Statement of Administrative Sources

In line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) this outlines the data requirements for Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend statistics published by the Department for International Development (DFID) in Statistics on International Development (SID).

Data Source

There are two main data sources used to compile SID;

They are:
- the 'ARIES' database, a financial management information system which records financial transactions relating to DFID expenditure and receipts, and comprises the bulk (over 70%) of information in the official statistics release;

- similar databases for other departments, which makes up the remainder of the information. For non-DFID departments, there is an assessment of whether their spend is in line with the OECD definitions of ODA. The non-DFID data is provided in a format that conforms with the international reporting standards of OECD DAC.

ARIES is also used by DFID staff for other internal and external purposes, such as managing projects or programmes and compiling financial accounts.

Cash and calendar year accounting for ODA
In contrast to the financial accounting information which uses resource accounting (see below non-statistical publication), ODA spend in ARIES is compiled on a cash basis in line with the international definition. This means spend on goods or services are recorded in the period they are actually paid for, and any payment receipts are recorded when they are received. Therefore, resource spend needs to be adjusted for any pre-payments or accruals. Another difference is that ODA is compiled over a calendar year (January – December) while the financial accounts measures financial year (April – March) spend.

When changes to ARIES are considered, statistical staff are consulted as part of the change management process. This ensures that any changes contemplated to ARIES take full account of the implications for ODA and Statistics on International Development.

There are currently no other administrative sources within DFID or in other departments which could be used to produce the National Statistics.

Collection

An extract of ARIES is imported to a separate statistical database for compiling ODA statistics and SID. Data in ARIES contains all the relevant information for DAC reporting, but needs to be re-mapped via the separate statistical database to conform with the international reporting standards of the OECD DAC. The non-DFID data is also added to complete the statistical database. The database is used by DFID statisticians to produce the UK's statistical returns to the OECD DAC and provides more detailed data used in the SID publication.

Access and dissemination to the statistical data

Within DFID, ARIES data is accessible by most of the organisation. The level of access that members of staff have depends on their grade and role. There are several different roles which are required for each project entered on ARIES, i.e. a project manager, a Senior Responsible Officer and a Quality Assurer.

ARIES has a management information reporting facility, called the Aid Management Platform (AMP), which is available to staff within DFID and allows users to access standard reports on an ad hoc basis. These standard reports have been quality assured by DFID statisticians and other staff within the Finance Performance a Department to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

DFID's [Development Tracker](#) makes ARIES data publicly available through the Gov.uk website. The public can view information on projects, including descriptions, sectors and budgets; all of which is taken from ARIES.

Statistics on International Development publishes the micro-data from ARIES, which is presented according to [OECD DAC](#) standards and definitions for ODA statistics reporting, and a dataset of DFID's gross public expenditure on development (GPEX), a broader measure of DFID's development assistance in a financial year, as supplementary information to SID.

Non-statistical publication
ARIES data is the basis of [DFID's Resource Accounts](#) and forward spending plans which are produced by DFID accountants and published in [DFIDs Annual Report](#).

The Resource Accounts are produced according to standard accounting rules GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) standards for Government Departments.

DFID annual report also includes results estimates, which provide progress on DFID's objectives set out in 2018 in its updated ['single departmental plan'](#) and are part of its Results Framework. Further details on the results estimates can be found [here](#).

Data Quality
The ARIES database is subject to operational and external checks. It provides financial information for DFID's Resource Accounts, which are prepared in line with Treasury guidance and audited annually by the National Audit Office. The financial information is inputted by spending teams, with some quality assurance carried out at entry and centrally by DFID statisticians to ensure it is in line with OECD definitions of ODA. The financial information is also subject to compliance checks as part of internal audit procedures. Statisticians also carry out periodic review exercises to ensure that ARIES remains fit for purpose for compiling the National Statistics. The OECD DAC provides external quality assurance of the statistical data to ensure that the information provided by DFID statisticians meet the statistical reporting requirements.

Security / data protection arrangements
Data is held on ARIES in accordance with our [Technology Strategy](#) and [Smart Rules](#), which set out guidance on how DFID staff should comply with the Data Protection Act and should handle confidential information. No confidential or sensitive information is extracted from ARIES to compile statistical publications. All statistical processing of the data for Statistics on International Development uses syntax for data outputs, which allows for clear validation of the work done.