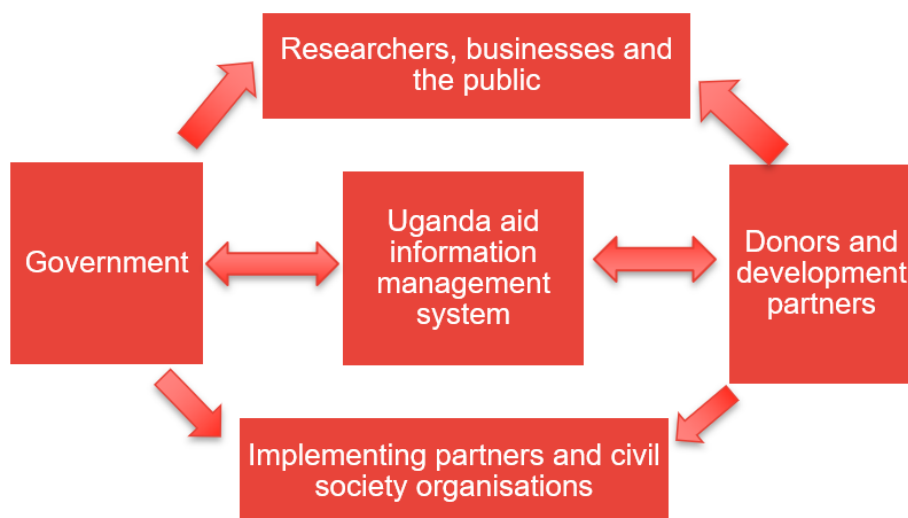
The donor community noted they had already raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the data in the system. They agree that the validity of the data is in doubt and cannot be used to give a clear picture of the external financing landscape to inform programming and funding decision-making.

To enhance the reliability of the data in the system at any given point in time, we encourage the government to establish channels of engagement and communication with development partners to identify the challenges associated with the system. Such engagements are essential to understanding the challenges encountered in the system and crafting collaborative recommendations understood by all stakeholders. Additionally, the government should provide user training to development partners tasked with entry of information on the platform. This approach will guarantee that project updates within the system are in real-time and of good quality, effectively addressing concerns regarding data accuracy and reliability.

## Users of Uganda’s aid information management platform

The primary users of the information in the UAIMP are ministries, departments and agencies and the donors supporting various aid projects in Uganda (Figure 2). However, there are other stakeholders – for example researchers and civil society organisations – who may not have direct access to the system but regularly use information derived from it in the form of aggregated reports.

**Figure 2: Flow of information within the data ecosystem of the UAIMP**



Source: Development Initiatives based on key informant interviews.



Notes: Arrowhead shows the direction of information flow.

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The key users of information contained in the system include the following.

- 1. Government through its various ministries, departments and agencies.** The government uses the information not only to monitor the progress of projects and their impact on the population but also to ensure the efficient allocation of resources and to make informed decisions regarding project resource allocation.<sup>24</sup> Line ministries depend on this information to monitor the progress and impact of aid projects within their respective ministries. They also rely on this information for reporting to various stakeholders, including donors and, to support their planning and budgeting processes. MoFPED additionally uses this data for reporting purposes to donors and for developing its annual reports on the country's external financing and debt sustainability.
- 2. Donors/development partners.** These are those institutions or countries that provide resource support for the implementation of development programmes in Uganda. The UAIMP provides donors with information to track the use of resources across various projects. This information helps monitor both donor objectives to ensure they are met and donor funding decisions to ensure they are grounded on evidence. It also helps in preventing duplication of efforts in both resource allocation and project implementation. However, as stated above, there are concerns within the donor community about data quality, system reliability, and thus the system's ability to generate valid reports.
- 3. Implementing partners.** Implementing partners include non-governmental organisations, local community groups or private entities that work in tandem with donors to achieve common goals. Although this group of stakeholders does not have direct access to the platform, they can obtain information from the system through ministry reports or from the donors they partner with to implement programmes in various sectors. They use this information as intelligence on the donors providing funding support to programmes in various sectors and to track the implementation of programmes.
- 4. Civil society organisations.** Like the implementing partners, this group of stakeholders does not have direct access to the platform, however, they can access information through various donor and government reports. They use the information for advocacy purposes and to hold the government and donors accountable for commitments made to support various projects and their execution. They also use this information to advocate for better policies and to ensure equity in allocation of funding to projects.
- 5. Researchers, business, media and the rest of the public.** These stakeholders access information on externally financed aid projects through donor and government reports. Researchers use this information to conduct in-depth analysis, track trends and assess the effectiveness of aid interventions in Uganda. They also use it for academic studies and writing research papers and

policy evaluation briefs. Businesses use the information for market research, risk assessment and identification of potential opportunities within specific areas and sectors that are of interest to external funders. They can also use the information to assess partnership opportunities for public–private partnerships or corporate social responsibility initiatives. The media relies on the information to report on aid flow trends, highlight the outcomes of aid on people’s lives and promote accountability on aid spending both by government and the donors. Lastly, the general public uses the information not only for accountability and transparency checks on the various programmes being implemented but also to raise awareness and advocate for better development policies and practices. It also helps raise public awareness about the status of development in Uganda.

# Section 4: Current and potential integrations with other financial systems

The Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) is integrated with two other key national financial systems, each providing a specific set of functions that are interlinked to ensure efficient and effective management of domestic and externally sourced public finances. These two systems are the Programme Budgeting System and the Integrated Bank of Projects.

## Programme Budgeting System (PBS)

The PBS is a government-owned and operated system that is used to track and manage government spending.<sup>25</sup> Plans for the UAIMP to be integrated with the PBS were agreed in 2020. The integration of the two systems aimed to facilitate information sharing and improve efficiency and transparency of aid management and indeed of the overall budgeting system in Uganda.<sup>26</sup> Development of the integration was carried out by Development Gateway.

Both systems have access controls and require authorised users to log in to access and input information, primarily to maintain the integrity of the information in the systems but also to prevent sensitive information from getting into the wrong hands.

The programme-based budgeting structure of the PBS assigns resources based on programmes or functional areas in accordance with the national development plan. The PBS is aimed at strengthening the links between government strategic objectives, budget allocations and service delivery outputs. In the PBS, service delivery outputs (also known as performance data) play a crucial role in decision-making, either as a direct input in budget allocation or as essential context for budget planning. The system offers integration abilities with other budgeting systems and retains historical data for future reference.

According to the donors, this integration is not fully operational due to lack of high-quality and reliable data from the UAIMP. As such, donors are yet to see any meaningful benefits from the integration of the two systems.

The full integration of the two systems will allow the following:

- **Increased efficiency.** The integration could allow automatic transfer of data on aid projects from the UAIMP to the PBS, eliminating the need for manual data entry, which saves time and reduces data entry errors.
- **Better decision-making.** Integration of the UAIMP and PBS would provide government officials with better data to inform their decision-making. This would help them to allocate resources more effectively and to achieve better development outcomes.
- **The improved transparency of aid management.** The integration allows the government to create a single source of information on all aid flows and government spending. This would make it easier for the public and other stakeholders to track how aid and government resources are being used.

The integration of the UAIMP and the PBS is a significant achievement for the Government of Uganda. It is a sign of the government's commitment to transparency and accountability, both in the management of aid resources and in the planning and budgeting of resources, that will lead to achieving the national development plan goals. Nonetheless, there are still some challenges with the quality, accuracy and reliability of data from the aid information management platform that need to be addressed to ensure seamless flow of data between the two systems.

These challenges can be mitigated by ensuring that data updates in the UAIMP are executed promptly and comprehensively. This would ensure the accuracy and reliability of data within the system at any given moment, making it a valuable resource for decision-making by both donors and the government at any point in time.

## Integrated Bank of Projects (IBP)

The IBP system assists all stakeholders involved in the Public Investment Management System over the lifecycle of investment initiatives. It is open-source, web-based software, acting as the central repository for all information and documents for public investment projects.<sup>27</sup> The system was procured with free licensing, so licensing costs and other recurrent costs are not incurred. IBP is owned by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) and hosted by NITA-U, just like the UAIMP.

The integration between the UAIMP and the IBP was completed in 2022 and is now fully operational.<sup>28</sup> The integration allows the two systems to share data seamlessly, providing users with a more complete and up-to-date picture of all development projects in Uganda. This includes information on project funding, implementation progress and outcomes. The aim of the IBP is to provide a dynamic information management system for public investment, fostering institutional coordination and improving decision-making throughout the project development cycle.

Currently, the IBP has a total of 857 projects: 552 at the concept note stage, 162 at the profiling stage, 89 at the pre-feasibility stage, 48 at the feasibility stage and six in the

pipeline.<sup>29</sup> The IBP is integrated with other national financial systems, including the PBS, UAIMP and IFMIS.

The system comprises three levels of workflow management: level 1 entails the sectoral department input, where projects are generated and submitted to the departmental head for approval. Subsequently, the projects progress to the sectoral planning stage, where they are presented to the Department of Planning for approval by the accounting officers and sector head. Once approved, the projects are then forwarded to the Development Committee secretariat for discussion before they proceed to the next stage of the project development cycle.<sup>30</sup>

The system has a user guide,<sup>31</sup> assisting the various stakeholders involved in the project cycle to populate the system with project details. The system currently generates seven predetermined reports:

- Public investments pipeline report
- Fiscal load from pipeline report
- Cost evaluation report
- List of projects in the IBP report
- Project ranking report
- Sectoral funding recommendation report
- Project location report

Only authorised users – mostly donors and government officials – can key project information into the system.

The IBP system helps stakeholders improve coordination, reduces time spent on project preparation and submission, and improves accountability and transparency by ensuring an effective audit trail and alignment of investments with existing government protocols.

The integration of UAIMP and IBP is a significant step towards improving the coordination and management of development aid in Uganda. It is still in its early days, but the integration has the potential to transform the way that development aid is managed in the country. The government is working with donors and development partners to ensure that the integration is successful and that it delivers the full range of benefits to the government, development partners and the general public. These benefits are:

- **Improved transparency and accountability.** The integration will make it easier for the government, donors and the public to track the flow of aid and the progress of development projects.

- **Reduced duplication of effort.** The integration will help to eliminate duplication of effort by ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of all the development projects that are underway.
- **Improved decision-making.** The integration will provide decision-makers with a better and more refined pool of information to make informed decisions about the allocation and use of aid resources.
- **Increased efficiency and effectiveness.** The integration will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the aid management process by ensuring all the information needed by both donors and the government are in a centralised repository.

While the government has made strides to integrate core financial systems to improve efficiency in the management of its public finances, there is still room for further integration between the core financial systems – the IBP, PBS, UAIMP and IFMIS – and other complementary systems. For example, these core financial systems could be integrated with other crucial systems that contain complementary information, such as the humanitarian database operated by the Office of the Prime Minister and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This would enhance the effectiveness and governance of development – promoting efficiency, ensuring successful implementation and maximising the benefits.

## Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS)

IFMIS Uganda is a web-based system that allows both government and non-government users to enter, track and manage financial transactions.<sup>32</sup> The system includes modules for budget planning, budget execution, accounting and reporting. IFMIS was implemented in Uganda in 2009, and it has been gradually rolled out to all government ministries, departments and agencies; however, the system is yet to be integrated with the UAIMP.

The mooted integration of the UAIMP with IFMIS is a complex process that would require significant investment and coordination. However, the potential benefits of such an integration are substantial and would make a major contribution to improving not only the transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of aid to Uganda, but also improving the decision-making around it. A plan to integrate the two systems has been impacted by technical challenges, the quality of data in the two systems and changes in management.

## UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) humanitarian database

The UNHCR humanitarian database is an international repository of information on the displacement of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless people. It provides data on their countries of origin, demographics, reasons for displacement, needs and vulnerabilities, and UNHCR's response to their situation. This

valuable resource serves UNHCR, other UN agencies, researchers, policymakers, journalists and the general public. It informs humanitarian interventions, advocates for the rights of refugees and stateless people, and tracks progress towards solutions to displacement.

Proposed integration of the UAIMP and UNHCR humanitarian database<sup>33</sup> (which is operated by UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda) will help enhance data sharing between the two systems, improving coordination between the government and development partners and ensuring that aid resources are allocated more effectively and efficiently where they are needed the most. It could also help reduce duplication and waste, as integration would help identify areas where there is an overlap of aid flows.

## **A master data set to support integration**

The integration of these core financial systems needs, ideally, a single set of master data. The best host for this depends on several factors, including the specific needs and context of Uganda's integrated system. An informed decision would require thorough analysis of the technical capabilities, organisational structure and workflow considerations of UAIMP, IBP and PBS.

Based on these factors, a choice would be made as to whether a centralised dataset, a distributed database or a hybrid approach would be necessary. Stakeholders from all three systems should be involved in the decision-making process to ensure the chosen solution meets everyone's needs and promotes efficient data management for Uganda's development efforts.

## **The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)**

Efficiency can also be optimised through the integration of the UAIMP, PBS and IBP with IATI. IATI is a global effort to improve how information about development and humanitarian aid is shared. It creates a common international standard for publishing aid data, the IATI Standard, which has been accepted by development partners. Organisations involved in aid use IATI to report on their projects and spending. This makes information easier to access, understand and compare.

This integration remains only theoretical, but promises major advancements in transparency, accountability and data-driven development decisions

Linking IATI with the UAIMP, PBS and IBP could

- improve resource allocation by identifying previously overlooked projects,
- broaden access to data from various organisations beyond donors,
- enhance planning and budgeting through timely transaction information,

- provide comprehensive insights into activities, including non-financial data, and
- save time by streamlining data collection and analysis processes for both donors and recipients.

A significant portion of the data entered into the UAIMP is already accessible in digital format in IATI. Directly importing near real-time data from IATI would streamline data entry, ensure quicker updates, and guarantee higher accuracy for all donors who publish their information through IATI.

Integration would require careful attention to both technical and institutional aspects.

Technically, the UAIMP must fully comply with IATI's latest standards, ensuring seamless data exchange through formats, APIs and quality control mechanisms. System compatibility and potential upgrades should also be assessed.

Institutionally, successful integration hinges on stakeholder engagement, building the capacity of the UAIMP users and government officials on IATI data, and proactive communication about the benefits of transparency and data-driven decision-making.

Finally, a long-term sustainability plan with dedicated resources is crucial for maintaining and optimising the IATI integration within the UAIMP.

By following these recommendations, Uganda can unlock the full potential of IATI integration, contributing to a more transparent and effective development landscape.



# Section 5: Potential benefits of using the platform

By making information on aid projects more accessible, the platform has helped to ensure that donors and other stakeholders are aware of how their resources are being used. The Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) has also helped to improve the efficiency of aid management by providing a centralised system for tracking and reporting on aid projects. Potential benefits that would exist if the practical challenges of the platform were overcome include:

- **Improved access to information on aid projects.** The UAIMP makes information on aid projects readily accessible to stakeholders within the ecosystem. This information can be used by civil society organisations, the media and the general public to hold the government and donors accountable for their commitments.
- **Enhanced coordination between government, donors and implementing partners.** The UAIMP provides a platform for government, donors and implementing partners to share information and highlight areas of potential collaboration on projects across various sectors. This helps to ensure that projects are aligned with the national development plan and that resources are being used effectively.
- **Enhanced decision-making on aid allocation.** The UAIMP provides information on the progress of aid projects and the impact of aid on the ground. This information can be used by the government and donors to make informed decisions about how to allocate aid resources.
- **Improved transparency and accountability of aid.** The UAIMP makes information on aid projects more accessible to both the donors and the government. This information can be used to track the progress of projects, ensure that resources are being used effectively, and hold the government and donors accountable for their commitments.
- **Increased efficiency in aid management.** The UAIMP provides a centralised system for tracking and reporting on aid projects. This helps to ensure that resources are being used efficiently and that projects are meeting their objectives.

- **Reduced duplication of efforts.** The platform allows donors to see which projects are receiving investment. This reduces the duplication of efforts, especially in sectors where several donors are implementing activities.

# Section 6: Challenges of using the platform

While the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) is a valuable tool for improving the transparency and accountability of aid in Uganda, stakeholders interviewed from both the government and the donor community agree the system is plagued with significant challenges around accessibility, system design, coordination of stakeholders and user uptake. These challenges need to be addressed to ensure that the platform is sustainable and effective.

- **Unreliable and poor-quality data.** The quality of data within the UAIMP is often subpar due to a lack of standardised guidelines for data entry (including clear indications on the minimum requirements for the data entered into the system and agreed definitions of terms). Poor-quality data inputs, with irregular and non-real-time data updates, makes the information in the platform unreliable. This deficiency hinders effective decision-making, the ability to monitor project progress and aid impact evaluations.
- **Low levels of user adoption.** The UAIMP is yet to be widely used by stakeholders in the aid community in Uganda – both government and especially the donor community. Low adoption has been driven by a lack of capacity (not enough trained staff to provide regular data updates, exacerbated by the laborious nature of the data entry into the system) and a lack of effective coordination between the government and donors. This limits the impact of the platform and makes it difficult for it to achieve its full potential.
- **Technical challenges.** The UAIMP is a complex system and bound to have technical challenges arising from access requirements, reporting standards and interface/navigation. These challenges need to be addressed mainly by the government but in close collaboration with the donor community and other stakeholders, including civil society organisations and the public. This will ensure that the platform is open, reliable and accessible.
- **Funding challenges.** The UAIMP has been developed and maintained by donors, with auxiliary support of the Government of Uganda, however there is no long-term funding strategy in place. This could make it difficult to sustain the platform in the future. Government needs to fast-track implementation of a financial framework supporting the system, which will involve having a dedicated line budget.

- **Poor coordination between the government and development partners.** This has created challenges that have affected the quality, accuracy and timeliness of aid data reporting to the platform. This issue is further exacerbated by a lack of established communication channels, which means that regular meetings with donors to convey information about upgrades and data standards are not conducted. Consequently, the full potential of the system remains unrealised, impeding effective aid management and data reporting.

# Section 7: Case study of Nepal's aid information management system

Foreign aid to Nepal accounts for 26% of the national budget.<sup>34</sup> Over forty donors provide development assistance to the country, and coordinating and monitoring this volume of aid was a challenge. In 2010, this led to the creation of an aid information management system, developed in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank and UN Development Programme, and hosted by the Ministry of Finance.

This section provides an overview of Nepal's Aid Information Management System (AMIS), which was also developed by Development Gateways. Based on a literature review, it highlights best practices that can be replicated in Uganda's Aid Management Information Platform (UAIMP). Despite potential differences in economic growth and inequality between the two nations, we believe that these practices can still enhance the potential benefits of the UAIMP.

Nepal's system is free and open to anyone who wants to see the progress of the various externally funded projects. It is a centralised and standardised repository for foreign aid, helping donors and Nepal's Ministry of Finance to report on aid assistance projects in the country. The Ministry of Finance, donor community, the National Planning Commission and line ministries are among the stakeholders who benefit from the platform in terms of reporting, analysis and planning.

At the time of writing, the system has over 1,245 projects with a total commitment of US\$24.7 billion and US\$11.7 billion in disbursements to various sectors.<sup>35</sup> The system has a user-friendly interface allowing the user to search for a project by location, financial information available on the project, or the contact details of key persons and organisations involved in the project. The system provides information on both on- and off budget programmes – the government provides information on the on-budget projects while the off-budget and technical assistance project information is given by the donors.<sup>36</sup>

The system is subject to regular upgrades to improve the system's user interface, include diverse types of financing and resource support, and to withstand increases in traffic to the system. Major upgrades were done in 2013 and 2023, both supported by development partners. The 2013 upgrade involved geo-coding all the projects within the system to create a comprehensive visualisation and analysis of project locations. This upgrade was done with financial support from USAID and UNDP.<sup>37</sup> The second major upgrade in the system began in the first quarter of 2023, supported by UNDP and the

UK's Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (under a project called Effective Development Financing and Coordination 2). This upgrade will improve the government's ability to track and manage development funding and strengthen the capacity of other stakeholders to coordinate their aid efforts. This upgrade has been outsourced to a leading technology consulting company called NAXA.<sup>38</sup>

The system has a seamless integration with the country's Public Financial Management System and the Budget Information Management System. This ensures there is a flow of information between the systems, for better decision-making and also transparency and accountability purposes.

The system also benefits from regular audits by citizens and civil society organisations, who visit the site to ensure accountability and transparency standards are met, leading to better management of the site. These stakeholders use and disseminate the information found on the site.<sup>39</sup>

The following are best practices from the Nepal aid information management system which can be replicated by Uganda.

- **Accessibility.** The system is open to all stakeholders – the government, donors, implementing agencies, civil society organisations and the public. This transparency and accountability helps to ensure that aid is used effectively, and stakeholders have oversight of commitments and disbursements made to a project.
- **Standardised reporting.** The system uses a standard data format to ensure that the information is consistent and easy to use. This makes it easier to compare data from different sources and to generate reports and use dashboards. Nepal uses the IATI Standard, which is an international standard for aid data that has been accepted by development partners.
- **Data updates.** The system benefits from regular updates (as and when there is a new project). This ensures that the system's database is up to date with new information, hence accurate and reliable.
- **Analysis and reporting tool.** The system has an inbuilt data analysis and reporting tool that synthesises information to generate reports and dashboards to track aid flows and impact. This helps the government and other stakeholders to make informed decisions about aid allocation and programming.
- **Sustainability.** To ensure the sustainability of the Nepal aid information management system, the government has:
  - dedicated a specific budget to provide necessary financial resources for the system

- Invested in staff training and skill development, to help them effectively use and manage the system
- Created a pool of experienced users
- Fostered engagement with development partners and other stakeholders by holding regular meetings to evaluate the system's progress and to identify areas for enhancement, thereby promoting long-term viability.

# Conclusion

The Uganda Aid Information Management System (UAIMP) has the potential to benefit stakeholders by increasing the efficiency of aid management. However, the donors interviewed have highlighted problems around the quality and reliability of data, the uptake of the system, and sustainability. The Government of Uganda must address these in close cooperation with donors.

The platform exclusively captures externally funded projects from bilateral donors that are on-budget, omitting off-budget programmes and multilaterally funded projects due to the intricate nature of tracking these programmes. In its current form, it serves as a useful input into budget planning but is unable to provide a comprehensive view of the effectiveness and impact of aid in general. Although it provides information on project disbursements and particulars, including impact, there is room for system enhancements that broaden its scope. This will ensure that the system captures all projects funded by any donor, whether on- or off-budget, providing a comprehensive overview of aid-funded programmes.

Within Uganda, the UAIMP, IBP and PBS play complementary roles. The UAIMP focuses on foreign aid, while the IBP and the PBS handle broader government projects and budgeting. There are some areas of overlap, such as on project data, budgeting and reporting. Integrating them, and ensuring efficient data exchange, would offer a holistic view of Uganda's development activities. Recent efforts towards their integration have resulted in progress, and optimising workflows for each system's specific user groups is key to maximising their collective benefit.

Additionally, donors and civil society organisations have highlighted the importance of making the system accessible to the public. They agree that granting public access would not only enhance the credibility of the information within the system but also enable public scrutiny, effectively turning the public into potential auditors.

The persistent lag in data updates and reporting stems from the laborious nature of data entry, the absence of a trusted manual, a lack of dedicated personnel to address system-related queries and accessibility issues. Regular meetings and collaborative efforts with the Ugandan government and stakeholders are essential to address these challenges and formulate actionable recommendations. Capacity-building sessions on system operation should be provided not only to government ministries and departments but also to donors, ensuring a shared technical knowledge base for seamless navigation and general impactful use of the platform.

Much of the data being keyed into the system is already available in a digital format through IATI. Importing near-real-time data from IATI would improve both the timeliness and accuracy of data for those donors that do publish through IATI.



Encouraging better coordination within the institutional framework is crucial. Meetings among stakeholders are infrequent, and even when convened, recommendations often go unimplemented, primarily by the government. Additionally, making all available legislations on the UAIMP public would foster transparency, as some existing laws are presently inaccessible to the public.

While integration with other systems promises improved efficiency and management of aid projects, public investments and general budgeting, the process is not devoid of challenges. Existing issues, such as data quality, accuracy and reliability, can only be mitigated by standardised reporting guidelines, simplified data requirements and regular and comprehensive updates from all donors.

Although the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) claims that the platform is user-friendly and provides multiple options for filtering and searching needed data, the donor community we interviewed has voiced concerns about difficulties in navigating the system.

# Recommendations

## Recommendations to the government

- **Accessibility and transparency.** To address accessibility concerns from both donors and the public, the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP) should be made accessible to the general public. This would promote both transparency and accountability. Simultaneously, steps need to be taken to address donor concerns regarding the platform's capacity to handle increased traffic, as it tends to become inaccessible during traffic surges. This can be achieved by enhancing the system's bandwidth to accommodate the influx of users. Furthermore, encouraging the automation of password management within the system is crucial to prevent issues related to password resets, which currently require the intervention of a third-party system administrator. This would streamline user access and reduce administrative overheads. The government must also take steps to ensure the transparency and accessibility of policies related to external financing. This will empower the public to actively engage with these policies. By making policies accessible, the government demonstrates accountability and transparency, fostering trust and public participation in shaping the future of external financing.
- **Technical assistance.** It is imperative to ensure that technical assistance is readily accessible to all users. To achieve this, a comprehensive manual for the UAIMP should be made available online, complete with instructional videos, to assist first-time users in navigating the system effectively. In addition, the government should appoint a dedicated technical support person to be responsible for addressing any queries or concerns from users. This individual would also play a crucial role in sending reminders to the donor community regarding submission details and due dates, as well as maintaining a calendar of events that highlights submission deadlines. To further enhance user proficiency and system utilisation, periodic training sessions should be organised, specifically catering for first-time users. Additionally, refresher training should be provided as necessary to ensure that all users remain well-informed and proficient in using the UAIMP.
- **Data.** To enhance the quality of data within the UAIMP, there are several steps that can be taken. First and foremost, it is essential to establish clear data standards. A comprehensive manual outlining the prescribed data format should be shared, ensuring uniform and consistent data-entry practices throughout the system, and authorised users should be provided with training on these standards. This manual should include minimum requirements for data entry to maintain data quality and integrity. Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) should expedite the implementation of

data validation meetings, involving both ministries and donors. These meetings will play a vital role in cross-verifying and ensuring the accuracy of data inputs, further contributing to the overall data quality improvement within the UAIMP.

- **Coordination.** The government should actively seek improved coordination between its various line ministries and development partners to raise awareness of the significance of the UAIMP and to increase user participation, particularly in terms of donor data inputting. This concerted effort is essential to establish the UAIMP as the primary data source for externally funded programmes in Uganda. To facilitate this, line ministries should be encouraged to contribute data related to sector-funded programmes into the system. MoFPED should play a pivotal role in validating this data, ensuring its accuracy and reliability. Furthermore, there should be a focus on promoting coordination between the government and the UNHCR to explore the integration of the humanitarian database (currently housed within the Office of the Prime Minister and the UNHCR). This integration would streamline information management and enhance the overall effectiveness of humanitarian efforts in Uganda.
- **System design.** To enhance user experience, several improvements can be made to the platform. First, enhancing the user interface is crucial for making it more user friendly. Additionally, providing dedicated user support is essential to assisting users in navigating and utilising the platform effectively. It is also important to establish clear and concise submission requirements, specifying the necessary approval levels. This clarity will streamline the submission process and reduce unnecessary steps. Context-specific training should be extended to all donors, with a particular focus on adapting the existing manual to the Ugandan context. This will ensure that users have access to relevant and practical guidance. In reviewing the current data entry framework, the government should consider revising the requirement for entering the names of implementing partners. Given the procurement challenges associated with this practice, it may be more productive to replace it with an option for listing items by activity, rather than by partners. This adjustment would streamline data entry and improve the efficiency of the system.
- **System reports and analyses.** The government should enhance system-generated reporting by ensuring that it is more frequent and comprehensive. This entails expanding the scope of the reports to incorporate information that is vital for donors in their decision-making processes. Such information should include aid allocation by sector, activity and geographical location, as well as updates on project progress. Additionally, donors would benefit from access to data about the Government of Uganda's own contributions to these initiatives. This broader and more regular reporting will facilitate more informed decision-making on the part of the donors.
- **Increase user adoption.** The UAIMP can be made more widely used by raising awareness of the platform and by providing training to first-time users on how to navigate the process of data entry and generation of reports within the system something which the development partners are currently struggling with.

- **Develop a long-term funding strategy.** The government needs to create a roadmap for sustaining the platform. A sustainable long-term financing strategy for the UAIMP can be established through collaboration with donors to secure a consistent and reliable source of funding. This initial funding support from donors can serve as a transitional phase, gradually shifting to direct government funding.
- **Enhancing system integration.** Integrating core financial systems and other related systems is imperative. A more robust integration framework would encompass the UAIMP, Integrated Bank of Projects (IBP), Programme Budgeting System (PBS), IATI, IFMIS and other pertinent systems. This will facilitate seamless data exchanges, eradicate duplication of efforts and foster proper governance and effectiveness in the development initiatives undertaken in Uganda.

## Recommendations to the donors

- **Resource support.** To ensure the sustained functionality and development of the UAIMP, both technical and financial support from donors will be crucial. This support will facilitate future maintenance and upgrades, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the system. Ownership and maintenance support responsibilities should gradually transition over to the government.
- **Data quality and availability.** Donors should actively support the government in establishing a harmonised data quality standard for the system that is in line with other international aid management information systems. This includes collaboratively defining a minimum set of data that must be consistently reported in the system. Furthermore, donors should strive to facilitate regular and real-time data reporting to enhance the credibility of the information available to decision-makers.
- **Coordination and collaboration.** Encouraging regular meetings between donors and the government is essential for addressing any challenges related to the system. These interactions provide a platform for donors to offer critical feedback and suggestions, improving efficiency and effective implementation of recommendations. These coordination meetings should also serve as opportunities for brainstorming sessions to explore ways to enhance the system.
- **Strengthening governance and oversight.** Donors should take the lead in advocating for independent oversight of the aid information system. This should involve the establishment of an oversight body and the development of mechanisms that allow civil society to actively participate in aid monitoring and evaluation (which would require granting them access to the system). This contributes to transparency and accountability.

## Recommendation to civil society organisations

- **Advocacy for an open aid information management platform.** Civil society can lead on advocating for changes and improvements in the system to facilitate open access for the public. This would not only provide the public with direct access to information on externally funded programmes but also empower them to act as auditors, helping to ensure effective oversight of the system. Civil society advocacy efforts should also prioritise securing a more robust financing framework for the UAIMP to ensure its long-term sustainability.
- **Raising awareness of the system.** Civil society organisations can take the initiative to educate the public about the significance of the aid information management system and the wealth of information it contains. This can be done by opening access to the system and developing analysis and disseminating information from the system. By doing this, they would contribute to increasing public awareness and understanding of the system's role in aiding transparency and accountability.
- **Providing oversight and monitoring of the system.** By leveraging the aid data within the system, civil sociality organisations can hold both the government and donors accountable for aid contributions. This includes reporting instances of aid misuse and fraud to the relevant authorities, as well as advocating for enhanced transparency and accountability measures in the aid sector.

# Annex: Key informant interviews

Interviews were conducted with representatives from:

- Development Gateway – Technical development partner
- Embassy of France - Donor
- European Union - Donor
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – Donor
- Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) - Government
- Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Protection - Government
- The ONE Campaign - Donor
- Uganda's Resource Enhancement and Accountability Programme - Government
- United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) - Donor
- United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) - Donor
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) - Donor
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) - Donor

# Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'On-budget support' refers to aid that is directly integrated into the national budget prepared by the Ministry of Finance while 'off-budget support' refers to aid that bypasses the national budget, meaning it's not directly accounted for by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

<sup>2</sup> Real-time data is data that is available as soon as it is created and acquired.

<sup>3</sup> Please see other research products from Development Initiatives covering aid flows to Uganda. Available at: <https://devinit.org/resources/?types=&topic=&country=uganda&q=>

<sup>4</sup> International Monetary Fund. *Just How Important Is Finance for African Development?* Available at: <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/downloadpdf/book/9781557752321/ch013.xml>

<sup>5</sup> Development Gateway. Aid Management Program: Uganda. Available at: <https://developmentgateway.org/casestudy/amp-uganda/>

<sup>6</sup> Development Gateway. Aid Management Program: Uganda. Available at: <https://developmentgateway.org/casestudy/amp-uganda/>

<sup>7</sup> Ethiopia will be one of the other countries included in this series of assessments.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Debt sustainability reports. Available at: <https://mepd.finance.go.ug/documents/DSA/DSA-FY202122.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> On-budget foreign aid projects, particularly those funded by bilateral donors, account for 60% of the total foreign aid to Uganda between 2012 and 2021. See more at: <https://data.oecd.org/>

<sup>10</sup> National Information Technology Authority – Uganda (NITA-U). Available at: <https://www.nita.go.ug/>

<sup>11</sup> This will be additional content support to the UAIMP. They will support a liaison person between the government and development partners who can engage on specific issues that need clarification (from both sides) in an effort to make data capturing easier for development partners in the future.

<sup>12</sup> Several donor respondents mentioned that there are ongoing discussions with the German Embassy to provide technical support required for maintaining the system.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Available at: <https://www.finance.go.ug/mofped>

<sup>14</sup> Development Gateway. Available at: <https://developmentgateway.org/>

<sup>15</sup> The Local Development Partners' Group (LDPG) Uganda is an apex forum for coordination of development issues in Uganda. It was established in 2006 and brings together development partners, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, civil society organisations and the private sector, to work collaboratively towards Uganda's national development goals.

<sup>16</sup> Several government agencies beyond the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) interact with the UAIMP, and it is not always possible to bring all of them to a meeting. Instead, these agencies can provide the MoFPED with a summary of their key issues related to the UAIMP and MoFPED will then use this information to facilitate discussions with donors in meetings.

<sup>17</sup> Constitution of Uganda, 1995. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/44038/90491/F206329993/UGA44038.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Access to Information Act, 2005. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/44038/90491/F206329993/UGA44038.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Local Development Partner Group. The Uganda Aid Management Platform Policy Framework, 2013. Available at: <https://www.ldpg.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Uganda-Partnership-Policy-2013.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Literature related to the policy is available here: [https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/83380/1/PArk\\_An%20analysis%20of%20Aid%20Information%20Management.pdf](https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/83380/1/PArk_An%20analysis%20of%20Aid%20Information%20Management.pdf) However, interviewees from the Government of Uganda could not point us to the legislation.

<sup>21</sup> The respondent from the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection pointed out that they currently lack access to the system, and therefore are unable to view externally funded projects within their sector.

- <sup>22</sup> Donors highlight challenges related to accessibility of the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP), citing issues such as the system being available only during non-working hours, when internet traffic is lower. Another noted challenge involves password reset difficulties: the reset process can only be facilitated by the system administrator. Additionally, certain embassy network security systems restrict access to UAIMP.
- <sup>23</sup> We could not ascertain from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development whether or how off-budget projects are managed.
- <sup>24</sup> Facing challenges of water scarcity and conflict, the Karamoja region in Uganda discovered a solution through a data-driven approach. Using the Uganda Aid Information Management Platform (UAIMP), the government identified specific needs, coordinated aid efforts and strategically allocated resources. This initiative led to improved water access, decreased conflict and the development of thriving communities. This success presents the UAIMP as a beacon of hope for efficient development management. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/Uganda-improved-water-resources-management-resilience-building-karamoja>
- <sup>25</sup> Programme Budgeting System. Available at: <https://www.finance.go.ug/content/programme-budgeting-system>
- <sup>26</sup> Development Gateway. A case study on Uganda aid information management platform. Available at: <https://developmentgateway.org/casestudy/amp-uganda/#:~:text=Aid%20Management%20Program%3A%20Uganda,maintaining%20data%20integrity%20across%20both.>
- <sup>27</sup> Public investment projects are government-funded initiatives aimed at developing various sectors of the economy and improving public infrastructure to promote socioeconomic growth and development in Uganda.
- <sup>28</sup> Integrated Bank of Projects. Available at: <https://ibp.finance.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Integrated-Bank-of-Projects-User-Manual.pdf>
- <sup>29</sup> Integrated Bank of Projects. Available at: <https://ibp.finance.go.ug/>
- <sup>30</sup> Integrated Bank of Projects system user manual. Available at: <https://ibp.finance.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Integrated-Bank-of-Projects-User-Manual.pdf>
- <sup>31</sup> Integrated Bank of Projects system user manual. Available here <https://ibp.finance.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Integrated-Bank-of-Projects-User-Manual.pdf>
- <sup>32</sup> Integrated Financial Management Information System. Available here <https://ereg.ifms.go.ug/>. Users in this context includes both government and non-government stakeholders. The former includes ministries, departments, agencies and public entities, while the latter comprises contractors and suppliers to the government, development partners, researchers and auditors. Financial transactions in this context refers to any movement of money within the government's financial system.
- <sup>33</sup> Operational data portal. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/>
- <sup>34</sup> USAID. Nepal's aid management platform: A Tool for Managing Aid in Nepal and Making it More Effective. Available at: [https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/usaidnepalnewsletter\\_april-june\\_page7.pdf](https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/usaidnepalnewsletter_april-june_page7.pdf)
- <sup>35</sup> Aid Information Management System, Nepal. Available at: <https://amis.mof.gov.np/>
- <sup>36</sup> Aid Information Management System, Nepal. Available at: <https://amis.mof.gov.np/>
- <sup>37</sup> USAID. Nepal's aid management platform: A Tool for Managing Aid in Nepal and Making it More Effective. Available at: [https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/usaidnepalnewsletter\\_april-june\\_page7.pdf](https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/usaidnepalnewsletter_april-june_page7.pdf)
- <sup>38</sup> Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. Ministry of Finance and UNDP Initiate Major Upgrade to Nepal's Aid Information Management System. Available at: <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/Ministry-of-finance-and-undp-upgrade-nepal-aid-information-management-system>
- <sup>39</sup> USAID. Nepal's aid management platform: A Tool for Managing Aid in Nepal and Making it More Effective. Available at: [https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/usaidnepalnewsletter\\_april-june\\_page7.pdf](https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/usaidnepalnewsletter_april-june_page7.pdf)



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