

ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES
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BILATERAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS

Note by OECD

OBJET/SUBJECT: Request Made by the ACC Statistics Committee

This is an initial response to the request by the ACC Statistics Committee concerning information on bilateral technical assistance in statistics.

Historical

In the 1970s, the UN Statistical Office inaugurated a survey of technical assistance to statistics in developing countries provided by multilateral organisations and bilateral donors. The information provided by DAC Members was channelled to UN via the Reporting Systems Division of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate. I seem to remember that a short summary report was made to the DAC Working Party on Statistical Problems when the survey was first inaugurated, and will check my files.

Copies were made here of each country's 7 - 8 page questionnaire for roughly the decade the survey lasted but little or no use was made of them: any follow up with regard to co-ordination of activities in recipient countries during this period would have been by the UN Statistical Office. With the survey discontinued, the now out of date information was destroyed in an office move in 1992.

The national agencies polled were in all instances the correspondents reporting statistical information to the DAC. To my knowledge no replies were submitted by National Statistical Offices. I do not know if any were solicited.

Potential

Most aid to the statistical function in developing countries is recorded as technical co-operation in DAC statistics. The information on TC activities comes in annually in aggregate form. There is a purpose/sector classification but aid to statistics is not broken out separately in it.

Members also report their individual projects and activities in the Creditor Reporting System, but this is on a voluntary basis. In practice the CRS reports on technical co-operation cover on average 20% of total technical co-operation, ranging from zero % for many countries to 100% for some. I have asked for what information the CRS might contain on technical co-operation to statistics to be retrieved. There may be none!

In principle, it would be possible to modify the annual DAC forms to include a line item on technical co-operation to statistics. This would require prior consent by the Committee and would yield only aggregate \$ values. Nothing much could be expected from CRS reporting, since efforts in this system would be limited to exhortation.