

Gross Public Expenditure Statistics – Ceasing standalone publication and merging uses into ODA Statistics



Summary

This note sets out plans to discontinue the publication of the GPEX suite of tables due to (i) low public usage and (ii) being able to meet the main known needs by adding three pilot summary tables to Statistics on International Development (SID). This note also outlines a new approach in more detail and provides an opportunity for users to give feedback.

For 2020 spend and beyond, the ODA statistics team will review the pilot tables and measure their use and whether they need adapting for the new Government Department – Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. We will communicate this to users at the earliest opportunity.

Background

As part of the Statistics on International Development series, the ODA statistics team publishes Gross Public Expenditure Statistics (GPEX) each year. These cover expenditure by DFID in countries eligible to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as non-eligible countries. GPEX is reported on a financial year basis and covers gross flows.

It is different to the ODA statistics published in 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' for numerous reasons:

- GPEX only includes summary tables, while the ODA statistics provide a detailed programme level dataset.
- GPEX only covers gross expenditure, which means that loan repayments and equity reflows are excluded whilst the ODA statistics is a net measurement and captures these reflows.
- GPEX includes non-ODA eligible spend such as humanitarian assistance in countries not eligible to receive ODA (e.g. British Virgin Islands)
- The ODA statistics includes spend made by all UK Official ODA contributors (such as Department Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) while GPEX only includes DFID spend.
- GPEX covers the UK financial year while the ODA statistics covers the calendar year, in line with the international ODA definition.
- GPEX uses some variables which are specific to DFID (funding mechanism and DFID sector codes), while the ODA statistics are based on OECD DAC variables.

Known uses

The ODA Statistics team deal with a small number of queries on GPEX. The majority of these queries are from DFID staff. Following a consultation with DFID users and through other research, the main known uses of GPEX are:

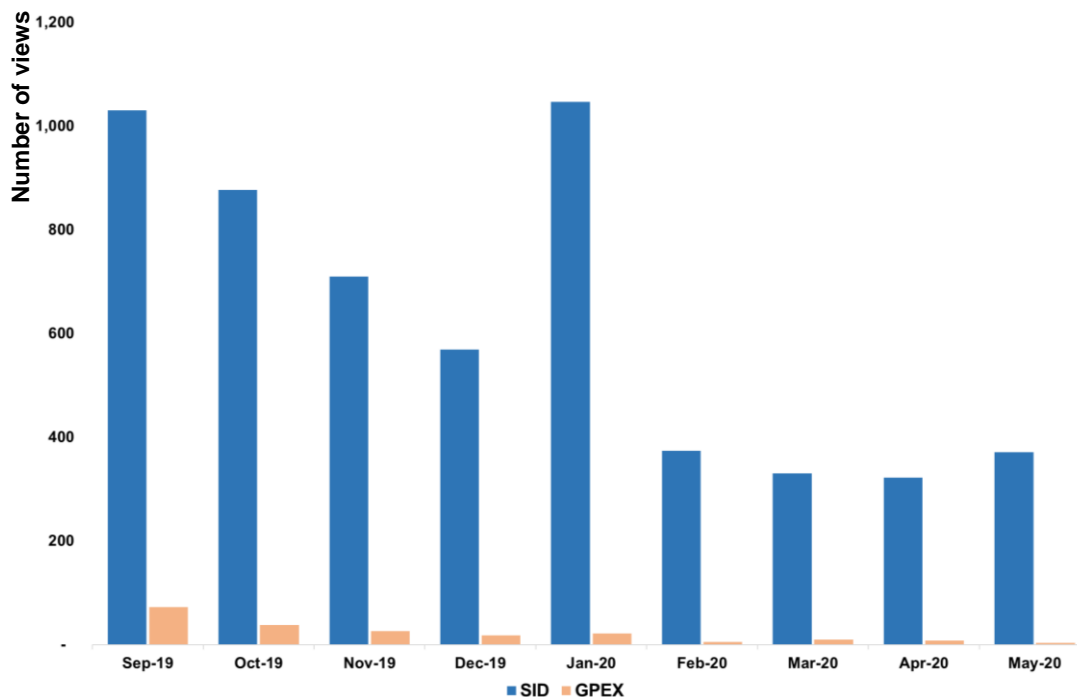
- To report DFID spend on Family Planning, including in the DFID Single Departmental Plan indicators and All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development & Reproductive Health Annual Report.
- Total spend involving Financial Aid

- DFID spend in non-ODA eligible countries

Evidence supporting decision to cease publication of GPEX statistics

- The process of collating, validating and finalising the GPEX data for publication is resource intensive for the statisticians yet it has a low number of downloads and known users. For instance, between January 2020 and June 2020, GPEX statistics have received 47 views on gov.uk compared to 2,444 views of ODA statistics. Ceasing the GPEX publication will free up valuable resource which can be used to improve the ODA statistics, for example by continuing to improve the openness of the dataset by interactive tools.
- In 2014, DFID ran a consultation on the Statistics on International Development series. There were specific questions on GPEX. Of the 38 respondents, ten (all of which were from the public sector) had used GPEX statistics; some of their answers suggested confusion between the ODA statistics and GPEX statistics and that for some of their needs would be met using ODA statistics.
- The statistics team consulted with the known DFID GPEX users in early 2020 and discussed how their data needs could be met by the ODA statistics publications. There was consensus that a set of pilot SID tables could achieve this (see New Approach section below).

Number of views by month – SID and GPEX: September 2019 to May 2020



New Approach

Following the publication 'Statistics on International Development (SID): Final Aid Spend 2019' we will pilot a new suite of ODA tables that incorporate the key uses of GPEX. There will be three new summary tables (all reported in calendar year, the international measure for ODA):

- DFID Bilateral ODA: by DFID sector code – 2019
- DFID Bilateral 'Financial Aid' ODA – 2019
- DFID spend to non-ODA eligible countries – 2019

There will be no publication of GPEX 2018-19 figures. Once the new tables have been published, we will seek users' feedback on the new suite of tables.

For 2020 spend and beyond, we will review the pilot tables and measure their use and whether they need adapting for the new Government Department – Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. We will communicate this to users at the earliest opportunity.

The below outlines how each known use of GPEX will be covered by the new approach.

<u>Current known reasons for using GPEX</u>	<u>How this is covered by new approach</u>
“GPEX sector codes are more detailed, in the SID there is only one code per programme”	Following a methodology change in “Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2017”, the SID now reports multiple input sector codes for programmes.
“GPEX gives DFID sector code breakdown”	We will be producing a new SID table that breaks down DFID bilateral ODA by DFID sector codes
“GPEX provides more information on financial aid”	SID currently covers General Budget Support and Sector Budget Support spend. We will be adding a financial aid table ¹ which will contain a ‘non-budget support financial aid’ ODA total.
“GPEX provides a financial year breakdown of DFID spend”	Users interested in DFID’s financial year spending should refer to the annual report.
“GPEX provides DFID spending in non-ODA eligible countries”	As part of the new suite of SID tables, we will produce a table that contains the calendar year spend to non-ODA eligible countries such as Gibraltar and Cyprus.

Timing and feedback

The new suite of tables will be published following the release “Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2019” in Winter 2020.

We are keen to receive users' thoughts and feedback on the approach before and after the release of the new suite of tables. Feedback can be submitted by emailing statistics@dfid.gov.uk

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¹Financial aid is divided into two main categories: Budget Support (BS) – an OECD DAC-defined term - where we finance a partner country’s budget through a transfer of resources to the partner government’s national treasury and ‘non-BS Financial Aid’ - a DFID-internal term - where we work in some way with the partner government and use their systems but the funding cannot be defined as ‘Budget Support’ according to the DAC definition.