Department for International Development (DFID) Revisions Policy

1. In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics the following sets out DFID’s approach to revisions of its official statistics. It covers scheduled revisions, unscheduled revisions including corrections, and other changes to DFID’s National Statistics.

2. DFID aims to avoid the need for unscheduled revisions to publications unless necessary and have put systems and processes in place to minimise their frequency, as described in Annex 4 of Statistics on International Development.

Scheduled revisions

3. DFID publishes provisional and final statistics about the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) the UK has provided as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) (the ODA:GNI ratio) for the previous calendar year in Statistics on International Development. The provisional statistics, released in the spring, include preliminary aggregate ODA data, which is requested at that time by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The final statistics, which are released in the autumn, include more complete disaggregated ODA data, and an ODA:GNI ratio based on a GNI estimate consistent with ONS’s Blue Book. These final ODA statistics are also reported to the DAC.

4. Once final estimates of UK ODA, including the ODA:GNI ratio, have been compiled and reported to the DAC, we do not schedule any further changes to the estimates and there should be no need to revisit the period covered by them during subsequent reporting cycles.

Gross National Income (GNI)

5. The releases of the ODA:GNI ratio use GNI estimates published in March for provisional, and in September for final. Estimates of GNI, used in the calculation of the ODA:GNI ratio, will continue to be revised in line with the ONS’s National Accounts Revision Policy. However, it is OECD DAC practice to use the GNI estimates provided during the reporting cycle, and not revisit the period covered by them during subsequent reporting cycles.

Unscheduled revisions, errors and corrections

6. Revisions can occur when information is received by a data supplier following publication, when no further publication was originally planned. For example, a late return can be supplied, missing the original publication deadline or when a data supplier notifies DFID that they have submitted incorrect information and resubmits this. In this case, a judgement will normally be made by the Chief Statistician or Head of Profession for Statistics as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a “revised” statistical release immediately.

7. As the timing of the final statistical release of ODA in the following autumn is designed to ensure that, as far as possible, any non-scheduled revisions have taken place, these revisions are not expected to occur regularly.
Errors in statistical systems and processes and corrections

8. Occasionally, errors will occur in our statistical processes. We do everything we can to minimise these errors and continually review processes and procedures to minimise this risk. These are non-scheduled revisions, and like 6. above, the Chief Statistician or Head of Profession for Statistics will decide on whether to correct and republish the figures immediately or wait for the next scheduled publication depending on the significance of the error found.

9. For unscheduled revisions, we will alert users immediately and issue a separate statement, explaining the nature, extent and handling of the change in the data in the statistical release.

Changes in statistical methodology or source systems

10. Where there are planned changes in statistical methods or source administrative systems, we will inform users in advance of any changes in methods through DFID’s Statistics webpage, and may consult users depending on the extent of the methodological change being proposed.

April 2019