

# Assessing the prospects of a Global Fund for Development Data

## Expert Meeting

**Thursday, 4 October 2018**

OECD Boulogne Building, Room BB3015  
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92100 Boulogne-Billancourt, France

## Meeting Summary

### Context

The Experts Meeting “Assessing the prospects of a Global Fund for Development Data” brought together approximately 30 experts from the development finance and statistical community to reflect on the financing needs for the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan (CT-GAP), the existing financing mechanisms, and the feasibility, governance and operational aspects of a Global Fund for Development Data. The feedback, perspectives and insights from a broad range of experts contributed to attaining all objectives of the Expert Meeting, and helped define the next steps for the underlying study.

### Session I – Funding arrangements for data: State of Play

The draft methodology for estimating the costs of CT-GAP implementation was introduced. The study suggests that the implementation of the CT-GAP would entail financial commitments of at least USD 7.9 billion per year. Given the current composition of international and domestic support, the CT-GAP is facing a USD 1.2 billion funding gap per year.

In the discussion that followed, the discussants and several participants highlighted the usefulness of the costing exercise and pointed to a few areas of possible improvements in the methodology (e.g. limited number of NSDSs, NSDSs do not include all costs e.g. for more innovative forms of data collection such as geo-spatial approaches). The discussants suggested that the presented numbers could be complemented with other sources that include detailed data on the costs of running an efficient statistical system and projects for implementing new data sources. Participants expressed some reservations about “simply scaling up” current financing and missing out on complementarities and synergies between public and private financing. In addition, the need of having a “reasonable number” to approach donors was stressed. The participants agreed that 1% of ODA seems a reasonable number to lobby and use for statistical capacity development to fulfil the CT-GAP objectives, in addition to scaling up domestic resources.

## **Session II – Comparing mechanisms and lessons from other global funds**

A comparison of existing financing mechanisms was introduced. In particular, the presentation focused on how a global fund option stands vis-à-vis other mechanisms. Participants agreed that a Global Fund for Development Data, if properly designed, could be the “second best option” to public finance.

Examples of existing global/international funds (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Vaccine Alliance and International Agricultural Fund) were introduced. All three examples illustrated how a vertical, thematic-based, multi-stakeholder structure with ex-ante impact assessment works. In terms of governance, participants agreed that a Global Fund for Development Data should include a Board which would comprise main donors and recipients, an independent technical committee to review proposals and a Secretariat.

In the discussion that followed, it was stressed that performance-based funding and country ownership are essential factors for success. Experts defined country ownership as a combination of government involvement, national proposals and an inclusive consultancy process. Additionally, experts highlighted political independence and a clear financing mandate. Some key takeaways centred on lessons to be learned from successful vertical health funds and the need for clear definitions for global funding mechanisms.

## **Session III – Exploring the focus and rationale for a global funding mechanism for data**

The general feasibility for the focus and rationale of a Global Fund for Development Data was discussed. Main suggestions included considering the centrality of sustained political demand, the possibility to focus funding on basic capacities in low-income countries, and to consider other sources of additional funding. Main takeaways from the discussion were that innovation and learning are key for a successful implementation.

Experts acknowledged the challenging nature of data and statistics. Intangibility and timeliness of data, the creation of sustained political demand, and the design of a valid narrative describing the results of statistical capacity development projects were identified as main hurdles for attracting additional investment efforts from donors. Translating efforts into success stories with a compelling pitch could result in the necessary increase in development data finance. Placing more focus on the pitch in the initial discussions, rather than on details of the instrument, was the main advice. Key motives were identified for a convincing narrative around statistical capacity development: a sense of urgency, possibilities for economic growth, and the cost of inaction. Further suggestions for a potential pitch from experts focused on innovation and/or SDG data challenges.

## **Session IV – Funding data for development: bringing the data and policy perspective together**

The HLG-PCCB paper “Better Data for Development” was briefly presented. The paper outlines the feasibility of having a new instrument for raising funds for statistical capacity development and emphasizes that a financial facility for development data should focus on country needs.

The discussion that followed highlighted that additional intermediary steps are needed in the process prior to launching a new mechanism, such as having broader consultations with the

statistical, financial and donor community and identifying a “champion” to help raise funds. A more detailed roadmap would be required to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken in this direction. The meeting participants proposed including a global consultation process in the finalisation of the study, and to tilt the focus towards success stories of financial mobilisation. Several experts underlined the complementarity of the paper with ODI’s study as both evaluate and propose a new global funding mechanism for data. Further steps towards the convergence of both studies were also discussed.

## **Session V – Concluding remarks and way forward**

PARIS21 closed the meeting by emphasizing the need to increase international aid for statistics to ideally 1% of ODA, and to find a pitch for a Global Fund for Development Data. SDG data challenges and investment returns of statistical capacity development were highlighted as possible opportunities. Lastly, the Experts Meeting concluded with a consensus that a Global Fund for Development Data could be a viable option, if designed properly, for closing the CT-GAP and SDG monitoring funding gap.