

Reporting System on Partner Support to Statistical Development

Minutes of Task Team Meeting, November 10, 2006

1. The first meeting of the Task Team (TT) on a Reporting System on Partner Support to Statistical Development was held on November 10, 2006 in Paris at the headquarters of PARIS21. The meeting was chaired by Rachael Beaven of DFID, and attended by Jean-François Divay (France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Lynn Forrest (DFID), Morag Ottens (Eurostat), Petteri Baer (UNECE), Rudolphe Petras (OECD), and Antoine Simonpietri, Adriana De Leva, Marc Tocatlian, and Sam Blazyk (PARIS21). A video-conference took place in the afternoon, linking the Paris participants to Naoko Watanabe and Neil Fantom (World Bank), Robin Kibuka, Theodore Bikoi, and Claudia Mariel (IMF) and Naman Keita, Hiek Som??., and Mohamed Barro (FAO). The objectives of the meeting were to discuss the purpose of a partner reporting system on statistical development and the general and specific issues related to such system, as well as define a work programme for the Team for the next few months (the meeting's agenda is attached). The members based their discussion on the Discussion Note, which was prepared by PARIS21 and distributed prior to the meeting.

2. In general, all members of the TT were very supportive of the initiative to put in place a reporting system on partner support to statistical development. They agreed that, for development partners, the purposes of such a system are to (i) contribute to improved partner coordination in the area of statistics and (ii) serve as an advocacy tool to mobilize additional resources for statistical development. Since for many recipient countries, statistical development is funded mainly by external partners, a reporting system on partner support can be a useful tool to assist them monitor/evaluate partner contribution, particularly in the context of the NSDS. It is hoped that in the future the main source of information of partner support will be the recipient countries themselves. Specifically, the meeting spent significant time discussing existing reporting systems and key characteristics of a reporting system that require further study.

Review of existing reporting systems

3. As regards the existing reporting systems, the following systems were presented by the relevant partner: (i) the Trade Capacity Building Database at the OECD (a sub-system of the DAC Creditor Reporting System), (ii) the World Bank's Country Statistical Information Database, (iii) the IMF's General Data Dissemination System and its Travel Information Management System, (iv) the FAO's project database and its webpage on technical assistance in statistics, and (v) the UNECE/Eurostat reporting exercise for Central Asian countries and the Balkan countries, respectively. Based on these presentations, the meeting agreed that each of these partners and DFID prepare a note on its own system, based on a template to be provided by PARIS21. In addition, given the experience of the OECD on developing the Trade Capacity Building Database, which is integrated into the CRS, it was agreed that a "feasibility study" be done by OECD/PARIS21 to assess how the CRS could be improved to permit reporting on statistical activities.

4. The meeting suggested that there may be four approaches for the design of a reporting system on statistical development:

- refine the CRS to allow reporting on statistical activities, so that support to statistics can be extracted (as a baseline) and be complemented by information from partners not covered by the CRS;
- encourage each partner to strengthen its reporting system on what it does in statistics (the experience of DFID, the World Bank, the IMF, and the FAO may serve as examples). Possibly build on one of these systems and expand to include other partners or find a way that core information on statistical activities can be extracted from the different partner systems and synthesized in a comparable manner;
- verify information at the level of the recipient country, whose importance was demonstrated through the experience of the Light Reporting Mechanism;
- move towards a global reporting system, separate from the CRS .

5. The meeting also briefly discussed the need to advocate for a more strategic approach to the funding of statistical development. The experience of the Light Reporting Mechanism clearly showed that partner

support, at present, is scattered and sometimes ad hoc. The Task Team agreed to reflect on how a reporting system on partner support to statistical development could be used as an advocacy tool at high levels of partner institutions, and to discuss the issue further at its next meeting.

Discussion on the characteristics of a reporting system

6. The discussion focused on the following characteristics of a reporting system:

- ***the classification of statistical areas***: the meeting stressed the importance of being clear on what statistical categories should be included in a reporting system, along with their definitions. Mr. Baer (UNECE) agreed to prepare a note listing what should be reported, giving clear description of each statistical area and examples. Mr. Divay (France) promised to provide input based on the experience of INSEE (the French Statistical Agency);
- ***the source of information***: there appeared to be general agreement that for the time being the principal source of the information should be the partners themselves (both HQ and field offices). In any event, recipient countries must be involved in the verification of data, as a way of assuring the ***quality of the information***;
- ***the coverage of statistical activities***: there was unanimous agreement on covering both past and planned activities in the reporting system. The statistical activities to be reported include sector statistics, administrative data, and support to information management systems, but exclude monitoring and evaluation activities specifically linked to projects;
- ***the periodicity of reporting***: based on the OECD experience, annual reporting is more realistic for past activities. Although regular updating has proven difficult, it could be encouraged for planned activities (as there is an element of self-interest involved);
- ***reporting of financial information***: the meeting agreed there was a need to prepare a typology of financing to help in “asking the right questions” in the design of an eventual questionnaire for the reporting system. The work should discuss whether to report on commitments or disbursements of statistical activities, propose a methodology for estimating annual aid flows, present different financing modalities, distinguish different financing mechanisms (source of funding vs. the implementer of funding) and recommend possible ways of estimating support to statistics within budget support operations, if necessary. Ms. De Leva (PARIS21) will draft a note on financing methodology;
- ***official mandate***: experience from all the existing systems has shown that a firm commitment of a partner’s top management is essential for the development and upkeep of a reporting system;
- ***accessibility of information***: there was general agreement that the information be accessible and/or disseminated to the public. This can be done in different ways, including through regular reports (OECD) and online (World Bank).

7. Although the agenda of the meeting included a discussion on the design of a web-based database, TT members felt that such a discussion should be postponed until the review of existing reporting systems is completed and its recommendations are discussed in the next meeting. Ms. De Leva will prepare a summary note of partners’ reviews and make recommendations for discussion during the next meeting.

8. To the extent possible, the TT stressed the importance of keeping its membership constant throughout its mandate, so as to ensure continuity and efficiency of its work programme.

Next Steps

9. The TT members agreed on the following revised work programme:

Activity	Responsibility	Date
Template: key characteristics of reporting system	De Leva	Nov. 14, 2006
Fill out template <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurostat • UNECE • IMF 	Ottens Baer Kibuka/Mariel	Nov. 24, 2006
Feasibility note on use of CRS for statistics	Petras/Simonpietri	Nov. 24, 1006
Review of existing systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAC CRS • World Bank • FAO • DFID 	De Leva/Petras Watanabe Keita Beaven/Forrest	Draft by Dec 6, 2006
Note on classification of statistical areas	Baer	Dec. 6, 2006
Note on INSEE's experience	Divay	Nov. 24, 2006
Financing methodology	De Leva	Nov. 30, 2006
Comments on three notes above	TT members	Dec. 20, 2006
Draft proposal based on above work	De Leva	Jan. 13, 2007
Next TT meeting	TT members	Jan. 22, 2007 (tentative)