

Unclassified**English - Or. English****20 June 2019****Development Co-operation Directorate
Development Assistance Committee****DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics****Proposing a New Approach to Measure Support to Statistics and Data in the
OECD Creditor Reporting System**

Formal meeting of the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT)
1-2 July 2019, OECD Conference Centre, 2 rue André Pascal 75016 Paris

The paper is presented FOR DISCUSSION under item 9.c of the draft annotated agenda
DCD/DAC/STAT/A(2019)2.

The paper is a revised version of document DCD/DAC/STAT(2019)4 discussed at the
February 2019 WP-STAT meeting. It contains a proposal by PARIS21 to improve the
measurement of support to statistics and data in the Creditor Reporting System, revised taking
into account members' comments at the February meeting.

Members will be invited to express their views on the proposal and whether they support it in
principle, in which case a final version of the proposal will be circulated for members' approval
under the written procedure.

This document is only available for download in pdf format.

Contacts:

Rolando Avendano (Rolando.AVENDANO@oecd.org)

Giorgio Gualberti (Giorgio.GUALBERTI@oecd.org)

Julia Benn (Julia.BENN@oecd.org)

JT03449215

PROPOSING A NEW APPROACH TO MEASURE SUPPORT TO STATISTICS AND DATA IN THE OECD CREDITOR REPORTING SYSTEM

June 2019



1. Background

Data and statistics play a fundamental role in development. A consensus has emerged among development providers on the need for sound data and statistics to inform policies and measure progress. The call to “Leave No One Behind” (LNOB), set out in the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has put forth an increasing need for better data and statistics to support informed policy-making. To the extent that data can make a difference in the way public policy is delivered, securing funding for statistics in the coming years is of the essence; good quality, disaggregated data is essential for putting LNOB in practice.

For a number of years, the donor community has stressed the importance of having a more accurate picture of financial support towards the data and statistics sector, which in turn will allow for the better allocation of support to data systems. With the increasing amount of actors working on statistical development, the information on financial support to statistics is also critical for donor co-ordination. It requires not only a wide coverage of donors, but also detailed information about the completeness of captured projects.

The Creditor Reporting System (CRS)¹, which is the official source of information on aid commitments from Development Assistant Committee (DAC) member countries and several multilateral organisations, has become an important source of information on global co-operation. It provides detailed geographic, sectoral, policy and financial information on development projects. In the CRS, data by destination sector are recorded using 5-digit purpose codes. The first three digits of the code refer to the corresponding DAC5 sector or category. Each CRS code belongs to one and only one DAC5 category. There are currently 207 purpose codes and “Statistical capacity building” (code 16062) is one of them.

Since 2008, the PARIS21 Secretariat has used data from the CRS to produce the Partnership Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS)² report to identify aid for statistics³. The results of the PRESS are also reported as SDG indicator 17.19.1 “value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries”. The PRESS has been widely used by partners as a tool for advocacy, co-ordination and planning. Results and highlights from the PRESS have also reached outside of the statistical community and have been referenced by international media outlets such as the Financial Times⁴.

Committed to its mandate to measure support for statistical capacity, PARIS21 would like to propose a revision of the methodology in the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) for Statistical Capacity Building to provide a more accurate measurement of statistical support. The proposal constitutes an important milestone for the recently established DAC work stream on Development Data, which started operating in 2019 and which identified this commitment reporting as one of its priorities in its first meeting in March 2018.

2. Limitations of the current methodology

Rising awareness of data and statistics also brings challenges to measuring global commitments. Increasingly, more projects start to have statistical components or activities, including data collection, data dissemination and monitoring and evaluation. A desk study by PARIS21 found that the word “data” and “statistics” has appeared much more frequently in projects of the CRS database since 2006. The difficulty of capturing the statistical component in a non-pure-statistical project, which is usually not tagged as

¹ See DAC and CRS code list <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/dacandcrscodelists.htm>

² See www.paris21.org/press

³ To complement the information available on the OECD Credit Reporting System, PRESS also relies on a PARIS21 questionnaire to cover non-bilateral donors and activities not included in the CRS database.

⁴ <https://www.ft.com/content/ca491f18-d383-11e8-9a3c-5d5eac8f1ab4>

“16062”, has thus emerged. To identify these projects, the PRESS report analyses the syntax and semantics of the project descriptions with the use of statistical concepts or keywords.

This problem has since been to some extent mitigated. Since the 2018 round of reporting, reporters have been allowed to assign multiple purpose codes for each project and to indicate the amount committed for each purpose. This will provide a more precise estimation, once combined with the current semantic analysis methodology.

However, two limitations of this approach still persist.

First, purpose code 16062 “Statistical capacity building is vaguely described as “*Both in national statistical offices and any other government ministries*” and could therefore be under-used. For reporters who are not experts in statistical development, this description won’t be helpful in identifying projects on statistical development. Indeed, by analyzing the syntax of project descriptions in the CRS database, the Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) found around 1500 projects in 2006-2016 with significant statistical components that were not classified as purpose code 16062. These projects account for 18% of all statistics-related projects in the CRS database during the same period. The lack of a proper definition of statistical capacity building can also be detrimental to donor commitments to national data systems that could be used for their own monitoring & evaluation frameworks.

Second, the limited use of purpose code 16062 could be explained by the fact that other purpose codes already include statistical activities such as “data collection”, “survey” and “census” in their definitions (see Table 1). Projects under these codes therefore combine statistics and non-statistics-related projects. This could lead to under-reporting of donor commitments to statistical development as they could be included in other sectors. The abundant project-level information in CRS could not be properly exploited if users cannot build a reliable estimation due to under-reporting.

Table 1. Examples of existing purpose codes using statistical concepts

Purpose code	Purpose Name	Description
13010	Population policy and administrative management	Population/development policies; census work, vital registration; migration data ; demographic research/analysis; reproductive health research; unspecified population activities.
14015	Water resources conservation (including data collection)	Collection and usage of quantitative and qualitative data on water resources ; creation and sharing of water knowledge; conservation and rehabilitation of inland surface waters (rivers, lakes etc.), ground water and coastal waters; prevention of water contamination.
31130	Agricultural land resources	Including soil degradation control; soil improvement; drainage of water logged areas; soil desalination; agricultural land surveys ; land reclamation; erosion control, desertification control.
31210	Forestry policy and administrative management	Forestry sector policy, planning and programmes; institution capacity building and advice; forest surveys ; unspecified forestry and agro-forestry activities.
31310	Fishing policy and administrative management	Fishing sector policy, planning and programmes; institution capacity building and advice; ocean and coastal fishing; marine

		and freshwater fish surveys and prospecting; fishing boats/equipment; unspecified fishing activities.
41082	Environmental research	Including establishment of databases , inventories/accounts of physical and natural resources; environmental profiles and impact studies if not sector specific.

Note: See in bold the statistical concepts/tools contained in existing purpose codes under the current classification.

3. Proposed improvements

3.1. Redefinition of the Purpose code for Statistical Capacity to improve usage

To address the first limitation, the definition of statistical capacity building used in the CRS can be considerably improved. Changes in the data ecosystem and the responsibilities of national statistical offices and line Ministries in charge of statistical activities have evolved considerably. To reflect these trends, it is proposed to modify the definition of statistical capacity building as follows, based on an international definition⁵ broadly agreed by UN member states⁶:

Definition: 16062 purpose code for Statistical Capacity Building

“All statistical activities, such as data collection, processing, dissemination, analysis and support to strategic and managerial issues of official statistics including demographic, social, economic, environmental and other multi-sectoral statistics”.

While the proposed definition for 16062 covers a range of statistical activities, from data collection to management, it explicitly excludes projects related to Monitoring and Evaluation activities of donors’ programmes, which is not considered statistical capacity building.

3.2 Addition of three new voluntary codes to the most relevant sectors

To facilitate the identification of sector-specific statistical activities (see Table 1), it is proposed to add three voluntary codes to three sectors, based on observations from past 5 years of analysis in the PRESS report.

According to the PRESS data, most of the non-16062 projects with statistical activities were assigned to Health (120), Population Policy (130) and Government & Civil Society (150). These sectors represent over 70% of projects with statistical activities between 2006 and 2016 that are not labelled as 16062. Statistics usually play a significant but non-dominant role in these projects. Reporters therefore tend to assign those projects under these three sectors, instead of purpose code 16062.

By adding one voluntary code to each of these three sectors, the CRS provides the reporters a tool to better identify the contributions to statistical development without adding compulsory reporting burden on them.

⁵ Based on United Nations Statistical Division’s classification of statistical activities (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/iiss/Classification-of-International-Statistical-Activities.ashx>) developed by an inter-agency task team that defined the PRESS methodology.

⁶ The OECD DAC Secretariat obtained approval to integrate a work stream on Data for Development in the 2019-2020 programme of work. This new work stream reflects a strong interest and commitment from DAC members in solving critical data challenges. Two meetings were held in 2018 where 16 OECD members presented data strategies for development from countries and discussed policy areas that the working group could develop, including investment in data, partnership with donors and evaluation of data interventions.

The descriptions for the three codes are proposed in table 2. The proposed definitions are subject to consultation with WP-STAT Committee members.

Table 2. Proposed voluntary purpose codes for tracking statistical activities in 3 targeted sectors

DAC 5 Code	Sector	Proposed title	Proposed description
120	Health	Health statistics and data	Collection, production, management and dissemination of data related to health. Includes health surveys, establishment of health databases, data collection on epidemics, etc.
130	Population Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health	Population statistics and data	Collection, production, management and dissemination of data related to Population and Reproductive Health. Includes census work, vital registration, migration data collection, demographic data, etc.
150	Government & Civil Society	Government and civil society statistics and Data	Collection, production, management and dissemination related to Government & Civil Society. Includes civil society surveys, access to administrative data and public financing data, support to development of administrative and data infrastructure.

3.3. Implementation

Subject to approval of the above proposals by the WP-STAT, the following additional guidance could be given on the reporting on statistical capacity building activities in the CRS:

Step 1. Consider whether the project has (or not) a statistical capacity building component, according to the definition of code 16062.

- If possible, estimate the share (% of amount committed) of statistical capacity building activities in the project.

Step 2. Choose the most appropriate code for reporting

- Provided the statistical capacity building component has been identified in a project in health (120), population (130) or government and civil society (150) sectors, consider using the sector-specific codes for statistical activities. Otherwise, use code 16062.

In the CRS, a project can, if necessary, be assigned more than one purpose code. Reporters are encouraged to make use of this possibility to improve the measurement of support for statistical activities.

The principle 9 of the European Statistics Code of Practice requires non-excessive burden to respondents. By causing the least change to the current CRS code list, this implementation method aims to cause no extra inconvenience to reporters. The improved definition of code 16062 helps reporters to identify the statistical capacity building activity more easily. The voluntary nature of the new sector-specific codes also gives flexibility to reporters who cannot take extra reporting burden.