



## **Partner Reporting System on Statistical Development**

### **Discussion Points for Steering Committee Meeting**

*November 2007*

#### **Background and Rationale**

At the request of its Steering Committee in June 2005, the PARIS21 Secretariat undertook the initiative of designing a Light Reporting Mechanism on support to statistical capacity building by development partners. This initiative was seen as an important input to promote donor collaboration and harmonization in the framework of the Paris Declaration.

To launch the process, the Secretariat conducted a pilot exercise to collect information on ongoing activities in Sub-Saharan Africa during the period 2004-05 from 56 financial and technical partners actively involved in Africa. The results of this Light Reporting Exercise (LRE) were presented in the three-volume document, “*Review of Support to Statistical Capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa – From Reporting to Collaboration*”. A draft of the document, presented at the FASDEV II meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2006, was well-received and deemed useful for both recipient countries and development partners.

Since the LRE pilot exercise, there has been a growing interest in “scaling-up” support to statistical development among the key statistical partners. This development reinforces the need for stronger monitoring and greater collaboration on partner support going to statistics.

#### **Lessons from LRE**

The LRE experience for Sub-Saharan Africa required roughly 5 person-months, including information collection/processing and report writing. Though follow-up with some partners was required to solicit responses, overall, the response rate was high -- roughly 90% of partners responded. Reactions received from a number of partners, namely DFID and the World Bank, were also encouraging, in that they were able to use the results of the LRE for their own planning and reporting purposes. Other partners are invited to provide examples on how they have found the LRE to be useful as a management tool to share information and contribute to the programming of operational work.

To verify the results of the LRE, the PARIS21 Secretariat visited three countries, Ethiopia, Niger and Mauritania. The findings of these missions showed that a significant amount of information is available at the country level, from both staff of partner country offices and staff of the national statistical system. This information is not always reported to headquarters of partner agencies due to a shift to decentralization of decision-making at the country level. Moreover, staff of the national statistical offices recognized the usefulness of such a reporting system for the preparation and implementation of their National Strategy for Statistical Development (NSDS) -- a reporting system that they would manage and maintain themselves to formulate action plans for statistical development activities and mobilize resources.

The LRE experience seems to suggest the following lessons:

- **continue to raise awareness of statistical development and to improve collaboration among partners:** getting complete information on support to statistics is difficult under any system, but the process of exchanging information on this support could highlight the need to scale up support in specific countries and/or particular areas;
- **monitor statistical development for partners' own use:** a partner reporting system is only as good as the information collected from the partners. In keeping with results-based management, it appears desirable that each partner mainstream statistics in its organization and develop/refine its own reporting system to identify statistical support in its operations;
- **report on future statistical activities:** partners have indicated a strong interest in including planned (“pipeline”) activities in a partner reporting system. This information is not limited to financial data, which may be unavailable, but would include textual information on planned activities (such objectives, areas of intervention). Clearly, not all partners would be able to provide this information, but, for those who can, it would serve as a useful input to other partners country programming exercises;
- **importance of information at country level:** staff of partners' country offices are often better informed on the actual support given and need to be involved in any reporting exercise.

### **Task Team on a Partner Reporting System on Statistical Development**

To build on the pilot Light Reporting Exercise, the PARIS21 Steering Committee agreed to create a Task Team on further developing a donor reporting system on statistical development at its November 2006 meeting. The Task Team has met four times and has completed a number of activities, as outlined in its terms of reference: (i) a review of existing reporting systems, including an in-depth study of the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) of the OECD; and (ii) a classification of statistical areas and financing typology, aimed at defining a questionnaire for a possible partner reporting system.

Key conclusions of the CRS study are that (i) the CRS can be used to extract information on statistical support provided by OECD bilateral countries; (ii) the information from other partners (multilateral institutions, non-OECD partners, and regional/sub-regional organizations) is either absent from or not as complete in the CRS, implying that information on statistical support from these partners needs to be added to the CRS or collected in another way; and (iii) extracting data relevant to statistical support from CRS data would be enhanced if reporters included more textual information about their activities, as provided for by the CRS.

In end-September 2007, Eurostat launched a reporting survey on support to statistical development in Sub-Saharan Africa by EC members. For this exercise, Eurostat prepared a web-based questionnaire, based on the classifications and content agreed-upon by the Task Team. The deadline for submitting information is end-November 2007.

### **Reporting at country level – the AFRISTAT experience**

In June 2007, AFRISTAT, with assistance from the PARIS21 Secretariat, began assisting its member states in building the capacity of statistical staff to review partner support to statistical development. To launch the initiative, a pilot exercise was carried out in Mali, using a questionnaire, similar to the one of the Task Team, but adapted to country needs; its preliminary results were presented at AFRISTAT's Directors Meeting in October 2007. A manual to accompany the questionnaire and a guide on managing the reporting mechanism for staff responsible at the country level will be finalized, based on the pilot experience. AFRISTAT also trained national experts on the reporting system in each member state during the summer of 2007. The lessons drawn from this pilot initiative will define future steps in promoting a partner reporting system at the recipient country level, which will be managed by the countries themselves for their own purposes. The PARIS21 Secretariat, along with other partners, is prepared to facilitate

technical assistance and training to recipient countries to incorporate a reporting mechanism to manage and monitor partner support to statistical development, as part of their overall budget management as they implement their NSDS, either on a country-by-country basis or through sub-regional organizations.

### **Decisions before moving forward**

In order to improve coordination on partner support to statistical development, the Secretariat of PARIS21 requests the agreement of its Steering Committee on the following points:

- the CRS will be the source for reporting on the statistical support activities of OECD-DAC bilateral countries;
- the CRS will be enhanced by collecting additional information from partners not covered by the CRS. This work will be carried out in collaboration with CRS staff and the DAC Working Party on Statistics, with the aim of improving the level of detail and expanding CRS coverage of support to statistical development;
- partners should be invited to share textual, and where possible financial, information on their planned statistical programmes and activities; and
- the partner reporting exercise is an integral part of the NSDS process that needs to be carried out by the recipient countries themselves. Within its overall support to country NSDS implementation and in collaboration with regional/sub-regional partners, the PARIS21 Secretariat will support countries to incorporate a reporting mechanism to manage and monitor partner support to statistical development, as part of their overall budget management as they implement their NSDS.