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Transparency Beyond Mexico: Lessons learnt and proposals on a way forward for the "Busan transparency indicator" and the common standard

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This ROOM DOCUMENT is submitted for DISCUSSION under Item 7 of the draft agenda DCD/DAC/STAT/A(2014)3/REV1.

It presents the WP-STAT Secretariat's observations of the main lessons learnt from the pilot transparency assessment undertaken in preparation for the Mexico High Level Meeting in April 2014. It is intended to facilitate discussions and inputs from one constituency of development co-operation providers to help refine the monitoring framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. It also aims to facilitate an open and constructive debate on options to further strengthen assessments of transparency. Such discussions will provide helpful inputs both to strengthening the current Global Partnership monitoring framework, as well as informing more comprehensive discussions regarding future approaches in the context of accountability post-2015.

Compared to the version issued earlier, this version clarifies the status of the document described in the present box and includes a correction in paragraph 24 on the potential tasks of the proposed multi-stakeholder reference group.

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TRANSPARENCY BEYOND MEXICO: LESSONS LEARNT AND PROPOSALS ON A WAY FORWARD FOR THE "BUSAN TRANSPARENCY INDICATOR" AND THE COMMON STANDARD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tables

Figures

Rationale and objectives of the paper

1.   This paper is prepared as a background document for the discussions at the upcoming WP-STAT meeting and represents the DAC Secretariat's perspective on the transparency assessment undertaken for the High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation held in Mexico in April 2014.

2.   While the Transparency assessment was responding to a direct commitment made in Busan by Global Partnership members, it has unfortunately received criticism on several fronts. Namely, concerning the **rationale**, the **process** and the current **methodology** and choices made to assess transparency.

3.   The paper aims to provide an overview of the main challenges that arose during the transparency assessment and propose a menu of options for taking the common standard and the next iteration of the transparency indicator forward.

A necessity to clarify the definition and governance structure of the common standard

4.   The "Transparency indicator" was created to monitor a commitment made in Busan in December 2011. The outcome document agreed upon in Busan[1] called for the implementation of a *"(...) common, open standard for electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources provided through development co-operation, , taking into account the statistical reporting of the OECD-DAC and the complementary efforts of the International Aid Transparency Initiative and others"*, but did not necessarily provide a sufficiently clear definition of what the "common standard" should be.

5.   In June 2012, the "Proposal for a common, open standard" [DCD/DAC/EFF(2012)9], prepared by the WP-STAT and IATI provided some guiding principles for "strengthening the emerging common standard" and outlined the building blocks of the standard, including a list of fields of which some are common to the DAC and IATI systems. The challenge however is what the common, open standard is. Currently it can be interpreted as an umbrella construction regrouping three different international reporting/publishing mechanisms namely the OECD DAC statistical reporting systems (the CRS and the FSS) and IATI, where each system has its own separate governance mechanism. The denomination "common" can therefore sometimes lead to confusion.

6.   The Global Partnership Monitoring report released in April 2014 provided the following description of the common standard: "*The common standard combines three complementary systems and processes for tracking development co-operation flows. These are two OECD reporting instruments – the DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the Forward Spending Survey (FSS) (...); and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), a self-publishing system with notifications to a registry that provides current management information on co-operation providers' activities.(...)*".[2]

7.   The lack of clear definition and scope makes its monitoring challenging. In addition, it is unclear to many stakeholders how a "full implementation of the common standard by 2015" can be achieved. More recently there has also been confusion between the "common standard", the OECD standards and the "IATI standard". Therefore in going forward it will be important to have a better narrative and understanding of the common standard, which will help its monitoring.

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1 .   See para 23c. of the Outcome document -
http://effectivecooperation.org/files/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN2.pdf.

2 .   See box 4.1 page 76 of the Global Partnership Monitoring report.

The importance of defining the scope and purpose of the indicator and making the right methodological choices

8.   One of the key lessons learnt from the pilot indicator is the diverging views among members of what the indicator should measure, including its name.[3] Table 1 summarises the various interpretations made by stakeholders throughout the process (with more detail provided in Annex 1, describing the rationale and relevant documentation for each of these possible interpretations):

Table 1.   What should the Busan indicator on transparency measure?

Interpretations of the scope of the indicator
A measure of the Common Standard implementation
1 - The level of implementation of the common standard
2 - The level of implementation of the common standard, but only based on providers' individual implementation schedules
A measure of "transparency of the <u>information on resource flows</u> available for development co-operation"
3 - The <u>supply</u> of information or "public availability" of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources, through the CRS/FSS/IATI (scenario used for the indicator in Mexico)
4 - The <u>supply</u> of information on development co-operation resources with several dimensions identified during the process: timeliness, comprehensiveness, forward-looking, comparability, accessibility, usability, quality, use of data
5 - A focus on the <u>demand</u> side : the actual usefulness / use of data by partner countries
A measure of "donor transparency on <u>all information regarding development co-operation</u>"
6 - Transparency on all information regarding development co-operation
7 - A broad measure of "donor transparency"

9.   The **scope** of the "Busan Common Standard Indicator" still remains to be clearly defined and agreed upon among Global Partnership constituents:

- What exactly should be measured? Is it the implementation of the common standard, the "supply of information on co-operation resources", or whether the "demand" for information has been met?

- How should it be measured? And through which systems / medium, and using what methodology?

10.   Currently the indicator methodology is very complex, as it requires an explanation of technicalities [limitations and characteristics of IT systems, development co-operation concepts (ODA, CPA, etc.), in addition to formulas for calculating various complex dimensions]. The assessment also showed that automation of the process cannot prevent human error (a number of corrections were made to the data after the HLM in Mexico). **Importantly, if donors are publishing data online without**

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3 .   Once the scope of the indicator is defined, a relevant name should be chosen, which should reflect the scope, and may or may not, contain the word "transparency". A number of proposals have been made by donors: "Common standard compliance indicator", "Aid Transparency indicator", "Busan common standard indicator", "Busan transparency Commitment indicator", etc. The pilot indicator was labelled in the <u>Global Partnership Monitoring report</u> as "Indicator 4: information is publicly available".

reporting to the CRS/FSS/IATI, they could be considered as "non-transparent", which is counter-intuitive for the layman.

11. The systems that are included in the common standard have different purposes and scope which makes the assessment of three dimensions difficult, these are timeliness (frequency and time lag), comprehensiveness (level of detail and coverage), and forward-looking information.

Figure 1. The three dimensions of the current indicator

Source: Global Partnership Monitoring report, 2014

12. For example, on timeliness, the performance of donors through the CRS with respect to frequency is the same for all donors, given the fact that the statistical system is an annual one. Regarding comprehensiveness, not all of the common standard fields are actually contained in the CRS. For forward-looking information, the approaches of the two systems differ significantly and can provide different scores because one is looking at CPA while IATI looks at a different set of information.

Methodological challenges to overcome – some considerations

13. The level of discomfort over the process and final methodology may call for improvements. The following principles could guide the refinement of the methodology.

Using OECD systems and IATI according to their respective purposes and inherent characteristics

14. OECD systems provide statistical information, while the IATI system publishes management information. They have different purposes and cannot logistically be assessed against the same parameters. It is critical that the indicator recognizes the inherent differences between the two systems and the types of data (statistical or management) that these systems handle, as they have an impact on the timeliness and comprehensiveness dimensions of the indicator.

- Statistical data takes longer to be published as it goes through a comprehensive quality assurance process, which is not the case for management data.[4]

- A global statistical accountability system does not necessarily require the same level of detail as a management system.[5]

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[4] . See "DAC and CRS Reporting Issues in 2013" - DCD/DAC/STAT(2014)5: data published by DAC donors require some adjustment, and sometimes in-depth revisions, before it can be considered as statistically relevant.

- On the comprehensiveness dimension of the indicator, donors were assessed on data for 41 fields[6] while they could only provide 24[7] as a maximum, because the CRS does not contain the 17 remaining fields.

- The indicator has "institutionalised" a competition between two inherently different systems thus forcing donors into transparency via the CRS/FSS/IATI, while there are many other ways of being transparent.

Sound assessment against the three indicator dimensions – timeliness, level of detail and forward-looking information

15. On the first indicator dimension (timeliness), some overarching challenges were identified during the assessment. It is important to keep in mind that **timeliness of CRS <u>statistical</u> data cannot be assessed the same way as IATI <u>management</u> data and the scoring should reflect a more balanced approach between the two systems, recognizing the contribution to Transparency of both sets of data and the inherent time lag to the production of statistical data.** Some discrepancies between the assessment results and the DAC Secretariat's experience should be taken into account and closely looked at [see DCD/DAC/STAT(2014)5]. It is also important that the scoring provide a proper incentive to improve reporting and publishing.

16. On the second dimension (level of detail), a number of methodological questions raised during the consultation process will need to be looked at:

- **Which fields should really be assessed**? (three fields were not assessed in the first assessment)

- **Should fields be weighted**, recognizing that some fields are more important than others? (for example, project title, sector and amounts would seem paramount).

- Should the assessment be based on disbursement or commitment information?

- Should all fields apply to all donor types (bilaterals/multilaterals) or types of flows (grants / loans)?

17. The transparency assessment should be supported by a comprehensible and validated methodological note. Annex 2 provides selected examples of detailed, field-specific methodological notes with pending questions to address in the process of refinement of the indicator.

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5 . For example, "Activity Documents", "Activity Website", "Related Activity", "Text of Conditions", etc.

6 . Out of which, only 38 were actually used for the transparency assessment in the Global Partnership Monitoring report.

7 . 19 fields are original CRS fields; 4 are common to the CRS and IATI; in addition, the field "planned disbursements" was considered as part of the CRS assessment if the donor was reporting to the FSS. This makes a maximum of 19+4+1 = 24 fields potentially covered by the CRS/FSS. The assessment was reduced to 38 fields, out of the initial 41, for a maximum score of 24/38= 63.16% on the comprehensiveness dimension for CRS reporters.

18.   The third dimension (forward-looking information) also suffered from the following issues:

- **The forward-looking information was scored at three levels – provider, sector and activity levels. The scoring for semi-aggregate at the sector level proved difficult to collect and was therefore not used in the assessment**. It is worth noting that neither of the two systems actually disaggregates forward-looking data by sector as such (even though a filter / sort can be made on this dimension).

- Many multilaterals, including MDBs allocate funding per country and not by project, which will make it hard for them to score properly on this dimension. While assessing the provision of data at the project level seems a fair approach given the request of partner countries and of other stakeholders, perhaps a specific scoring system could be put in place for multilaterals.

Include other relevant elements in going forward such as quality and use

19.   There is an emerging consensus that the dimensions included in Busan did not fully reflect transparency as a whole. These new dimensions could not be taken into account in the first iteration, but were addressed in the Mexico communiqué (para. 18): *"(...) we encourage accelerated efforts to fulfil the commitments made in Paris, Accra and Busan in terms of **timeliness, comprehensiveness, comparability, accessibility, usability and forward-looking nature of information**, taking particular note to improve **quality** and thereby greater **use of information**, including by tracking and making public resource allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment, as critical steps toward enhanced mutual accountability".*

20.   **Annex 3 provides a first basis for discussion on taking into account these new dimensions** (based on the experience from the pilot indicator and the OECD statistical practices) and proposes additional dimensions with definitions, challenges and to the extent possible, proposals on how to measure some of these new dimensions.

Proposed options for a way forward on the common standard and the Busan Indicator

21.   A starting point for improving the monitoring assessment would be to begin to clarify some of the definitional issues around the common standard. This can be done by making clear choices on some of the elements of the common standard:

- **A "fields" dimension** – all (or some) of the 41 fields of the common standard.

- **A "systems" dimension** – the CRS, the FSS, IATI, or other systems (websites, portals, etc.)

- **An "electronic format of publication" dimension** – CSV, XML, etc.: there is a debate around whether machine-readable formats (such as XML) are more important than actual transparency of information provided through other formats (CSV, websites, data portals, etc.).

22.   Examples of possible definitions of the common standard are included in Annex 4.

23.   Another prerequisite is the importance of a strengthened multi-stakeholder consultative process to improve the methodology of the indicator as well as clarifying the scope of the common standard. Donors indicated a number of areas for improvement, including defining what was measured and the target of "full implementation", securing ownership among the various constituencies by setting up a consultative process with key milestones and deadlines and securing credibility of the assessment by ensuring a transparent validation process. This calls for a much more robust and transparent process going forward if the indicator is to restore its credibility.

24.   In this respect, it would be desirable that the common standard and the future indicator is shaped by a multi-stakeholder technical reference group comprised of the various constituencies of the Global Partnership, including IATI, WP-STAT, non-DAC donors, multilaterals, developing countries and south-south providers. Such a technical reference group could advise on an improved definition of the common standard, clarify what "full implementation" means, and address any technical issues that may arise from the evolution of the common standard. It could also propose a modified scope and design for the updated indicator on the Busan common standard, including how the results could be presented. Such a group could base its deliberation on various possible scenarios, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2.   Possible indicator scenarios

General Approach	Relevant scenarios – what should the Busan Indicator measure?
Approach 1: A measure of the level of implementation of the Busan Common standard	1.1 - The level of implementation of the common standard based on providers' individual implementation schedules
	1.2 - The level of implementation of the common standard as a whole
Approach 2: A measure of "the transparency of information on Development Co-operation flows"	2.1 - Measuring the <u>supply</u> / availability of information on resource flows, with an improved version of the current indicator, including only the three existing dimensions envisaged in Busan
	2.2 - Measuring the <u>supply</u> / availability of information on resource flows, with 2 indicators: a "Global accountability indicator" (using the CRS/FSS statistical data) and an indicator on "Management information" using IATI. These 2 indicators would include some or all of the 5 new dimensions identified in the process
	2.3 Measuring the <u>supply</u> of information on resource flows, with all or some of the new dimensions but through any system (OECD, IATI, websites, data portals, etc.)
	2.4 - A focus on the <u>demand</u> side : the actual usefulness / use of data by partner countries
Approach 3 - A measure of "Transparency on Resource Information" as a whole	3.1 – A Resource information transparency indicator, encompassing dimensions much beyond transparency on resource flows, but on all resource information including the existence of a transparency strategy, the publication and results of audit reports, results on the untying of aid, etc.

25.   **In view of the Global Partnership monitoring which is likely to be launched early 2016, it would be important to ensure a process by which an indicator is developed, tested and agreed upon by the Global Partnership. The WP-STAT participants are invited to share their views on ways forward, including the creation of a technical reference group, and provide recommendations that will allow the successful implementation of an indicator in the run up to the next HLM of the Global Partnership.**

ANNEX 1: WHAT SHOULD THE BUSAN INDICATOR ON TRANSPARENCY MEASURE?

Approaches/scenarios	Rationale
A measure of the Common Standard implementation	
1 - The level of implementation of the common standard	Para 23c of the Busan Outcome Document : *"To this end we will: (…) Implement a common, open standard for electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources provided through development co-operation, taking into account the statistical reporting of the OECD-DAC and the complementary efforts of the International Aid Transparency Initiative and others."*
2 - The level of implementation of the common standard, but only based on providers' individual implementation schedules	*"We will agree on this standard and publish our respective schedules to implement it by December 2012, with the aim of implementing it fully by December 2015."* - *see* Para 23c of the Busan Outcome Document.
A measure of "Transparency of information on development co-operation resources"	
3 - The <u>supply</u> of information or "public availability" of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources, through the CRS/FSS/IATI This was the vision of the first indicator presented in Mexico	See the "Guide to the Monitoring framework": indicator 4 is "Transparency: information on development co-operation is publicly available". The same table indicates that the indicator should be a "Measure of state of implementation of the common standard by co-operation providers" with the target by 2015 that "All development co-operation providers are *on track* to implement a common, open standard for electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on development co-operation".
4 - The <u>supply</u> of information on development co-operation resources with several dimensions identified during the process: timeliness, comprehensiveness, forward-looking, comparability, accessibility, usability, quality, use of data	Some members indicated during the October-November 2013 consultation on the indicator methodology (see p8 – section B) the fact that many other dimensions should be included in a transparency indicator. These do not appear in the Busan outcome document but now appear in the Mexico Communiqué (paragraph 18). These dimensions are paramount to a measure of the Transparency of development co-operations resources.
5 - A focus on the <u>demand</u> side : the actual usefulness / use of data by partner countries	The spirit of Paris, Accra, Busan and Mexico is the actual transparency notably towards partner countries to help them prepare their budget and monitor the execution of development activities. The current indicator only provides a measure of <u>published</u> data in specific systems, but not whether this data is useful or <u>used</u> by partner countries. This issue was mentioned several times in the October-November 2013 consultation. The rationale behind this approach is that if data provided by donors is indeed timely, comprehensive and forward-looking, it will be used by partner countries, as it is requested since the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. Measuring the actual use of information by partner countries can therefore be considered as a way of measurement of donors' commitments.
A measure of "Transparency on all information regarding development cooperation", not only flows	
6 - Transparency on all information regarding development co-operation	Another ambition would be to measure Transparency beyond data on aid resources, and analyse Transparency not only from the perspective of the provision of information on resources, but by including much broader transparency-related issues such as whether a donor has a freedom of information act, a transparency strategy, whether evaluation and audit reports are publically available, whether large projects are posted on the untied aid bulletin board, whether reporting of issues such as tying is truthful, etc.
A measure of "Donor Transparency"	
7 – A broad measure of "Donor Transparency"	Similarly to what is done on assessing the transparency of large companies (see for example the assessment done by the NGO Transparency International on large companies), and using the experience in other divisions (e.g. http://www.oecd.org/tax/transparency/ and http://www.oecd.org/tax/transparency/keypublications.htm). A similar work stream could be started within the OECD, but focusing on Donor Transparency and taking into account the recent evolutions towards Development finance.

ANNEX 2: SOME PENDING QUESTIONS ON METHOLOGICAL NOTES

	Common standard data fields	Methodological notes		Pending questions
		CRS / FSS	**IATI**	
General Information	Reporting Organisation	A score of 100% has been given to all providers since this information is necessarily available in the CRS for one of the following reasons : - The field is mandatory in CRS (e.g. sectors) - The field has been derived from another field (e.g. the "region" is derived from the "country" field) - Other specific reasons (e.g.: transaction fields, since even if not in the same year, a commitment will necessarily be associated with a disbursement in a subsequent year).		
	Standard activity identifier			
	Other activity identifiers			
Basic Activity Information	Activity Title			
	Activity Title (in recipient's language)			Should the 17 fields that are not present in the CRS be part of the assessment since they are not even contained in the system? (At the same time, reporting on all fields is a requirement since "full implementation" of the common standard is envisaged in the Busan Outcome Document)
	Activity Description			
	Activity Description (in recipient's language)		The approach was to look at the language of the recipient country and see if the title is translated into this language. However, for all countries where the recipient and donor languages are the same, these have been excluded to reflect the real effort by donors to translate into the recipient language, otherwise it would naturally favour some countries, particularly France, Spain and the UK. This methodology could not be pursued in the CRS for this monitoring round, but was done for IATI.	In the first round of monitoring, the methodology did not take into account institutions that had more than one official language. This should be corrected in the next version of the indicator. Various options are possible for the future, which should be discussed as part of the new version of the methodology (only one language for example English could be treated as a default language).
	Activity Status			
	Activity Dates (Start Date)			

	Common standard data fields	Methodological notes		Pending questions
		CRS / FSS	IATI	
	Activity Dates (End Date)			
	Activity Contacts			
	Participating Organisation (Funding)			
	Participating Organisation (Extending)	A score of 100% has been given to all providers since this information is necessarily available in the CRS for one of the following reasons : - The field is mandatory in CRS (e.g. sectors) - The field has been derived from another field (e.g. the "region" is derived from the "country" field) - Other specific reasons (e.g.: transaction fields, since even if not in the same year, a commitment will necessarily be associated with a disbursement in a subsequent year).		
	Participating Organisation (Implementing)			
	Participating Organisation (Accountable)			
Geopolitical Information	Recipient Country			
	Recipient Region			
	Sub-national Geographic Location			
Classifications	Sector (DAC CRS)	A score of 100% has been given to all providers since this information is necessarily available in the CRS for one of the following reasons : - The field is mandatory in CRS (e.g. sectors) - The field has been derived from another field (e.g. the "region" is derived from the "country" field) - Other specific reasons (e.g.: transaction fields, since even if not in the same year, a commitment will necessarily be associated with a disbursement in a subsequent year).		
	Sector (Agency specific)	N/A		
	Policy Marker	If any of the 8 Policy Marker was filled in, then the corresponding activity was counted in		
	Collaboration Type	A score of 100% has been given to all providers since this information is necessarily available in the CRS for one of the following reasons : - The field is mandatory in CRS (e.g. sectors) - The field has been derived from another field (e.g. the "region" is derived from the "country" field) - Other specific reasons (e.g.: transaction fields, since even if not		
	Default Flow Type			
	Default Finance Type			
	Default Aid Type			

	Common standard data fields	Methodological notes		Pending questions
		CRS / FSS	IATI	
		in the same year, a commitment will necessarily be associated with a disbursement in a subsequent year).		
	Default Tied Aid Status	The tying status was considered as not applicable for multilateral institutions, except for the EU.		
Financial	Activity Budget			
	Planned Disbursements	On the "planned disbursements" field, since there is no such field in the CRS but the common standard indicates that this is a field common to the OECD systems and IATI, the totals for this field were not presented on the basis of the CRS but on the basis of the FSS. Only those donors that provide planned disbursements in the FSS at activity-level, score for "planned disbursements" field, and got 100%. However, if a donor provided data to the FSS at the activity level but had a "non-disclosure" policy on its FSS data, the total for the planned disbursements field was 0%, since the data was not made public.		
	Economic Classification (Capital/Recurrent)	There is a field in CRS that captures "investment project". The definition in the CRS reporting directives ("Investment project aid comprises activities primarily designed to augment the physical capital of recipient countries.") is probably similar to the one used by IATI, but is not considered as an overlapping field between the CRS and IATI.		
	Recipient's Administrative/Functional budget classification			
Financial Transaction	Financial transaction (Commitment)	Given the nature of cumulative annual transactions of the CRS, commitments and disbursements / expenditures / repayments are not always linked. 100% has been given for this field in the CRS as by definition each transaction has an amount associated.		
	Financial transaction (Disbursement & Expenditure)			
	Financial transaction (Reimbursement)			
	Financial transaction (Incoming Funds)			
	Financial transaction (Loan repayment / interest repayment)	Given the nature of cumulative annual transactions of the CRS, commitments and disbursements / expenditures / repayments are not always linked. 100% has been given for this field in the CRS as by		

	Common standard data fields	Methodological notes		Pending questions
		CRS / FSS	IATI	
		definition each transaction has an amount associated.		
Related Documents and Links	Activity Documents			
	Activity Website			
	Related Activity			Related activities can only be reported when they do in fact exist (and this is not a necessary condition) – How should donors be scored?
Performance	Conditions attached Y/N	These fields were excluded for the first monitoring round carried out before Mexico (following the consultation held in October-November 2013).		- Should these fields still be excluded from the assessment? - Should non-mandatory fields in IATI (namely sub-national geographic location, text of conditions and results data) be part of the assessment (these have been excluded for the Mexico assessment)?
	Text of Conditions			
	Results data			

Colour Legend			
	Overlap between IATI and CRS/FSS		
	Partial overlap between IATI and the CRS/FSS		
	Only IATI		
General Notes			
	N/A : Not applicable		

ANNEX 3: POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN A FUTURE VERSION OF THE INDICATOR

Taking into account transparency beyond the common standard

On the question of how to recognize work on transparency beyond the common standard, two options could be envisaged:

- Either the scope of the indicator is such that the name of the indicator should not include the word "transparency", but focus on the common standard, in which case "measuring Transparency beyond the common standard" is not relevant anymore and should not be part of the indicator.

- Or, the ambition is to measure "transparency", in which case new dimensions should indeed be included based on the definition of Transparency retained for the indicator (e.g. focusing on Transparency of information on co-operation resources or beyond). A list of proposed new dimensions (with possible approaches) is included below for future reference.

Comparability

Elements of definition: According to the OECD glossary of terms, "comparability is the extent to which differences between statistics from different geographical areas, non-geographical domains, or over time, can be attributed to differences between the true values of the statistics". This dimension is also part of the Mexico Communiqué, because it was not in the Busan Outcome document, nor did it appear as a major outcome of the October-November consultation. Other transparency indicators such as the "Aid Transparency Index" of Publish What You Fund, take into account this dimension in its calculation. An extract from the latest PWYF report (Section 2 - page 10): "*A new, graduated scoring methodology has been used for some of the publication indicators. For 22 of the indicators, the scoring takes into account the format that the data is provided in, depending on how accessible and comparable the information is. For example, data published in PDFs scores lower than data published in machine-readable formats (...). Data that is published in the most open, comparable format of IATI XML can score up to 100% for most indicators, depending on quality. More detail on scoring is provided below, with a full explanation provided in the technical paper*".

Elements to consider for measurement: Using the context section of the OECD glossary of terms, the following questions will need to be addressed:

- How can donors / the common standard make sure that the different datasets can still be **reliable** if combined in different ways and for various uses? How can this comparability be measured in an indicator?

- How to ensure that the datasets **can be cross-checked** with other datasets?

- How can the use of different **concepts/definitions (e.g. for each field) be managed over time** to allow for comparison across years?

Accessibility and usability

Elements of definition: According to the OECD glossary of terms, Accessibility is defined as: "The ease and the conditions with which statistical information can be obtained". Other relevant elements from the same glossary are: "*Accessibility refers to the **availability** of statistical information **to the user** (International Monetary Fund, "Data Quality Assessment Framework - DQAF - Glossary"). Accessibility includes **the ease** with which the existence of information can be ascertained, as well as **the suitability of the form** or **medium** through which the information can be accessed. The **cost** of the information may also be an aspect of accessibility for some users. (Statistics Canada, "Statistics Canada Quality Guidelines", 4th edition). In SDMX, "Accessibility of Documentation" refers to the availability of documentation of various aspects of the data (sources and methods documents) and the content of such documentation*".

"Usability" is not defined in the OECD statistical glossary of terms, so discussions will be needed as to what falls under "usability" or under "accessibility" as a dimension, or even whether these two dimensions can be merged. Indeed some of the usual understanding of "usability" overlaps with the definition given to "accessibility" in the OECD glossary of terms.

Elements to consider for measurement: Some of the questions that will help the measurement of these two dimensions in the context of Transparency are:

- **For whom** should the data be considered usable (only partner countries, other stakeholders, etc.)?

- What are their **goals** (defining the goals is key as data is sometimes usable only for a specific purpose - e.g. is the data fit for preparing the national budget?). Considering these goals, **what are the conditions that make the data usable**?

- **Where** should data be placed to be considered accessible? Is the fact that data is online make it accessible? Is the data considered accessible/usable if it is:
  - On each donor's website but not in a centralized place (for partner countries, the latter means going to all donors' websites to collect data)
  - In the CRS/FSS/IATI
  - In a defined electronic format
  - Specific IT skills are required to extract / use the data? Should easiness / user friendliness of data extraction be part of usability?

- Taking into account that too much data may be confusing, should data be presented in a prioritized way, as part of the accessibility / usability dimension?

Also, it is worth mentioning that some proposals were made during the consultation, and could be used in a new version of the indicator. For usability, as proposed by Honduras: *"Timeliness: Data starts (...) to be useful for partner countries when it is 3 month-old. In the time lag category, the scale should not ascend linearly, but rather exponentially: Annual Lag: 0, Semi-Annual Lag: 2, Quarterly Lag: 4, Monthly lag: 8. Level of Detail: Some fields are more important to Partner countries (e.g. Project's name, development objectives, expected results, financial information. Weights should be applied to each field and not scored on a yes/no basis. This will most likely necessitate wide consultations with data users and partner countries."*

Use of information

Elements of definition: This dimension intends to measure the extent to which the data is actually used.

Elements to consider for measurement: Discussions should determine whether the intended target for the data is only partner countries, or a broader range of stakeholders. It will be hard to measure this dimension without asking the intended user group whether they are using the information. However, it should be reminded that the assumption made in the context of the PBIG discussion was that "*the indicator should not involve the collection of new data at the country level*". The measurement of the "use of information" dimension would probably require revisiting this requirement.

Quality

The definition and ways of measurement on the "quality of data" will likely require some study and in-depth discussions. The work will need to take into account:

- A process already exists for CRS reporters, so this could be used for assessing this dimension [see DCD/DAC/STAT(2014)5]. This only covers DAC members and not the full global partnership constituency, so there will be a need to see how and if this process is applicable to other donors.

- IATI has started looking into the quality of data of the files provided by donors.

ANNEX 4: A NUMBER OF EXAMPLES OF DEFINITIONS FOR THE COMMON STANDARD

Four examples of definitions for the common standard are presented below:

- **Option 1: the common standard is "a standard list of fields" (e.g. the list of 41 fields indicated in DCD/DAC/EFF(2012)9), to be published by all donors on their activities regardless of the medium.**

  - "Full implementation" would then mean the provision of information for all of the fields of the common standard publically through whatever medium (website, CRS/FSS/IATI, etc.)

- **Option 2: the common standard is "a standard list of fields" together with "the provision of information to the three systems (FSS, CRS, and IATI)"**

  - "Full implementation" would then mean the provision of information for all of the fields of the common standard, and the participation and provision of information to the CRS/FSS/IATI)

- **Option 3: the common standard is "a list of fields", the provision of information to the "three systems" (FSS, CRS, IATI) of the common standard and "a specific electronic format of publication" (XML, CSV, etc.)**

  - "Full implementation" would then mean the provision of information for all of the fields of the common standard, the provision of information to the CRS/FSS/IATI and the publication of information in a machine-readable format that can be reused

- **Option 4:** "**a list of fields**" and "**an electronic format of publication**" (XML, CSV, etc.) but no obligation to provide this information through the CRS/FSS/IATI

  - "Full implementation" would then mean the provision of information for all of the fields of the common standard in a machine-readable format that can be reused, but without the obligation to use the CRS/FSS/IATI and the publication of information