

**TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TOSSD TASK FORCE
VIRTUAL MEETING, 6-7 JULY 2023
SPECIAL FOLLOW UP SESSIONS, 2 AND 4 OCTOBER 2023**

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION POINTS

This note presents the main conclusions and action points from the 21st meeting of the TOSSD Task Force (the TF) as recorded by the co-Chairs and the Secretariat. In brief:

- **Item 1.** Task Force members were invited to reach out to the Secretariat should they encounter any difficulty in the ToRs approval process, as many Task Force members are already part of existing hosted partnerships and have therefore already validated similar ToRs in the context of these bodies.
- **Item 2.** The Secretariat will send the concept note on the TOSSD recipient profiles to the Task Force for comments in the course of the summer and will produce the profiles (statistical part) by the end of 2023.
- **Item 3.** The Secretariat will revise the proposed guidance on SDG-related investments from public institutional investors – in the light of the discussion and the questions raised at the meeting (e.g., double counting) – and circulate it to members for their consideration. The final guidance will be incorporated as an Annex of the “explanatory notes” shared with members in the Secretariat’s annual data solicitations.

From the special follow-up sessions of the 21st meeting:

- **Item 1.** The Secretariat informed the Task Force that the OECD Council had approved on 13 September 2023 the hosting of the Secretariat of the IFT by the OECD.
- **Item 2.** On 4 October 2023, the Task Force finalised the first version of the Terms of Reference for the International Forum on TOSSD.
- **Item 3.** Task Force members are invited to indicate, by 20 October, to whom the letter inviting them to approve the TORs should be sent. The Secretariat will then send invitation letters to current Task Force members in the week of 23 October, for countries and organisations to answer to the Secretariat by 31 December 2023.

| 21st meeting of the International TOSSD Task Force – 6-7 July 2023 | |
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| | <p>Introduction and welcome</p> <p>The Co-Chairs welcomed participants for this important meeting of the TOSSD Task Force.</p> |
| Item 1. | <p>Governance and financing of the TOSSD framework</p> <p>The Secretariat updated the Task Force on progress in the OECD discussions on the hosting of the Secretariat of the International Forum on TOSSD. The Secretariat informed that discussions at the OECD Executive Committee (ExCo) had been postponed to 6 September 2023. This was because the Memorandum of Understanding between the OECD and the signatory countries (Canada, France, Spain and the US) had not been finalised. The Secretariat further explained that following the Executive Committee meeting in September, the formal approval of the hosting by the OECD Council was expected to take place on 9 October 2023¹.</p> <p>The Task Force was informed that the MoU on the hosting of the Secretariat would come into effect for a period of two years and that the IFT Secretariat would continue operating for a third year if financial commitments have been secured, in advance of the end of the second year, to fund the IFT Secretariat for a third year.</p> <p>The Secretariat also presented the updated roadmap towards the creation of the Forum as well as the updated operational budget estimates and funding plan.</p> <p>Regarding the budget, one observer asked why the budget for 2026 was almost equivalent to the one of the first two years 2024-25. The Secretariat explained that, based on guidance by the OECD legal department, it had been necessary to align the 2024-25 budget with the amount indicated in the MoU (EUR 2.1. million). It is expected however that the Forum will further expand in 2026 after a consolidation phase in 2024-25.</p> <p>The co-Chair from the EU highlighted the necessity to have before the end of the year a clear and unequivocal decision by the Task Force to create the Forum. The Secretariat indicated that a letter could be sent to the Task Force inviting them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree on the creation of the Forum on 1 January 2024 by approving the terms of reference (ToRs). While the TORs are not legally binding, this approval would be a commitment to participate in the Forum and abide by the ToRs. - Become Members of or Observers to the Forum. - Agree to have the two co-Chairs of the Task Force acting as co-Chairs ad interim, and the current TOSSD Task Force as interim IFT Governing Body, pending the first General Assembly to take place early 2024, to ensure continuity and a smooth transition. <p>This letter would be addressed to all countries and organisations of the Task Force.</p> <p>It was clarified that if a country or organisation cannot agree to the TORs for the IFT by 1 January 2024, it could still participate in the interim IFT governing body until the first IFT General Assembly takes place. The co-Chair noted that it would be important for countries and organisations to provide an indication of when they would be able to approve the ToRs. One member requested clarification on the "endorsement" of the ToRs, noting that the Forum is not a new organisation. The member highlighted the informal nature of the Task Force comprised of representatives that are not empowered to approve documents with possible budgetary implications or dealing with legal/substantive issues (e.g., intellectual property). The Secretariat provided examples of partnerships hosted by the OECD where both OECD and non-OECD countries participate, and where those countries had agreed with the respective Terms of Reference. Task Force members were invited to reach out to the Secretariat should they encounter any difficulty in the ToRs approval process, as many Task Force members are already part of these existing hosted partnerships and have therefore already validated similar ToRs in the context of these bodies.</p> |

¹ The approval of the hosting took place at the OECD Council session on 13 September 2023.

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| | <p><u>Discussion on the revised draft terms of reference for the International Forum on TOSSD for review by the Task Force on 6-7 July 2023.</u></p> <p>The Task Force approved in-line edits proposed by the Secretariat but discussed the following adjustments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In section 2.a (Members), the Task Force agreed on a footnote to indicate that contributions from recipient countries are waived for the first three years in order to facilitate their participation as full Members in the Forum. - In section 3.d.i (Steering Group), the Task Force agreed on the process and criteria for the General Assembly to appoint, in Year Y, IFT Members that will be Members of the Steering Group in Year Y+1. The Task Force also agreed that the General Assembly will assess each in-kind contribution individually to decide whether it can give a right to a seat in the Steering Group. - In section 3.f. (Secretariat), the Task Force agreed on edits to further define the Secretariat’s main functions and the relations with the co-Chairs. - In section 3.g. (Other governance arrangements), the Task Force agreed on new paragraphs on data management at the IFT. - In section 4 (Financial provisions). The following footnote was included: “As discussed in the 20th TOSSD Task Force meeting in March 2023, major economies among the OECD DAC membership, Arab donors and major SSC providers would be expected to be Level 1 contributors.” - The Task Force agreed to delete “Annex A. Template Terms of Reference for IFT Working Groups.” This document can still be used in due time when setting up Working Groups. <p>This updated version of the draft Terms of Reference was submitted as an input to the OECD Executive Committee discussions. Other comments were received after the Task Force and were discussed at the special follow up sessions of the 21st meeting (2 and 4 October). The outcome of these discussions is presented further below.</p> |
| <p>Item 2.</p> | <p>Proposal on “TOSSD recipient profiles”</p> <p>The Secretariat presented the rationale and proposed content of the TOSSD recipient profiles, as well as the prototype under development for Senegal. The profiles would be made available online and would provide a standardised statistical overview for each recipient country. In addition, for a selection of countries, more qualitative information would accompany the statistics, including on the country strategic planning process and the monitoring of SDG financing. The profiles would be reviewed by each country and could go together with the planned review mechanism of TOSSD data. Initial consultations with Senegal had showed that the recipient profiles could inform countries’ VNRs and INFFs and could even complement the national aid management platforms.</p> <p>The Task Force welcomed this initiative and Senegal highlighted the promising collaboration with the Secretariat. The elaboration of the profile gave them the opportunity to better use TOSSD data, gain ownership over these data, and better identify the financing gaps to achieve the SDGs.</p> <p>The Secretariat will send the concept note of the TOSSD recipient profiles to the Task Force for comments over the next few weeks and will produce the profiles (statistical part) by the end of 2023.</p> |
| <p>Item 3.</p> | <p>Potential inclusion of public institutional investors’ SDG-related activities in TOSSD</p> <p>In follow-up to the March 2023 Task Force meeting, the Secretariat invited members to conclude the discussion on the findings from the TOSSD data pilot on institutional investors and consider the potential inclusion of these institutions’ investments in TOSSD. In its presentation, the Secretariat recalled the main findings of the data pilot and shared a few additional elements in response to the questions raised by members at that time. The Secretariat suggested revisions to the draft reporting guidance presented in March, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. clarify the optional/voluntary nature of reporting in TOSSD on SDG-related investments from public institutional investors, as well as the scope of the reporting (i.e., only flows from <u>public</u> institutional investors with a clear mandate to support/align with the SDGs). |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. tighten the process for assessing the TOSSD eligibility at the portfolio level. iii. recommend stricter reporting requirements from such institutions. <p>Members generally welcomed the proposed revisions to the guidance. However, some members reiterated the challenges they face to collect information from such institutions and discussed how to encourage more participation and better standardisation of the data (e.g., disbursements vs. stocks). One member and one observer asked about the necessary safeguards to avoid double counting, especially in the case of institutional investors purchasing bonds issued by multilateral organisations.</p> <p>The Secretariat will revise the proposed guidance in light of the discussion (e.g., double counting) and circulate it to members for their consideration. The final guidance will be incorporated as an Annex of the “explanatory notes” shared with members in the Secretariat’s annual data solicitations.</p> |
| | <p>AOB</p> <p>The Secretariat informed that, as of 6 July 2023, 39 providers had already reported to TOSSD on 2022 activities and quickly presented its activities to expand TOSSD reporting and data use. Finally, the Secretariat announced that the provider perspective tab is now available on TOSSD.online, as per the agreement of the Task Force at its 20th meeting.</p> <p>One member asked whether the Secretariat could post the full TOSSD dataset with a provider perspective and if it would be possible to present this perspective in a more user-friendly manner. The Secretariat indicated that it would be misleading to provide such a dataset, which would not be comprehensive since only a selection of providers agree to present their provider perspective on TOSSD online. Once established, the IFT will resume the discussions on the possible evolution of the provider perspective, bearing in mind the recipient perspective, which is the main perspective of TOSSD. The CSO observer informed that they are working on publishing a policy paper analysing TOSSD data.</p> |
| | Special follow-up sessions – 2 and 4 October 2023 |
| Item 1. | <p>Update on the hosting of the Secretariat of the International Forum on TOSSD by the OECD</p> <p>The Secretariat informed the Task Force that the OECD Council had approved on 13 September 2023 the hosting of the Secretariat of the IFT by the OECD. The Secretariat presented an updated timeline of next steps for the transition towards the IFT, particularly in relation to the budget, the signature of the MoU, the ToRs, as well as human resources. Furthermore, the Secretariat presented what it considered as the key success factors for this positive outcome, such as the Task Force’s political and financial support, the progressive expansion of the TOSSD dataset, a clear rationale and business case for the IFT, and the teamwork within the Secretariat and partners.</p> <p>The Secretariat informed that the target date for all countries to sign the MoU was end of October 2023. Regarding a possible public launch of the IFT, the co-Chair from South Africa requested that it be included in the timeline of the Forum for 2024.</p> |
| Item 2. | <p>Review of the revised draft Terms of Reference (TORs) of the International Forum on TOSSD</p> <p>The Task Force pursued the discussion on the ToRs of the IFT. It reviewed and agreed on the changes proposed by the Secretariat, and exchanged in particular on a text regarding a quorum for making decisions in the Forum bodies when consensus cannot be reached. The Task Force agreed on this text and, with that, finalised the first version of the ToRs of the IFT.</p> <p>On 4 October 2023, the Task Force finalised the first version of the Terms of Reference for the International Forum on TOSSD.</p> |
| Item 3. | <p>Next steps in the formalisation of the TORs</p> <p>The Secretariat presented the timeline for approval of the ToRs by countries and organisations’ administrations, as well as the draft letter to be sent by the Task Force’s Co-Chairs and the Director of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate to invite countries and organisations to approve the TORs. The letter will also invite countries and organisations to approve temporary measures to ensure a smooth transition between the Task Force and the Forum.</p> |

The Secretariat provided some guidance as to who should approve the TORs within Members' administration, noting however that Members are best placed to identify the appropriate ministry or office, as well as the appropriate person and level.

One member and an observer indicated that TOSSD should not be presented as an international standard producing official statistics, since TOSSD had not been approved by the UN Statistical Commission. The Secretariat clarified that, for an international standard to exist, the approval by the UNSC is not mandatory (taking the ODA measure as an example) and added that TOSSD complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the UN.

The Secretariat explained that current Observers of the Task Force are not required to approve the TORs and will remain Observers until the first General Assembly of the Forum, which is the body that is responsible for appointing IFT Observers. The co-Chair of the EU asked whether the campaign to bring in new IFT members could start before the end of 2023 and the Secretariat indicated that it was seizing all possible opportunities to do so already, for example on the Triangular co-operation conference in Lisbon in October.

The Secretariat indicated that having at least a few members approving the TORs before 31 December 2023 was necessary for the IFT Secretariat to start operating as planned.

Task Force members are invited to indicate, by 20 October, to whom the letter inviting them to approve the TORs should be sent. The Secretariat will then send invitation letters to current Task Force members in the week of 23 October, for countries and organisations to answer to the Secretariat by 31 December 2023.