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PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE BUSAN COMMON STANDARD FOR AID INFORMATION

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This document reviews progress by DAC members in implementing the Busan Common Standard for aid information. Drawing on their implementation plans, it outlines performance and planned improvements in coverage and comprehensiveness, frequency and timeliness, and forward looking information.

This document is submitted for INFORMATION under agenda item 10.

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PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE BUSAN COMMON STANDARD FOR AID INFORMATION

1. In 2011, stakeholders resolved at Busan to make information and resources on development co-operation more readily available and publicly accessible. They set out to implement a common, open standard for the electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information by the end of 2015.¹ In early 2012, the OECD DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) developed a framework for the common standard, which was endorsed by the Working Party for Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) in June 2012.²

2. The agreed common standard consists of three complementary systems and processes: the DAC's Creditor Reporting System (CRS), with comprehensive statistical information; its Forward Spending Survey (FSS); and IATI, a self-publishing system with notifications to a registry that provides current management information on donors' activities. The common standard enables and encourages providers of development co-operation to make aid information more transparent along four dimensions:

- i. Greater availability of historical, current and future information on aid flows;
- ii. More detailed information on aid projects and programmes (improved comprehensiveness);
- iii. Broader coverage and participation (beyond ODA, and beyond traditional donors); and
- iv. Improved timeliness and more frequent updates of development financing information.

3. To raise awareness of the common standard, the DAC and IATI Secretariats have produced outreach material and presentations throughout the past year.

Implementation schedules for the common standard

4. Busan endorsers agreed to publish implementation schedules by the end of 2012. WP-STAT and IATI developed a template in autumn 2012 to help them prepare these. The template asked Busan endorsers to specify the information they already reported and published, and state their plans to further implement elements of the common standard up to December 2015. Its two substantive parts were:

- **General questionnaire (Part II)** on comprehensiveness, timeliness and public availability of information. To be completed by each country or organisation.
- **Detailed questionnaire (Part III)** on the availability of information at agency and activity level.

1. The Busan Partnership Document commits endorsers to "implement a common, open standard for electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources provided through development co-operation, taking into account the statistical reporting of the OECD-DAC and the complementary efforts of the International Aid Transparency Initiative and others. [...] We will agree on this standard and publish our respective schedules to implement it by December 2012, with the aim of implementing it fully by December 2015".

2. See DCD/DAC/EFF(2012)9/REV.

5. At the time of writing, more than half of Busan endorsers had submitted **implementation schedules**. These are available on the OECD website³ and will soon be accessible through the Global Partnership website. To date, seven members have published their schedules on their websites.⁴ The schedules provide endorsers' assessments of their current situations, and a statement of their intentions. They are meant to be updated as implementation proceeds. The Secretariat noted some discrepancies between the implementation schedules and the actual information in the CRS and FSS, and this paper follows actual implementation where possible; in the case of IATI, the Secretariat has supplemented the information provided in the implementation schedules with information from the IATI website; however the format of IATI publication did not allow comprehensive verification of all data in the time available.⁵

6. The following analysis focuses mainly on DAC members' information provided in the General section (Part II of the template) on comprehensiveness, timeliness and public availability of information.⁶ The Secretariat hopes later to produce a more comprehensive report covering all Busan endorsers in collaboration with the IATI Secretariat.

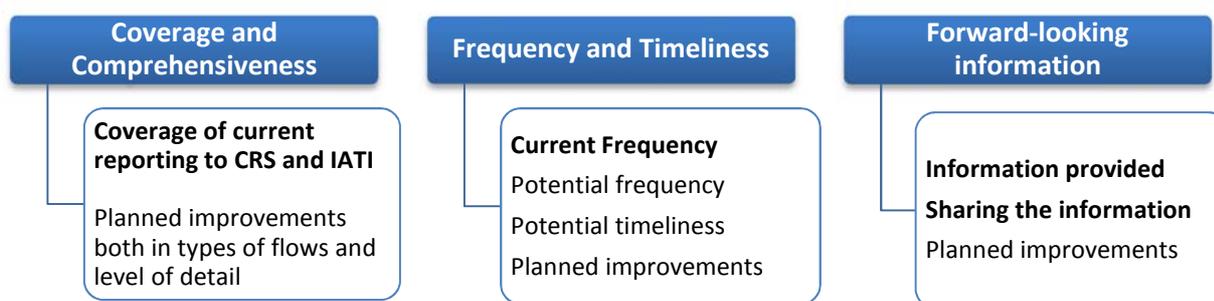
7. To date, **all DAC members except Iceland have published their implementation schedules**. However: Japan did not complete the template in part II; Switzerland and the United Kingdom provided separate schedules for two agencies⁷ which are aggregated to the country level here; and the United States is publishing to IATI and reporting some information to the FSS, but its template only covers the CRS.

Methodology: Presenting donors' performance and ambition

8. Table 1 below sets out current information provision by DAC members to the three systems of the common standard. It shows that **13 DAC members utilise all three systems** of the common standard, **11 report to the CRS and the FSS** but do not publish to IATI, and **2 members report only to the CRS**.

9. It is also important to assess reporting quality. Figure 1 below outlines the criteria this paper has used to assess performance in three dimensions. The items in bold represent current performance; those in plain text relate to planned improvements. A brief discussion of each dimension follows.

Figure 1. The three transparency dimensions



3. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/acommonstandard.htm>

4. These are Canada, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States.

5. The DAC Secretariat will discuss the discrepancies bilaterally with DAC Members, with a view to updating the published schedules.

6. Cf. the March 2013 summary of Part III by Publish What You Fund: <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/updates/news/common-standard-implementation-aid-transparency-tracker/>

7. SDC and SECO (Switzerland), and CDC and DFID (United Kingdom) provided implementation schedules.

Table 1. DAC members' reporting to the various systems of the common standard

DAC member	CRS	FSS	IATI
Australia	●	●	●
Austria	●	●	
Belgium	●	●	
Canada	●	●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	
Denmark	●	●	●
EU Institutions	●	●	●
Finland	●	●	●
France	●	●	
Germany	●	●	●
Greece	●		
Iceland	●		
Ireland	●	●	
Italy	●	●	
Japan	●	●	
Korea	●	●	
Luxembourg	●	●	
Netherlands	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	●	●
Norway	●	●	
Portugal	●	●	
Spain	●	●	●
Sweden	●	●	●
Switzerland	●	●	●
United Kingdom	●	●	●
United States	●	●	●

Notes: All DAC members, except Iceland and Japan, answered Part II of the template. For these two members, the Secretariat used its own sources to fill the Table. In addition, two members, the Czech Republic and Korea answered that they are not reporting to the FSS, though they now do so. Japan, Norway and the United States only provide provisional past expenditures through the FSS but no forward spending information. Switzerland has notified publishing IATI data; at the time of writing, the information is however still not accessible through the IATI website.

Coverage and Comprehensiveness

10. Table 2 shows, for each type of flow, members' data coverage in the three systems, and planned improvements. For the CRS and FSS, information relates to all extending agencies. In principle, the CRS covers all ODA from a donor country, whereas IATI covers aid at agency level. For donors that publish through IATI approximately 68% of their combined ODA is captured in IATI, which represents 46% of total DAC ODA (in gross terms).⁸

8. These are estimates based on implementation schedules as they stand, and may be subject to revision.

11. Most members plan to improve the coverage and comprehensiveness of the information they provide to the CRS and/or IATI. Significant improvements are envisaged by Belgium, which plans to report on geocoding, results, and documentation; Canada, which plans to report more detailed data to the CRS++ on ODA, OOF and private flows; and Sweden, which plans to publish all types of flows to IATI by 2015 and improve its CRS reporting in 2013. Other plans include joining IATI; creating open data portals; and providing more comprehensive reporting to CRS, or elements such as results or detailed geographical information to IATI.

12. Six members indicated that they apply thresholds in their CRS reporting and/or IATI publication. For the CRS, this generally means that expenditures below the threshold will be bundled into one transaction, to ensure that CRS returns sum to total ODA. For IATI, smaller activities are more often not published. For example, Australia does not publish activities under AUD 3 million to IATI. Other activities may be not published to IATI because of confidentiality or timing issues, or legal concerns.

Table 2. Coverage of DAC members' reporting to the Common Standard and planned improvements

DAC member	CRS					IATI					Planned improvements by 2015 as reported through the implementation plan schedules	
	ODA	Official Export Credit	Other OOF	PRIV	NGO	ODA	Official Export Credit	Other OOF	PRIV	NGO		IATI coverage (percentage of ODA and publishing agencies) ^f
Australia	●		●	●		●					87% of Australian ODA: AusAid	Plans to increase coverage of its IATI reporting to cover all countries (Australia currently only reports countries in the Pacific, East Asia, and South and West Asia to IATI). Plans to publish remaining agencies through IATI.
Austria	●	●		●	●							-
Belgium	●		●	●								Plans to include geocoding, results and project documentation in its ODA reporting. It also plans to provide semi-aggregate information by sector and partner country of NGO flows.
Canada	●	●	●	●	●	●		●			66% of Canadian ODA: Canadian International Development Agency.	Plans to provide more comprehensive reporting in CRS++ (Export Credits and FDI).
Czech Republic	●											Plans to join IATI.
Denmark	●	●	●	●	●	●					100% of Danish ODA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	Plans to publish project documents.
EU Institutions	●		●			●		●			75% of EC ODA: DG EuropeAid. Data not yet captured: ODA from DG Enlargement, EIB and ECHO.	Plans more complete implementation of the IATI component of the standard by increasing coverage of ODA and OOF.
Finland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100% of Finnish ODA: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finnfund and other line ministries.	Full coverage of ODA. Possibly in OOF and private flows as well.
France	●		●									Plans to increase the level of detail reporting of ODA to cover the maximum fields of IATI, publish more project level information, improve transparency by publishing past data and include evaluations.
Germany	●	●	●			●					Activities funded by BMZ and implemented by its implementing agencies GIZ (8% of German ODA), KfW (18% of ODA), PTB and BGR (unknown percentage of ODA for both). Not yet captured: bilateral activities implemented by non-governmental agencies, and multilateral activities.	Plans to increase share of ODA covered in IATI and include contributions to NGOs.
Greece	●			●								Plans to improve the level of detail of ODA and NGO flows.
Iceland	●											
Ireland	●											Is investigating the feasibility of publishing OOF and NGO flows.
Italy	●											Increase the awareness on the importance of a complete and accurate reporting including on NGO, OOF and private flows.
Japan	●				●							
Korea	●	●	●	●	●							-
Luxembourg	●											Plans to publish ODA flows in IATI format on their website.
Netherlands	●			●	●	●					72% of Dutch ODA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	Plans to complete coverage of all ODA flows in IATI format (CRS is already covered), considering coverage and publication of OOF and private flows in IATI format.
New Zealand	●					●					94% of New Zealand's ODA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.	Seeks continuous improvements to the coverage and comprehensiveness of ODA data leading to full compliance with the common standard. Will in the future consider including OOF, private flows and NGO.
Norway	●	●										-
Portugal	●		●	●	●							Plans to improve the coverage of private flows and NGOs and to increase the level of detail.
Spain	●					●		●	●		100% of Spanish ODA. All Ministries, the Development Agency (AECID), Regions, Municipalities, Public Universities and Private Universities.	Plans to standardise information and improve quality reporting of ODA and to include data currently not included in OOF, Private and NGOs flows.
Sweden	●					●		●			95.6% of Swedish ODA: Swedish International Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice and other departments.	Plans to provide full IATI implementation (100% ODA coverage) and improve its reporting to CRS.
Switzerland ^a	●			●	●	●					60% of Swiss ODA: Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) according to the common standard implementation schedule, but data still not available through IATI. Not yet captured: SECO (under consideration).	Plans to include in ODA, equity investment; in private flows, guaranteed export credits; and in NGOs flows more comprehensive data on private donations.
United Kingdom	●	●	●	●	●	●		●			More than 90% of UK ODA: DFID , the portion of the International Climate Fund of the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), UK Home Office and CDC .	In ODA, piloting use of geocoded data, budget Identifier, IATI identifiers for traceability and other continuous data quality improvements.
United States ^b	●	●	●	●	●						The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the Department of Defense .	-

Notes:

- (a) Switzerland has notified publishing SDC data through IATI. At the time of writing, the information was still not accessible through the IATI website.
(b) The United States publishes through IATI, but did not provide any detailed information on this in its common standard implementation schedule.
(c) The Secretariat used the information provided in the implementation schedules, supplemented, where needed, with information from the IATI website.

Frequency and timeliness

13. Table 3 shows the current and potential frequency and timeliness of DAC members' reporting to the CRS and publishing to IATI, as well as planned improvements by 2015.

Table 3. Frequency and timeliness of DAC members' reporting to the CRS and publication through IATI

DAC member	Current frequency		Potential frequency		Potential timeliness	Planned Improvements
	CRS	IATI	CRS	IATI		
Australia	Annually	Twice a year	Twice a year	Twice a year		
Austria	Annually		Annually			
Belgium	Annually		Quarterly	Quarterly	One month	To increase the frequency by publishing ODA on a quarterly basis.
Canada	Annually	Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly	One month	To publish ODA and OOF on a quarterly basis.
Czech Republic	Annually		Annually		One quarter	
Denmark	Annually	Quarterly	Annually	Quarterly		For ODA flows, to publish in IATI-format on a monthly basis.
EU Institutions	Annually	Quarterly	Annually	Monthly	One month	To publish ODA and OOF monthly through IATI.
Finland	Annually	Annually	Annually		One month	To implement a data warehouse, allowing the automatic publication of information on ODA.
France	Annually		Annually		One quarter	To publish twice a year for some projects.
Germany	Annually	Twice a year	Annually	Twice a year	One quarter	To publish every three months through IATI.
Greece	Annually		Annually	Annually	Six months	
Iceland	Annually					
Ireland	Annually		Annually	Quarterly	One quarter	To publish ODA at activity level quarterly.
Italy	Annually		Quarterly		One quarter	
Japan	Annually					
Korea	Annually		Annually		One quarter	
Luxembourg	Annually		Annually	Annually	One year	To publish ODA figures in CRS and IATI format on their own website to coincide with their submission to the DAC.
Netherlands	Annually	Quarterly	Annually	Monthly	One month	To publish ODA data monthly.
New Zealand	Annually	Twice a year	Quarterly	Quarterly	One month	To continuously improve in order to ensure full compliance with the common standard.
Norway	Annually		Annually	Quarterly	One quarter	
Portugal	Annually		Twice a year		One quarter	To increase the frequency of reporting of ODA, OOF, Private flows and NGO flows to bi-annually.
Spain	Annually	Annually	Quarterly	Quarterly	One quarter	To report ODA, OOF, and private flows quarterly.
Sweden	Annually	Monthly	Annually	Monthly	One month	To publish ODA in real time (when able to meet the system requirements) and to publish OOF, private flows and NGO flows on a yearly basis.
Switzerland ^a	Annually		Twice a year	Twice a year	Six months	To publish ODA on a semi-annual basis.
United Kingdom ^b	Annually	Monthly	Annually	Monthly	One month	
United States ^c	Annually		Quarterly		Two months	

Notes: Potential timeliness refers to how soon the data can be reported or published after they enter the donor system.

(a) Switzerland has notified publishing SDC data through IATI. At the time of writing, the information was still not accessible through the IATI website.

(b) For the United Kingdom: DFID and CDC each provided a schedule. In this case, the most ambitious agency (DFID in regards to frequency and timeliness) has been taken as the basis for the analysis.

(c) The United States publishes through IATI, but did not provide any detailed information on this in its common standard implementation schedule.

14. All members report annually to the CRS. The frequency of members' publication through IATI varies from monthly to annually. In terms of potential frequency of reporting, four members (Belgium, Canada, New Zealand and Spain) could provide quarterly data to both the CRS and IATI. Seven aim to publish monthly/quarterly data only through IATI, while two aim to report quarterly only to the CRS.

15. In terms of potential timeliness, eight members could publish data within a month after capturing them internally; ten need up to three months and two are able to publish within six months.

Forward-looking information

16. Table 4 summarises DAC members' ambitions regarding forward-looking information; it shows, for the FSS and IATI, current performance in terms of level of disaggregation, how far ahead members can provide information, the permission (or not) to publish FSS data, and any planned improvements.

Table 4. DAC members' forward looking information: Reporting to the FSS and publication through IATI

DAC member	FSS				IATI			Planned Improvements
	Disclosure Permission	Activity level	Semi aggregate level	Aggregate level	Activity level	Semi aggregate level	Aggregate level	
Australia	No	<i>Planning horizon (years)</i>			<i>Planning horizon (years)</i>			
Austria ^b	Yes	4	4	4	4			
Belgium ^c	Yes	3	3	3			To extend the work done on CPA to cover NGOs, humanitarian and multilateral aid.	
Canada ^c	No	4						
Czech Republic	Yes			3				
Denmark	Yes			5				
EU Institutions	No			3	3			
Finland ^c	Yes	4	4	4	1	4	4	
France	Yes			1			To publish more information at project level.	
Germany ^a	Yes			3	3		3	
Greece	n.a.							
Iceland	n.a.							
Ireland	Yes			4			To publish CPA at sector level.	
Italy ^c	Yes			3				
Japan ^d	Yes							
Korea	Yes			1				
Luxembourg ^a	Yes			4-5			To increase categories of aid and country coverage.	
Netherlands	Yes			4			1	
New Zealand	Yes			4	3			
Norway ^d	Yes						To publish forward spending information at activity level.	
Portugal ^a	Yes	4					To disclose forward-looking information on all bilateral activities (beyond CPA flows) and multilateral flows. Disclose forward-looking data on OOF, private flows and flows to NGOs.	
Spain	n.a.			1				
Sweden	Yes		7	7	3			
Switzerland	Yes			4			To disaggregate ODA flows to activity level.	
United Kingdom	No			4	4	4	4	
United States ^d	No							

Notes:

(a) Only covers information about committed and ongoing projects.

(b) Also includes planned, not yet-committed projects.

(c) Also includes remaining country budget envelopes.

(d) Japan, Norway and the United States only provide provisional past expenditures through the FSS but no forward spending information.

17. The table shows that nineteen members provide forward looking information in the form of aggregate country envelopes for each recipient country. Among these, 11 members provide activity-level forward looking information, either to the Forward Spending Survey or through IATI, at least three years ahead. Five members do not allow the information they report to the FSS to become public.⁹

18. Some donors mention that they face certain constraints related to their budget framework. Most members use a rolling planning framework. Some note the uncertainty of their budget frameworks, which limits their programming horizon.

19. A few members have planned **improvements** by 2015; examples include providing forward looking information for aid flows beyond CPA; reporting to the FSS at activity level, and publishing forward-looking aid information in IATI format.

9. See DCD/DAC/STAT/RD(2013)1/RD1: since the release of this document, the Netherlands have confirmed that its forward spending plans can be made public.