

Statistics on  
International  
Development and  
the ODA:GNI  
Ratio

*Department for  
International  
Development*

# Statistics on International Development and the ODA:GNI Ratio

July 2009

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### **About the UK Statistics Authority**

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The UK Statistics Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. The Statistics Authority is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK

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## **ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION**

Under the provisions of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, the UK Statistics Authority has a statutory function to assess sets of statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, with a view to determining whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated, or to retain their designation, as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics are deemed to be compliant with the Code of Practice. Whilst the Code is wide-ranging, designation may be broadly interpreted to mean that: the statistics meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further, for example on the validity of the statistics as a social or economic measure; though reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Designation as National Statistics will sometimes be granted in cases where some changes still need to be made to meet fully the requirements of the Code, on condition that steps are taken by the producer body, within a stated timeframe, to address the weaknesses. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the Code.

Designation is granted on the basis of the information provided to the Statistics Authority, primarily by the organisation that produces the statistics. The information includes a range of factual evidence and also assurances by senior statisticians in the producer organisation. The views of users are also sought. Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, the Assessment report may be withdrawn and revised as necessary.

Once designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement on the producer organisation to ensure that the set of statistics continues to be produced in compliance with the Code of Practice.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is one of a series of reports prepared under the provisions of Section 14 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*<sup>1</sup>. The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>2</sup>. The Act also allows Ministers or the National Statistician to request an assessment of other official statistics in order for them to gain National Statistics status.
- 1.2 This report covers two sets of statistics: those published in *Statistics on International Development (SID)*<sup>3</sup>, which presents the UK's expenditure on international aid, and in *Provisional UK Official Development Assistance as a proportion of Gross National Income (ODA:GNI)*<sup>4</sup> which presents the annual figure of Official Development Aid as a proportion of Gross National Income. Both are produced by the Department for International Development (DfID). ODA:GNI is published as a provisional estimate in March and is revised for inclusion in SID in November. SID is currently designated as National Statistics, while the ODA:GNI release is not currently designated as National Statistics.
- 1.3 The Statistics Authority will be inviting comments on both the process for assessment and the presentation of reports with a view to further development of the arrangements in the coming months. The forward programme of Assessments is at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/programme-of-assessment/index.html> and further information on the principles and procedures for assessment is at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/principles---procedures/index.html>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pgs/ukpga\\_20070018\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pgs/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/DFID-Expenditure-Statistics/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Press-releases/20091/Provisional-UK-Official-Development-Assistance-as-a-proportion-of-Gross-National-Income-2008/>

1.4 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

**Section 2 Summary of findings**, highlighting the main strengths and weaknesses in relation to the Code of Practice. This summary includes the UK Statistics Authority's recommendation in relation to designation as National Statistics.

**Section 3 Subject of the assessment**, an overview of the statistics and their history.

**Section 4 Detailed assessment**, providing more details about the assessment of compliance against each principle and protocol of the Code of Practice.

**Annex 1 Suggestions for improvement**

**Annex 2 Summary of the assessment process and users' views.**

1.5 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

## **2 Summary of findings**

### **2.1 Recommendation for designation as National Statistics**

2.1.1 The Statistics Authority confirms that:

- the set of statistics published in *Statistics on International Development* is designated as National Statistics, subject to the implementation of the enhancements listed in section 2.4 below by October 2009;

and has determined that:

- the release *Provisional UK Official Development Assistance as a proportion of Gross National Income* can be designated as a new National Statistics product, subject to DfID making some specific enhancements listed at section 2.4 below and reporting them to the UK Statistics Authority by October 2009.

2.1.2 Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics are deemed to be compliant with the Code of Practice, and thus that they meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.

2.1.3 Designation also signifies that, subject to any caveats in this report, the Statistics Authority judges that the statistics are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

### **2.2 Summary of strengths and weaknesses**

2.2.1 The main users' needs relating to these sets of statistics are met. DfID has carried out some consultation with other users in the past, primarily via a User Survey in 2005.

2.2.2 The publications are available via the website and provide commentary on the statistics along with tables and graphs. The publications present and explain the difference between Gross Public Expenditure on Development (GPEX)/the DfID Programme and UK Official Development Assistance (ODA), although there could be better links between these two key figures and with international figures. Users would benefit from more flexible formats for the data, such as Excel files and downloadable data suitable for re-use.

2.2.3 The production of ODA:GNI has in the past been subject to controversy, in particular over the timing of the publication. In 2008 the figures were not issued as a separate release, for non-statistical reasons.

### **2.3 Detailed recommendations**

2.3.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where DfID could strengthen its compliance with the Code. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 2.4

below. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users, but which are not central to their designation, are listed at annex 1.

## 2.4 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Requirement 1</b>  | Publish a plan for engaging with users, and document their needs (para 4.3 and 4.28)  |
| <b>Requirement 2</b>  | Publish a Revisions Policy for ODA:GNI (para 4.5)   |
| <b>Requirement 3</b>  | Confirm that any future changes to methods or classifications will be announced in advance to ensure all users are aware of planned changes (para 4.6)  |
| <b>Requirement 4</b>  | Confirm that the Head of Profession is protected from non-statistical pressures that might influence the production or presentation of the statistics, and has sole responsibility for deciding on the timing of releases (para 4.10)                                     |
| <b>Requirement 5</b>  | Produce and publish an estimate of ODA that matches the internationally agreed DAC definition of ODA (para 4.12)  |
| <b>Requirement 6</b>  | Consider delaying the publication of the ODA:GNI release to allow the use of the first ONS estimate of GNI if this allows publication in advance of the DAC release. If this is not feasible, DfID should publish details of the methods used to estimate GNI (para 4.15) |
| <b>Requirement 7</b>  | Report annually the estimated costs of responding to the Voluntary Agency Survey (para 4.20)  |
| <b>Requirement 8</b>  | Publish an indicative date for both releases as soon as possible, with a more precise release date being published as soon as practicable, and ensure that all releases are accessible via the Publication Hub (para 4.29)  |
| <b>Requirement 9</b>  | Include the name of the responsible statistician on all future releases (para 4.32)   |
| <b>Requirement 10</b> | Publish a list of those people given pre-release access (para 4.33)   |
| <b>Requirement 11</b> | Publish a Statement of Administrative Sources (para 4.35)   |

### 3 Subject of the assessment

- 3.1 The assessed statistics are produced by the Department for International Development (DfID). *Statistics on International Development* (SID) is an annual publication that reports how official UK financial resources for international development are spent. It provides two different aggregates of aid expenditure: Gross Public Expenditure on Development (GPEX)/the DfID programme and UK Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- 3.2 *Provisional UK Official Development Assistance as a proportion of Gross National Income* (ODA:GNI) provides a provisional estimate of the ODA:GNI ratio for the UK and is published as a statistical release in mid March each year. DfID aims to publish the estimate in advance of its inclusion in a publication by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee<sup>5</sup> (DAC) which presents international comparisons on aid expenditure and is released in late March or early April. The ratio is an internationally recognised indicator of the level of international aid. A revised estimate of the ODA:GNI ratio is published in SID in November.
- 3.3 SID is used widely to give a broad picture of the UK's contribution to development aid, broken down into variables such as destination country, type of assistance and purpose. The provisional estimate of the ODA:GNI ratio is used by the DAC to provide comparisons of different countries' aid expenditure. It is also a key figure in the measurement of the UK's progress towards the United Nations target that all developed countries should give 0.7% of GNI as Overseas Development Assistance. The UK has committed to reaching this target by 2013. Parliament, the media and the public can be expected to interpret the ODA:GNI ratio as an indicator of the UK's position on helping poor countries and its attitude towards international aid.
- 3.4 SID has been published annually since 1999. It was previously called 'British Aid Statistics' - an annual publication dating from the 1960s. SID provides a summary of the data provided to the DAC. It also provides a more detailed break-down of UK official aid flows between the main provider (DfID) and other government departments, which is more relevant to domestic policy makers.
- 3.5 The statistics are produced primarily from the DfID financial and administrative system, ARIES. The system is under development and is being rolled out across DfID.
- 3.6 The ARIES data are supplemented by the Voluntary Agency Survey, which is used to determine the value of UK aid flows to developing countries from the charity sector. The statistics also make some use of data from other sources such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en\\_2649\\_34447\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34447_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)

## 4 Detailed Assessment

### Principle 1: Meeting user needs

**The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.**

- 4.1 The primary users of SID are internal policy users within DfID and other users within government such as HM Treasury. ODA:GNI is produced primarily to meet the requirements of the DAC, which publishes international comparisons of the ODA:GNI ratio in spring each year. The statisticians at DfID attend a twice yearly OECD working party, which discusses definitions and methods. They seek views from key policy users about possible changes to the statistics prior to these meetings.
- 4.2 The most recent formal external user consultation took place in 2005 when a survey was sent to those on the distribution list for SID, seeking views on the publication. This exercise resulted in a number of changes, with some tables being taken out and further metadata being added. Users noted that the publication had improved in recent years. The producers have no plans for a follow-up survey in the near future.
- 4.3 There is little published documentation of the uses and users of SID, nor of how user views are taken into account in DfID's plans for developing SID. As part of the designation as National Statistics DfID should publish a more systematic plan for engaging with users, and document their needs (Requirement 1)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> In relation to Principle 1 Practice 2, Principle 1 Practice 5 and Protocol 1 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice

## **Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity**

### **Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.**

- 4.4 There are some concerns about the orderly release of these statistics (see Principle 3 and Protocol 2).
- 4.5 The Assessment team found no evidence of reporting bias or concerns over the impartiality of the statistics. Statements on release practices and revisions are included in the Statement of Compliance with the (now-superseded) National Statistics Code of Practice. While some relevant sections can be extracted and used, the statement refers only to SID. At present, DfID does not make any revisions to the ODA:GNI ratio to take account of revisions made to official estimates of GNI. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfID should publish a Revisions Policy for ODA:GNI<sup>7</sup> (Requirement 2).
- 4.6 Changes being made to the statistics published in SID are pre-announced to internal users on the DfID intranet, but this is not extended to external users. As part of the re-designation as National Statistics DfID should confirm that any future changes to methods or classifications will be announced in advance to ensure all users are aware of planned changes<sup>8</sup> (Requirement 3).
- 4.7 The publication is available free-of-charge in PDF format on the DfID website. The Statement of Compliance (see 4.5) notes that more detailed breakdowns of the data are available on request. These are also free-of-charge and can be provided electronically to customers.

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<sup>7</sup> In relation to Principle 2 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

<sup>8</sup> In relation to Principle 2 Practice 4 of the Code of Practice

### **Principle 3: Integrity**

**At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.**

- 4.8 SID and ODA:GNI are published as statistical releases, with policy statements from DfID published separately.
- 4.9 The Assessment team found no evidence of political pressure in relation to the statistics published in SID.
- 4.10 The ODA:GNI figure has in the past been the subject of controversy in relation to the publication arrangements. The Assessment team understands that ODA:GNI was originally included in the scope of National Statistics but was removed in 2001 because the Department considered the pre-release access arrangements overly restrictive. Furthermore, in 2008 the figures were not issued as a separate release, for non-statistical reasons. There was no Head of Profession in post at the time; accordingly the National Statistician was informed of this matter. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfID should confirm that the Head of Profession is protected from non-statistical pressures that might influence the production or presentation of the statistics, and that the Head of Profession has sole responsibility for deciding on the timing of releases<sup>9</sup> (Requirement 4).

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<sup>9</sup> In relation to Principle 3 Practices 2 and Principle 3 Practice 3 of the Code of Practice

## Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

**Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.**

- 4.11 The quality of the statistics meets the needs of the main users. Changes have been made in recent years to maintain the relevance of the statistics and to improve consistency with international requirements. The sector codes for expenditure now better match those agreed by the DAC. DfID statisticians attend the OECD working party meetings where they discuss methodological developments. Where there are deviations in classifications or terminology, direct mapping is used to assist interpretation.
- 4.12 One area where the statistics do not match the international definition of ODA was identified during the assessment. Aid spent on refugees within the UK is included in the DAC definition of ODA but data on this expenditure, which are collected by the Home Office, are excluded from DfID's estimate. DfID feel that the DAC definition should be amended to exclude this type of aid and it may wish to propose such changes to DAC. In the meantime, as part of the designation as National Statistics, DfID should produce and publish an estimate of ODA that matches the internationally agreed DAC definition of ODA<sup>10</sup> (Requirement 5).
- 4.13 The statistics are primarily derived from a new DfID financial and administrative system, ARIES. The system is being implemented gradually which means that the statistics are currently drawn from different systems. A process to revise data from previous years is also underway. This will provide historic data back to 2003/04.
- 4.14 Most quality assurance is now carried out by those inputting the data - DfID project managers in the various countries. They receive training and there are guidance notes on how to carry out quality assurance. The most common quality problem is the entry of incorrect sector codes for expenditure. Enhancements are planned in the next version to introduce more automated quality assurance.
- 4.15 The ODA:GNI release, published in mid-March, is based on an estimate of GNI calculated by DfID. The methodology behind this estimation is not published. There would be benefits in developing a release schedule for ODA:GNI that allows the use of the first official estimate of GNI (by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)), generally published in late March each year. However, the timing of the ODA:GNI release is also influenced by DfID's aim to publish in advance of the DAC publication. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfID should consider delaying the publication of the ODA:GNI release to allow it to make use of the first ONS estimate of GNI if this allows

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<sup>10</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

publication in advance of the DAC release. If this is not feasible, DfID should publish details of the methods used to estimate GNI<sup>11</sup> (Requirement 6).

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<sup>11</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice

## **Principle 5: Confidentiality**

**Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.**

- 4.16 All users of the administrative system used to produce the data sign a general DfID confidentiality clause. Access to the data in the system is controlled so that only those who need to see certain data are authorised to view the data. A recent review by the National Audit Office noted that confidentiality at DfID in general was adequate<sup>12</sup>. The DfID Statement of Compliance (see para 4.5) also notes the confidentiality policy.
- 4.17 Data taken from the Voluntary Agency Survey, primarily financial data on organisations' expenditure, are aggregated to a single figure when published and it is therefore not possible to identify individual organisations.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/providing\\_budget\\_support\\_to\\_de.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/providing_budget_support_to_de.aspx)

## **Principle 6: Proportionate burden**

**The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.**

- 4.18 The statistics are collected largely from the internal DfID administrative system, ARIES. The burden is on those inputting data into the system - generally DfID project managers in the destination countries. Expenditure data used for SID and ODA:GNI are also required for other purposes, such as project planning and the management of funds, so the additional burden is minimal. The new system was designed for ease of data entry and consistency, to reduce the need for quality assurance. Further modifications to the system should reduce this even further.
- 4.19 Some of the statistics are taken from the annual Voluntary Agency Survey. The expenditure from these organisations generally represents a very small proportion of the full amount of expenditure and is aggregated to one line of data. Although there were no complaints from suppliers during the assessment, the burden on the agencies to supply the data and on DfID itself to collect the data may be disproportionate given the minimal impact the data has on the final figures.
- 4.20 DfID statisticians are aware of this and have made some efforts to investigate alternative methods of data collection. The Assessment team suggests that DfID continues to develop methods that will reduce the cost burden on data supplier organisations. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfID should report annually the estimated costs of responding to the Voluntary Agency Survey<sup>13</sup> (Requirement 7).

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<sup>13</sup> In relation to Principle 6 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice

## **Principle 7: Resources**

**The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.**

- 4.21 DfID statisticians told us that the change to a more administrative system allowed for a reduction in staff and more efficiency in the production of the statistics. Technical support is also provided by the IT team for those using the ARIES system. The resources currently available appear to be sufficient. The administrative costs of the Voluntary Agency Survey may outweigh the benefits in terms of its contribution to the overall figures (see paras 4.19, 4.20).
- 4.22 The Head of Profession holds a budget which can be used for user consultation.

## **Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility**

**Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.**

- 4.23 The annual SID publication presents metadata and provides information on the quality and reliability of the statistics. It explains the differences between the two key figures, GPEX and ODA, with reference to the range of their potential uses. ODA:GNI contains some commentary and background notes on the statistics. Users mentioned that changes have been made to the publications to make them more accessible and easy-to-use.
- 4.24 The SID publication has been released via the Publication Hub. Both SID and the ODA:GNI figure will need to be pre-announced and accessible from the Hub (see Requirement 8 and para 4.29). The statistics can be difficult to find on the DfID website, situated under “Finance and Performance”. Many regular users go to the DAC website instead of DfID’s website and know where to find the data they need. However, better signposting of the statistics would be helpful for other users. For example, the ODA:GNI figure could be made accessible from the same webpage as SID, and a link could be provided to the DAC website.
- 4.25 Better information about how the figures are used by DAC would be useful. It would also be helpful to provide a clearer picture of how the data are used internally by DfID.
- 4.26 Some users expressed a desire to see more flexibility in the data provided. Currently a hard copy of the SID publication is produced in PDF format – but this does not readily lend itself to analysis and re-use of the figures. DfID statisticians recognise this and are currently looking at ways in which more tables, in Excel format for example, could be provided on the website.

## **Protocol 1: User engagement**

**Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.**

- 4.27 Informal engagement with internal DfID users is carried out on a regular basis. There is evidence that these users' views have influenced the development of the presentation of the statistics and the design of ARIES, the new administrative system.
- 4.28 There could be more documentation on user engagement on the DfID website to tell less experienced users how they can contact DfID statisticians and make their needs known. Both SID and ODA:GNI could be strengthened by developing a more systematic plan for user engagement (see para 4.3 and Requirement 1).

## Protocol 2: Release practices

**Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.**

- 4.29 DfID had not pre-announced the 2009 publication of SID on the Publication Hub at the time of writing this report. They have not previously pre-announced the ODA:GNI figure. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfID should publish an indicative date for both releases as soon as possible, with a more precise date of publication as soon as practicable, and ensure that all releases are accessible via the Publication Hub<sup>14</sup> (Requirement 8).
- 4.30 Some of the data on DfID expenditure published in SID are also published at an earlier date in DfID's annual report. Including this information in DfID's annual report is required by international legislation. The Assessment team considers this to be compliant with Protocol 2 Practice 8 of the Code since the purpose of the statistics published in SID is to report on the deployment of all official financial resources by the United Kingdom to support international development, whereas DfID's annual report only presents expenditure by DfID.
- 4.31 In previous years, DfID has released the SID publication according to a specified timetable. It is planning to improve the timeliness of SID to bring it into line with the publication of the Annual Report. DfID has traditionally aimed to publish the ODA:GNI release before the DAC figures; however this varies from year to year depending on when the DAC figures are released (see para 4.15 and Requirement 6).
- 4.32 The statistical releases currently only give the contact details of the DfID press office. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the name of the responsible statistician should be included on all future releases<sup>15</sup> (Requirement 9).
- 4.33 Pre-release access to the statistics is given to some officials and Ministers, in accordance with the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008. A list was provided to the Assessment team as part of the assessment. As part of the designation as National Statistics, and to ensure full compliance with the Order, a list of those people given pre-release access should be published<sup>16</sup> (Requirement 10).

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<sup>14</sup> In relation to Principle 2 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

<sup>15</sup> In relation to Protocol 2 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

<sup>16</sup> In relation to Protocol 2 Practice 7 of the Code of Practice

### **Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes**

**Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.**

4.34 DfID makes use of ARIES for SID and ODA:GNI and is involved in the development of ARIES to improve its usefulness for statistical purposes.

4.35 DfID should publish a Statement of Administrative Sources, as part of the designation as National Statistics<sup>17</sup> (Requirement 11).

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<sup>17</sup> In relation to Protocol 3 Practice 5 of the Code of Practice

## **Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement**

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to DfID's statistical outputs, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Suggestion 1</b> | Continue to develop methods that will reduce the costs to organisations (para 4.20)  |
| <b>Suggestion 2</b> | Improve accessibility of the statistics via the website through better links and signposting (para 4.24)                             |
| <b>Suggestion 3</b> | Provide better information about how the figures are used by DAC, and links to the DAC website from DfID's website (para 4.24, 4.25) |
| <b>Suggestion 4</b> | Make data tables available in other formats, for example downloadable Excel files, to encourage analysis and re-use (para 4.26)      |

## **Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views**

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from April to June 2009.

A2.2 The Assessment team met representatives of DfID at an initial meeting in DfID's London office on 28 April 2009. Some background information was provided by DfID in early May 2009, and the Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 1 June 2009. The Assessment team subsequently met with DfID at their East Kilbride office on 23 June 2009, to confirm and clarify the written evidence provided.

### **Summary of users contacted, and issues raised**

A2.3 As part of the assessment, questionnaires were sent to around 35 users, suppliers and other interested parties. The Assessment team received 13 responses, grouped as follows:

Government departments	1
International organisations	1
Academic/research	2
Suppliers (VAS)	9

A2.4 The users who responded were generally satisfied with the statistics. Some did not go to the publication directly; instead they found the data via the DAC website or directly from DfID itself. Areas of dissatisfaction include the accessibility of the data and the level of detail and flexibility provided. More commentary on the relationship and comparability with international figures could also be useful. The suppliers who responded receive the Voluntary Agency Survey. They were generally happy with the survey and did not feel it represented any unnecessary burden. Awareness of what the data was used for seemed to be low and none of the suppliers appear to have been consulted on issues regarding the survey.

### **Key documents/links provided**

Written Evidence for Assessment document

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/DFID-Expenditure-Statistics/Statistics-on-International-Development-2008/>

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Media-Room/Press-releases/20091/Provisional-UK-Official-Development-Assistance-as-a-proportion-of-Gross-National-Income-2008/>

