

THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE TOSSD TASK FORCE
VIRTUAL MEETING, 29-30 JUNE 2021
MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION POINTS

This note presents the main conclusions and action points from the 13th meeting of the TOSSD Task Force (the TF) as recorded by the co-Chairs and the Secretariat. In brief:

- Item 1. In terms of next steps, the Secretariat will send members **a reminder about reporting** once the official deadline has passed and **could present annually to the WP-STAT the list of newly-created TOSSD codes** for its consideration for the CRS framework. Members are encouraged to make an extra effort in reporting COVID-19 related activities. Discussion on the delineation of regional activities in Pillar I versus Pillar II will continue.
- Item 2. The Secretariat will make **a presentation on the Chile pilot** at the next meeting of the Task Force, and present a new discussion paper based on the lessons drawn from that pilot, as a way to advance the discussion on the development of the provider perspective.
- Item 3. Members agreed on the need to carry out **regular activities to promote TOSSD** both at the national and international levels, and to regularly share progress in this area.
- Item 4. The Secretariat will provide **a new scenario on funding TOSSD** at the next meeting based on the co-Chair's conclusions, with 6 groups including Multilaterals. A budget by broad objectives / activities will also be prepared.
- Item 5. The Secretariat will **propose a mechanism through which data reported are formally notified to recipient countries**. Recipient countries could then work with the Secretariat, on a rotating basis, to verify the data with the possibility to fill gaps or correct any discrepancies with their own information.
- Item 6. TF members that are also members of the IAEG-SDGs working group on the measurement of development support will hold **a meeting before 6 July**. The Secretariat will **report back on progress** at the next TF meeting. **Members are invited to express their opinions on the working group proposal through the global consultation that will take place in July-August**.
- AOB: Due to time constraints, the updated Terms of Reference of the TF were only circulated after the meeting, for approval on a non-objection basis. (Note: the TORs were circulated on 1 July and no objection was received by the deadline of 9 July. **The TORs were therefore considered as approved and posted on the TOSSD website.**)
- Next meeting: The next meeting of the TF is scheduled to take place in October / November 2021.

	<p>Introduction and welcome</p> <p>The co-Chairs welcomed Mexico as a new observer to the Task Force. Later in the meeting, Mexico thanked the co-Chairs and the Task Force and expressed its pleasure to re-join the group after a long period of absence (Mexico had been a founding member of the Task Force back in 2017). Co-Chairs also welcomed other participants and thanked them for their attendance.</p>
<p>Item 1.</p>	<p>Update on data collection and capacity building seminar on TOSSD reporting</p> <p>The Secretariat made a presentation on TOSSD reporting, which included an update on the 2021 data collection exercise with a focus on a number of specific topics and issues noted in last year’s reporting on 2019 data.</p> <p>Update on the 2021 reporting</p> <p>Several members informed the Task Force that they were expecting to meet the reporting deadline. A number of members highlighted substantial improvements in their reporting coverage (new government entities) and quality (better reporting on the SDG focus). Some emphasised the time needed to socialise TOSSD with their administration and that this is still work in progress. One member informed the group that its official report on South-South Co-operation will be the basis for its TOSSD reporting but that it was not sure the report would be ready for this year’s reporting round. One member informed the Secretariat that it is expecting some delays in its reporting. The Secretariat informed members that it would be able to accommodate reporters who would need more time to submit their data and that it would send a reminder once the official deadline has passed.</p> <p>Focus on specific topics</p> <p>Delineation between pillar I and pillar II: One member commented that all regional cross-border flows should be in pillar I and questioned the classification in pillar II of cross-border peace operations and capacity-building to regional institutions.</p> <p>COVID-19 tracking: Most members will be able to identify COVID-19 activities though the new sector code under health and/or the keyword. One member informed the group that it is planning to report its contribution to the COVAX Facility and asked whether other members consider this eligible and are planning to report it. Some members raised questions on the definition of the COVID-19 keyword. One member stressed that “repurposed activities”, i.e. those that have been redesigned to address COVID-19, can significantly contribute to COVID-19 response even if their primary objective was not related to that initially. Another member noted that a large part, but not all, of its CRS data could be marked with COVID-19 and that manual marking may need to be done for the additional pillar II activities. The Secretariat clarified that “primarily aimed at COVID-19” means an activity “would not have occurred without COVID-19” and that the keyword would lose much of its meaning and usefulness if it was used on all activities. One member responded that we would need to continue discussing the actual meaning and operationalisation of the expression “would not have occurred”.</p> <p>The Secretariat encouraged Task Force members to make extra efforts in reporting COVID-19 activities, in particular in pillar II.</p> <p>Reporting issues in 2019 data</p> <p>The Secretariat flagged a number of issues identified in last year’s reporting round, including confidentiality issues and the divergence between the CRS and TOSSD classifications that creates conflicting instructions for members that report in both systems. It suggested that the Task Force could present annually to the WP-STAT the list of new codes that have been created. The list could be considered and possibly approved by the WP-STAT to ensure that the same activities are reported with the same codes in the two frameworks. The EU representative, who is also the WP-STAT Chair, supported this idea.</p> <p>As regards the topic of confidentiality, two main issues were touched upon during the meeting: MDB disbursements and private mobilisation.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As regards the former, some MDBs explain that they are able to report quality data on commitments only, as their disbursement (and reflow) data are subject to confidentiality constraints. Noting that TOSSD is a disbursement-based measure, future efforts in the TF could focus on ways to help the MDBs enhance transparency in this area. • Concerning the latter, the OECD – MDB Working Group on Mobilisation recently agreed on the principles for disclosing data on private finance mobilised. To address the expressed confidentiality constraints, published data could be shown in various ways but not combining the provider and recipient dimensions. Upon agreement by the MDBs, such disclosure rules could be replicated in the context of the TOSSD.online tool. This would greatly improve the current situation where the MDB mobilisation data are only shown as one unallocated aggregate. <p>The Secretariat will send members a reminder about reporting once the official deadline has passed. It could present annually to the WP-STAT the list of newly-created TOSSD codes for its consideration for the CRS framework. Discussions will continue on COVID-19 related activities, on which members are encouraged to make an extra effort in reporting, as well as on the delineation of Pillar I versus Pillar II in relation to regional activities.</p>
<p>Item 2.</p>	<p>Provider perspective</p> <p>The Secretariat presented the background paper for this session.</p> <p>Many Task Force members stressed that TOSSD was a recipient-focused measure and that this perspective should be preserved.</p> <p>There was support for the development of a provider perspective by several members, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is already mentioned in paragraph 6 of the Reporting Instructions. - There is a necessity to have a statistical methodology to allow for comparable figures across providers. - There is no measure of support by SSC providers and TOSSD can prove useful in this respect. - Providers will be able to communicate on their pillar II activities, which is not possible today. <p>One observer indicated that it did not favour the development of a provider perspective and one member indicated that the group should rather focus on the recipient perspective for now and reopen the discussion later. The arguments that were brought up were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The risk of undermining the TOSSD measure as a whole (as it could then be perceived as a donor-led measure) and the difficulty to communicate on provider figures as opposed to a TOSSD figure focused on recipients. - The risk of undermining ODA as a measure of donor effort. - The development of this perspective at this point in time may not be well perceived by the UN. <p>It was also highlighted that the information on providers' contributions was already available in the tossd.online when downloading all data. One member commented that this was indeed the case but that there is a need to ensure that the provider perspective is constructed in a consistent way.</p> <p>One member expressed explicit support for the principles highlighted in the paper.</p> <p>Other salient elements of the discussion were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One member suggested consulting with multilateral institutions and paying attention to the issue of double counting when developing the provider perspective. - One member suggested aggregating figures for OECD member countries and disaggregated figures for other providers. - One member advocated for having a provider perspective also for multilateral institutions so that their contributions are not diluted. Further discussion should be carried out on this point.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only one provider expressed an opinion on the options put forward in the paper, favouring option 1 (i.e. a provider perspective measured by inflows to multilateral institutions) as it was deemed easier to implement while option 2 (i.e. attributing multilateral outflows back to provider countries) was considered interesting but with many elements to define on how to do it. - One member suggested that another name be found for the TOSSD figure from a provider perspective. <p>In his wrap-up, the co-Chair from South Africa highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A position has already been taken on the development of a provider perspective (through the paragraph 6 of the Reporting Instructions). • There is a need to balance out the complementarity and the competition that this new perspective would generate. • The Chile Pilot should help to advance the discussion. <p>The Secretariat will make a presentation on the highlights of the Chile pilot at the next meeting of the Task Force and provide a new discussion paper based on lessons drawn from it to advance the discussion on the development of the provider perspective.</p>
<p>Item 3.</p>	<p>Implementation of the TOSSD promotion strategy and TOSSD data in 2021</p> <p>The Secretariat presented a summary of the networking and communication actions implemented in the first semester of 2021, updating members on the strategy and roadmap decided upon in the previous meeting. The Secretariat invited members to update the TF on the actions they have taken, and the ones they intend to take, to communicate on TOSSD and TOSSD data in the course of 2021.</p> <p>Several TF members intervened, highlighting the importance of continued efforts in promoting and communicating about TOSSD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All mentioned the growing interest in TOSSD, perceived both at the national and international level. • Three members flagged their efforts to get TOSSD mentioned in top international fora (G7/G20/FFD) and the importance in continuing such efforts, to give visibility and high-level international recognition to the framework. • Two members mentioned their efforts in promoting TOSSD within the IAEG-SDGs working group, which is particularly crucial as the discussions of the group are coming to a close. • Two members mentioned their efforts to collect data from various agencies and ministries, in particular for Pillar II, and to popularise TOSSD data and the TOSSD website for internal use. • One member indicated that it had started carrying out studies that will make use of TOSSD data and that these will be disseminated in due course. • One member proposed that existing reporters share their experience and challenges with new potential reporters. • One member mentioned the importance to use also social media to promote TOSSD. The Secretariat noted that this part of the networking and communication strategy had not yet been implemented due to resource constraints, but confirmed its intention to work on this aspect in the future. <p>Members agreed on the need to carry out regular activities to promote TOSSD both nationally and internationally including at political level, and to regularly share progress in this area.</p>
<p>Item 4.</p>	<p>Update on the financing of TOSSD and the Task Force</p> <p>The Secretariat presented the findings of the bilateral calls carried out with about one-third of the Task Force on this topic. The main highlights of the discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member recommended to frame the issue of TOSSD financing as “the financing of a custodian agency” for which there are clear costs attached.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several members, through the bilateral calls or in the meeting, expressed a preference for funding scenario 2 (i.e. with fixed but differentiated contributions by type of stakeholder). There was also some support for a scenario with fixed but differentiated contributions by income groups. • Several members expressed that in-kind contributions should be taken into account as actual contributions. • One member indicated that, even if this is challenging at the moment given the current governance structure, there is a need to put an incentive system in place to ensure everybody contributes to the initiative. Another member indicated the TF should ensure that the funding issue does not deter new members from joining the TF. • A bilateral call with one member had highlighted the possibility of multilateral organisations paying their contribution through their administrative budget. It can be considered that the TOSSD Task Force Secretariat provides a service to the organisation by collecting, processing, assuring data quality, publishing and promoting TOSSD data. • One member mentioned that the issue of financing is also linked to the governance and in that regard, a separate entity such as the Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) can be a model. • One member advocated for having core work being funded in a stable manner through core resources. The budget should be available to the Task Force by type of activity. • Several members indicated they would come back to the Secretariat with their contribution modality as they were not able to provide this modality in the bilateral call or during the Task Force meeting. <p>In his wrap-up, the co-chair from the EU highlighted that there is some urgency in providing adequate resources to the Task Force Secretariat to carry out its work and recommended presenting at the next meeting a new scenario with fixed contributions in six categories: 1/ Major OECD providers (with contributions around 200K€); 2/ Other OECD providers (contributions to be determined); 3/ Major SSC providers (with contributions around 77.5K€ as in Scenario 2); 4/ Other SSC providers (contributions to be determined); 5/ Multilateral institutions (contributions around 50K€); 6/ Recipients (contributions and modality to be determined). For DAC members, the contributions would take place outside of the DAC PWB. He also highlighted the importance of setting up an incentive system for contributions while not creating obstacles for new members and observers.</p> <p>The Secretariat will provide a new scenario at the next meeting based on the co-chair’s conclusions. A budget by broad objectives / activities will also be prepared.</p>
<p>Item 5.</p>	<p>Investigating options for data verification by recipient countries</p> <p>The Secretariat introduced a discussion on a possible verification mechanism for TOSSD data by recipient countries. Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat had shared with TF members some questions to stimulate the debate. Highlights from the discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Task Force members that intervened showed a strong interest in the implementation of a data verification mechanism, so that recipient countries can provide feedback on TOSSD data. • Three countries signalled that they had indeed noticed discrepancies between the data in their country systems and development finance statistics published internationally. In some cases they had tried to get in touch with provider countries to get the data corrected, with various degrees of success. • One country mentioned the importance of a data verification mechanism in order to provide feedback on the sustainability of the activities carried out by providers. Another member noted that the mechanism could be useful in particular to fine-tune the SDG target(s) of the activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat took note of the positive feedback by members on the possible data verification mechanism. Process-wise, while it would not be feasible to expect feedback on all data every year prior to their publication, a subset of data could be analysed each year ex-post. The Secretariat also suggested notifying the recipient countries when the data are published. It was also noted that the verification mechanism would be an important data quality feature, unique to TOSSD. • Two members asked about the Secretariat’s role in managing and facilitating data verification, and especially if sufficient resources would be available. They also pointed out that any data verification process would indeed need to be carried out ex-post not to delay data publication. • In his wrap-up, the co-Chair concluded that there is a clear interest from recipient countries to be able to verify data and that this implies that recipient countries should indeed be notified at the time of publishing TOSSD data. It should not be expected that all countries verify all data every year, and that verification is not an approval criterion but should rather be understood as an ex-post verification process. Once developed, this data verification mechanism would certainly deserve a paragraph in the Reporting Instructions. <p>The Secretariat will propose a mechanism through which data reported is formally notified to recipient countries. Recipient countries could then verify data on a rotating basis, with the possibility to fill gaps or correct any discrepancies with their own information.</p>
Item 6.	<p>Update on the IAEG-SDGs working group on measurement of development support</p> <p>The Secretariat presented an update on the progress made by the IAEG-SDGs working group (WG) on measurement of development support.</p> <p>Several members expressed concerns about the proposal put forward in the WG. The most salient points of concern were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments beyond loans and grants are excluded from the proposal. • The new indicator would create a third measure beyond ODA and TOSSD or compete with TOSSD Pillar I, even though not all agreed on this point (subsets of ODA data are currently used for other SDG indicators without jeopardizing the integrity of ODA). • A beneficiary country could challenge ODA, because if one activity is excluded from the indicator, then it will also be put in question in the ODA measure. • Activity-level reporting is not consistently pursued. • TOSSD should be clearly mentioned as a data source for this indicator. <p>One member strongly objected to the criteria b. of the proposal¹ as it felt a single country cannot decide unilaterally what should count as sustainable development.</p> <p>One observer recommended that the TF be also open to make changes based on the UN proposal while one member expressed the opposite view.</p> <p>One member flagged that it had sent a request to the UN Statistics Division to become an observer to the working group and had got no response.</p> <p>Many members and observers congratulated Mexico and Brazil for their work on the quantification of South-South Co-operation (SSC) and welcomed their proposal as a major breakthrough. Once finalised, it could be integrated in the TOSSD framework as foreseen in the Reporting Instructions (see footnote 25).</p> <p>One observer indicated that the TF should aim to have only one reporting framework in the long run and through a UN-led process.</p>

¹ “b. Flows where the recipient country, after discussion with the custodian agency and/or the reporting provider country, objects to their characterization as supporting its sustainable development”.

	<p>The co-Chair from the EU indicated that members should be ready to block the proposal if key points of concern (as above) are not addressed just like two countries had blocked the TOSSD proposal at the IAEG-SDGs meeting in October 2019. The conclusion of that meeting had been that the WG would fine-tune the TOSSD proposal and, two years down the road, TOSSD is not even mentioned as a data source in the proposal. The co-Chair from South Africa called for flexibility and for discussions to narrow the gap with the UN proposal.</p> <p>The Secretariat indicated that, in principle, it could retrieve from the TOSSD database the information for the indicator as outlined in the proposal, even though this would represent extra work. The Secretariat has closely examined the SSC proposal and finds it compatible/aligned with TOSSD.</p> <p>TF members that are also members of the working group will continue coordinating ahead of the meetings of the working group and will hold a meeting before the WG meeting of 6 July. The Secretariat will report back on progress at the next TF meeting. Members should express their opinion about the working group proposal through the global consultation that will take place in July-August.</p>
	<p>AOB and Wrap-up</p> <p>Due to time constraints, it was decided that the new Terms of Reference would be circulated for approval on a non-objection basis after the meeting. (The TORs were circulated on 1 July and no objection was received by the deadline of 9 July. The TORs were therefore considered as approved and posted on the TOSSD website.)</p> <p>The co-Chairs thanked the participants and the Secretariat for their hard work. Co-Chairs recalled the main elements discussed during the meeting, also highlighted above. The next meeting of the TF is tentatively scheduled to take place in October / November 2021.</p>