

SID User Consultation Response

To ensure that DFID's National Statistics publication, Statistics on International Development (SID), continues to meet user needs, DFID ran a user engagement exercise during May – August 2014.

The objective of this user engagement was :

- To investigate user needs, building on the previous consultation run in 2012.
- To understand the use made of the statistics published within SID.
- Better understand the preferences of our users in terms of presentation and analysis of data
- Ensure that we effectively tested out ideas with users or improving the publication prior to its release.

Statisticians from DFID ran a Royal Statistical Society seminar on ways to improve DFID's aid statistics. In addition, an online survey was available to the public and was promoted on DFID's internal and external websites, social media, other statistics websites including statusernet, and directly via email to those who have shown a previous interest in SID.

As a result of the feedback received during this consultation, DFID are considering making some changes to SID in order to better meet user needs. These changes and the results of the online survey are summarised below.

Changes to the SID publication

The publication structure will change and will include more commentary and more analysis. Specific changes will include:

- Improved structure of the publication with more detailed analysis of regional and country breakdowns, sector breakdowns and official agencies.
- A new section on multilateral aid to give users more insight into the multilateral organisations that the UK funds.
- Improved graphics and data visualisation including maps.
- Refined data tables which more accurately support the commentary and analysis.
- A full ODA dataset will be released in CSV format and other formats so specialist users can analyse the microdata themselves.
- Hyperlinks to navigate between sections; reducing the size of the publication, to focus on key areas of analysis, and linking out to supporting annexes and guides; removing large tables from the publication and making available online; providing all tables in one Microsoft Excel workbook (as well as CSV versions).

Summary Results of the User Consultation Survey

The online survey had 38 responses. The majority of respondents were from the public sector, mainly government departments or agencies (Fig. 1), and half of all respondents were analysts (29%) or policy makers (21%). Those in the 'other' category worked in research, IT, parliament and information rights.

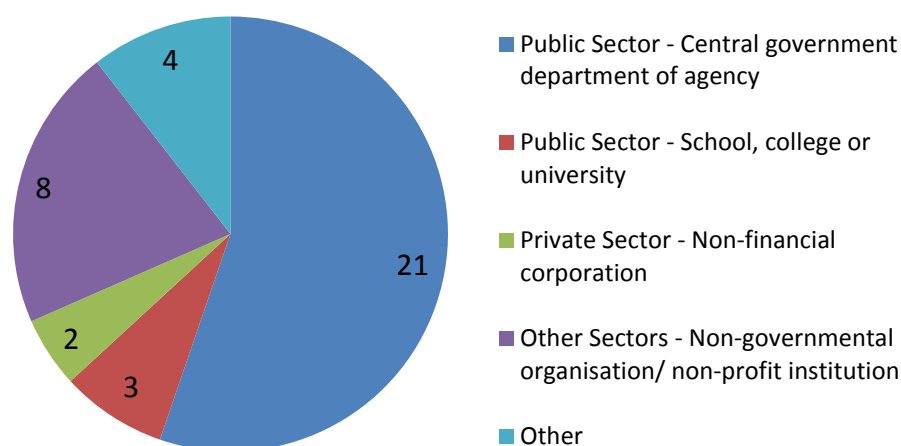


Figure 1. Number of survey respondents in each sector of work or study.

SID is most commonly used for general background information (71% of question respondents had used it for this); writing briefs, inclusion in reports, research and monitoring were other commonly reported uses. Three respondents had never used SID.

Eighteen respondents had not used any of the GPEX tables included in SID 2013, while only 10 respondents had used them. Of the respondents who had used them, 5 would still require GPEX if ODA was also presented by financial year. Reasons for this included the more detailed breakdown of DFID's spend and the non-ODA spend details provided by GPEX data.

Respondents were asked for suggestions of good data visualisation they would like to see in SID. Twelve respondents answered this question. Suggestions included presenting more data in a visual format in general, making better use of geographical data and maps, and using tree maps.

Of the 27 respondents who answered the question on the balance of information on UK aid versus international aid, 44% felt that the balance was right; 11% did not know if the balance was right; 22% felt there should be more information on UK aid spend; and 22% felt there should be more information on international aid spend.

Most (58%) respondents to the question on the balance of bilateral versus multilateral aid spend felt that the balance was right. However, of those who did not think the balance was right, there were more people who felt there should be more information provided on multilateral aid spend than people

who would like more information on bilateral aid spend (27% and 8% of those who answered the question respectively). Of the 21 respondents who answered the question of what type of statistics on multilaterals they would like to see published, 86% would like to see statistics on the funding DFID provides to multilaterals, 71% would like to see DFID multilateral results, and 57% would like to see total multilateral results.