The work of the Panel

International Development Sector Transparency Panel
Abercrombie House, East Kilbride
5th March 2015

Purpose of discussion

To give a brief overview of the Panel's previous work, and discuss its future direction.

The Panel's previous work
Terms of Reference

The Panel's Terms of Reference (ToRs) were agreed between members and DFID at the first meeting of the Panel. They can be viewed here on gov.uk.

As well as covering logistics, such as governance, the ToRs describe the objectives of the Panel, the scope of its work, and the key outputs which members and DFID envisaged the Panel working on.

Achievements
Working together, the Panel and DFID have made significant progress on a number of the key areas outlined in the ToRs. Highlights of these include:

Requiring suppliers to publish

The Panel have provided robust challenge to DFID's work to require our private-sector suppliers to publish to IATI. Members have encouraged us to make publication a contractual obligation for suppliers, to push transparency down the supply chain, and to make clear exactly which data we require to be published.

This feedback was incorporated into our rollout, and all new contracts now require suppliers, and their first-tier of sub-contractors, to publish to IATI. Additionally, forty of our top suppliers, and their immediate sub-contractors, will publish by the end of 2015 – representing approximately 80% of our 2013-14 procurement expenditure. We have also made clear which information should be published by establishing minimum requirements for our implementing partners.

The budget identifier

With guidance and challenge from the Panel, DFID has begun publishing IATI budget identifiers, which classify our expenditure according to a common set of budget types, for example the provision of health, education or social protection. This can be used by partner-country governments to automatically integrate IATI data into their own financial systems.

The Panel were clear that this work should be a priority internationally, and DFID could drive the agenda on this to ensure that the identifier meets partner governments' needs. We have sought to do this by working with Canada, Sweden, Publish What You Fund (PWYF) and the International Budget Partnership to test the identifier in pilots, presenting to the DAC to request further disaggregation of sector codes, and maintaining a highly active role in the IATI Technical Advisory Group.

The future of the Panel

With three new members joining the Panel, there is an exciting opportunity to consider how the Panel works, and whether it should broaden its work into other areas of transparency.

Some suggestions for discussion:

- To what extent should Panel members and DFID engage with one another, between meetings? What are the best ways to do this (e.g. Google apps?)
- How can the Panel and the Department extend our influence beyond DFID into the wider sector?
- Should the Panel continue to focus mainly on aid transparency, or consider broader development transparency?