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Development Co-operation Directorate  
Development Assistance Committee

## DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics

### Peer review on development finance statistics of Czechia

The Statistical Peer Review of Czechia was carried out from 14-17 October 2024. The review team consisted of representatives from the Netherlands and Portugal, an observer from Kazakhstan and four staff from the DAC Secretariat. The review covered the seven dimensions outlined in the Guidance note for statistical peer reviews, namely: statistical policy issues; domestic data collection; statistical reporting; performance on DAC recommendations and international commitments; transparency; data accessibility; and publication of statistics.

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# Executive summary

The Statistical Peer Review of Czechia was carried out from 14-17 October 2024. The review team consisted of representatives from the Netherlands and Portugal, an observer from Kazakhstan and four staff from the OECD DAC Secretariat. The review covered the seven dimensions outlined in the Guidance note for statistical peer reviews, namely: statistical policy issues; domestic data collection; statistical reporting; performance on DAC recommendations and international commitments; transparency; data accessibility; and publication of statistics.

## Key recommendations

### Official Development Assistance

- The review team commends Czechia for providing support to the Ukrainian refugees from budgets that were additional to the development co-operation and humanitarian assistance budget. The team also commends Czechia for its conservative approach to counting in-donor refugee costs. The MFA is encouraged to continue its efforts to protect the development co-operation / ODA budget.

### Domestic data collection

- The team in charge of statistical reporting, with the support of the IT team, is encouraged to investigate various options with regards to improving the current system by upgrading ODAStat.cz or by adopting a new system, taking the opportunity to make more important system structural changes.
- The review team noted the importance of documenting the data collection process, preparing personalised materials / guidebooks per institution to facilitate reporting, and using existing checklists and productivity tips.
- Czechia could consider increasing, to the extent possible, its statistical capacity to manage the overall process of collecting, reviewing, reporting and communicating on ODA data. Specific attention should be given to the profile of the staff to fill the MFA statistical correspondent position, as this role can call on skills related to statistics, policy and IT. Potentially, the rotation issue could also be addressed by hiring for a longer-term position within the MFA team.
- The review team commends the MFA for the coordinating role it plays amongst all data reporters when it comes to ODA reporting. Potential further improvements could be found, e.g. to revive the Statistical Working Group in the framework of the Council for Development Co-operation as a platform to address data collection challenges, share best practices, ensure sustained coordination, support institutional memory across government entities, and identify needs for improvement to ODAstat.cz.

### Reporting to the OECD

- The review team commends the work by the statistical correspondents in Czechia for submitting comprehensive ODA reporting of good quality.
- To further improve an already good reporting by Czechia, the MFA could consider the possibility to increase training of national data collectors. The review team recommends automating processes to catch common reporting issues and ensure data integrity.
- The team recommends sharing WP-STAT documents with relevant institutions to ensure that they are aware and consulted on policy/reporting discussions and decisions taken by the WP-STAT.
- The review team invites the MFA to further increase its active participation in the discussions of the WP-STAT and its informal network on data quality and innovation (AI, machine learning).

### Monitoring of commitments and recommendations

- Czechia could invite the WP-STAT to resume discussions on how to harmonise the tying status of reporting on NGO grants.
- Czechia is invited to resume the contract awards reporting.

### Private sector instruments (PSI) and mobilisation

- With the merger between the National Development Bank (NRB) and the Czech Export Bank (CEB), and in response to CSOs concerns, continued attention should be paid for the NRB guarantee programme to stay focused on development and additionality, as key criteria of ODA eligibility of PSI.
- The review team also recommends that the MFA documents, together with NRB, what and how to report to ensure institutional memory both within the MFA and NRB.

### Transparency, data fit for purpose and dissemination

- In the absence of internal online tools to disseminate its ODA figures, the review team recommends that the MFA leverages all existing tools for data analysis and visualisation, including the OECD Czechia Development Co-operation profile, the OECD Data Explorer or the EU Explorer.
- Czechia could consider expanding its reporting on TOSSD through an incremental approach.

### Requests to the Secretariat

- Czechia noted that, with the migration of the OECD website, many resources available before were no longer accessible (e.g. webpages dedicated to specific ODA-eligibility topics). They urged the Secretariat to rebuild the OECD DAC website as these resources are essential for the statistical correspondents and their multiple partners.
- Czechia suggested that the Secretariat prepares a basic welcome / induction package for new WP-STAT correspondents. Specifically, Czechia would welcome greater access to e-learning programmes and training resources aimed at enhancing the skills of statistical correspondents. Additionally, recommendations on how to automate repetitive and routine tasks — which are common across all member states — would greatly improve efficiency.
- The WP-STAT community could also see how to address collectively some issues that were deemed common to many members. These include how to communicate on impact (given that the CRS system is an input-based system) and tips on how to handle and optimise communication in several languages (e.g. managing in parallel French, English and the national language).

# Introduction – Overview of Czechia’s development co- operation

1. This section provides an overview of the organisational structure of Czechia’s development co-operation, the strategic and legislative framework, and the ODA budget preparation process.

## Organisational structure and key stakeholders

2. The Department for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for leading, coordinating, and overseeing the delivery of Czechia’s ODA, in particular the budget for bilateral development co-operation and humanitarian assistance programmes.<sup>1</sup>

3. The 2010 Act on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid<sup>2</sup> assigned the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) as implementing agency for bilateral ODA. The MFA and CzDA work closely together to ensure adequate implementation across the priority countries of Czechia.

4. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) is responsible for Czechia’s engagement with international financial institutions and the European Union. It is responsible for payments to the European Union, the European Development Fund, and other international financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, or the World Bank Group. It is also a key stakeholder for the approval of the ODA annual plan. The MoF also implements public finance-related Technical Assistance Programmes for partner institutions in developing countries.

5. The MFA regularly collaborates with other ministries, both for policy-related issues and for data collection in relevant areas, mostly with the Ministry of Finance (for multilateral co-operation); the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, of Health and of Interior, as well as regional governments and municipalities, notably for the support to refugees but not only; the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (e.g. scholarships); the Ministry of environment (e.g. contributions to environmental conventions,

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed understanding of the organisational structure of Czechia’s development co-operation system and division of labour, see notably Figure 1 in OECD (2023), *OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Czech Republic 2023*, OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/eba15a0b-en>.

<sup>2</sup> See the Act on Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid, and Amending Related Laws at [https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/en/foreign\\_relations/development\\_cooperation\\_and\\_humanitarian/act\\_on\\_development\\_cooperation\\_and.html](https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/development_cooperation_and_humanitarian/act_on_development_cooperation_and.html)

international organisations and protocols); the Ministry of Industry and Trade (e.g. Aid for Trade); and the Ministries of Regional Development and Agriculture (for contributions to specific multilateral institutions).

6. The MFA is the main contact for Czech reporting to the OECD. CzDA carried out this statistical function for a few years, based on the rationale that the function would be best carried out by the independent agency that delivered co-operation, but Czechia brought this function back to the MFA at the beginning of 2024 in order to ensure better coordination and policy coherence across the system.

## Strategic and legislative framework

7. The 2010 Act on Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance sets out the administrative organisation of the international development co-operation policy of Czechia. It provides the MFA with a strategic mandate and defines clear roles across the different government departments.

8. Czechia's development co-operation policy objectives are defined in the 2018-2030 Development Cooperation Strategy<sup>3</sup>, which sets out five thematic priorities: building stable and democratic institutions, sustainable management of natural resources, agriculture and rural development, inclusive social development, and economic growth. These priorities are pursued in the six priority countries<sup>4</sup> of Czechia which are in Southeast and Eastern Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova), Southeast Asia (Cambodia), and Eastern and Southern Africa (Ethiopia, Zambia), and in addition Ukraine. The MFA also administers the Council for Development Cooperation, which has existed since 2007 and gathers representatives of government and other entities involved in Czechia's development co-operation. It meets regularly and has a consultative role on development co-operation issues.

9. Czechia publishes a yearly Development Co-operation plan<sup>5</sup>, which summarises the indicative amounts to be disbursed for development co-operation over the next three years.

## ODA figures and budget preparation

10. Czechia provided USD 810.3 million of ODA in 2023, representing 0.24% of GNI.<sup>6</sup> Its ODA peaked in 2022 at USD 1051 million, representing 0.38% of GNI, mainly due to a surge of in-donor refugees costs (IDRC) from Ukraine. From 2018 to 2021, ODA was relatively stable, around 0.13% of GNI<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> See the "Development Co-operation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018-2030" at [https://www.mzv.cz/file/2710363/CZ\\_Development\\_Cooperation\\_Strategy\\_2018\\_2030.pdf](https://www.mzv.cz/file/2710363/CZ_Development_Cooperation_Strategy_2018_2030.pdf).

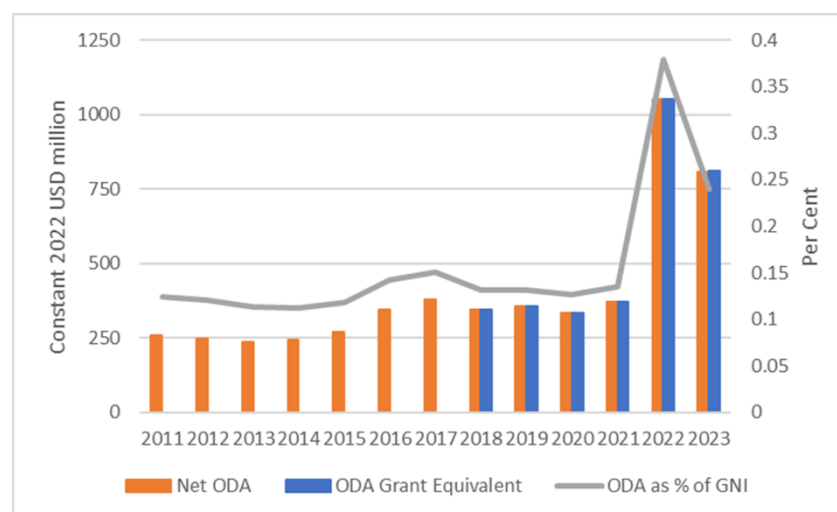
<sup>4</sup> See footnote 3 in page 13 in "Development Co-operation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018-2030".

<sup>5</sup> See [Czechia 2025 Development Cooperation Plan](#).

<sup>6</sup> DAC members adopted the grant-equivalent methodology starting from their reporting of 2018 data as a more accurate way to count the donor effort.

<sup>7</sup> See the [2024 OECD DCR profile of Czechia](#).

Figure 1. Czechia's ODA and ODA/GNI



Source: OECD DAC, "International development statistics (database)" (2024).

11. The international development co-operation budget is managed and coordinated by the MFA Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) department. Every year in May, a Development Cooperation Plan (for 2 years plus one more indicative year) is prepared and includes development co-operation, humanitarian assistance and transition programmes. The plan is drafted by the MFA, jointly with CzDA and is discussed at interministerial level between June and September, including at the Council for Development Cooperation, and presented to Parliament between October and December before final approval by the Government. Although Czechia has a dedicated budget for development co-operation, humanitarian assistance, and transition programmes, the largest part of ODA is identified ex-post based on actual expenditures by each ministry (e.g. in-donor refugee costs).

# 1. What are the main statistical policy issues?

12. This chapter describes the main statistical policy issues related to ODA reporting in Czechia.

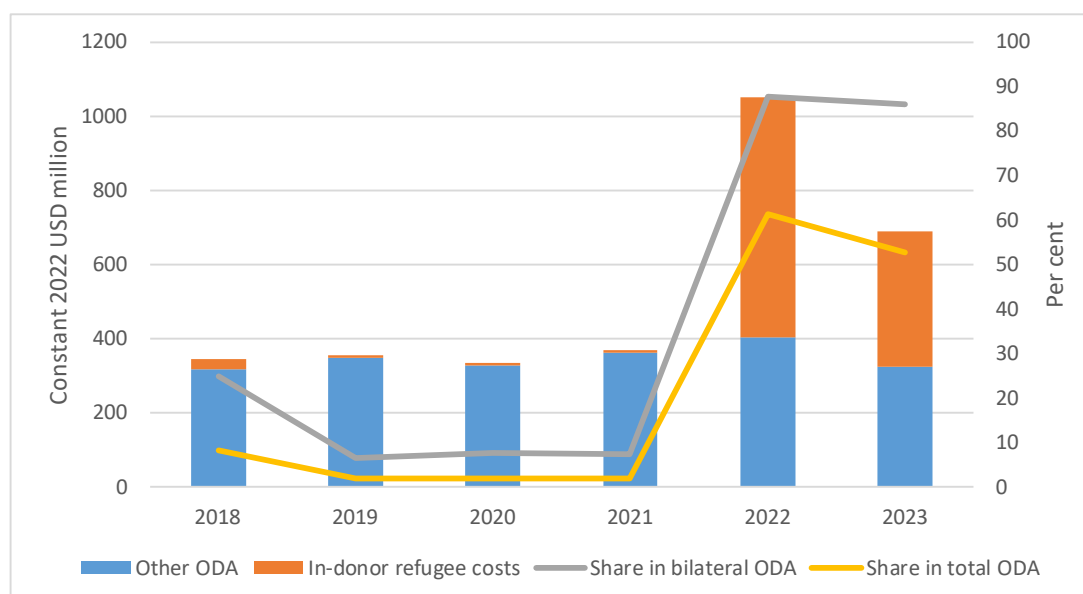
## 1.1. ODA eligibility issues

13. Czechia calculates ODA ex-post by summing up ODA-eligible expenditures from various ministries. The ODA figure hence also includes programmes which were not originally budgeted as part of the development co-operation or humanitarian assistance programmes, e.g. in-donor refugee costs or activities by the Ministry of Interior. The discussions highlighted that Czechia followed a conservative approach in assessing the ODA-eligibility of costs and was eager to deepen its knowledge of the rules. The review focussed on the method for calculating ODA-eligible in-donor refugee costs as well as administrative costs and human rights. Migration-related activities also raised eligibility questions on the Secretariat's side.

### **1.1.1. In-donor refugee costs**

14. Czechia reported a high level of in-donor refugee costs (IDRC) with a share above 80% of bilateral ODA in 2022 and 2023 (see the trend in Figure 2 below). This upsurge in the IDRC figure is linked to the mass influx of Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, reaching the number of 476 051 persons in 2022, with the share of support to Ukrainian refugees in Czechia representing 93% of total IDRC for that year.

Figure 2. Trends in ODA for in-donor refugee costs in Czechia



Source: OECD (2024), OECD International Development Statistics (database), <https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00061-en> and <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/oda-eligibility-and-conditions/in-donor-refugee-costs-in-official-development-assistance-oda.html>.

15. Czechia was among the vast majority of DAC members for which the funds for Ukrainian refugees were additional to their originally planned budget for development co-operation.<sup>8</sup> While this budget was hence “additional” and did not crowd out the development co-operation budget, it was noted that, in practice, the aftermath of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine did draw on the MFA staff resources, including those involved in the ODA reporting process. The Netherlands described a different context in their case: the ODA figure is determined ex ante and, to prevent the surge of IDRC crowding out the development co-operation budget, an inter-ministerial decision was taken to exceptionally consider the IDRC for Ukrainians as additional, and record a one-time contribution in 2022 ODA (EUR 150 million).

16. Czechia’s methodology for calculating ODA-eligible IDRC is conservative and well documented<sup>9</sup>. The discussions during the review as well as follow-up consultations with the Secretariat allowed to finalise Czechia’s inputs to the Secretariat’s survey on Ukrainian refugee costs and confirm the compliance of the method with the ODA rules. Czechia follows a conservative approach for counting IDRC in ODA. Czechia does not intend to rely on these unpredictable costs to increase and reach sustainable ODA levels.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the large refugee costs reported as ODA merely reflect the extraordinary number of refugees hosted (see Box 1).

<sup>8</sup> See the Secretariat’s report on methods for calculating IDRC for Ukrainian refugees at [DCD/DAC/STAT(2024)5/REV2].

<sup>9</sup> See Czechia’s general methodology at <https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/topics/policy-issue-focus/in-donor-refugee-costs-in-oda/oda-in-donor-refugee-costs-czech-republic.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, regarding debt relief, there are inter-ministerial discussions to try and avoid peaks in ODA by spreading the effect over several years.

### Box 1. Czechia's conservative method for counting Ukrainian refugee costs in its ODA

#### Procedure

People fleeing Ukraine are granted temporary protection (TP) in Czechia, pursuant to the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD). The procedure is de jure and de facto separated from the ordinary international protection procedure, although also administered by the Department of Asylum and Migration of the Ministry of Interior.

#### Costs counted in ODA

Czechia only includes costs incurred within the registration of new refugees, which takes from a few hours up to a few days (if the refugee arrives outside the business hours of reception centres). From the moment that TP is granted, Ukrainians are fully integrated into the national social protection systems, and costs are no longer counted in ODA.

In 2022, given the emergency character of the situation, Czechia additionally reported on humanitarian allowances provided either directly to refugees or to entities denoted to provide emergency services (emergency scholarships, health, reception centres, etc.). In 2023, when the system was already settled, most of the emergency allowances ended. The scope of costs reported is thus smaller from 2023 onwards.

#### Twelve-months rule

TP registration takes place immediately after arrival, and only costs incurred within the registration are recorded as ODA. In that way, the twelve-month rule is met by default. Only real newcomers are counted in ODA, not those granted an extension of TP. Czechia does not withdraw TP when people travel back to Ukraine, which limits the cases of multiple granting of TP.

#### Data collection

For 2022, the MFA collected the data from all entities involved in the reception of refugees from Ukraine (Ministries of the Interior, Health, Labour and social affairs, Education, Youth and sports; regional and local governments, state agencies for asylum and refugees, universities). From 2023, the data is obtained from the Ministry of Finance.

### 1.1.2. Other items – Administrative costs, human rights and migration

17. Administrative costs are ex ante planned in the development co-operation budget. They are composed of human resource costs at the MFA, including development diplomats at embassies of priority countries, evaluations, communication and logistics. Czechia does not include administrative costs of diplomats for non-priority countries in ODA, as they are only partially responsible for development co-operation.

18. The Secretariat delivered a presentation on the ODA rules for the eligibility of activities in the field of human rights and emphasised the dividing line between contributions for the promotion of “universal” human rights as an objective in itself, apart from any developmental impact that might result (not ODA) versus contributions for the promotion of human rights through capacity development in developing countries (considered part of assistance to good governance and counted as ODA). The prosecution of perpetrators of human rights abuses has a moral or legal motivation, rather than developmental motivation and examples of non-ODA activities reported by Czechia in this field include: the “Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar”, the “International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for most serious crimes in Syria”, other activities related to war crimes (these non-ODA contributions fall under the TOSSD framework). Anonymisation of human rights projects conducted under the transitional programme does not allow the Secretariat to verify their ODA eligibility (see Chapter 3) but Czechia confirmed during the review that their transitional programme is focused on providing capacity development in developing countries and hence within the scope of the ODA definition.

19. The topic of migration-related activities was not discussed during the review but should remain a point of attention as well. Compliance with the principles and criteria for this type of activities needs to be thoroughly verified. In particular, when projects refer to border management, such as the project financed in 2023 by the Ministry of Interior that refers to Frontex, the EU border and coast guard agency, the criterion 4 on addressing irregular migration applies and lists specific exclusions from ODA (e.g. border control). This project was removed from Czechia's 2023 ODA reporting.

### Observation by the peer review team

- The review team commends Czechia for providing support to the Ukrainian refugees from budgets that were additional to the development co-operation and humanitarian assistance budget. The team also commends Czechia for its conservative approach to counting in-donor refugee costs.

### Request to the Secretariat

- The team noted that, with the migration of the OECD website, many resources available before were no longer accessible (e.g. webpages dedicated to specific ODA-eligibility topics). They urged the Secretariat to rebuild the OECD DAC website as these resources are essential for the statistical correspondents and their multiple partners.

## 1.2. Private sector instruments and private finance mobilisation

### 1.2.1. Private sector instruments

20. Czechia, through its National Development Bank (NRB) is introducing new financial instruments for its development co-operation programme, including a guarantee programme and two sovereign concessional loans<sup>11</sup> (Moldova). Czechia considers itself to be still at the infancy of its private sector instrument (PSI) programme, on which it has actively been working for several years now. Reporting on PSI can be challenging for reporters given its technicality and should therefore be considered as a long-term process. In order to facilitate the reporting on PSI activities on a yearly basis, initial contacts have been made by the MFA team with the NRB.

21. Czechia demonstrated real progress in getting their guarantee instrument up and running. Beside financing projects in Czechia, the NRB is now also responsible for the guarantee programme for developmental projects in developing countries. The main guarantee scheme was established in 2019 and is funded through the development budget. A new guarantee scheme for Ukraine was developed and presented as part of the EU Ukraine Facility call, it will be co-financed by the Ukraine 2024 Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CZK 21 million) and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (CZK 50 million). NRB described some of the challenges it faced, in particular regarding the risk assessment in selecting banks in developing countries. It has submitted an application to the Ukraine Investment Framework program to possibly obtain a counter-guarantee from the Commission for the guarantee scheme in Ukraine (approval was anticipated early in 2025, but the programme itself will not be launched before Q3 2025 at the earliest).

22. During a peer learning session organised at the initiative of Czechia, the Netherlands described the Dutch Good Growth Fund (DGGF) – 'Investing in local economies' and Denmark (not formally part of the review team) was invited to share its experience in developing its guarantee instrument:

- The Danish guarantee instrument is at this stage up and running, it provides guarantees to developmental projects in several sectors. These are unfunded guarantees, sovereign backed. Denmark, like Czechia, faced challenges in determining the management fees and recalled the difference between origination costs (for the first years) and monitoring costs (which occur yearly). Yet, it very much emphasised the added value of guarantees, as it is the instrument that has mobilised the most private finance so far.
- The DGGF in the Netherlands provides a loan to a company or guarantee (sovereign and unfunded, like for Denmark) to a bank that will on their turn give a loan to a company investing in developing countries. Support can be provided to a Dutch commercial bank or a local bank. In the

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<sup>11</sup> Sovereign loans are not classified as PSI.

due diligence process of selecting projects, DGGF puts emphasis on ensuring additionality of its projects: the applicant must demonstrate that it has made reasonable efforts to obtain maximum financing from a commercial financial institution. Additionally, the impact should generate a substantial impact in terms of employment and local income generation. Regarding business development and how to build a pipeline of projects, the Netherlands recognised this was a long process of raising awareness in the market and relationship management with stakeholders like banks, business associations, but also local stakeholders, e.g. embassies that are in contact with companies willing to invest in developing countries.

23. Czechia is encouraged to anticipate reporting to the OECD on private sector instruments. This reporting will need to be provided by the MFA (based on inputs from the NRB) to the OECD, from the reporting year of the start of the guarantees. Czechia can usefully refer to existing guidance in the [Reporting Directives \(Annex 25, section 2\)](#) and in the “[Handbook on Private Sector Instruments](#)”. Also, the Secretariat stands ready to provide capacity building on PSI reporting, both for the Ministry and the NRB.

24. Czechia’s attention is drawn towards the requirement for ODA-eligible PSI to be additional. Not only financial additionality, but also development additionality, is being requested in the reporting of such transactions. The recent decision to merge NRB and CEB, the Czech Export Bank, raised concerns among the CSOs that the review team met with (see Section 5.2 in Chapter 5. ). While the integration with CEB creates the background for the NRB to significantly increase its capacity to provide guarantees and preferential loans, the CSOs noted that the expertise of CEB was with commercial topics, not development. They highlighted a risk of blurring the lines between PSI (that can be recorded in ODA if they meet the ODA criteria) and export credits (that cannot).

### **1.2.2. Private finance mobilisation**

25. Czechia gave an overview of their B2B programme, the Development Partnership Programme for the Private Sector, which is administered by CzDA. This instrument is designed to support 1) local organisations, 2) development in developing countries and 3) Czech companies. It opens grant calls for companies registered in Czechia, and grants are awarded either for the preparation phase (business plan or feasibility study) or for the realisation phase (carry out/implement the business plan, always in co-operation with a local partner company). Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of most popular countries for project awards.

26. In terms of reporting, two main issues were discussed:

- Reporting on mobilisation consists of simple co-financing. Currently, information is provided on the B2B programme on the website of Czech Aid. It includes data on the provided grants as well as an estimate of the total amount of the project, which allows to derive the amount mobilised. Czechia reports mobilisation for two phases separately in the CRS: i) for the preparation phase, companies have to obtain cofinancing themselves for at least 50 percent of the project to be able to apply for a grant up to EUR 21 000; ii) for the realisation phase, companies have to obtain cofinancing of at least 60 percent to be able to apply for a grant. More discussions would be needed to discuss the mobilisation effect of the technical assistance provided in the context of the projects.
- The team appreciated that Czechia corrected, as of 2023 data, reporting on their B2B programme, previously reported as PSI while that should not be the case.

### 1.3. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 1

#### ODA eligibility

- The MFA is encouraged to continue its efforts to protect the development co-operation / ODA budget.

#### Private sector instruments and mobilisation

- The review team encourages the NRB and MFA to continue to further increase their knowledge base about the use of guarantees and PSI generally and to engage with more experienced DAC members (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden).<sup>12</sup>
- With the merger between NRB and CEB, and in response to CSOs concerns, continued attention should be paid for the NRB guarantee programme to stay focussed on development and additionality. The review team also recommends that the MFA documents, together with NRB, what and how to report to ensure institutional memory both within the MFA and NRB. The OECD Secretariat stands ready to support.
- The review team commends Czechia for its B2B programme and advises it to join the discussions of the DAC Community of Practice on Private Finance for Sustainable Development (CoP-P4FSD) and of EDFI (Association of European Development Finance Institutions) to increase opportunities for peer learning on other types of blended finance and networking with other donors and multilateral institutions.
- The review team recommends providing the supplementary data needed in the ‘Mobilisation’ spreadsheet in the CRS for checking and quality assurance purposes.
- When Czechia starts its guarantee programme, it will be important to account for the mobilisation of flows generated through this programme.

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<sup>12</sup> The DAC Secretariat is also updating its [Blended Finance Principles](#), that feature guarantees prominently as a powerful instrument.

## 2. How to make domestic data collection more effective and efficient?

27. This chapter describes how the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Czech Development Agency (CzDA) collect and manage Czechia's statistics on development finance.

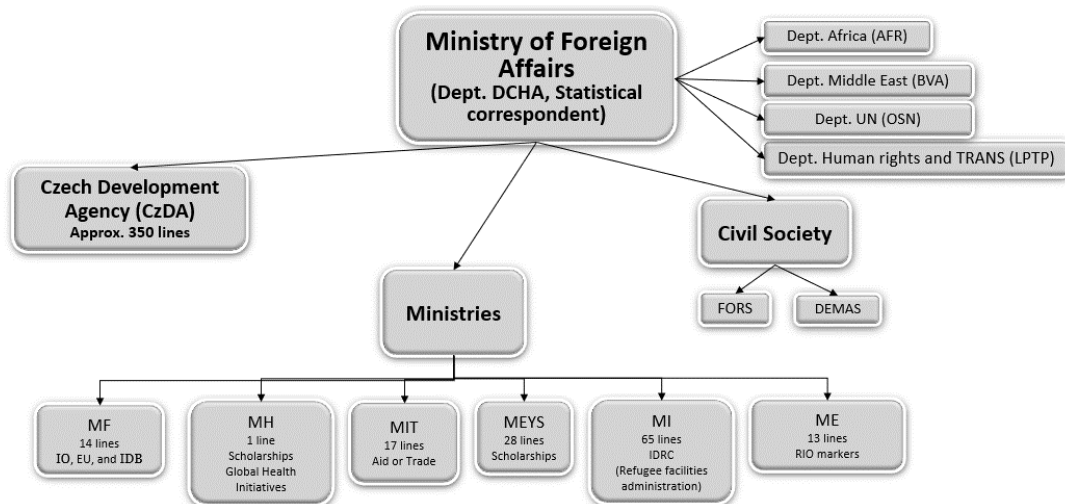
### 2.1. Data collection

28. The Department for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) within the MFA leads, coordinates and oversees the delivery of Czech aid. It is also responsible for the collection, verification and publication of Czech development finance statistics. The MFA's statistical capacity is comprised of one staff working part-time on statistical matters, who occupies the position of a junior diplomat (this staff is supported by another staff member when needed). Every two to three years the person sitting in this position rotates. CzDA also has a staff member working part-time on ODA data. The MFA statistical correspondent performs various tasks related to statistical reporting, such as for example, coordination, dissemination, capacity building as well as responding to statistical enquiries. This statistical correspondent also represents Czechia at the DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT).

29. The MFA works closely with CzDA which is responsible for the implementation of bilateral grants and accounts for the bulk of activities reported. In December/January each year, the MFA sends a solicitation letter and excel template to the various ministries (finance, interior, education, environment, trade, health, etc.) to collect data on their ODA expenses in the given year.

30. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the reporting of contributions made by Czechia to the European Union and multilateral development banks (e.g. World Bank). The Ministry of Interior saw its reporting increase sizeably in 2022 as it is responsible for the reporting of aid for refugees. The other Ministries mainly report aid in the form of multilateral contributions or scholarships (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Key contributors of Czechia's ODA



Notes: Acronyms and additional information on the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be found at: [Organizational Chart | MFA](#).

MF: Ministry of Finance; MH: Ministry of Health; MIT: Ministry of Industry and Trade; MEYS: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; MI: Ministry of the Interior; ME: Ministry of the Environment. FORS: the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation; DEMAS: the Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechia.

31. The Council for Foreign Development Cooperation, an interministerial body comprised of all line ministries, has established a statistical working group which in principle enables statistical coordination among the various ministries involved in the delivery of Czech aid. The review has been the occasion to revive this group and the review team signalled that it could possibly play a useful role to coordinate and share best practices on the reporting of ODA going forward.

32. The compilation, verification and publication of statistics on development finance requires in-depth knowledge in policy areas as well as strong technical skills. Ensuring sustainability, continuity and developing internal guidelines is especially important as ODA statistics are not only extremely technical but also becoming increasingly complex. The development of institutional knowledge can be a challenge if the position is filled by a diplomat who is on diplomatic rotation every two to three years. The review team acknowledged the outstanding commitment of the staff in place to produce high-quality statistics, as well as the time and efforts that were invested to understand and improve data processes.

33. The team appreciated the support of management in the MFA (Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance Directorate) and CzDA to their teams responsible for statistical reporting. The review team identified three areas where it believes improvements could have a substantive impact on the quality of the reporting: i) staff and IT capacity, notably because the statistical correspondent was new to the function and that there were many parallel tasks to manage the ODA reporting process (collection, review, reporting, coordination, collation of lessons learnt, communication) ii) the documentation on how CRS reporting is organised. This would help newly appointed staff to rapidly come on board to deliver the DAC questionnaire and CRS reporting. In this regard, the review team felt that the experience of previous staff working on DAC reporting at CzDA could have been further leveraged and documented for increased institutional memory iii) the turnover on the statistical correspondent's position at the MFA due to the nature of the contract (a diplomat position where a new staff is appointed every 2-3 years).

## 2.2. Data management process and tools

34. The main tool for managing Czech aid activities is ODAstat.cz. The system has been in place for four years and was developed by the Prague University of Economics and Business as a project for the MFA. It contains all the key fields for ODA collection and compilation, but it has not been upgraded to include some of the latest fields agreed by WP-STAT. In addition any new codes that have been implemented in the DAC/CRS reporting need to be adjusted manually if not initially entered at the beginning of the year, which adds to the reporting burden of the statistical correspondent. The MFA has limited capacity to update the system and lacks dedicated IT support. There are no automatic data checks built into the system and making changes to existing records is challenging once the previous year is closed in the system. When this is required, the statistical correspondent needs to first download the records to excel, delete them from the system then reload the revised records into ODAstat.cz. This also means that it is challenging to keep track of revisions unless this is done manually.

35. ODAstat.cz combines front-end and back-end technologies in order to receive and store Czechia's data. The data are stored in an SQL database with a user-friendly interface that relies on open-source software.

36. ODAstat.cz is used mostly for data collection even if initially it was also meant to be used for data analysis and dissemination. It is not linked to other systems within the government (e.g. project management system, budget system, administrative and financial system) which leads to a data collection and reporting process that is highly manual. The IT infrastructure also blocks macros which prevents the team from using the tools provided by the OECD DAC Secretariat for data verification.

37. Querying the data is complex and the statistical correspondent would benefit from having a tool to be able to search the data in a more efficient manner. In addition, the MFA would like a system that could enable downloading data, with tables or charts, automatically.

38. Although all line ministries have access to the tool and could enter their activities directly into it, some prefer to send their data to the MFA via Excel sheets provided. Because of the complex manner to edit existing data in ODAstat.cz, many users indicated they refrained from using it as they did not have any IT assistance. Therefore, the MFA is investing time into making the excel templates more user-friendly by including definitions and guidance notes on how to report the different dimensions.

39. The MFA has indicated that it intends to update (or possibly replace) ODAstat.Cz. Given the shortcomings of ODAstat.cz and heavy manual process required, it appears clearly that the tool needs a major update and upgrade (or possible replacement). The review team commends the MFA staff for their proactiveness in investigating this possibility with the IT department and for already scheduling meetings with the Slovak Republic for peer learning purposes. Further improvements to the system could include a way to modify previous years, including the tracking of revisions; search features; dashboards and analytical functionalities; user friendly data export functions; automatic data fill-in. Special attention should be put on the flexibility of the system and the capacity to modify it in the future. Another option could be to develop a new system that would meet existing and future requirements. This option would require that the new system be agile, use the integrity checks as a starting base, and that the MFA drives the specifications for the system so that it takes into account all current and future needs.

## 2.3. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 2

- The team in charge of statistical reporting, with the support of the IT team, is encouraged to investigate various options with regards to improving the current system by upgrading ODAstat.cz or by adopting a new system, taking the opportunity to make more important system structural changes.

- The review team noted the importance of documenting the data collection process in order to facilitate institutional memory during staff turnover of the position at the MFA and consider documenting information by each reporting institution, (e.g. contacts, list of broad areas reported, list of the main purpose codes used, relevant paragraphs of the CRS directives, recurring data issues per institution). This will help improve institutional memory. The review team also encourages the preparation of short, personalised materials / guidebooks per institution to facilitate reporting. The review team also recommends using the checklist and other productivity tips already existing (e.g. limiting the number of fields for national collectors to fill in as some can be automatically filled in).
- Czechia could also consider increasing, to the extent possible, its statistical capacity to manage the overall process of collecting, reviewing, reporting and communicating on ODA data. Specific attention should be given to the profile of the staff to fill the MFA statistical correspondent position, as this role can call on skills related to statistics, policy and IT. Potentially, the rotation issue could also be addressed by hiring for a longer-term position within the MFA team.
- The review team commends the MFA for the coordinating role it plays amongst all data reporters when it comes to ODA reporting. Potential further improvements could be found, e.g. to revive the Statistical Working Group in the framework of the Council for Development Co-operation as a platform to address data collection challenges, share best practices, ensure sustained coordination, support institutional memory across government entities, and identify needs for improvement to ODAstat.cz.

# 3. How to improve reporting to the OECD and how to consolidate quality reporting over time?

40. This chapter discusses how Czechia can improve the quality assurance and reporting of statistics on development finance to the OECD, building on findings from Chapter 2.

## 3.1. Quality assurance process and DAC reporting

41. At the beginning of the reporting cycle, the MFA downloads the data it has by national reporting institution and sends this information back to them for revision. When revised and new data are received from the national data providers, the MFA reviews them activity by activity, and reverts to the reporting institution requesting any modification or clarification.

42. Attention is given to the reporting of policy markers with the MFA scrutinising information provided by various departments. At present, the MFA is focussing on comprehensive reporting of the gender marker (and is also organising for a contact to represent Czechia at the Gendernet), but it also reviews other markers. The MFA informs project managers about the logic around the application of policy markers, for them to better understand what information to provide, but highlighted that it is often difficult for project managers to differentiate between “principal” and “significant” objectives of an activity and greatly values the expertise by the policy experts in the line ministries. The Ministry of Environment performs an extensive check on the climate markers. The Review team appreciated the conservative approach that the MFA takes vis-à-vis policy markers.

43. For data within the MFA, the statistical correspondent goes through the list of expenditures in the financial system and traces back the person who can then provide the more detailed CRS information. There are no records of the main (recurring) reporting issues by entity. At present, the MFA does not implement automatic control systems, either in ODAstat.Cz or through other means (the MFA firewall blocks the macros provided by the OECD DAC Secretariat to check the CRS data).

## 3.2. Data quality and specific reporting issues

44. The review team appreciated the overall commitment by the MFA to ensure quality information and commends Czechia for its good descriptive data. In general, Czechia’s reporting is good in the CRS. Each year, when the OECD Secretariat provides feedback on reporting, the MFA discusses with relevant policy officers to make appropriate changes to the data.

45. At present, Czechia anonymises qualitative data for a limited number of projects every year which relate to human rights activities taking place in certain countries where Czechia has made the assessment that exposing detailed information (e.g. name of implementing partner, project description)

could cause security risks for the local partner. The more general variables such as markers, channel codes, etc. are still being reported by Czechia on those activities, although sometimes on a more general level. The OECD DAC Secretariat recalled the overall background on the anonymisation of projects in CRS and the difficulty it faces to assess ODA eligibility when projects are anonymised upfront. This also creates distortions when the data are published, especially in those cases where information on e.g. channel or sector codes is missing or is too general. The WP-STAT will discuss this issue at the next meeting in March 2025.

46. With regards to ODA-eligibility, Czechia reviews its CRS reporting at an activity-by-activity level, which has led to a high level of scrutiny prior to submitting the data to the OECD. Czechia tends to take a conservative approach with regards to in-donor refugee costs, for example, and ensures that previous recommendations by the Secretariat are taken into account for the subsequent years. Key areas of ODA-eligibility to pay attention to would be the prosecution of war crimes, earmarking for activities related to conventions with a global mandate, and rules on migration-related activities (see Chapter 1).

47. Czechia reports at a good level overall and should prioritise “quick wins” with regards to improving data quality, for example, data integrity by ensuring coherencies such as with the Free-standing Technical Co-operation (FTC) flag and certain co-operation modalities, commitment dates for new transactions and tracking of older CRS IDs. Addressing some of these issues would continue to facilitate the processing of Czechia's CRS in subsequent years and ensure even higher quality reporting of the data.

#### **Request to the Secretariat**

48. Czechia suggested that the Secretariat prepares a basic welcome / induction package for new WP-STAT correspondents. It encouraged the Secretariat to take on a more active role in supporting member states through capacity-building initiatives. Specifically, Czechia would welcome greater access to e-learning programs and training resources aimed at enhancing the skills of statistical correspondents. Additionally, recommendations on how to automate repetitive and routine tasks — which are common across all member states — would greatly improve efficiency.

49. Czechia recommended that the Secretariat provides an overview of the main uses of OECD DAC statistics, also beyond the OECD, to demonstrate the importance of high-quality data.

### **3.3. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 3**

- The review team commends the work by the statistical correspondents in Czechia for submitting comprehensive ODA reporting of good quality.
- The review team invites the MFA to further increase its active participation in the discussions of the WP-STAT and its informal network on data quality and innovation (AI, machine learning), for peer learning on best practices to improve data quality.
- The MFA could consider the possibility to increase training of national data collectors (e.g. guide on the specific reporting fields, training on markers for relevant institutions). The review team recommends automating processes to catch common reporting issues and ensure data integrity. This could feed into the need to improve the statistical profile of the position (see Chapter 2).
- The team recommends sharing WP-STAT documents with relevant institutions to ensure that they are aware and consulted on policy/reporting discussions and decisions taken by the WP-STAT.

# 4. How to better monitor recommendations and commitments in the field of development co-operation?

50. This chapter synthesises the peer review team’s observations and recommendations to better monitor recommendations and commitments.

## 4.1. DAC Recommendation on Untying Official Development Assistance

51. Bilateral co-operation is generally implemented by the Czech Development Agency (CzDA), and Czechia reports the following instruments as tied or untied ODA, in line with the DAC Reporting Directives:

- Reported as tied:
  - B2B grants, which are restricted to Czech companies.
  - Grants restricted to Czech companies for the purposes of supplying goods to developing countries.
  - The Czech-UNDP Partnership for the SDGs, which finances the transfer of expertise from Czechia to other Europe and Central Asia countries.
- Reported as untied:
  - Public procurement carried by the CzDA, since legally companies from any country have the possibility to bid with the condition of having a registration number in Czechia - in practice the majority of companies that win the contracts are Czech though. The Secretariat clarified that de facto untying is tracked separately in the annual reporting on contract awards (which Czechia did not report in 2022 due to staff turnover).
  - Direct co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with local organisations and governments, where there is no condition to procure from Czechia.

52. While Czechia carries out the tying status reporting diligently, it faces challenges in determining the tying status on project-type grants to NGOs. During the review, the Secretariat clarified some of the ambiguities. These grants are restricted to Czech NGOs that need to have a local partner. The Secretariat clarified that this is a grey zone where members interpret the tying status differently. The Reporting Directives are clear that core grants to NGOs should be reported as untied. However, for project-type grants, some members report the financing as untied if the grant itself (call for proposal) was awarded based on an international competitive procedure, whereas others report these as untied if the subsequent procurement actions by the grantee are not restricted to the donor country (even though the grant award itself may be restricted to donor NGOs). The Secretariat has attempted to solve this issue at multiple occasions at the WP-STAT, but members have not been able to reach a consensus. The Secretariat

confirmed that partially untied aid refers to aid where procurement is restricted to a limited number of countries, not to aid that would be partially distributed to donor NGOs that work with local NGOs.

53. Beyond a purely technical matter, during the review mission, Czechia raised the issue of levelling the playing field with non-DAC donors, some of which continue to tie large volumes of their aid. Czechia indicated this is a critical issue for them, and they have raised it at the EU level. This topic was part of the review of the DAC Untying Recommendation, that the DAC tasked the WP-STAT to carry out since 2023. The rationale for untying is based on the confidence in the principles of open, fair and transparent procurement markets, i.e., a levelled playing field in aid-funded procurement. If this confidence erodes, this can endanger donors' commitment to untie aid. Members discussed various options to address this issue and could agree to strengthen the provisions on sustainable procurement, to address distortions created through the application of lower environmental and social standards. Some members however stated that this stronger focus on sustainable procurement would not alone be sufficient to fully level the playing field with some non-DAC donors. More discussions might therefore be needed at the political level which Czechia may wish to raise at the DAC.

#### 4.2. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 4

- Czechia could invite the WP-STAT to resume discussions on how to harmonise the tying status of reporting on NGO grants.
- Czechia is invited to resume the contract awards reporting. The Secretariat stands ready to support the new statistical correspondent in this exercise.

# 5. How to improve transparency, make the data better fit for purpose, and improve dissemination?

## 5.1. Transparency, communication, and dissemination

54. Communicating on data at the MFA is carried out through a variety of means (e.g. website<sup>13</sup>, social media<sup>14</sup> and annual ODA reports<sup>15</sup>). CzDA also publishes information on their projects<sup>16</sup>. The review team commends the MFA for its proactive and ambitious approach to promote development co-operation, as demonstrated by the organisation of the first National Development Day organised in 2024 with about 2000 people attending<sup>17</sup>. The MFA considered this as a very successful event with a lot of impact, notably on the younger generations.

55. Czechia currently publishes information at project level by partner country through the Global map of foreign aid of the Czech Republic - Mapotic<sup>18</sup>. This platform represents a commendable effort by the MFA to publicise its bilateral aid, even if not all countries and projects are documented with the same level of information (e.g. pictures).

56. The MFA receives many requests for data, notably from the embassies. Responses to these requests are deemed rather time-consuming because they need to be very customised. The primary source of information for the MFA to respond to such requests is the OECD Data Explorer in the absence of a national tool to consult data in various manners<sup>19</sup>. An online tool that would allow to respond to basic data requests would help reduce the burden for the MFA and facilitate the dissemination of ODA data.

57. A new unified logo for the Czech Co-operation has been created in 2024 to provide a whole-of-co-operation image towards all stakeholders, both internally and externally. At the time of the review, the Department of Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid was drafting a new Methodology for

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<sup>13</sup> Notably with a section for development co-operation (<https://mzv.gov.cz/aid>)

<sup>14</sup> Notably through the MFA social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).

<sup>15</sup> See [Information, statistics, publications | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic](#).

<sup>16</sup> See the dedicated website for CzDa ([czechaid.cz/en](https://www.czechaid.cz/en)) and the new section with dedicated information on the projects (<https://www.czechaid.cz/en/our-work/news>)

<sup>17</sup> [First National Development Day at the Czernin Palace | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic](#)

<sup>18</sup> See the Global map of foreign aid of the Czech Republic - Mapotic.

<sup>19</sup> A dedicated presentation was made of the OECD data explorer to various stakeholders of the Czech Development system during the review mission in order to invite these stakeholders to possibly use it to respond to their basic data requests.

communication on and presentation of the Czech Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid. The document will notably aim to harmonise information in existing documents across the development co-operation system; summarise the roles and mutual interactions of the various entities involved (MFA, Czech missions abroad, CzDA and project implementers); list basic guidelines for drafting and implementing the annual communications plan and other communication activities, and for using the unified Czech Aid logo.

## 5.2. A perspective from civil society organisations

58. In Czechia, civil society organisations (CSOs) are represented via two main platforms, the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FORS) and the Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights (DEMAS). The CSOs that the review team met with are in regular contact with the MFA and the overall relationship with the Ministry is considered that of a partnership. CSOs are regularly consulted and involved in the Council for Development Co-operation and other working groups and expressed that they felt informed about the data produced.

59. The data that CSOs use are data produced ex-ante via the plan developed for the foreign development co-operation. Ex-post, CSOs rather rely on data and analysis published by the Concord platform, the OECD data and the annual reports on development co-operation produced by the MFA. CSOs consider that their internal capacity somewhat limits analysis of the information, as well as advocacy activities. Overall, CSOs considered the amount and quality of data on Czech ODA activities to be sufficient. The main issues raised by CSOs are the overall low levels of ODA, and the gradual blurring of the lines between business-related activities and ODA (CSOs notably mentioned in this regard the recent decision to merge the National Development Bank and the Czech Export Bank)<sup>20</sup>.

## 5.3. TOSSD

60. Czechia agreed to use its CRS information as a proxy for its 2023 reporting on total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD). The main challenge for reporting on TOSSD at present is internal capacity. Despite this challenge, Czechia sees potential for TOSSD reporting to increase transparency and expand the scope of development finance and showed motivation to build its capacity around TOSSD. Portugal presented its system for collecting TOSSD and the Netherlands indicated that they did not report on TOSSD<sup>21</sup>. The IFT Secretariat highlighted the types of activities beyond ODA that could be reported as TOSSD. Three particular potential key areas of expansion are identified: export-credits and guarantees, the non-ODA share of contributions to multilateral organisations, and the mobilised private finance (for DAC members, TOSSD is collected through a streamlined CRS/TOSSD template, which also includes mobilisation).

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<sup>20</sup> CSOs expressed interest in the use of PSI for development, but were concerned about the risk of funds being mostly invested in export-related activities rather than development activities with the recent merge of the Czech development bank with the export-import bank. CSOs also expressed concerns about the capacity of the Czech system to report on these instruments.

<sup>21</sup> Since the review, the Netherlands have indicated that their CRS data can be used by the TOSSD Secretariat as a proxy.

### Request to the Secretariat

61. The WP-STAT community could also see how to address collectively some issues that were deemed common to many members. These include how to communicate on impact (given that the CRS system is an input-based system) and tips on how to handle and optimise communication in several languages (e.g. managing in parallel French, English and the national language).

## 5.4. Proposed recommendations – Dimensions 5, 6, and 7

- In the absence of internal online tools to disseminate its ODA figures, the review team recommends that the MFA leverages all existing tools for data analysis and visualisation, including the OECD Czechia Development Co-operation profile, the OECD Data Explorer or the EU Explorer.
- Czechia could consider expanding its reporting on TOSSD through an incremental approach. It could, for example, start by including the non-ODA share of contributions to multilaterals, contributions to international conventions that are not ODA-eligible and other activities in their CRS reporting that are assessed as not eligible to ODA but could be TOSSD-eligible. Discussions on improving ODAstat.cz on adopting a new system could also include TOSSD requirements.