

International Forum on TOSSD Draft Terms of Reference

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Introduction to the document

- This document presents first elements of terms of reference of the future governance entity of TOSSD.
- The text builds to the maximum extent possible on previous Task Force documents (e.g. issues papers and strategy paper by the co-chairs).
- Additional considerations may need to be incorporated to the terms of reference depending on the evolution of TOSSD and its administrative and governance arrangements.
- The name of this future governance entity remains to be discussed by the Task Force. However, for the purpose of this document, and to improve readability, this new governance structure is referred to as “International Forum on TOSSD”.

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1. Context and purpose of the document

1. In the last two decades, the development finance landscape has seen major changes with the emergence of new actors (e.g. emerging providers, the private sector), the use of new financial instruments (e.g. guarantees) and, first and foremost, a greater focus on sustainable development. In July 2015, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) acknowledged this broad landscape and called for “open, inclusive and transparent discussions” on the new Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) measure¹.
2. In 2017, an International TOSSD Task Force² was created to develop a single international statistical standard encapsulating all official (and officially supported) resources of financing for the sustainable development in developing countries, much beyond traditional development finance.
3. From July 2017 to June 2019, the International TOSSD Task Force focused on developing the general statistical concepts, standards and methodologies of the TOSSD framework, which led to the release of a first set of complete Reporting Instructions in June 2019. The first release of TOSSD data took place in 2020 on 2019 activities. Since then, the methodology and data are updated every year and published online. Over time, the membership of the International TOSSD Task Force has substantially increased.
4. In March 2022, the United Nations have included TOSSD as a data source in the SDG global indicator framework. As a result, it became clear that TOSSD required a much broader and stronger institutional framework providing efficiency and continuity to the work already carried out. At their meeting in February 2022, TOSSD Task Force members agreed to a gradual transition towards a clarified and more formalised governance structure with a permanent secretariat as soon as possible³.
5. This document sets out a draft mandate for an International Forum on TOSSD, hereafter referred to as the “International Forum”, “the Forum” or using its abbreviation “IFT”. It also includes the main draft rules and procedures that could govern the Forum.

Issues for discussion

- **Task Force members are invited to comment on this introduction.**

¹ See paragraph 55 of the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda \(AAAA\)](#).

² All information about TOSSD and the work of the Task Force is available at: www.tossd.org

³ See all background documents at: www.tossd.org

2. International Forum on TOSSD: vision and mission statement

Issues for discussion

- **Task Force members are invited to comment on the vision and mission statement contained in this chapter.**

This Chapter outlines a Vision and Mission Statement for an International Forum on TOSSD (IFT).

2.a. Vision

6. The ambition for TOSSD is that it becomes a global measure to track resources for sustainable development in support of developing countries. Such a measure needs an International Forum where all stakeholders are represented, can engage, exchange experience and find solutions for sustainable development. As such, the International Forum on TOSSD aims to foster **partnerships** where all countries gather to support the sustainable development of recipient countries.

7. TOSSD represents **an opportunity for all countries, including recipient countries, to design an international development finance standard that suits their needs**. In a financing landscape that is growing in volume and complexity, TOSSD is bringing greater **transparency** to the full array of officially supported resources provided in support of **sustainable development** in developing countries. TOSSD facilitates **learning and coordination** between all countries about how to access and combine resources most effectively, builds trust and helps **mobilise more private finance** through a better understanding of investment opportunities in developing countries. Importantly, TOSSD supports **more informed policy discussions** on how to align financing with sustainable development, on the **monitoring of the SDGs**, and ultimately on **the effectiveness and impact of development activities**. The measure provides insights about how the international community is financing International Public Goods. With all these benefits, TOSSD supports the United Nations in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

2.b. Mission Statement

8. The International Forum on TOSSD will carry out the following mission (Box 2.1):

Box 2.1. Mission Statement of the International Forum on TOSSD

The International Forum will ensure the promotion and rapid global implementation of “Total Official Support for Sustainable Development”, the international statistical standard on financing for sustainable development in support of developing countries.

2.c. Main functions of the International Forum on TOSSD

9. To achieve its mission, the International Forum will:

- **Maintain and update the TOSSD Reporting Instructions:** TOSSD relies on a statistical methodology called “TOSSD Reporting Instructions” designed to assist countries and institutions to record and report data regarding the resources they are providing to developing countries in support of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda. The International Forum will maintain and further update the Reporting Instructions taking into account, as appropriate, the results of TOSSD data collection rounds and other work in the field of sustainable finance measurement.
- **Collect and analyse TOSSD data, and constantly improve their quality:** The International Forum will undertake yearly rounds of TOSSD data collection and seek to expand the coverage of these data, by inviting more providers, especially South-South providers and multilateral institutions to report on TOSSD and join the International Forum. It will also review analyses of TOSSD data and discuss any action to undertake to improve data coverage and quality.
- **Promote TOSSD and the use of TOSSD data:** The International Forum shall actively promote TOSSD and the use of TOSSD data within government agencies and internationally (e.g. recipient countries, leading development think tanks and CSOs).

3. Membership and participation

Issues for discussion

- **Task Force members are invited to comment on the text below related to the definition of members and observers, the related application process and the system for waiving annual membership contributions.**

10. Participation in the International Forum on TOSSD is open to all countries, territories and multilateral intergovernmental organisations, as indicated in the sections below. Participants can be providers, recipients, or dual providers/recipients of development co-operation and can participate in the IFT either as members or observers.

3.a. Members

11. Membership of the International Forum is open to countries, territories and multilateral organisations that:

- Endorse the vision and the mission of the IFT.
- Pay the annual membership contribution to the IFT.
- Report TOSSD data within two years from the date they become members. Recipient countries are not required to commit to a specific timeline.
- Commit to using TOSSD data to the greatest extent possible.
- Promote the International Forum and the TOSSD standard.
- Commit to actively contribute to the International Forum, including by: participating in its governance, decision-making processes and activities; contributing their expertise to relevant working groups; and promoting constructive dialogue in the Forum.

12. Members are expected to pay an annual membership contribution. Waivers can be granted in the following cases:

- **Waiver for annual membership contribution, pending the identification of the appropriate funding source, for one, two or a maximum of three years.** Recognising that the identification of an appropriate funding source within the member's budget and the inclusion of a budget line to cover for the IFT annual membership contribution can take time, the Steering Group of the Forum (see section 4.d below) can consider waiving the annual contribution of a given member for a maximum of three years. After this period, the member is expected to pay its annual contribution or will no longer be considered as a member of the Forum. In this situation, it can: search for its

contribution to be funded by another member; participate as a reporter only; or decide to no longer participate in the International Forum.

- **Exceptional waiver of a member's contribution:** In situations where a country, territory or multilateral organisation is experiencing political, social, economic or other challenges that impact upon its ability to pay its annual membership contribution, the country or territory may request an exceptional waiver of its contribution.
- **Compensation for the contribution of another member:** A member can cover the annual membership of another country, territory or organisation.
- **For recipient countries only (not for dual providers/recipients), payment of the participation/travel cost in lieu of annual membership contribution:** On receipt of the annual membership contribution request, the recipient country may respond formally seeking approval to fully finance its own participation at the Plenary of the IFT in that year in lieu of its annual membership contribution.
- **For dual providers/recipients, staff secondment in lieu of annual membership contribution:** On receipt of the annual membership contribution request, the dual provider/recipient country may respond by offering a staff secondment for a period of no less than two years in lieu of its annual membership contribution. This staff secondment would cover the contribution for the year of the staff arrival, as well as the following one.

13. The Steering Group will consider each request received in accordance with the above provisions and inform the country, territory or organisation of its decision as early as possible.

3.b. Observers

14. IFT observer status is open to all countries, territories and multilateral organisations for two years, after which the observer is expected to become a member, or give up its observer status in the Forum for three years (after which it can apply for observer status again).

15. During their tenure, observers are expected to actively contribute to the International Forum's activities, share their expertise and promote constructive dialogue on TOSSD in the International Forum and beyond.

16. The United Nations has a permanent observer seat at the International Forum Plenary and Steering Group.⁴ Civil Society Organisations also have one permanent observer seat.

17. Observers may participate in all meetings and activities of the IFT and have access to all documents, but shall not take part in decision-making.

3.c. Other participants

18. The International Forum may invite independent experts to support the work of its bodies.

3.d. Application process

19. Application for membership / observership is formalised through a letter of request sent to the Co-Chairs and the Head of the Secretariat. Membership becomes effective on the date of the response letter

⁴ Given work already carried out in the context of the TOSSD Task Force and the co-custodianship for the UN indicator on the measure of development support, UNCTAD will be invited to take on this role for the United Nations.

by the Secretariat. Members may withdraw from the IFT at any time by notifying the co-Chairs or the Secretariat through a formal letter – their withdrawal will be effective twelve (12) months after reception of the letter by the co-Chairs. For observers, the withdrawal will be effective from the date of the acknowledgement by the co-Chairs (or the Head of the Secretariat) of the observer’s decision, within a maximum of one month.

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4. Governance arrangements

4.a. International Forum bodies

Issues for discussion

- **Task Force members are invited to comment on the text in this sub-section defining the main bodies of the Forum.**

20. The governance structure of the International Forum consists of:

- **A Plenary**
- **A Steering Group**
- **Working Groups**
- A self-standing **Secretariat**.

4.b. Chairing arrangements

Issues for discussion

- **This section is still being developed.**
- **It will include the co-Chairs' main functions and election / rotation system.**
- **Task Force members are invited to comment on the text below.**

21. The International Forum shall have two co-Chairs, who will be co-Chairs of both the Plenary and the Steering Group.

22. The two co-Chairs will be selected from the International Forum membership among providers, dual providers/recipients, recipients and multilateral organisations.

24. *[Placeholder: co-Chairs' main functions, their election and rotation; mechanism for delegation of responsibilities].*

4.c. Plenary

Issues for discussion

- Task Force members are invited to discuss the composition, the role and the decision-making process within the Plenary.
- Task Force members are also invited to discuss the specific role of the UN/UNCTAD in the Plenary.

4.c.i. Composition

23. The Plenary is comprised of members and observers of the International Forum on TOSSD.
24. All countries, territories and organisations that report to the TOSSD framework can also attend the plenary as observers upon a written request to the co-Chairs or the Head of the Secretariat. In Year Y, those countries, territories and organisations that reported TOSSD data in Year Y-1 will be considered TOSSD reporters.
25. The Plenary shall be chaired by the two co-Chairs.

4.c.ii. Role and mandate

26. The Plenary shall appoint the co-Chairs of the International Forum, who are also co-Chairs of the Steering Group. The Plenary shall also appoint the other members of the Steering Group.
27. The Plenary meets at least once every two years. Meetings can take place virtually or in-person.
28. The Plenary will be the main decision-making body on the vision, mission and strategic priorities of the International Forum, as well as for its programme of work and budget. In particular, it will:
- Discuss and approve any modification to the vision, mission and strategic priorities of the International Forum.
 - Discuss and approve recommendations by the Steering Group on the strategic priorities of the International Forum.
 - Discuss and endorse the programme of work and budget prepared by the Steering Group.
 - *[Placeholder: "Sign-off on the International Forum Annual Report". Note: the exact text will depend on the final governance arrangement of TOSSD.]*
29. The role of the Plenary is also to:

Methodology

- Identify specific areas or topics for further development of the TOSSD methodology to ensure that TOSSD continues to evolve and meet the requirements of all stakeholders.
- Make suggestions on how to ensure that TOSSD meets the needs of key users of information, in particular recipient countries.

External coordination

- Oversee that appropriate coordination takes place between the International Forum and relevant technical bodies (e.g. DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics, International Aid

Transparency Initiative) and political entities (e.g. UN, G20, G77, OECD DAC) on support for sustainable development.

Communication and outreach

- Discuss the communications and outreach strategy for TOSSD and the IFT.

Evaluation and performance

- Periodically review the International Forum's performance, relevance, structure and governance.

4.c.iii. Decision-making process

30. Members should make every effort to reach decisions by consensus. Decisions by voting should only occur in exceptional cases.

31. In cases where consensus cannot be reached despite the co-Chairs' best endeavours, the co-Chairs may organise a consultative straw poll with a view to identifying where a majority might lie. This could then open the discussion to more informed consensus-building.

32. In exceptional cases, if members fail to reach a consensus after extensive discussion and following a consultative straw poll, the co-Chairs may put an item for decision by a qualified majority vote of two-thirds of the Plenary members present.

33. Members cannot participate in the vote if their contributions remain unpaid at the date of the vote.

34. Should the Plenary need to organise a vote, each member will have one vote.

35. In between meetings, decisions can also be taken by written procedure.

36. The Plenary may delegate to the Steering Group the power to make a decision on a specific topic.

4.d. Steering Group

Issues for discussion

- **Task Force members are invited to discuss the composition, the role and the decision-making process within the Steering Group.**
- **Task Force members are also invited to discuss the role the UN/UNCTAD should play in the Steering Group.**

4.d.i. Composition

37. The Steering Group is comprised of a maximum of [20/30] member countries and organisations representing the various stakeholder groups (providers, dual providers/recipients, recipients, multilateral organisations) and including the two co-Chairs (See Annexe A).

38. Steering Group members are appointed by the Plenary for a two-year term based on expressions of interests by members. All efforts will be made to maintain a balanced membership across the various stakeholder groups and ensure rotation within each stakeholder group.

39. The Steering Group may hold meetings in open or closed session. Observers may attend Steering Group meetings in open session, but not meetings or parts of meetings held in closed session. The United Nations and CSOs have a permanent observer seat in the Steering Group.

4.d.ii. Role and mandate

40. The Steering Group assists the International Forum Plenary by preparing and guiding its work. In particular it will:

- Make recommendations on strategic priorities for the International Forum to the Plenary.
- Oversee the implementation of the vision and mission, as well as strategic direction of the International Forum and their periodic review thereafter.
- Provide substantive inputs, discuss and approve the Programme of work and budget prepared by the Secretariat for final endorsement by the Plenary.

41. The role of the Steering Group is also to:

Methodology

- Oversee and approve new versions of the TOSSD methodology (Reporting Instructions).

Programme of work and budget

- *[Placeholder to be adjusted based on the PWB discussions at the OECD DAC: “Exercise oversight of the Secretariat’s operations, including financial oversight. The Steering Group is responsible and accountable for oversight and approval of the annual work plans and budget and has no operational role in the day-to-day management of the Secretariat”.]*
- Actively support fundraising activities of the International Forum.
- Consider and approve waivers on membership contributions.

External coordination

- Provide guidance to the Secretariat in relation to the coordination with relevant technical bodies (e.g. DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics, International Aid Transparency Initiative) and political entities (e.g. UN, G20, G77, OECD DAC) on support for sustainable development.

Communication and outreach

- Steering Group members shall be expected to be “champions” of the International Forum, by advocating for and publicising International Forum activities within their constituencies, and by supporting outreach and engagement around the International Forum. This also entails promoting TOSSD data as evidence for policy dialogue on support for sustainable development, both domestically and internationally.

Working Groups

- *[Placeholder for the role of the Steering Group in establishing and managing Working Groups – e.g. appointment of Chair/co-Chairs; evaluation and performance of Working Groups].*

Evaluation and performance

- Prepares the periodic review of the performance of the Forum.

4.d.iii. Decision-making process

42. Members should make every effort to reach decisions by consensus. Decisions by voting should only occur in exceptional cases.

43. In cases where consensus cannot be reached despite the co-Chairs' best endeavours, the co-Chairs may organise a consultative straw poll with a view to identifying where a majority might lie. This could then open the discussion to more informed consensus-building.

44. In exceptional cases, if members fail to reach a consensus after extensive discussion and following a consultative straw poll, the co-Chairs may put an item for decision by a qualified majority vote of two-thirds of the Steering Group members present.

45. Members cannot participate in the vote if their contributions remain unpaid at the date of the vote.

46. Should the Steering Group need to organise a vote, each member will have one vote.

47. In between meetings, decisions can also be taken by written procedure.

48. The Steering Group may delegate to the Co-Chairs the power to make a decision on a specific topic.

4.d.iv. Other administrative matters and transparency of the Steering Group

49. The co-Chairs decide when and where to hold Steering Group meetings. These can take place virtually or in-person. The Steering Group will meet at least twice per year, and ideally at least once in-person.

50. Steering Group members should carry out their work in a consultative manner and the Secretariat will facilitate communication between Steering Group members.

51. The co-Chairs of the Steering Group may invite other IFT members to attend meetings should their expertise be relevant to a particular topic on the agenda. In all other cases, meetings will be limited to Steering Group members.

52. A summary record of Steering Group meetings will be drafted by the Secretariat. It will be validated with the co-Chairs and made publicly available online. It will include for each meeting a list of attendees, decisions taken and any proposals made.

53. The co-Chairs will be responsible for setting the agenda, the dates and location of the Steering Group meetings together with the Secretariat. Working documents should be made available by the Secretariat to Steering Group members no less than 7 days before the meeting date.

54. The co-Chairs will, in common with other members, be expected to self-fund their attendance at the Plenary and Steering Group meetings and will not be reimbursed for their time.

4.e. Working Groups

55. *[Placeholder to describe the creation and functioning of Working Groups within the International Forum, such as a Technical Working Group on statistical issues].*

4.f. Secretariat

56. The International Forum will be served by a secretariat integrated with the OECD's Development Co-operation Directorate, so as to benefit from the Organisation's experience in statistics on financing for sustainable development.

57. *[Placeholder: "The initial duration of the hosting proposal will be for a period terminating on 31 December 2025."]*

58. The Secretariat functions can be broken down into four broad areas:

- Strategic development and methodology
- Data collection and publication
- Finance and Administration
- Communications

59. The functions of the Secretariat are described in detail in Annexe B to this document.

5. Financial provisions

[Placeholder for financial provisions, including the budget of the Forum]

Content of this chapter

- This section will be developed once the financial provisions for the International Forum are clear.

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Annexes

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Annexe A. Composition of the Steering Group

Composition of the Steering Group	Option 1: 20 members	Option 2: 30 members
Co-Chair	1	1
Co-Chair	1	1
Traditional providers	5	8
Dual providers / recipients	5	8
Multilateral organisations	3	4
Recipient countries	5	8
Total	20	30
Permanent Observer – United Nations	1	1
Permanent Observer – CSOs	1	1
Other Observers	Maximum 3	Maximum 8

Annexe B. Functions of the Secretariat

The functions of the Secretariat are divided into four broad areas:

- Strategic development and methodology
- Data collection and publication
- Finance and Administration
- Communications

Job descriptions for staff shall draw on a combination of the responsibilities described in these areas.

Such functions will include in particular the following tasks:

1. Strategic development and methodology

- Support and make proposals on the further development and improvement of the TOSSD Reporting Instructions.
- Carry out relevant research and develop proposals to continue enhancing the relevance of the TOSSD framework in tracking support for sustainable development.
- Analyse the past TOSSD data collection rounds and work carried out outside the International Forum on the measurement of sustainable development support, country and thematic pilots, as well as stakeholder feedback, to support the further improvement the TOSSD Reporting Instructions.

2. Data collection and publication

- Undertake yearly data collection and seek to expand the coverage of TOSSD data, engaging with current and potential new reporters on TOSSD.
- Manage the data collection process and ensure the necessary quality assurance to verify that TOSSD data received from reporters are in line with the TOSSD Reporting Instructions.
- Coordinate with other relevant technical bodies maintaining databases on development finance to optimise work flows (e.g. UNCTAD, IATI and the OECD Working Party on Development Finance Statistics).
- Store TOSSD data in a centralised database.
- Publish TOSSD data on an online TOSSD public portal where data will be released on a regular basis and accessible free of charge.
- Carry out all appropriate maintenance related to this portal.
- Review analyses of TOSSD data and discuss any action to undertake to improve data coverage and quality.

3. Finance and Administration

- Act as the focal point for members and external partners on all administrative and financial matters.

- Undertake appropriate day-to-day administrative and financial management of the International Forum, in accordance with the agreed programme of work and budget and guidance from members.
- Prepare the annual budget and work plan for approval by members.
- Engage in resource mobilisation for the International Forum.
- *[Placeholder: "Provide an annual update on income and expenditure to the Steering Group"]*.
- Organise meetings of the bodies of the International Forum, ensuring that the agenda, minutes and other relevant documentation are circulated at least one week in advance.
- Provide administrative support to International Forum members for their participation in meetings of the International Forum.
- Maintain a document management system for communication purposes and proper safeguarding of corporate memory.

4. **Communications**

- Act as the focal point for members and external partners in close liaison with the co-Chairs.
- Actively disseminate TOSSD data; promote their use within government agencies and internationally; and use TOSSD data in policy and communication materials.
- Provide advisory services to recipients and providers for collecting, reporting and analysing TOSSD data in order to support capacity-building. These advisory services are demand-driven and subject to specific funding.
- Organise communications and outreach activities, including to engage with the United Nations (e.g. UN StatCom and UN ECOSOC) and to promote TOSSD in other relevant fora (e.g. African Union, G7 and G20), as appropriate.
- Maintain and further develop a dedicated external website and other possible communication tools (e.g. intranet, community space).
- Produce an annual report covering the International Forum's main activities and achievements throughout the year.