

Are Foreign Donors Engaging in Effective Transparent Aid

Practice: Foreign Aid and Best Practices

by

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Abstract:

I seek to understand whether foreign aid donors are meeting their own commitments and engaging in effective transparent best aid practices. As arguably the most important measure of best practices, transparency allows public access into the activity of foreign aid donors. Without transparency, there is little chance for donor accountability. I evaluate 82 foreign aid agencies on transparency by creating two indices. I use 2018 data from the Organization of Economic Co-operation Corporation (OECD) reporting system for a first index and hand-collected overhead costs from each agency's annual reports as a second index. Overall, my results indicate that donors are not meeting their transparency best aid practice commitments and they have become worse over time. Donors were found to be more transparent when reporting to the OECD than with reporting their overhead costs. Multilateral donors ranked the highest in transparency measures and have improved since 2004, while Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors have worsened. Available data from 2012, also suggest that although non-DAC donors have improved over time, they continue to be the worst performers on transparency. The top performing donors include DAC bilateral donors: Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom; in addition to multilateral agencies: Asian Development Bank, Global Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, IMF, Nordic Development Bank, OPEC Fund, UN-International Fund for Agricultural Development, and UNRWA. Bottom performers were non-DAC donors, Mexico, Hungary, Chile, China, Brazil and Thailand and multilateral agencies UN Women and UN Democracy Fund. DAC donor Slovenia also performed poorly.

Section 1 Introduction:

There is a continuous debate among scholars over the effectiveness of foreign aid as well as research within the aid community which challenges whether foreign aid donors adhere to their own ‘best aid practices.’ Foreign aid can be described as resources or assistance transferred from a country or a group of countries to another, and best practices refer to a set of guidelines that are believed to be the most effective means of giving foreign aid. The reason scholars and the aid community focus on best aid practices among donors is because there is some agreement that recipient countries are better off when aid donors engage in best aid practices. There are several different areas of best aid practices, but transparent aid is arguably the most important because any best aid practices monitoring is not possible without first having transparency of aid. Therefore, without transparency, there is little chance for donor accountability.

I compile a dataset consisting of current transparency best practice data among aid donors giving official development assistance and evaluate whether foreign aid donors have improved their transparency overtime.

Official development assistance is a type of foreign aid which is distributed for the purposes of economic development and usually consists of grants, loans, or other financial transfers, though not all development aid donors grant aid in this manner. I follow the methodology that was established in Easterly & Pfutze (2008), Easterly & Williamson (2011) and Palagashvili & Williamson (2020) in assessing donors on transparency. Because I use the same methodology from previous years, I can track how transparency has changed over time (from 2004-2018). I create two indices of transparency. I use 2018 data from the Organization of Economic Co-operation Corporation (OECD) reporting system for a first index and 2018 hand-collected overhead costs from each agency’s annual reports as a second index

I evaluate 82 foreign aid agencies on transparency by creating two indices. Overall, my results indicate that donors are not meeting their transparency best aid practice commitments and they have become worse over time. Donors were found to be more transparent when reporting to the OECD than with reporting their overhead costs. Multilateral donors ranked the highest in transparency measures and have improved since 2004, while Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors have worsened. Available data from 2012, also suggest that although non-DAC donors have improved over time, they continue to be the worst performers on transparency. The top performing donors include DAC bilateral donors: Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom; in addition to multilateral agencies: Asian Development Bank, Global Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, IMF, Nordic Development Bank, OPEC Fund, UN-International Fund for Agricultural Development, and UNRWA. Bottom performers were non-DAC donors, Mexico, Hungary, Chile, China, Brazil and Thailand and multilateral agencies UN Women and UN Democracy Fund. DAC donor Slovenia also performed poorly.

Section 2 Literature Review:

Globally with over 100 billion spent on foreign assistance annually, one would expect the ability to somewhat easily identify how funding is allocated, given the practice of supplying foreign aid has been a concerted effort among donors for several decades. An abundance of evidence to the contrary exists as there is mounting research that analyzes how practices of donor countries are not the most effective and may continue to make countries worse off.

One problem in donor aid practices is that aid does not always go to countries that are the least well-off, and instead aid can be used in a more political manner. The public consensus within certain wealthy donor countries like the United States, perceives most foreign aid

beneficiaries to be poorer recipient nations whose populations suffer abject poverty and depend on foreign assistance, which influences public opinion in the direction of the need for less foreign aid. While it is true that many recipient nations that receive foreign aid are extremely poor, there are recipients whom regardless of wealth, are supplied aid in exchange for what wealthier donors find value in. Frot et al., (2013) examines the motivating factors behind aid to Central and Eastern European countries. (CEEC), and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) during and after the cold war. They find that donors were more willing to supply aid to countries that aligned with their commercial and political interests as communism collapsed and these countries entered market economies. The realist perspective and liberal idealist perspective aid regimes are examined to determine their effectiveness in contributing to the development in CEEC and CIS recipient countries. Countries pursuing strategic interests in line with military and commercial empowerment partnered with countries that could offer that in exchange for foreign aid and were associated with the realist perspective. The liberal idealist perspective corresponds to “humane internationalism” in which donor countries supply aid based on domestic policy, with consideration to institutional atmosphere, political environment, and special interests of the donor country, suggesting the liberal idealist perspective is more recipient focused. Donor preference which favored the realist perspective also resulted in increased fragmentation of aid due to donors partnering with countries who can offer something in exchange for aid, suggesting that effective aid depends on donor incentives. In another paper, Kuziemko and Werker et al., (2006) also finds similarly that donor countries such as the United States were allocating aid for political reasons. They find that donor countries attempt to influence UN Security Council votes with both direct foreign aid payments or with funds that are processed through a U.N. agency.

The problem of aid being used for geopolitical reasons has been a big part of the launch for assessing donor countries on “best aid practices,” and also in particular to push for transparency of aid so that there can be assessment of donor aid practices. The most comprehensive approach first taken by Easterly & Pfutze, (2008), examines the aid distribution parameters which donors themselves have expressed to be the most effective means of supplying foreign aid. The authors found that donors overall performed terribly on almost all indicators of best practices except for the performance of development banks. These best practices included: transparency, overhead costs, specialization, selectivity of aid, and ineffective aid channels. The authors examined donor transparency because it is not possible to monitor donors if they cannot get access to interpretable data in order to hold agencies accountable. Overhead costs are also important because if they are too high, it could mean that agencies are spending more money on salaries than disbursing aid. Specialization is also analyzed, which focuses donors’ efforts to concentrate their aid, so that it is not fragmented among too many recipients, and that donor’s efforts coordinate so as not duplicate projects in countries that can make transaction costs for recipients in poorer nations burdensome. Selectivity was measured to ensure that aid averted countries with corrupt or autocratic leadership, and ineffective aid channels such as tied aid and food aid were studied as well because those channels make recipient countries worse off.

Following the same methodology, Easterly and Williamson, (2011) assessed donors on those same best practices using 2008 data. They found that even though donor groups increased their rhetoric on engaging in best aid practices on those five areas, they have in fact become worse off. They found that UN groups, although they are some of the most vocal about best aid practices, they tended to be the worst performing groups. They also found that most aid donors are getting better with aid transparency and moving away from ineffective aid channels, but there

is no improvement, and sometimes getting worse, with aid specialization, selectivity, and overhead costs. Palagashvili and Williamson (2020) also followed the same methodology on best aid practices and used data from 2012. They found that donors are getting slightly better, but they continue to fail to meet their own standards. Unlike the previous study, Palagashvili and Williamson (2020) find that UN agencies began to perform better. The best performing groups were UN and other multilateral agencies, while the worse performing groups were the DAC members of the OECD. Palagashvili and Williamson (2021) also assess best aid practices using 2012 data following the same methodology, but they include non-DAC donors (donors who are outside of the official Development Assistance Committee) in order compare them to DAC donors. They find that both DAC and non-DAC donors do not differ significantly in best aid practices, and both groups are bad performers when compared to multilateral agencies.

Several other scholars embarked on assessing best aid practices but used slightly different criterion and methodology. Birdsall et al., (2011) constructed a quality of ODA assessment (QuODA), using country-programmable aid (CPA) to the exclusion of aid that is not programmable, such as humanitarian aid, donor awareness programs, administrative costs, reorganization, and debt relief. CPA comprises aid that is intended for long term development and is “programmable at the partner country level” (pp.4). It is then analyzed against four dimensions: maximizing efficiency, fostering institutions, reducing burden, and transparency and learning. Maximizing efficiency measures whether aid allocation has contributed to reducing poverty in recipient countries. Fostering institutions aids in the strengthening of the recipient countries institutional structure by utilizing it, such as with using a recipient’s public financial management system or engagement that enhances their institutions. Reducing burden means that donors give aid in a way that does not increase transaction costs for the recipient. Measuring

transparency and learning not only provides insight into donor activity, but donors can be held to account for the implementation and development of more effective procedures to replace ineffective procedures upon learning of them. The study finds that none of the donors assessed outperform each other in terms of transparency. Greece, Switzerland, and The United States rank in the bottom 10 in the four dimensions of measuring aid as well as “foreign affairs ministries perform poorly on all measures.” Multilateral agencies do not perform well on transparency and learning, perhaps due to lack of sufficient pressure from stakeholders and their own governments. However, they do rank higher on maximizing efficiency, where they outperform bilateral agencies in specialization and fostering institutions, in which multilaterals supply higher levels of country-programmable disbursements to recipients. In sum, multilateral agencies tend to perform better in specializing in sectors where they have comparative advantage. However, aid is still fragmented, with donor agencies frequently disbursing small sums of aid, across many recipients.

Knack et al., (2011) follow closely the principles of the 2005 Paris Declaration by using indicators such as selectivity, aid alignment, harmonization, and specialization. Selectivity measures the aid that is disbursed to poorer countries as well as aid that is allocated to countries with good governance; aid alignment measures “donor’s alignment with recipient countries’ policies and systems,” (Knack et al., 2011). For example, a donor aligns aid with a recipient country if the donor uses the recipient’s public financial management systems, provides aid that is predictable, untied, and aid which coordinates “technical assistance with national development strategies” Knack et al., (2011). Harmonization also supports recipient institutions and environments by simplifying procedures. Ideally, donors would disburse aid in a manner that lessens the recipient’s transaction costs associated with aid allocation by administering aid using

program-based approaches, --a method of implementing projects in recipient countries.

Specialization measures the geographic concentration of aid, given that many donors fragment aid across multiple sectors and projects, exhausting recipient country systems.

The results from the study indicate that multilateral agencies are found to align with recipients in that they do not tie aid, as well as these agencies are more selective and perform better at specializing aid. DAC bilateral country, Denmark, ranks highly in all measures except aid specialization and the U.S surprisingly performs well on selectivity and alignment measures. Caution should be used in interpreting the alignment results given some countries underreport or partially report aid tying, which is consistent with the Easterly (2007) research that finds donors with high amounts of tied aid in the past tend to not report or underreport aid tying directly in response to the results of previous studies. Finally, with the exception of Denmark and Ireland, bilateral agencies tend to rank low on the measure of harmonization.

Knack et al., (2011) has similarities with Birdsall et al., (2011) and methodology employed by Easterly. Similar to Easterly, Knack et al. uses specialization and selectivity as their main indicators. Knack et al., (2011) and Birdsall et al., (2011) also both focus on the use of recipient countries' systems and reducing recipient's burden through coordinative efforts as a means of effective aid allocation, as well as project aid for long term development. Both studies also utilized sub-indices to organize their research and found that multilateral agencies are more likely to specialize and are selective when allocating aid.

The UK's Department for International Development also has a biennial index that measures the performance of multilateral partners. The DFID (2016) report finds that although multilaterals have implemented internal costs procedures, improvements still need to be made regarding administrative costs --described as back-office functions within their report. The need

for “stricter controls of daily allowances, travel expenses, and pay level of senior level staff and board” was also specified. Multilateral agencies are found to prioritize “grants and cheap funding” to the poorest nations, reinforcing other studies that find that multilaterals tend to be selective in giving aid to the poorest recipients. Technical assistance implementation based on need remains less clear. DFID’s measure of transparency and accountability assess agency performance based on global aid transparency standards and accountability to partner countries. They find most agencies assessed to be “transparent across their operations” and accountable to partners in the use of client surveys and “beneficiary feedback mechanisms.”

Other papers on best practices choose to focus on one best practice and evaluate aid all on that one. For example, Dollar and Levin, (2006) measure from 1984-2002, how bilateral and multilateral donors fare on policy and poverty selectivity, which means how much donors give aid based on the well-functioning institutions of recipient nations and to nations that are poor. Agencies that were inclined to be selective based on policy were also shown to be selective on poverty. While a direct relationship between the volume of aid disbursed and the growth of a recipient country has not been identified, aid is more effective in countries that have strong institutions. According to the study, no meaningful data could be gathered on this measure during aid years 1984-1989, as during that time, foreign aid was not shown to be supplied using selectivity, especially as it relates to policy. Improvements during the 1990s revealed positive relationships with donors and recipients with strong governments. Multilaterals tend to be more selective than bilateral agencies, and the largest distributors of foreign aid were the least selective, with Japan being selective as it relates to policy and not poverty and the U.S and France needing improvement in both. Bilateral agencies donors like Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, and the Netherland rank high in both measures of selectivity, however.

Ghosh and Kharas (2011) studied specifically the best practice of transparency and created an index for measuring the culture of transparency among donors. The study finds that being a member of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is indicative of donor transparency, as IATI members ranked higher on the measures. One of their other findings is that as aid projects grow annually, the size of aid appeared to decrease. In 2007, there were 79, 875 new aid projects by DAC bilateral donors,” with the median size of each project being \$83,267. Increased activity requires increased visibility given donors are less likely to be held accountable for wasteful aid such as with fragmentation. In this instance, donors may look charitable because they have supplied aid to a recipient, but that aid can be absorbed into transaction costs that could be equivalent to receiving no aid at all. Additionally, without access to donor activity, donors blindly establish projects in absence of coordinative efforts from donors seeking to establish the same types of projects. Lack of transparency also skews public perception as the case with the United States, where 71 percent of the Americans who were surveyed had incorrectly approximated that 25 percent of the U.S. budget is devoted to foreign aid assistance when foreign aid actually comprises 1 percent. The misconception about aid size increases public demand for less aid in a complicated landscape of mix results.

Overall, many of the studies find that while there are some improvements on specific best practices, such as transparency, most donors are still not meeting their own best practices commitment. Easterly (2007) provided an extensive analysis over a long period of time that examined the trends in aid agency performance from 1960-2003 and finds that over time aid agencies have failed to improve their best aid practices. While there has been a slight decrease in food and tied aid, the results for tying aid is at best inconclusive, given that donors who perform poorly on this measure, stop reporting aid. The United States, one of the largest donors

of aid was found to have extremely high amounts of tied aid in 1996 and responded to this finding by reporting less of their tied aid around the time of the study. This makes the “positive results that show decreased aid tying incomplete,” and indicative of the lack of transparency that would highlight unfavorable and ineffective practices. Donors have also shown a tendency to engage with corrupt recipients. In other words, regardless of corruption, donors were found to give aid to their allies during the cold war. Higher fragmentation occurred in countries with low quality bureaucratic institutions and support the finding that aid did not correspond to policy selectivity. As well, donors wanting to be seen “planting their flags,” disregard existing high levels of fragmentation that result in high administrative costs to their own agencies and recipients. Donors neither elected to give aid based on poverty.

Another set of foreign aid best practices papers are not only analysing traditional donors (members of the DAC committee), but also emerging donors such as China, India, Brazil, and Russia (known as non-DAC donors). Walz & Ramachandran, (2014) discuss and analyze foreign aid donorship from emerging donors who were estimated to have given between 8-31 percent of all gross development assistance at the time of the study –roughly between 11-41.7 billion dollars. Development assistance from non-DAC donors is not a new phenomenon given that many “emerging” donors have distributed aid for decades. Donors who participated in the 1955 Bandung Conference committed to providing technical assistance and foster economic growth among each other with participants of the South-south cooperation doing the same. Non-DAC donors supply large sums of aid but due to lack of transparency and inconsistent reporting, disbursements quantities from donors like China prove difficult to interpret. Specifically, China does not classify their disbursements as foreign aid. In addition, there are no established criteria that emerging donors follow, and many non-DAC donors who are still DAC recipients tend to

have high poverty levels within their country, which spawns concerns from DAC donors about the purpose of emerging donors' development assistance. For example, Brazil had estimates between \$356-4000 million in foreign aid outflows, while receiving, \$338 million the same year. Three distinct models of giving aid are also examined, the Arab model, DAC model and Southern model. Donors who follow the DAC model still report aid, but inconsistently to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. They are also familiar with DAC reporting requirements. Arab model donors tend to concentrate aid in neighboring regions or with partners who share religious and cultural similarities, providing up to 75 percent of aid to Middle East North African Regions. Countries using the South-South model such as Brazil or Venezuela, provide aid based on their mutual interests with countries equal in status. More specifically, South-South donors regard each other as having equal levels of expertise and therefore refer to themselves as development partners and not recipients. Another analysis of Non-DAC donors was done with more recent data by Asmus et al. (2020), and the study found similar findings in terms of differences between non-DAC donors. It also found that the non-DAC BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) donors were giving aid for more commercial interests rather than for development reasons—thereby strengthening this idea that some non-DAC donors see themselves as development partners rather than donor-recipient. The divergence from the DAC model shows a shift away from traditional means of supplying aid into methods deemed appropriate by region. It is much less clear with the divide in procedures how DAC and non-DAC countries can unify under a common reporting standard.

There are several other papers that analyze the non-DAC donors and most of them find that non-DAC donors may not be very different from DAC donors in terms of best aid practices related to selectivity. Both Dreher and Fuchs (2015) and Dreher et al. (2011) find that, overall,

both types of donors will give aid based on geopolitical or other “self-interest” considerations and ignore best-aid practices of selecting countries for need or for good institutions. However, both of those papers do find that though non-DAC donors are far worse in transparency than DAC donors. Similarly, a paper that analyzed Brazil’s best aid practices found that Brazil had very low levels of transparency and gave aid to countries that were corrupt (Semrau and Thiele 2017). Another paper that analyzed non-DAC donor India found that India does perform worse in terms of giving aid for geopolitical or self-interest reasons than do traditional DAC-donors (Fuchs and Vadlamannati). Overall, the research on non-DAC suggests that they give aid more for commercial interests, they are less transparent, and that similar to many DAC donors, they are not selective in their aid giving—meaning they continue to give aid to corrupt countries.

Section 3 Methodology & Data

I first collect a list of foreign aid agencies by consulting Aid Data and the OECD. Then I use both hand-collected 2018 data and data from the OECD to create an overhead costs index as well as an OECD reporting index to monitor the transparency of donors. An index allows me to compile data into a single metric for the purposes of tracking and measuring particular indicators. Donors are then ranked based on the data obtained from these indices. In total, I was able to find 82 donors consisting of 28 DAC agencies, 22 non-DAC agencies, 19 multilateral agencies (excluding UN agencies), and 13 UN agencies. In Appendix Table 1, there is a list of all donors included in this dataset.

The data is collected at the agency level and the aggregate the scores to the country level. This means that if a country has three different agencies, I aggregate the country’s score based

on a simple average of the scores of the three agencies in that country. In the sub-section below, I present how the data is collected.

OECD Reporting Index:

International Development Statistics (IDS) provided by the OECD were consulted to determine whether bilateral agencies reported to any of the any of the following five OECD tables:

1. Credit Reporting System – All Commitments
2. Credit Reporting System – Gross Disbursements
3. Total Official Flows
4. Official and Private Flows
5. Aid Tying Status

For multilateral and UN agencies, IDS data was consulted to establish whether donors reported to one of three OECD tables:

1. Credit Reporting System – All Commitments
2. Credit Reporting System – Gross Disbursements
3. Total Official Flows

A score of 1 was given if a bilateral agency reports to each of the five OECD tables: 1) CRS –All Commitments, 2) CRS –Gross Disbursements, 3) Total Official Flows, 4) Official and Private Flows, 5). Aid Tying Status. If an agency did not report to a table, a score of 0 is given for that table, and if an agency reports to table, a score of 1 is given for that table. Similarly, a score of 1 is given to multilateral and UN agencies that report to each table, and score of 0 is given for each table they do not report to. The OECD tables for multilateral and UN agencies are as follows: 1)

CRS –All Commitments, 2) CRS –Gross Disbursements, 3) Total Official Flows. An “OECD Reporting Index” is created by taking an average of all five tables for bilateral and all three tables for multilateral and UN agencies.

Overhead Costs Reporting Index

An Overhead Costs Reporting Index was created using the 2018 hand-collected overhead. Aid agencies were categorized into DAC bilateral, non-DAC bilateral, and multilateral agencies and annual reports were consulted for the following information:

- Number of permanent international staff
- Administrative Expenses
- Salary & benefits
- Official development assistance –or— official development financing

Once all agency data has been gathered, a score of 1 is given to each piece of information that the donor provides and score of 0 is given for each piece of missing information. I then take an average across all four overhead cost information to create an “Overhead Cost Reporting Index” An overall score of 1 is given to agencies where all four categories were found (number of permanent international staff, administrative expenses, salaries and benefits and official development). A score of 0 is given to agencies if no information is obtained from the annual reports or their websites.

Lastly, I create the Overall Transparency Index was then created using the averages of the Overhead Cost Index and the OECD Reporting Index to rank each donor relative to other donors’ performances, to compare agencies for transparency.

Section 4 Results:

As shown in Table 1 below, across all donors, transparency averaged at .60. Donors were found to be more transparent with OECD Reporting than with Overhead Costs Reporting. With an average of 0.71 multilateral donors, excluding UN agencies, ranked the highest and most transparent out of the donor groups. Non-DAC donors rank the lowest with an average index score of 0.36. All individual agency calculations are available in the appendix: Appendix Table with the OECD Reporting Index, Table 3 with the Overhead Costs Index, and the Table 4 with the Overall Transparency Index. As shown in Appendix Table 4, the top performing individual donors include, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Asian Development Bank, Global Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, IMF, Nordic Development Bank, OPEC Fund, UN - IFAD, and UNRWA. Bottom performers were Mexico, Hungary, Chile, China, Brazil, and Slovenia, UN Women, UNDEF, and Thailand.

Table 1: Overall Transparency Index by type of Donor Agency

Donor	OECD Reporting	Overhead	Average Index
DAC- Bilateral Agencies	0.94	0.39	0.66
Non-DAC Bilateral Agencies	0.49	0.23	0.36
Multilateral Agencies (without UN)	0.72	0.71	0.71
UN Average	0.69	0.66	0.67
<i>All Donors</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>0.50</i>	<i>0.60</i>

Non-DAC donors Kuwait, South Africa and Taiwan’s International Cooperation and Fund are exceptions to the among their group with full transparency scores of 1, as many do not report their overhead costs. Other donors such as Israel, Saudi Arabia and The United Arab Emirates report overhead cost information but could use significant improvement in transparency, with scores ranging from 0.25-0.50.

The United States received an overhead transparency score of 0 for two of its bilateral agencies. The United States’ Millennium Challenge, and African Development Foundation are examples of less transparent donors with zero transparency score. Given the United States supplies the most aid globally, readily accessible aid information, can give a more accurate depiction of aid size.

The OECD Reporting scores of DAC bilateral donors in comparison with their Overhead Cost Reporting scores indicate that DAC agencies are capable of being more transparent. The overall transparency score of DAC donors is lowered by their lack of transparency in reporting overhead costs to their annual reports. However, DAC bilateral donors are more transparent when reporting to the OECD with a score of 0.94, versus an Overhead Cost Reporting score of 0.39.

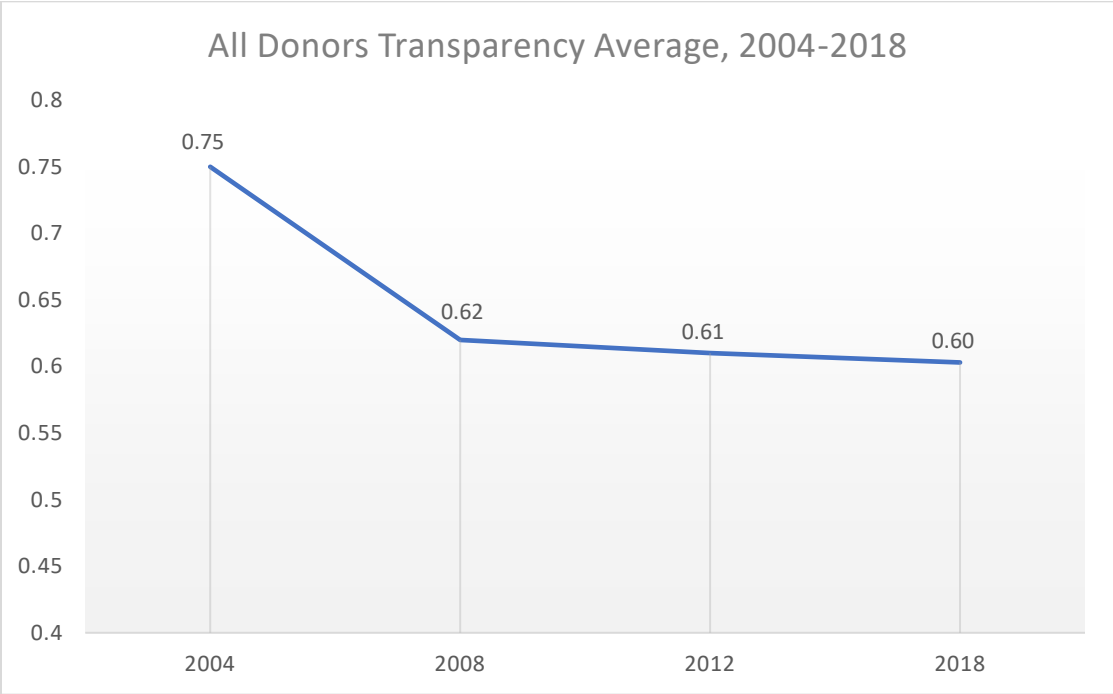
Table 2 and Figure 1 below shows average transparency scores over time by donor type since 2004. Since 2004, overall donor transparency has declined, falling from an average index score of .75. DAC bilateral donors specifically have become worse over time, while multilaterals have consistently improved. Non-DAC agencies, for which data is only available for 2012 onward have also improved since then. The main takeaway is that DAC bilateral donors have become less transparent, despite rhetoric that supports the need for greater transparency. It remains unclear why they have moved backwards in their reporting.

Table 2: TRANSPARENCY AVERAGE BY DONOR TYPE OVER TIME:

DONOR TRANSPARENCY BY TYPE OVER TIME	2004	2008	2012	2018
DAC Bilateral	0.82	0.72	0.76	0.66215517

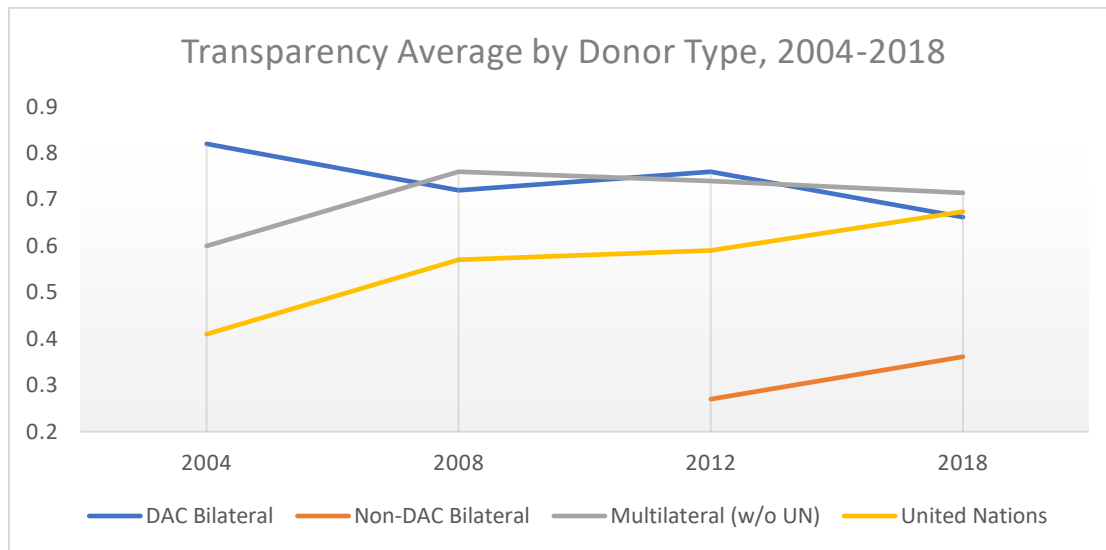
Non-DAC Bilateral			0.27	0.36141304
Multilateral (w/o UN)	0.6	0.76	0.74	0.714625
United Nations	0.41	0.57	0.59	0.67392763
All donors	0.75	0.62	0.61	0.60

Figure 1: All Donors Transparency Average, 2004-2008



Multilateral donors who rank the highest in terms of transparency in this study, have improved from an average of 0.60 in 2004 to 0.71 in 2018 and have remained consistent over time. The multilateral group has the highest number of donors whose scores indicate that they are fully transparent, such as Asian Development Bank, Global Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, Nordic Development Fund, OPEC Fund; and UN agencies: International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Figure 3 below also shows the Transparency Average by donor type, 2004-2018.

Figure 2: Transparency Average by Donor Type, 2004-2018



Conclusion:

The results from this research suggest that donors still need to improve upon being transparent as donors are still not meeting transparency goals. Transparent reporting remains the only way the aid community and the general public access information concerning official development aid flows. DAC donors, who are usually the most vocal about being transparent, have gotten worse with transparency over time. The ability to access and assess the quality and relevance of the aid data allows for ineffective practices to be discovered and corrected. Multilateral donors, who outrank other donor groups in terms of transparency have shown improvement over time. Since 2004, the average transparency index score for multilaterals increased from .60 in 2004 to .71 in 2018. It appears that multilaterals display a better understanding of transparency measures as the best performers. The exceptions to this study are DAC bilateral donors who ranked high on transparency in this research are Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, however. Perhaps both DAC donors and non-DAC donors

need to clarify their criteria and understanding of transparency, so that these agencies supply more uniform data.

Though the transparency index itself is not standardized, that this research has been reproduced many times, gives insight into changes in donor transparency practices across different time periods.

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Appendix

Table 1: List of All Donor Agencies

DAC BILATERAL AGENCIES	NON-DAC BILATERAL AGENCIES
Australia	Azerbaijan
Austria	Bulgaria
Belgium	Brazil
Canada	Chile
Czech Republic	China
Denmark	Cyprus
European Commission	Estonia
Finland	Hungary
France	Israel
Germany	Kazakhstan
Greece	Kuwait
Iceland	Latvia
Ireland	Liechtenstein
Italy	Lithuania
Japan	Malta
Korea	Mexico
Luxembourg	Romania

Netherlands	South Africa
New Zealand	Saudi Arabia
Norway	Taiwan (Chines Taipei)
Poland	Thailand
Portugal	Turkey
Slovak Republic	United Arab Emirates (ADFD)
Slovenia	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
UK	
USA	
MULTILATERAL AGENCIES	UN AGENCIES:
African Development Bank	IFAD (Int. Fund for Ag. Dev)- UN
Asian Development Bank	UNAIDS
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development	UNDEF
Andean Development Corporation	UNDP
Caribbean Development Bank	UNFPA
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	UNHCR
Food and Agriculture Organization	UNICEF

GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance	UNIDO
Global Environment Facility	UNOPS
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery	UNPBF
Global Fund	UNRWA
International Bank of Reconstruction and Development & International Development Association	UNWomen
Inter-American Development Bank	WFP
International Finance Cooperation	WHO
International Monetary Fund (SAF,ESAF,PRGF)	
Islamic Development Bank	
North American Development Bank	
Nordic Development Fund	
OPEC Fund	
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	

Appendix Table 2: OECD Reporting

DONOR	All Commitments (CRS)	Disbursements (CRS)	Total Official Flows	Official and Private Flows DAC Table 1	Tying Status of Bilateral ODA DAC Table 7b	OECD Index
DAC						
Australia	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Austria	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Belgium	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Canada	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Czech Republic	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Denmark	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Finland	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
France	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Germany	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Greece	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Hungary	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Iceland	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Ireland	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Italy	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Japan	1	1.000	1	1	1	1

Korea	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Netherlands	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
New Zealand	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Norway	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Poland	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Portugal	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Slovak Republic	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Slovenia	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Spain	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Sweden	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
United Kingdom	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
United States	1	1.000	1	1	1	1
NON-DAC						
Azerbaijan	1	1	1	0		0.75
Bulgaria	0	1	1	0		0.5
Croatia	1	1	1	0		0.75

Cyprus	0	1	1	0		0.5
Estonia	1	1	1	0		0.75
Israel	0	1	1	0		0.5
Kazakhstan	1	1	1	0		0.75
Kuwait	1	1	1	0		0.75
Latvia	1	1	1	0		0.75
Liechtenstein	0	1	1	0		0.5
Lithuania	1	1	1	0		0.75
Malta	0	1	1	0		0.5
Qatar	0	0	0	0		0
Romania	1	1	1	0		0.75
Russia	0	1	1	0		0.5
Saudi Arabia	1	1	1	0		0.75
Chinese Taipei	0	1	1	0		0.5
Thailand	0	1	1	0		0.5
Timor-Leste	0	0	0	0		0
Turkey	1	1	1	1		1
United Arab Emirates	1	1	1	0		0.75

MULTILATERAL DONOR	All Commitments (CRS)	Disbursements (CRS)	Total Official Flows	OECD Index
EU Institutions	1.000	1	1	1.000
IMF (Concessional Trust Funds)	1.000	1	1	1.000
African Development Bank [AfDB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
African Development Fund [AfDF]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Asian Development Bank [AsDB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Inter-American Development Bank [IDB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [AIIB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Caribbean Development Bank [CarDB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Council of Europe Development Bank [CEB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Islamic Development Bank [IsDB]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO]	0.000	1	1	0.667
International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA]	0.000	1	1	0.667
IFAD	1.000	1	1	1.000
International Labour Organisation [ILO]	1.000	1	1	1.000
UNAIDS	1.000	1	1	1.000
UNDP	1.000	1	1	1.000
UNECE	0.000	0	0	0.000

UNEP	0.000	0	0	0.000
UNFPA	0.000	1	1	0.667
UNHCR	1.000	1	1	1.000
UNICEF	1.000	1	1	1.000
UN Institute for Disarmament Research [UNIDIR]	0.000	0	0	0.000
UN Peacebuilding Fund [UNPBF]	0.000	1	1	0.667
UNRWA	1.000	1	1	1.000
WFP	0.000	1	1	0.667
World Health Organisation [WHO]	1.000	1	1	1.000
World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO]	0.000	1	1	0.667
World Bank Group, Total	1.000	1	1	1.000
World Bank, Total	1.000	1	1	1.000
International Development Association [IDA]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Other Multilateral, Total	1.000	1	1	1.000
Adaptation Fund	1.000	1	1	1.000
Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa [BADEA]	0.000	1	0	0.333
Arab Fund (AFESD)	1.000	1	1	1.000
Center of Excellence in Finance [CEF]	1.000	1	1	1.000

Central Emergency Response Fund [CERF]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Climate Investment Funds [CIF]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization [GAVI]	0.000	1	1	0.667
Global Environment Facility [GEF]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Global Fund	1.000	1	1	1.000
Global Green Growth Institute [GGGI]	1.000	1	1	1.000
Green Climate Fund [GCF]	1.000	1	0	0.667
Montreal Protocol	0.000	0	0	0.000
Nordic Development Fund [NDF]	1.000	1	1	1.000
OPEC Fund for International Development [OPEC Fund]	1.000	1	1	1.000
OSCE	1.000	1	1	1.000

Appendix Table 3: Overhead Cost Reporting Index

Donor	Permanent Int'l Staff	Administrative Expenses	Salaries and Benefits	Total ODA disbursed	Average Transparency
DAC Bilateral					
Australia: Australian Development Agency	1	1	1	1	1
Austria: Austrian Development Agency	0	1	0	1	0.5
Belgium: Enable; Belgian Development Agency	1	0	0	0	0.25
Belgium: Directorate General Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid	0	0	0	0	0
Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development	0	0	0	0	0
Canada: International Development Research Centre	1	1	1	0	0.75
Czech Republic: Czech Development Agency	0	1	1	1	0.75
Denmark: DANIDA Open Aid	0	0	0	1	0.25
Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1	1	1	1	1
European Commission	0	0	0	1	0.25
Finland: Department for International Development and Cooperation	0	0	0	0	0
France: Expertise France	1	0	1	0	0.5
French Development Agency	1	0	0	1	0.5
France: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
France: Ministry of Economy and Finance (Directorate General of the Treasury)	0	0	0	0	0
Germany: kfw Development Bank	1	1	1	1	1
Germany: German Agency for International Cooperation	1	1	1	0	0.75
Germany: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	0	0	0	0	0

Greece: Directorate General of International Development Cooperation-Hellenic Aid of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	1	0.25
Iceland: Icelandic International Development Agency	0	0	0	1	0.25
Iceland: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland: Irish Development Agency, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade	0	1	0	1	0.5
Italy: Italian Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	1	0.25
Japan: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
Japan: Japan International Cooperation Agency	1	1	0	1	0.75
Japan: Japan Bank for International Cooperation	0	1	1	1	0.75
Korea: Korean International Cooperation Agency	1	1	0	1	0.75
Luxembourg: Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation (LuxDev):	0	1	0	1	0.5
Netherlands: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
New Zealand: New Zealand Agency for International Development	1	1	1	1	1
Norway: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)	0	0	0	1	0.25
Poland: Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Department of Development Cooperation	0	1	0	1	0.5
Portugal: The Camões – Cooperation and Language Institute	0	0	0	0	0
Slovak Republic: Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation	0	0	0	1	0.25

Slovenia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
Slovenia: Centre for International Cooperation and Development	0	0	0	0	0
Spain: Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation	0	1	1	1	0.75
Sweden: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs	0	0	0	1	0.25
Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom: Department for International Development	1	1	1	1	1
United States: US Agency for International Development	1	0	1	1	0.75
United States: The Millennium Challenge Corporation	0	0	0	0	0
United States: Inter-American Foundation	0	0	0	1	0.25
United States: United States African Development Foundation	0	0	0	0	0
Multilateral Agencies:					
African Development Bank Group- AFDB	1	1	0	1	0.75
Andean Development Corporation- CAF	1	1	1	1	1
Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development	0	1	1	1	0.75
Asian Development Bank	1	1	1	1	1
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	1	1	1	1	1
Black Sea Trade and Development Bank	0	1	1	0	0.5
Caribbean Development Bank	0	1	1	1	0.75
Eurasian Development Bank	1	1	1	1	1
European Investment Bank	1	1	1	1	1

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	0	0	0	1	0.25
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	0	0	0	0	0
GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance	0	1	1	1	0.75
Global Environment Facility	0	0	0	0	0
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery	0	1	1	1	0.75
Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria	1	1	1	1	1
Inter-American Development Bank	1	1	1	1	1
International Bank of Reconstruction and Development	1	1	1	1	1
International Committee of the Red Cross	1	1	1	1	1
International Fund for Agricultural Development (UN)	1	1	1	1	1
International Labour Organization (UN-SPECIALIZED)	0	0	0	0	0
International Monetary Fund	1	1	1	1	1
International Organization for Migration (UN)	1	0	0	1	0.5
Islamic Development Bank	1	1	0	1	0.75
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	0	1	1	0	0.5
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency	1	1	0	1	0.75
Nordic Development Fund	1	1	1	1	1
North American Development Bank	0	1	1	1	0.75
OPEC Fund for International Development	0	1	1	1	0.75
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	1	1	0	0	0.5
Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation	0	0	0	0	0
United Nations Childrens Fund	1	1	0	1	0.75

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	1	0	0	1	0.5
United Nations Democracy Fund	1	0	0	1	0.5
United Nations Development Programme	1	0	0	1	0.5
United Nations Environment Programme	1	1	0	0	0.5
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	1	1	1	1	1
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	1	0	0	1	0.5
United Nations Office for Project Services	0	0	0	0	0
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	0	1	0	1	0.5
United Nations PeaceBuilding Fund	0	1	0	1	0.5
United Nations Population Fund	1	1	1	0	0.75
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	1	1	1	1	1
UN Women	0	0	0	1	0.25
World Bank	1	0	0	1	0.5
World Bank - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	0	0	0	1	0.25
World Bank - International Development Association	0	0	0	1	0.25
World Bank - International Finance Corporation	1	0	1	1	0.75
World Food Program	1	0	1	1	0.75
World Health Organization (UN)	1	1	1	0	0.75
World Trade Organization	1	1	1	1	1
Non DAC Bilateral					
Argentina: White Helmets Commission/ Comision Cascos Blancos	0	0	0	0	0

Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan International Development Agency	0	0	0	1	0.25
Brazil: Brazil Development Cooperation (ABC)	0	0	0	0	0
Chile: Chilean International Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
China: China International Development Cooperation	0	0	0	0	0
Cyprus: The Development Cooperation Service of the Republic of Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0
Estonia: Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
Egypt: Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary: Hungarian International Development	0	0	0	1	0.25
Iran: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance- Organization for Investment, Economics, and Technical Assistance	0	0	0	0	0
Israel: Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation	1	0	0	0	0.25
Kuwait: Kuwait Fund For Arab Economic Development	1	1	1	1	1
Latvia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
Liechtenstein: Liechtenstein Development Service	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania: Lithuanian Development Cooperation	0	0	0	1	0.25
Malta: Ministry for Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	1	0.25
Mexico: Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistan: Pakistan Technical Assistane Program	0	0	0	0	0
Palestine: Palestine International Cooperation Agency	0	0	0	0	0

Romania: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	0	0	0	0
Russia: Rossotrudnichestvo/ Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation	0	0	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia: Saudi Fund for Development	0	0	0	1	0.25
South Africa: Development Bank of Southern Africa	1	1	1	1	1
Taiwan: International Cooperation and Development Fund	1	1	1	1	1
Taiwan: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	0	1	0	1	0.5
Thailand: International Development Cooperation Agency	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency	1	0	0	0	0.25
United Arab Emirates: Abu Dhabi Fund for Development	0	0	0	1	0.25
United Arab Emirates: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	0	1	0	1	0.5

Appendix Table 4: Overall Transparency Index

Donor	OECD Reporting	Overhead	Average Index	Overall Rank
DAC- Bilateral Agency				
Australia	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
Austria	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
Belgium	1.00	0.13	0.56	72
Canada	1.00	0.38	0.69	52
Czech Republic	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
Denmark	1.00	0.63	0.81	34
European Commission	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
Finland	1.00	0.00	0.50	76
France	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
Germany	1.00	0.58	0.79	35
Greece	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
Iceland	1.00	0.13	0.56	72
Ireland	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
Italy	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
Japan	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
Korea	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
Luxembourg	1.00	0.00	0.50	76
Netherlands	1.00	0.00	0.50	76
New Zealand	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
Norway	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
Poland	0.40	0.50	0.45	91
Portugal	1.00	0.00	0.50	76
Slovak Republic	0.40	0.25	0.33	110
Slovenia	0.40	0.00	0.20	120
Spain	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
Sweden	1.00	0.00	0.50	76
Switzerland	1.00	0.13	0.56	72
UK	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
USA	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
Average	0.94	0.39	0.66	
Non-DAC Bilateral				
Azerbaijan	0.75	0.25	0.50	76
Bulgaria	0.50	0.00	0.25	113
Brazil	0.00	0.00	0.00	122
Chile	0.00	0.00	0.00	122
China	0.00	0.00	0.00	122
Cyprus	0.50	0.00	0.25	113
Estonia	0.75	0.00	0.38	92
Hungary	0.00	0.25	0.13	121

Israel	0.50	0.25	0.38	92
Kazakhstan	0.75	0.00	0.38	92
Kuwait	0.75	1.00	0.88	20
Latvia	0.75	0.00	0.38	92
Liechtenstein	0.50	0.25	0.38	92
Lithuania	0.75	0.25	0.50	76
Malta	0.50	0.25	0.38	92
Mexico	0.00	0.00	0.00	122
Romania	0.75	0.00	0.38	92
South Africa	0.00	1.00	0.50	76
Saudi Arabia	0.75	0.25	0.50	76
Taiwan (Chines Taipei)	0.50	1.00	0.75	36
Thailand	0.50	0.00	0.25	113
Turkey	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
United Arab Emirates (ADFD)	0.75	0.38	0.56	72
Average	0.49	0.23	0.36	
Multilateral without UN				
African Dev. Bank	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
Asian Dev. Bank	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
AFESD (Arab Fund)	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
CAF (Andean Dev. Corporation)	0.00	1.00	0.50	76
CariBank	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
EBRD	0.33	0.25	0.29	111
FAO	0.67	0.00	0.34	108
GAVI	0.67	0.75	0.71	50
GEF	1.00	0.00	0.50	76
GFDRR	0.00	0.75	0.38	92
Global Fund	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
IBRD&IDA	0.67	0.50	0.58	70
IDB or IADB	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
IFC	0.00	0.75	0.38	92
IMF (SAF,ESAF,PRGF)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
Islamic Dev. Bank (ISDB)	1.00	0.75	0.88	20
NADB	0.00	0.75	0.38	92
Nordic Dev. Fund	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
OPEC Fund	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
OSCE	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
Multilateral Average (without UN)	0.72	0.71	0.71	
IFAD (Int. Fund for Ag. Dev)-UN	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
UNAIDS	1.00	0.50	0.75	36

UNDEF	0.00	0.50	0.25	113
UNDP	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
UNFPA	0.67	0.50	0.59	68
UNHCR	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
UNICEF	1.00	0.50	0.75	36
UNIDO	0.00	0.75	0.38	92
UNOPS	0.00	1.00	0.50	76
UNPBF	1.00	0.67	0.84	32
UNRWA	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
UNWomen	0.00	0.50	0.25	113
WFP	0.67	0.67	0.67	54
WHO	1.00	0.25	0.63	57
UN Average	0.69	0.66	0.67	
All Donors	0.71	0.50	0.60	