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SURVEY ON FORWARD SPENDING PLANS 2013: TIMELINESS AND OVERALL REPORTING PERFORMANCE

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This document reviews the coverage, quality and timeliness of reporting by DAC members, multilateral agencies and non-DAC donors to the OECD-DAC 2013 Survey on Aid Allocations and Indicative Forward Spending Plans. It also presents the current status of members' willingness to make the survey data publicly available, provided there is a clear indication that the information is indicative.

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Contact: Suzanne Steensen (suzanne.steensen@oecd.org);
Fredrik Ericsson (fredrik.ericsson@oecd.org)

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SURVEY ON FORWARD SPENDING PLANS 2013: TIMELINESS AND OVERALL REPORTING PERFORMANCE

1. The annual DAC Survey on Aid Allocations and Forward Spending Plans (hereafter “the Survey”) aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of collective aid allocations, providing a global perspective on future aid flows, highlighting the prospects for meeting aid commitments and identifying potential gaps in aid provision. It contributes to better informed decisions on future aid allocations for individual donors, and reveals opportunities for improved co-ordination among development actors.
2. The Survey is one of three complementary systems that constitute the Busan common, open standard for aid transparency, providing key information to developing countries on indicative future resource envelopes available to budget planning processes in line with commitments made at the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness in Paris, Accra and Busan.¹
3. The 2013 Survey is the sixth in the series. It was sent out to 56 countries and agencies in December 2012 for return by 22 February 2013. For the first time the survey also sought information from non-DAC donors, including Kuwait (KFAED) and Poland. It requested indicative spending plans for Country Programmable Aid (CPA) to all countries and regions up to 2016, including information on members’ priority partner countries and any plans to phase out country programmes. To better help inform broader policy dialogues on making aid more predictable, this year’s edition also requested qualitative information on current aid allocation policies and operational planning practices.

Time of reporting - a complex issue

4. The Survey deadline is set in the second half of February to allow time to verify and analyse the information and feed the preliminary results into the annual April press release on ODA flows. Most members still struggle to meet this deadline. Table 1 shows that only five DAC members met it in 2013, with three not reporting until late April, three weeks after the press release was published. To facilitate verification and analysis, the Secretariat encourages all members to **meet the reporting deadline**.

1. Paragraph 24a) of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation states: *“Those of us who committed, through the Accra Agenda for Action, to improve medium-term predictability will implement fully our commitments in this area, introducing reforms where needed. By 2013, they will provide available, regular, timely rolling three- to five-year indicative forward expenditure and/or implementation plans as agreed in Accra to all developing countries with which they co-operate. Other actors will aim to provide developing countries with timely and relevant information on their intentions with regard to future co-operation over the medium term”*.

Table 1. 2013 Survey Response Dates

Timing of reporting	Countries
By 22 February deadline	Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece ^a , Sweden
23 February - 1 March	New Zealand, Australia, Germany, Portugal, Italy
2-12 March	Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, Belgium, Switzerland
12-25 March	United States, Japan, EU Institutions
3 April	Publication of press release
Received after publication of press release^b	France, Korea, Spain

Notes:

a. Greece sent a letter explaining its non-participation in this year's Survey.

b. The Secretariat is still awaiting a submission from Iceland.

5. The fact that the Survey coincides with the Advance Questionnaire is an opportunity. While the main purpose and level of detail in the two surveys differ, the need to provide provisional figures of aid data for the previous year applies to both (the Survey collects detailed information on a subset of the aggregated information to be reported through the Advance Questionnaire). Full CRS++ reporting of provisional figures in converged format could fill the data needs of both the Advance Questionnaire and the Survey for the preceding year. In addition, streamlining data collection would reduce the reporting burden for member countries and also improve timeliness and transparency of activity-level data. **Members are invited to comment on how to best improve co-ordination between and sequencing of the Survey on Forward Spending Plans and the Advance Questionnaire**, keeping in mind the balance between political necessity and technical feasibility.

Good quality of reporting

6. Most members' submissions were of good quality and did not require extensive quality assurance from the Secretariat. In a few cases, the Secretariat asked for clarifications on specific issues as part of the data validation process, *e.g.* main reasons for significant planned increases/decreases in aid.

7. As shown in Table 2, ten members were able to provide forward spending plans up to 2016 and six others up to 2015. For DAC members (excluding the Czech Republic and Iceland) the survey coverage was 56%, two percentage points higher than last year. The DAC Survey coverage excluding Japan and the United States, which cannot provide forward spending plans, was 94%.²

2. Coverage means the share of donors' CPA for which they provide forward programmed information.

Table 2. Coverage of Reporting^a

DAC members	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Australia					
Austria ^b					
Belgium ^b					
Canada ^b					
Czech Republic					
Denmark					
EU Institutions					
Finland ^b					
France					
Germany					
Greece ^d					
Iceland ^d					
Ireland					
Italy					
Japan					
Korea ^c					
Luxembourg					
Netherlands					
New Zealand					
Norway					
Portugal ^b					
Spain					
Sweden					
Switzerland					
United Kingdom					
United States					

Notes:

- a. Annex 1 provides an overview of the coverage of reporting by multilaterals, non-DAC donors and foundations.
b. The country reported to the 2013 Survey on Donors' Forward Spending Plans in CRS++ format.
c. Korea reported to the 2012 Survey on Donors' Forward Spending Plans in CRS++ format.
d. Greece and Iceland did not provide data on provisional 2012 expenditure or forward spending data.

Details of reporting

8. The technical feasibility of reporting forward spending plans in CRS++ format has been successfully tested with several member countries in previous survey rounds. CRS++ format allows collecting forward spending information at activity level and has the potential to:

- Capture all information available in donor systems;
- Provide more details on on-going and planned projects (sectors, channels etc.);

- Ensure coherent time series (historical and future CPA);
- Improve the information-base of donor intentions in order to facilitate improved division of labour and allocations across and within partner countries.

9. Participating countries and agencies could report either in the standard format, providing aggregates by country, or in activity-level format, based on CRS++. Five DAC members and one multilateral agency reported in CRS++ format (see Table 2).³ However, donors' common standard implementation plans indicate that a further seven DAC members and two multilateral agencies can report at activity level.⁴ To further improve the transparency and predictability of aid, the Secretariat recommends that **members report to the Survey in CRS++ format, or at the most disaggregated level possible.**

Transparency of survey data

10. In light of the commitments to increase predictability and transparency made in Busan, the previous survey round asked for full data disclosure, with a clear indication that the information is indicative and may change. At the time, 15 DAC members agreed to full disclosure (as well as 10 multilateral agencies). In the 2013 survey round, two more DAC countries (and three multilateral agencies) agreed to make their forward spending plans publicly available. The Secretariat has published these datasets on its website and main statistical portal, OECD.STAT.⁵

11. The main reasons cited, by members that did not agree to release the information, were uncertainties about future aid levels or on-going budget reviews. Going forward it is important to discuss and get a consensus on how donors can comply with their predictability and transparency commitments in these cases.

12. Partner countries have repeatedly emphasized the importance of having estimates of future available resources to utilize in their own budget planning processes. To contribute to this agenda, and as part of its efforts towards increased aid transparency and outreach to partner countries, the Secretariat plans to disseminate the forward-looking data collected through the Survey directly to partner countries.

3. The GEF reported to the Survey at activity level, but not in CRS++ format. Korea reported to the 2012 Survey in CRS++ format but not in 2013.

4. These are the EU, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Sweden and United Kingdom; and GAVI and UNICEF. For all plans, see <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/acommonstandard.htm>.

5. To access the data, see www.oecd.org/dac/aidoutlook.

Table 3. Public availability of Indicative Forward Spending Plans^a

Yes	No	No answer yet
<u>DAC members</u>	<u>DAC members</u>	<u>DAC members</u>
Austria	Australia	Iceland
Belgium	Canada	Spain
Czech Republic ^d	EU Institutions	United States ^b
Denmark	Netherlands ^c	
Finland	United Kingdom	<u>Multilateral agencies</u>
France ^d		GEF
Germany	<u>Multilateral agencies</u>	Global Fund ^b
Ireland	AfDB	IAEA
Italy	UNPBF	IMF ^b
Japan ^b	World Bank (IDA)	Montreal Protocol
Korea		UNDP
Luxembourg	<u>Non-DAC donors</u>	
New Zealand	Poland	<u>Non-DAC donors</u>
Norway ^b		Kuwait (KFAED)
Portugal		Turkey ^b
Sweden		United Arab Emirates ^b
Switzerland		BADEA ^b
<u>Multilateral agencies</u>		
AsDB		
CarDB		
GAVI		
IADB		
Isl. Dev Bank ^d		
IFAD		
OFID ^d		
UNAIDS		
UNFPA		
UNRWA ^d		
UNICEF		

Notes:

- This table excludes the six countries/agencies that did not respond to the Survey (Greece, Arab Fund [AFESD], Gates Foundation, UNECE, WHO and the Russian Federation).
- The country/agency did not provide any forward-looking data and the data refer only to preliminary 2012 CPA data.
- The Netherlands reported that the figures could be made public after they have been sent to parliament.
- The country/agency agreed to make the information public for the first time in 2013.

Annex 1: Survey response schedules and coverage of reporting by multilaterals, non-DAC donors and foundations

Timing of reporting	Multilateral agencies, non-DAC donors and foundations
By 22 February deadline	AsDB, BADEA, the GEF, Global Fund, IADB, IAEA, OFID, UNDP
23 February - 1 March	AfDB, IFAD, Montreal Protocol, Poland, UNAIDS
2-12 March	Arab Fund (AFESD) ^a , CarDB, GAVI, IDB, United Arab Emirates, UNPBF, UNRWA
12-25 March	IMF, Kuwait (KFAED), Turkey, UNFPA, World Bank (IDA)
3 April	Publication of press release
Received after publication of press release	UNICEF

Notes:

a. The Arab Fund (AFESD) sent a letter explaining its non-participation in this year's Survey.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Multilateral agencies					
AfDB					
Arab Fund (AFESD)					
AsDB					
BADEA					
CarDB					
GAVI					
GEF ^a					
Global Fund					
IADB					
IAEA					
IDB					
IFAD					
IMF					
Montreal Protocol					
OFID					
UNAIDS					
UNDP					
UNECE					
UNFPA					
UNICEF					
UNPBF					
UNRWA					
WHO					
World Bank (IDA)					
Private foundation					
Gates Foundation					
Non-DAC donors					
Kuwait (KFAED)					
Poland					
Russian Federation					
Turkey					
United Arab Emirates					

Notes:

a. The GEF reported to the 2013 Survey on Donors' Forward Spending Plans at activity level.