



Small Steps for Partnerships: A Proposal for Co-operation

The need for donors to report on their support to statistical activities is increasingly recognised as an essential step toward improving aid effectiveness, ensuring consistencies in their programmes, and enhancing the implementation of NSDSs. Information sharing improves the efficiency of support programmes at the country level and enables synergies, donor cooperation, and partnership at the international and regional levels. While some donors have been resistant to additional reporting as it is perceived as an added burden, the potential benefits for both donors and country beneficiaries are considerable: improved delivery of aid, increased harmonisation of aid programmes, and greater accountability of interventions.

Among the recommendations that emerged from the UNECA–AfDB–PARIS21 Forum on African Statistical DEvelopment (FASDev) held in May 2004, participants (representatives of donor institutions, UN specialised agencies, and regional and sub-regional agencies) recognised the need for a “light” reporting mechanism to facilitate this exchange of information. While several donors (e.g., France, Sweden, Norway, and Eurostat) have already circulated reports of their statistical aid programmes, PARIS21 intends to propose a light template that all donors—both bilateral and multilateral—could use to report on their statistical support activities. To minimise the reporting burden and maximise the dissemination of this data, the proposed template will link with existing reporting mechanisms such as the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the Development Gateway’s Accessible Information on Development Activities (AiDA). The information gathered through this template will be accessible on the PARIS21 website.

Typically, support to statistical development is underreported because much of it is integrated into larger development interventions. An analysis of the CRS for 2000–2002 shows that for bilateral donors, new commitments coded as statistical capacity building are running at between \$20–26 million per year. Conducting a word search on “STATIS” in the description of projects adds between one-third and a doubling of this amount, depending on the year (average 60%). Similarly, conducting a word search on “CENSUS” adds a further 15% (varying between 5–45%). On this **limited** basis, it is clear that probably less than 50% of new commitments for the development of statistics is captured as SCB by the CRS. For example, an agricultural development programme may have a statistical component, which is often absorbed into the overall programme. It is for this reason that PARIS21’s proposed template will explicitly outline all possible types of support and how to identify and quantify this support when it is integrated into a larger programme.

The template will allow donors to report on past, current, and planned activities. The template will include several fields: sector(s), country/institution supported, amount of support, duration of support, and type of support (e.g., direct support to the country, support to regional or subregional programmes, support to international programmes; institutional training activities).

PARIS21’s role in this process will be the following:

- *Promotion* of the need to report and the use of the light template
- *Assistance* to donors in preparing their reports
- *Harmonisation* of reporting across donors
- *Synthesis* of reports in order to obtain a broad snapshot of support (the support will be sorted by individual donor institution then by donor country)
- *Dissemination* of reports on the PARIS21 website
- *Organisation* of meetings to discuss reporting, aid harmonisation, and aid effectiveness issues

The Steering Committee is invited to endorse the creation of a light reporting mechanism as outlined above.