



Department for
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Business, Energy and
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9 December 2021

Dear Darren and Nusrat,

In our correspondence of 24 June, which followed the publication of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's report on Uyghur forced labour in Xinjiang and UK value chains, I committed to write to you in 6 months with an update on the Department's work to improve Official Development Assistance (ODA) Transparency. We are clear on the need for transparency in the use of ODA funds and are happy to provide you with this update for all of the Department's ODA funds (the Newton Fund, the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and International Climate Finance (ICF)), to outline our progress in improving transparency over the past six months and the impact this has had.

In January 2020 Publish What You Fund (PWYF), the global campaign for aid and development transparency, published the results of their Aid Transparency assessment of aid-spending departments, with BEIS achieving a 'Good' rating. BEIS was one of only three departments to meet the minimum transparency target set by the 2015 UK Aid Strategy to ensure the provision of transparent aid data for scrutiny of effective delivery and value for money.¹

In August 2021, PWYF announced they will be including BEIS in their 2022 Aid Transparency Index. Data collection commenced in November 2021 and the Department's ODA teams have been contributing to the data collection process which will finish in March 2022. The report, including the Department's score, will be available in Summer 2022.²

The Department's ODA spend broadly falls under two categories: Research & Innovation (R&I) ODA – covering the Newton Fund and GCRF – and International Climate Finance (ICF), with each having different established funding relationships and mechanisms.

Regarding R&I ODA, the focus over the past six months has been on the development and onboarding of Delivery Partners to the new Reporting ODA (RODA) system. The RODA system is a new digital service for reporting the Department's and Delivery Partner ODA spend. The service has been developed to provide an effective information management

¹ PWYF, 2020, [Publish What You Fund 'How transparent is UK aid?' report](https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/2021/08/2022-aid-transparency-index-which-organisations-will-we-assess/)

² <https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/2021/08/2022-aid-transparency-index-which-organisations-will-we-assess/>

system to support BEIS and its Delivery Partners in fulfilling internal and external reporting obligations and improving the transparency of information on how BEIS meets its ODA commitments.

BEIS R&I have been working on ensuring RODA produces International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) compliant data that meets the standard achieved during the 2019 UK cross government ODA transparency assessment. This includes improving the validation of data and processes for publishing quality and timely data on a quarterly basis.

The RODA dataset is a source of reports on ODA spend to HMT and FCDO as well as the IATI schema for transparency. It ensures that ODA data is captured and reported to internationally recognised standards. This has included the migration of BEIS R&I ODA data to meet BEIS's ODA reporting obligations and commitments. RODA is now the source of data for all BEIS ODA activities funded by the Newton Fund and GCRF and feeds into publicly available published data on Statistics on International Development (SID), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and IATI.

The BEIS R&I team are committed to transparent evaluations of GCRF and the Newton Fund. The Annual Reports, Theories of Change, an independent review of gender equality, our approach to assessing Value for Money of the Funds as well as a mid-term evaluation reports for Newton Fund are publicly available on the Funds' website³.

BEIS ICF has continued to focus on maintaining the January 2020 Transparency score and increasing frequency of publication of data. The IATI frequency calculator shows that BEIS data is now published on a monthly basis compared to quarterly publications last year.

BEIS ICF is also committed to transparency and has been preparing for the upcoming Publish What You Fund 2022 International aid transparency index. We welcome the opportunity for our approach to ODA transparency to be scrutinised, again.

I would like to thank you for your continued interest in this matter and hope this demonstrates the importance that we assign to ODA transparency.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Scully', is positioned above the printed name.

PAUL SCULLY MP

Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets
Minister for London

³ <https://www.newton-gcrf.org/transparency/>