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Development Co-operation Directorate
Development Assistance Committee

DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics

Summary record of the WP-STAT meeting of 21-23 March 2023

21-23 March 2023
Paris, France

This draft summary record was submitted for APPROVAL under the written procedure on a non-objection basis.

The Secretariat received no substantial objection by COB 26 May 2023. The language in paragraphs 40 to 42 has been edited at the request of a member.

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Summary Record

Tuesday 21 March 2023 (14h – 18h)

Thematic area 1 – WP-STAT procedural items

Item 1. Welcome and introduction

1. The WP-STAT Chair, Ms. Katrine Heggedal, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants in person and online. She greeted the vice-chairs, Ms. Miryam Rordorf Duvaux and Ms. Megumi Muto, and thanked the Secretariat for the organisation of the meeting. Ms. Heggedal introduced the new DAC Chair, Mr. Carsten Staur.
2. Mr. Staur highlighted how much the DAC appreciates the work by the WP-STAT and the constructive spirit in WP-STAT discussions on the difficult issues it deals with. Mr. Staur thanked WP-STAT members for their contribution to the work of the DAC and of the OECD.
3. The DAC facilitator, Mr. Dirk Platzen, reiterated the interest of the DAC on the reporting and statistical work of the WP-STAT and wished good deliberations for the meeting.
4. The WP-STAT Chair recalled that, in an earlier meeting, the possibility of having a more open and transparent process for the designation of the WP-STAT Bureau had been discussed. She noted that the current Bureau and the Secretariat are available to respond to any questions from members that might be interested in joining the Bureau. She also affirmed that colleagues that would be interested to join the Bureau in 2024 would be given the opportunity to make a presentation at the next WP-STAT meeting. After that meeting, a call for nominations will be issued to prepare the designation of the 2024 Bureau at the last meeting of the year, as per OECD rules.

Action point(s)

Members potentially interested to join the Bureau in 2024 or later are invited to contact the current Bureau members or the Secretariat. Members interested will be given the opportunity to address the next plenary meeting.

Item 2. Adoption of the agenda

5. The WP-STAT Chair informed members that a REV3 of the agenda had been issued to fix a misspelling in the cover note, which incorrectly had labelled the meeting as informal and which was not in line with the decisions of the WP-STAT Bureau and what had been communicated to members at the previous meeting. The REV3 version correctly refers to this meeting as a plenary session.
6. Members adopted the agenda.

Thematic area 2 – Review of the provisional reporting methods for private sector instruments (PSI)

Item 3. [For information] Update from the CSO and MDB consultations held on 14 January and 27 January 2023 respectively. Update from DAC discussion on 7 February 2023

7. The Vice-Chairs updated members on the outcomes of the Secretariat's consultations with the CSO community and the MDBs on the progress in members' discussions on private sector instruments (PSI). Ms Rordorf Duvaux highlighted the CSOs' high commitment to ODA integrity, transparency and accountability as well as their strong interest in continued dialogue on PSI going forward. Ms Muto presented some of the main comments shared by the MDB community that primarily sought coherent and solid enabling environment for engaging with the private sector across various development finance actors. MDBs had also shared insights on the methodological models they use to estimate concessionality of their activities.

Item 4.a [For approval] Batch 1 topics: i) ODA eligibility assessment of PSI vehicles; ii) treatment of loans to the private sector; and iii) treatment of credit guarantees

8. Canada, France and the United States presented the final proposals on, respectively, the treatment of loans to the private sector, credit guarantees and ODA-eligibility assessment. Members were invited to share their last views and approve the three proposals.

9. Members expressed support for all three proposals and agreed that they be submitted to the DAC for approval at its meeting on 5 April 2023. Three members would need to follow up in writing, pending the outcomes of internal approval processes. In this context:

- The Secretariat clarified that, based on the 2016 HLM Communiqué, private sector instruments are understood as non-grant instruments. Accordingly, vehicles that only extend grants to the private sector are not concerned by the ODA-eligibility assessment.
- Members approved the proposal on credit guarantees with the understanding that discussions on the treatment of guarantees and other instruments in relation to multilateral institutions will be launched directly after the conclusion of the review of the provisional reporting methods for PSI.
- Going forward, the Secretariat will continue its discussions with members on the implementation of the PSI methodologies.

10. Furthermore, a few members highlighted the importance of ODA integrity in the context of PSI and called for members' continued commitment to transparency and accountability of ODA. Particular attention should be paid to safeguards and other provisions, to be addressed as part of members' discussion on the third batch of issues.

11. The approval process related to PSI was also discussed. A few members called for a final DAC approval of the entire set of reviewed directives, while a few others emphasised sticking to the step-by-step approach to secure any improvement to the current reporting arrangement, as agreed upon in the Terms of Reference for the Review [DCD/DAC(2021)40/FINAL].

Action point(s)

The Secretariat submits the three proposals to the Committee for approval at its meeting on 5 April 2023 [see DCD/DAC(2023)22].

Item 4. b [For discussion] Batch 2 topics: treatment of equities and other private sector instruments

12. The Secretariat (Mr. Tomas Hos) presented the first methodological documents on the second batch of issues (treatment of equities, treatment of mezzanine finance instruments, treatment of reimbursable grants and other clarifications). Members appreciated this work and provided their first comments and suggestions as follows:

- On equities, members welcomed the proposal but acknowledged that more work is needed to determine suitable discount rates and the private sector surcharge in particular. Some suggested possible surcharge differentiation by DAC income group. Some noted that attention also needs to be paid to the incentives that the methods provide, and that positive grant equivalents may need to be reserved for investments with good performance too. One member signalled the complexity of the ex-ante and ex-post methods if co-existing. More clarity is needed on the application of the reviewed method to equity investments disbursed under the provisional reporting methods. Some members also requested guidance on the treatment of multi-country investments, such as shares in collective investment vehicles with a regional focus.
- Regarding mezzanine finance instruments, members appreciated the simplicity of the proposed methods, especially their anchoring in methodologies on loans to the private sector and equities. One member highlighted the operational benefits of clear ODA rules on these instruments. Still, more work will be needed on private sector surcharge, which could be differentiated by DAC income group as in the case of equities and loans to the private sector. As regards reimbursable grants, one member indicated its availability to pursue discussions with the Secretariat and other members, building upon discussions on other PSI.
- One member argued that agreed rules on loans to the private sector should not pre-empt discussions on equities and mezzanine finance, particularly when it comes to safeguards, reporting requirements and rules for data disclosure.

13. Overall, members welcomed continued technical discussions in the context of the PSI Project Team and advised on the priorities for upcoming discussions, such as private sector surcharge for individual instruments, the treatment of portfolio guarantees and the treatment of loans to collective investment vehicles. Some members indicated their availability to provide data and case studies to support these discussions. A few members will provide written comments after the meeting.

Action point(s)

- Members will maintain follow-up technical discussions in the PSI Project Team, e.g., on the discount rates for individual instruments. Members are encouraged to share data and case studies to support these discussions.
- Members that are willing to join the PSI project team are invited to contact the Secretariat.

Thematic area 3 – Climate and environment

Item 5. [For discussion] Progress in work to clarify reporting rules for Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes

14. The Secretariat (Mr. Giorgio Gualberti) presented a note clarifying the status of work on ODA eligibility of co-operative actions referred to in Art. 6 of the Paris Agreement [DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)5]. The note asked members if they considered these co-operative actions similar enough to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to be considered ODA-eligible, albeit with a deduction of the ODA value, or rather different enough from the CDM, and therefore falling outside the ODA definition.

15. Members welcomed the possibility to further debate this issue and highlighted the complexity of the matter. On ODA-eligibility:

- Eight members considered co-operative actions ODA-eligible overall:
 - Five members expressed the view that the co-operative actions should be treated similarly to the CDM and thus be ODA-eligible, albeit with a deduction in their value. They pointed to the fact that these activities can have both climate and developmental objectives at the same time. Two of these members flagged the need to have a robust method to differentiate to whom the ITMO is transferred and if the ITMO is used for compliance or if it is cancelled.
 - Two members affirmed that while they considered co-operative actions ODA-eligible, a very cautious approach should be taken in assessing the developmental benefit for the host country.
- Three members considered co-operative actions not ODA-eligible or partially ODA-eligible.
 - One member pointed out that ITMOs constitute a liability for the host country in the reaching of their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). In its view the main objective of co-operative approaches is to reduce the carbon emission of the donor country, and thus should not be reported as ODA.
 - One member emphasised the necessity of analysing the main intent of the activity, differentiating between activities that for example would support countries with the regulatory framework for co-operative actions (with a developmental intent and thus ODA-eligible) and activities whose main focus is to transfer the mitigation outcome to the donor (and thus non ODA-eligible).
 - One member pointed to the differences between the CDM and co-operative approaches and welcomed the occasion to have a further detailed discussion on this topic, also considering the different uses of the offsets. The member affirmed the differences do not necessarily prevent ODA eligibility in all cases.
- One member stated it still needs to consult internally on ODA eligibility of co-operative approaches.

16. On the issue of marking or not the co-operative approaches with the Rio marker on mitigation, members expressed the following views:

- Two members affirmed that co-operative actions should be considered as climate-related, and therefore marked with the Rio marker, as long as the value of the ITMO is correctly deducted.

- Three members were of the view that co-operative actions should not be considered as climate-related, because the mitigation benefit is transferred to another country. The approach proposed by the Secretariat in the paper – of not marking co-operative actions with Rio marker on climate mitigation – would therefore avoid double counting.
- One member stated that not applying Rio markers to co-operative actions could resolve the double counting issue but added that WP-STAT should reflect on how this could appear in DAC statistics. In its view the UNFCCC text that prescribes to avoid double counting – between the resources provided and mobilised for developing countries and the resources used under Art. 6 – refers to the ITMO transaction in itself, and not to the financing for the underlying activity.
- Members also added some further considerations. One member asked the Secretariat to provide practical examples. Another member thought a trial period would be needed. Yet another member noted that in some cases co-operative actions could be financed by both ODA and OOF, in which case the deduction of the ITMO value from the ODA figure should take into account the ODA/OOF shares of funding for the project.

17. The Secretariat thanked members for their comments. It recalled that the issue of the developmental intent is central to many WP-STAT discussions on other topics, such as migration, and that it could be useful indeed to have a granular analysis of all the different cases and sub-cases to assess ODA eligibility.

Action point(s)

- Members are invited to submit to the Secretariat examples of co-operative actions – which can be treated confidentially – to be used for subsequent analysis.
- The Secretariat will open a page on the community space for members to provide written comments on the paper.

Wednesday 22 March 2023 (9h30 – 17h30)

Thematic area 4 – ODA methodologies

Item 6. [For approval] Annex 2 issues: CEPI and RST

18. The Secretariat (Mr. Harsh Desai) presented the Secretariat's further assessment of the ODA eligibility of core contributions to CEPI (2022-26) and the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), after members had failed to reach an agreement on these organisations at the December 2022 WP-STAT meeting. The Secretariat recommended that members apply an 88% ODA coefficient on core contributions to CEPI and recommended the inclusion of the RST on the List as fully ODA-eligible. Members agreed with the Secretariat's recommendation on CEPI, with a few members reiterating their support to CEPI's mission. One member called for the Secretariat to reflect on the process of assessing CEPI's coefficient, which had been ongoing for two years, and to suggest improvements to the process for future organisations that are similar to CEPI's governance, mandate, and budget structure. Other members asked about how long the coefficient would apply, and how the Secretariat would ensure that the coefficient appropriately reflected CEPI's activities in coming years. The Secretariat answered that the coefficient would apply for the duration of CEPI 2.0 (2022-26), and that it is corresponding with CEPI to obtain

disaggregated information on its expenditure to track the objectives and focus of CEPI's activities in coming years.

19. Members also generally agreed with the inclusion of the RST on the List as fully ODA-eligible, with one member expressing a reservation on the grounds that contributions to the RST (such as SDR loans) do not meet ODA criteria. The Secretariat clarified that including the RST on the List would not open the door to allowing SDR loans to be reportable as ODA [see DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)6], as contributions that do not meet ODA criteria would not be considered eligible regardless of whether or not an organisation was on the List. The member indicated that further discussion with the Secretariat was necessary before they could approve the inclusion of the RST. They agreed not to block members' consensus but requested that its reservation be recorded, and that the Secretariat's paper be updated to reflect minor, factual corrections.

Action point(s)

- Members agreed to the Secretariat's recommendation to apply an 88% ODA coefficient for reporting on core contributions to CEPI (2022-26).
- Members also agreed to the Secretariat's recommendation to include the IMF's RST on Annex 2 as fully ODA-eligible, pending final confirmation from one member that expressed a reservation.
- The Secretariat will re-issue the paper with minor, factual corrections suggested by members.

Item 7. [For discussion] Preliminary guidance on ODA-eligibility of EIB Trust Funds

20. The Secretariat presented its recommendation on the ODA-eligibility of six trust funds managed by the EIB, following a request from the EIB for formal guidance on the reporting on these trust funds. The Secretariat recommended that these trust funds are fully ODA-eligible as they have the economic development and welfare of developing countries as their main objective. Members agreed with the Secretariat's conclusions and asked minor questions for clarification on how the Secretariat's guidance would be issued.

Action point(s)

The Secretariat will re-issue its guidance documents for reporting contributions to trust funds managed by multilateral institutions to include a section on trust funds managed by the EIB.

Item 8. [For discussion] Administrative costs: draft text to the Reporting Directives

21. The Secretariat (Ms Marisa Berbegal Ibáñez) presented proposed edits to the Reporting Directives to harmonise reporting of administrative costs. Members generally agreed with the proposed edits but made the following comments:

- A few members signalled that they were unable to separately identify the salaries of some high-level officials (directors generals) and requested flexibility on that element, and one member asked for clarification on whether the main development co-operation agency was covered by this provision too.

- As regards estimates for multi-purpose agencies, whenever possible the calculation should be made at the level of institutional units, rather than the entire institution, as it would be more accurate. It was proposed to add another possible estimation methods as follows: Calculation of a coefficient based on the proportion of effort each part of the organisation directs at ODA-eligible strategic objectives, which is then applied to Administrative costs.
 - In paragraph 16, add “and programmes” after projects.
 - Not delete the reference to “dedicated funding arrangements” until discussions with EvalNet have taken place on the classification of evaluations.
 - On the timeline, one member requested flexibility on the implementation, starting in 2024 on 2023 reporting.
22. The Secretariat stated that it could adjust the proposal to take members’ comments into account. In response to members’ questions, it also clarified that recipient country codes should not be used for administrative costs of donors’ embassies or delegations in developing countries as these costs were still “in-donor” and using recipient codes would be confusing to data users. The CRS checklist would be updated once the changes to the Directives are approved.
23. Members agreed with publishing the results of the survey once the edits of the Reporting Directives are approved.

Action point(s)

- The Secretariat will adjust the proposed edits to the Directives [section 3 of DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)7] as agreed in the meeting and will circulate the text for approval on a non-objection basis. If approved, the Secretariat will integrate the text in the Reporting Directives.
- The Secretariat will publish the results of the survey once the text for the Directives is approved.
- The Secretariat will open a discussion page at the WP-STAT community space for members and Eval Net members to make suggestions on the classification of evaluations not linked to projects. It will then present an updated proposal at the next WP-STAT meeting.

Item 9. [For approval] ODA eligibility of migration-related activities: Criterion 7 on labour mobility

24. The Secretariat (Ms. Valérie Gaveau and Ms. Micaela Linares) presented a revised proposal of criterion 7 on labour mobility for members’ approval [DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)8]. It recalled that the previous version of the criterion discussed at the WP-STAT meeting in December 2022 had not been agreed. Discussions on the wording had subsequently been pursued in a small group composed of members who had remaining concerns. The Secretariat presented the adjustments made to the criterion as a result of the small group discussions. It also updated members on the status of elaboration of the casebook that will illustrate the application of the principles and criteria on ODA eligibility of migration-related activities.

25. Most members were comfortable with the Secretariat’s proposal and supported its approval. They welcomed the careful wording as it reflected a compromise between the concern to protect ODA integrity and the request to recognise the development focus of some long-duration labour mobility programmes. One member while supporting the proposed criterion, remarked that

the capacity of developing countries was often stretched, and that the criterion should not imply an overly prescriptive requirement for them to formulate a request identifying skill set needs.

26. Three members requested additional changes to the criterion: Two of these members were concerned about a potential broadening of scope of ODA in-donor costs and recommended tighter conditions for including costs of programmes beyond the 12-month period, such as a two-year limit. One member felt the criterion was too narrow and requested adjustments to soften it.

27. Several members emphasized the progress achieved with the current proposed criterion and urged for approval without any further delay. The Secretariat highlighted that the questions raised at the meeting had been discussed at length within the small group. It noted that introducing further changes at this stage would compromise other members' support for the current version of the criterion. On this basis, the Chair suggested follow-up bilateral discussions with members concerned, and indicated that the Secretariat's proposal would be submitted for approval under a written procedure.

28. Lastly, members welcomed the update on the casebook and expressed their overall interest. Some voiced their willingness to provide further examples and others requested more time to ensure they could contribute with meaningful and illustrative cases.

Action point(s)

- The meeting agreed that the proposed criterion 7 on labour mobility would be subject to approval via the written procedure on a non-objection basis, by 12 April.
- Members are invited to share more examples of migration-related activities for inclusion in the casebook, in particular non-ODA cases in the field of conditionality, reintegration support targeting exclusively returnees from the provider countries and border management.
- The Secretariat will share by early April a draft casebook for members' comments (cases on labour mobility will be included at a later stage, when the criterion is agreed).

Item 10. [For approval] Updated Statistical Reporting Directives

29. The Secretariat (Ms. Valérie Gaveau) presented the updated Statistical Reporting Directives [main body of the Directives in DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)9 and annexes included in three separate documents: ADD1, ADD2 and ADD3]. It confirmed that the update only related to changes that had been approved by the DAC and/or WP-STAT up until end-December 2022 and a few editorial changes. All changes in comparison with the previous version were shown in the PDF documents available on the WP-STAT Community space.

30. In response to a question from one member, the Secretariat explained that paragraph 7 had been removed given that the work described therein – revision of the reporting forms to cover both grant equivalents and cash flows – had been finalised. The Secretariat responded to another member that, next year, it would produce for ease of reference a methodological note to accompany the Advance Questionnaire and provide the necessary linkages with the Reporting Directives.

Action point(s)

The updated Statistical Reporting Directives are subject to approval via the written procedure on a non-objection basis by 12 April 2023.

Item 11. [For discussion] Concept of commitment in DAC statistics: interpretation and reporting practice of selected DAC members

31. Members generally agreed with the usefulness of producing a mapping of members' interpretation and use of the concept of commitment and expressed their willingness to share information. Some of them explained what concept of commitment they use.

32. The EIB explained that in their case financial terms of loans are only known when the disbursements are made so they report the disbursement date as commitment date. It noted that this is not exactly correct but is the only way they can calculate the concessionality of loans.

33. Some members commented that the proposal of expanding the "nature of submission" categories was interesting, while others noted that the proposal only makes sense at the level of individual countries (typically countries use only one concept of commitments in their reporting, in some countries the concept might vary across institutions).

34. Some members expressed a preference for analyses made on gross disbursements basis and requested that different reporting practices among members be at least highlighted when presenting analyses on commitments basis. The Secretariat clarified that some aspects of DAC statistics are only defined at the commitment stage, e.g., policy markers or the concessionality of loans. It also recalled that, in relation to policy markers, members had in the past expressed that presenting figures on a disbursement basis gives the wrong message on the underlying data, although this could be rediscussed.

Action point(s)

- Members invited to share on the community space share their definition of the term commitment.
- The Secretariat will then produce a mapping and organise a workshop-style discussion on this topic.

Item 12. [For discussion] Tracking COVID-19 vaccine donations through voluntary purpose codes

DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)10

35. The Secretariat presented its proposal for voluntary purpose codes to track members' COVID-19 vaccine donations in their reporting on 2022 ODA. The proposal is intended to facilitate tracking members' application of the safeguards for reporting on COVID-19 vaccine donations [DCD/DAC/STAT(2023)8], in the interest of full transparency on this issue. The Secretariat emphasised the voluntary nature of these codes on the basis that future reporting of COVID-19 vaccine dose donations still needs to be discussed at the WP-STAT and DAC.

36. Members expressed reservations about the Secretariat's proposal as it would add a reporting burden on members (when this information is already available in members' CRS reporting). Some members also questioned the proposed language to describe the voluntary codes.

Item 13. [For discussion] Proposal by Switzerland to revise the Reporting Directives on activities in the field of culture

37. Switzerland (Mr. Flavien Breitenmoser and Mr. Rudolf van Planta) presented a room document with the proposal to revise the paragraph 94 of the Reporting Directives on development-oriented social and cultural programmes [DCD/DAC/STAT/RD(2023)1] to better reflect current realities in development co-operation support and international agreements such as the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the SDGs.

38. Members broadly welcomed the initiative of Switzerland and thanked for the proposal. They expressed their views on the main elements to consider in the next phase of work on this topic.

- Eight members supported the need to update paragraph 94 as they found it outdated. Many also agreed on the overall elements presented in the room document (with one request to look at the specific case of artists that have the nationality of the donor country – or that are binational – but resident in the recipient country). The commented that the current wording on, for example, the distinction between activities aimed at strengthening the cultural sector of recipient countries (ODA-eligible) and cultural events (non ODA-eligible) was no longer relevant. Culture was a powerful tool for development that needed to be better reflected in the ODA rules. The rules should also acknowledge that some related in-donor expenditures should be considered eligible, as is the case for development awareness activities.
- Several members however noted the risk that the proposed revision of paragraph 94 could lead to a broadening of the ODA definition, in particular in relation to in-donor costs. They requested that clear eligibility criteria and safeguards be established for cultural activities, and that the ones taking place in the provider country, as well as all sporting events, continue to be excluded. One member suggested that some cultural activities contributed to a Global Public Good and would thus better fit under TOSSD. Another member expressed doubts about whether cultural heritage should continue being ODA-eligible.
- One member suggested that the Secretariat also revise the CRS purpose codes on this topic (16061 – Culture and recreation and 16066 – Culture) and provide more comprehensive description of these codes.

39. The Chair thanked members for their interventions, noting a strong support for opening the discussion on this topic and asking the Secretariat to prepare a proposal based on members' feedback. Given the concerns expressed in relation to ODA integrity, she asked the proposal to include a delineation between ODA and TOSSD, a description of the boundaries for ODA in-donor costs and a clear guidance referring to the primary purpose of activities (contribute to development versus improve the image of a donor country).

Action point(s)

The Secretariat will issue a proposal for a revised paragraph 94 on development-oriented social and cultural programmes for discussion at the WP-STAT meeting in October, taking into account the comments expressed by members during the discussion.

Thursday 23 March 2023 (9h30 – 13h)

Thematic area 5 – Peer learning / workshop

Item 14. Report and peer learning from the statistical peer review of Austria

40. Mr Raimund Magis, Austrian MFA Director of Co-operation Strategy and Evaluation, and Ms Sigrid Breddy, ADA Head of Evaluation and Statistics, jointly introduced this item by highlighting the benefits for Austria to participate in the review. It had created a momentum and visibility for statistics on development finance which had culminated with a briefing provided to the Minister on the key recommendations arising from the review.

41. Mr Magis and Ms Breddy shared their perspectives on the major statistical policy issues identified during the review, and outlined the steps taken by the MFA and ADA to implement some of the recommendations:

- Reporting: The large number of reporting entities (80) creates considerable challenges in Austria. The MFA and ADA account for approximately 20% of the total ODA budget. The MFA plays a coordinating role among all actors involved in development co-operation (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Interior etc.), but has no formal authority to guide policies or collect the data on ODA or TOSSD. In such a complex institutional set-up and in the absence of a legal obligation for external entities to report, networking and personal contacts are required to emphasise the value added of reporting.
- Budgets: The ODA core budget in Austria remains stable despite large variations in humanitarian assistance and in-donor refugee costs.
- “Austrian development co-operation” vs. “Austrian Development Co-operation – ADC”: The MFA will start a rebranding exercise to remove the current ambiguity in terminology, acknowledging that this will not be easy given the large number of stakeholders to involve in a whole-of-Government approach.
- IT systems: The MFA and ADA are currently analysing a way forward on using data systems for collection. They are also mindful of the risks and technical challenges of integrating different systems and the costs involved.
- TOSSD: The TOSSD session during the review had successfully increased awareness among line ministries. As a next step, to make TOSSD more relevant at the political level, Austria will explore the possibility to include related data in its Voluntary National Reviews to showcase their contributions beyond ODA.

42. Austria has taken concrete steps to implement the recommendations of the review, and is considering to develop a management response to the report¹, but it regrets the absence of a formalised process for the Secretariat to follow up on the recommendations. Austria suggested a stronger linkage between peer reviews, mid-term reviews and statistical peer reviews and asked for other peer reviewed members’ feedback on how they had implemented the recommendations made during the statistical peer review of their country.

43. Members congratulated Austria on a successful and informative review. Members that had been peer reviewed shared their experience with following up on the recommendations. Although they highlighted that in several cases the review had been useful to safeguard the statistical functions in their aid agency/Ministry and to improve on different fronts (e.g. communication),

¹ See final report available at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/peer-reviews-on-development-finance-statistics.htm>.

they agreed with Austria that the Secretariat should ensure some follow up, to maximise the positive effects of statistical peer reviews.

44. The meeting also discussed one of the specific issues that had emerged from the statistical peer review, i.e. the sustainability of statistical competencies. Austria (Ms Breddy) described the mechanisms and tools put in place to cope with the risk of statistical staff turnover: automation of the production of statistics through R, four-eye principle, and documentation. Several members emphasised the specificities of their statistical staff: passionate about development co-operation statistics and pushed to become highly specialised in this field. Given that the knowledge relies on a few people in statistical units, there is a certain degree of vulnerability which is addressed through trainings, development of dashboard for easy data queries and hiring trainees. The Secretariat acknowledged facing the same types of challenges and putting in place the same solutions, e.g. a regular in-house training on R. Members indicated that more time was needed to discuss in-depth some other topics that had emerged from the statistical peer review of Austria.

Action point(s)

- Members are invited to share their views on the community space on what actions should be undertaken to follow-up on the recommendations made during statistical peer reviews.
- Workshop sessions will be organised at the margins of the next WP-STAT meeting to discuss more in-depth some of the issues that emerged from the Austrian statistical peer review, e.g. automation processes for efficient reporting and communication of ODA figures.

Item 15. Update on Forward Spending Survey and next steps

45. The Secretariat (Mr. Mark Baldock) presented the feedback on reporting against the 2022 Edition of the Forward Spending Survey (FSS).

46. On the Secretariat's question concerning the lack of reporting in the FSS in its present state, six members stated they only have 1-year budgets and are therefore unable to provide any forward-looking data beyond that. Only one member mentioned that they have multi-year budgets. Two members explained they have no country-based budgeting in their administrations (the budgets are thematic only).

47. Although six members said they could continue reporting on FSS, four members raised questions about the usefulness or the added value of the FSS exercise and three members said they were in favour of discontinuing the FSS.

48. The Chair invited members to post alternative options and/or suggestions for the FSS on the WP-STAT community space to be discussed at the WP-STAT meeting in October 2023, with the possible option to discontinue FSS if members are not able to report comprehensively.

Action point(s)

- Members are invited to share their views on the community space on alternative solutions to collect forward spending data.
- The Secretariat will issue a proposal for the October meeting on the discontinuation of the FSS.

Item 16. AOB

Action point(s)

- The Secretariat informed members that it will issue by the end of March a brief survey on members' methodologies for the calculation of in-donor costs for Ukrainian refugees reported in 2022 ODA. The deadline for responses is the end of April.
- The Secretariat informed members that an updated version of the [DAC and CRS code lists](#) are available online. An updated version of the [CRS reporting check list](#) is also available.