



Communications and Outreach outcomes in 2023 and strategy for 2024

**International Forum on TOSSD (IFT)
Issues Paper¹
Meeting of the Interim Governing Body of the IFT
20 and 22 February 2024**

Agenda item 4

Introduction

1. The last TOSSD communication and outreach strategy was presented to the Task Force during its 17th meeting in July 2022². It was structured around four objectives/intended changes:

- More countries and organisations to report activity-level and quality data to TOSSD in 2022 and 2023, to inform the SDG indicator 17.3.1.
- Increased usage of TOSSD data to inform development finance decision-making and discussions.
- Targeted audiences have increased their knowledge on the basic concepts contained in the TOSSD methodology.
- Targeted audiences are sensitised to the future TOSSD governance arrangement and its rationale.

2. This paper takes stock of the progress towards the above objectives and the main lessons learnt (Section 1). It presents some major recent developments that should inform a new strategy, and suggests an updated communications and outreach strategy for TOSSD in 2024 (Section 2). Finally, the paper includes, as an annex, the intended outcomes and result indicators for the proposed strategy.

¹ Drafted by Camilo Gamba Gamba (Camilo.gambagamba@tossd.org), and Julia Benn (Julia.Benn@tossd.org)

² Available [here](#).

1. Context, outcomes and lessons learnt from the previous communications and outreach strategy, and recent developments

Context of implementation

3. The strategy agreed by the TOSSD Task Force in July 2022 was implemented between July 2022 and December 2023. The implementation of the strategy has been shaped by three key benchmarks:

- **We live in a hybrid world now.** After the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings organised by the Secretariat were either virtual or hybrid. This required major adjustments to the meetings' set-up (e.g., shorter meetings and adjusted agendas to consider participants' different time zones). The TOSSD Task Force adapted well to these changes.
- **The creation of the International Forum on TOSSD was at the top of the agenda.** During the period of implementation of the strategy, the Task Force developed the Terms of Reference of the brand-new IFT. For evident reasons, this topic, in addition to TOSSD data collection and publication, emerged as the key priority for the Secretariat.
- **The Secretariat received dedicated resources for Outreach and Communications.** In the same period, the Secretariat received additional support to deliver activities related to communications and outreach. This marked a clear difference from past years, in both outcomes and monitoring efforts.

Main actions and outcomes

4. Examples of actions carried out to implement the TOSSD communication and outreach strategy between July 2022 and December 2023 are presented below:

- The Secretariat organised a side event at the Financing for Development (FfD) Forum (April 2023) and participated in other conferences such as the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean (May 2023) and the International Meeting on Triangular Co-operation (October 2023).
- The Secretariat organised five collective capacity-building seminars, with a) recipient countries; b) Latin American countries; c) Asian countries and organisations; d) countries that will present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the upcoming 2024 High Level Political Forum (HLPF); and e) Multilateral Development Banks and other International Financial Institutions. Several TOSSD data reporters actively took part in these seminars, sharing their reporting experiences through peer learning sessions.
- The Secretariat promoted TOSSD in social media. The Secretariat posted several [infographics](#), [data stories](#), [pilot studies](#), the 2021 key figures, outreach activities and

important developments for TOSSD (such as the formalisation of the IFT) on X (formerly Twitter) and through the LinkedIn account of the Head of the TOSSD Task Force Secretariat.

- Three op-eds were published through the Head of Secretariat's LinkedIn account, presenting the main outcomes of the Task Force meetings and outreach activities led by the Secretariat. The Secretariat supported the TOSSD co-Chairs with an article signed by them, about [TOSSD's crucial role in the international development finance architecture](#). Furthermore, a Devex article was released in July 2023, shedding light on the level of support developing countries had garnered for the implementation of the SDGs.
- The Secretariat posted [7 data stories on TOSSD.org](#), related to key 2020 and 2021 TOSSD figures. These explored how TOSSD could be used for VNRs for 2022 and 2023 HLPF, and for tracking South-South co-operation, health financing and refugee-related support.
- On the TOSSD websites:
 - i. The Secretariat conducted periodic updates to TOSSD.org. These include the full redesign of infographics, the creation of dedicated pages for data stories, the dissemination of information on major TOSSD events and key documents (e.g., background papers for the Task Force discussions), and regular content review to ensure they were fit-for-purpose.
 - ii. The Secretariat implemented updates to TOSSD.online. These include a [dedicated page for the provider perspective](#), historical graphs with TOSSD data, the migration of TOSSD.online to an updated version of the Content Management System, and quarterly updates to TOSSD data.
 - iii. The Secretariat monitored the analytics for both websites quarterly.
- In September 2023 (coinciding with the SDG Summit), the Secretariat launched a [new video](#) to present TOSSD, its benefits and governance. The video featured interviews with several Task Force members and observers and was filmed in Dakar, Senegal.
- The Secretariat briefed newcomers on TOSSD, namely new Task Force representatives from Colombia, Costa Rica, Egypt, Tunisia and the United Kingdom.
- The Secretariat actively supported outreach and advocacy efforts to secure references in outcome documents of key global and regional conferences (e.g., G7, G20, FfD Forum, Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC)).

5. The Secretariat monitored the results of the previous strategy, and presents below its main outcomes:

- 22 countries and organisations³ joined TOSSD as new reporters in 2022 and 2023.
- +390,000 activities were reported in the 2022 data collection round, and +440,000 in the 2023 round.
- The number of TOSSD.online users per year increased by 42% from 2021 (3,534 users) to 2023 (5,053).
- The number of likes, retweets and responses in tweets using the #TOSSD increased by 217% during the implementation of the strategy, in comparison to the January 2021 - June 2022 period.
- It was the first year in which several countries included references to TOSSD in their VNRs. Six VNRs presented at the 2023 HLPF included either TOSSD data or references to TOSSD: Burkina Faso, Canada, European Union, France, Portugal and Saudi Arabia.
- TOSSD got references in six outcome documents from key global and regional conferences: G20 (Indonesia and India Presidencies), GPEDC, 2022 HLPF, 2023 FfD Forum, Summit on a New Global Financing Pact, and the 2023 LAC SSC Regional Conference.

Main lessons learnt from the previous strategy

6. The lessons learnt, to be considered in the elaboration of the new strategy (along with the ones from previous strategies), include:

- **Dedicated resources (human, technical and financial) are needed to foster the implementation of an outreach and communications strategy.** Social media presence and website management, preparation of and participation in events, bilateral meetings and other outreach activities require significant and dedicated resources.
- **Communicating about TOSSD through social media networks is critical.** The Secretariat observed four main outcomes from its social media campaigns in 2022 and 2023. Firstly, social media has a crucial role in reaching new audiences for capacity-building seminars, and contributed to the expansion of TOSSD data use and reporting to TOSSD. Secondly, social media has also helped in identifying some key actors in development finance to engage in the dissemination of TOSSD data. Additionally, social media has also been an

³ Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, International Commission on Missing Persons, Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, New Development Bank, Organisation of American States (OAS), Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA), Peru, UN Women, UN Environment Programme, UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, Uruguay, World Health Organisation – Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, World Organisation of Animal Health, World Trade Organisation (aid for trade).

excellent channel to showcase the Secretariat's efforts in TOSSD governance and related initiatives.

- **Defining and monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) on communications and outreach is a good practice.** Tracking TOSSD websites' traffic and social media has proven valuable in assessing the performance of Comms messages and/or products, as well as identifying countries with potential interest in working with TOSSD. However, it is worth mentioning that this work needs to be balanced with other duties of the Secretariat and requires adequate resources. Also, considering other impact indicators could be useful for the monitoring of the new strategy⁴.
- **Further efforts should be made to ensure that TOSSD, with its recipient perspective, is effectively used by TOSSD recipient countries.** Task Force members have a major role to play in this regard. In the top 20 countries in terms of TOSSD.online users, there are only four TOSSD recipients (Brazil, China, India and Mexico) which are, simultaneously, major South-South co-operation providers.
- **Ensuring the retention of current reporters to TOSSD must also be a priority.** This requires dedicated outreach efforts that should not be underestimated.
- **From a regional and strategic standpoint, the Secretariat and the Forum need to increase efforts to bring in more TOSSD reporters from Southeast Asia.** Despite notable progress with countries in Latin America during the 2023 data collection round, Thailand and Indonesia stood as the sole TOSSD reporters from Southeast Asia.
- **The strategy cannot be implemented without strong involvement and clear actions from the IFT members and observers, as well as strategic partners.** Peer learning presentations during the capacity building seminars have been well received (e.g., 2023 capacity building seminars for Asia, Latin America and the MDBs). The inclusion of TOSSD references in outcome documents from key international conferences relies on the TOSSD members/reporters, given that the TOSSD Secretariat may not have direct representation at many of these conferences. Finally, the transition to and consolidation of the International Forum on TOSSD will require further efforts on communications and outreach from IFT members and observers with support from the TOSSD Secretariat, both in international conferences and in social media.

7. Overall, TOSSD has achieved a lot in the last one and a half years, but there remains untapped potential for further advancements in communications and outreach to respond to the strategic objectives of the initiative.

⁴ An example of this could be the number of publications including references to TOSSD. The Secretariat records all publications (academic papers, working papers, book chapters, articles, blogs, and reports from governments and international organisations). In 2022, there were 16 publications including references to TOSSD. In 2023, there were 50.



2. New communications and outreach strategy in support of TOSSD for 2024

Summary of major recent developments and context influencing the upcoming strategy

8. After the approval of the last TOSSD communications strategy, there have been three main achievements:

- The fourth TOSSD dataset (on 2022 activities) was released in February 2024.
- The TOSSD Task Force agreed on the governance arrangements for the newly created International Forum on TOSSD (IFT), and the OECD agreed to host the IFT Secretariat.
- The G7, the G20, the FfD Forum, the Summit on a New Global Financing Pact, and the LAC SSC conference's outcome documents included references to reporting to TOSSD and/or continuing discussions on TOSSD. These references have strengthened TOSSD's political anchorage.

9. **Having the International Forum on TOSSD as an independent body will come with some key opportunities and challenges in terms of communications and outreach.** Firstly, the Head of the IFT Secretariat and the IFT co-Chairs will need to progressively enhance their political visibility, to ensure TOSSD continuity in the medium and long term. This independence will also give the IFT a higher margin of manoeuvre to manage the IFT's communication actions but additional efforts will be needed to consolidate and expand TOSSD audiences.

10. **The political context for financing for development and data for development will be very dynamic in 2024 and 2025, which can offer multiple opportunities for TOSSD and the IFT to consolidate its position.** The Fourth Conference on Financing for Development will take place in 2025 and intends to have a similar (or higher) level of ambition to the third one (Addis Ababa, 2015)⁵. There are renewed commitments on financing for development from the 2023 Summit on a New Global Financing Pact. Also, the 2024 Summit of the Future will seek to have an impact on transforming the international finance architecture and establishing frameworks to measure progress beyond the GDP. Finally, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) has initiated the process to review, in 2025, the SDG global indicators framework. This review is of importance to TOSSD as it serves as a data source for indicator 17.3.1.

11. All these pivotal developments require the IFT to create **a tailored outreach and communications strategy** to incorporate them in its approach.

⁵ TOSSD is anchored at the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (paragraph 55): "We will hold open, inclusive and transparent discussions on (...) the proposed measure of 'total official support for sustainable development' and we affirm that any such measure will not dilute commitments already made."



Proposal for the 2024 strategy

12. Considering all changes described above, and the outcomes and lessons learnt from the previous strategy, there are relevant updates to the objectives of the strategy. The proposed modifications are aligned with the Secretariat's work plan and with the ToRs of the International Forum on TOSSD. All objectives should be implemented in parallel to maximise their collective impact.

13. The Secretariat proposes three objectives/intended changes for Communications and Outreach in 2024. The annex shows these objectives and their respective target audiences, intended outcomes and results indicators.

- **Objective/intended change 1. The International Forum on TOSSD (IFT) is recognised and gets involved in development dialogues.** Targeted audiences recognise IFT and the TOSSD standard as politically and technically relevant for informing current and upcoming debates and decision-making on development finance and data for the SDGs.
- **Objective/intended change 2. More and better TOSSD data.** More countries and organisations report activity-level, quality data, to TOSSD in 2024, also informing the SDG indicator 17.3.1.
- **Objective/intended change 3. TOSSD data informs policymaking.** Target audiences know the basic concepts of the TOSSD methodology, and use TOSSD data to inform development finance decision-making and discussions.

14. The Secretariat will implement the following activities during 2024 to reach the proposed objectives. The activities are commensurate to the current capacity of the Secretariat and resources received, and more can be done should additional contributions be received in the coming months:

- Participation of the Secretariat in key international conferences and processes. This will include the organisation of side events (both virtual and in-person), bilateral outreach with key participants, and the provision of inputs for global discussions (e.g., the 2025 SDG indicators review).
- Five capacity-building seminars on TOSSD reporting and data use. The targeted audiences for them will be a) TOSSD data users; b) UN entities; c) European and Eurasian countries and international organisations; d) Middle East and North African (MENA) countries; and e) countries presenting VNRs at the 2025 HLPF.
- Outreach to potential reporters in TOSSD, with a focus on Southeast Asia and Africa.
- Outreach to current TOSSD reporters to avoid any dropouts during the data collection process.
- Translation of updates to the TOSSD Reporting Instructions to French and Spanish.
- Outreach and invitation to relevant countries and organisations to become IFT members. The target audiences for this action will be a) TOSSD Task Force members that have not yet confirmed their membership in the IFT; b) current TOSSD reporters; c) OECD accession countries; d) recipient countries.

- Strengthening of the TOSSD community to work jointly in promoting TOSSD. The Secretariat will reach out to the IFT membership and TOSSD reporters, providing them with relevant information and key TOSSD milestones during the year (e.g., launch of 2022 TOSSD data, inputs for references in outcome documents and international processes).
 - TOSSD promotion through social media networks. This includes the creation and management of a TOSSD Secretariat's LinkedIn account, as well as the drafting and dissemination of social media posts with TOSSD data and other relevant products, aligned with global events and discussions.
 - Updates to the TOSSD.org and TOSSD.online websites (e.g., update of TOSSD.org sections, migration of TOSSD.org to the new OECD website management platform, look-and-feel adjustments).
 - Creation of an online community space for developing, accessing, and sharing information and knowledge on IFT's work-in-progress. The platform will allow IFT members and General Assembly participants to provide comments and feedback on the Secretariat's proposals (e.g., issues papers to be discussed at IFT bodies).
 - Production and dissemination of three data stories using TOSSD data.
 - Video promoting TOSSD and presenting the brand-new International Forum on TOSSD.
 - Active collaboration with the OECD and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., CSOs, think tanks) to promote TOSSD data use in different types of publications.
 - Creation of the TOSSD Newsletter. Every two months, the newsletter will feature the latest relevant information on TOSSD-related work conducted by the Secretariat, IFT members/observers, TOSSD reporters and/or other stakeholders.
15. Special groups of countries and organisations will be prioritised in 2024:
- Members of the IAEG-SDGs,
 - Countries that present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the 2024 HLPF,
 - Potential TOSSD reporters from Asia and Africa,
 - OECD accession countries.
16. Similarly, the following conferences and processes will be prioritised for Communications and Outreach purposes, including in-person and/or virtual engagement⁶: a) 2024 Financing for Development

⁶ This may include, among others, the following activities: organisation of side-events, bilateral engagement with key stakeholders, TOSSD-related products, and messages to be launched at the time of those conferences, coordinated work with IFT members participating in those conferences and processes.



Forum; b) 2024 HLPF; c) 2024 Summit of the Future; d) G7; e) G20; f) IAEG-SDGs; and g) the 2024 UN World Data Forum.

17. For the implementation of this strategy, IFT members and observers, as well as TOSSD reporters, are called to be mobilisers. Their collective efforts can help reach broad segments of target audiences, as well as relevant stakeholders for TOSSD. To support the Secretariat in implementing this strategy, IFT members, observers, and TOSSD reporters can undertake the following actions:

- Sharing with the Secretariat the contact names and emails of colleagues working on communications in their respective offices. Along with representatives to the IFT, the Secretariat can share regularly TOSSD communication products and draft messages for social media or key data/messages for international conferences.
- Advocating for TOSSD reporting and IFT-related references in international and regional for outcome documents. Engage in advocacy efforts within the G7 and G20, FfD Forum, HLPF, GPEDC, and other relevant agendas.
- Active participation and dissemination of events hosted by the TOSSD Secretariat, such as side events at UN conferences and others. Contribute to capacity-building seminars by sharing their experience on TOSSD reporting.
- Include TOSSD data in talking points in different policy scenarios.
- Disseminate TOSSD communication products, post social media messages related to TOSSD and repost the TOSSD Secretariat's posts on social media.
- Organise events at the national level on TOSSD data (open or government-only) and invite the TOSSD Secretariat if needed and desired.

18. A detailed matrix of the activities and outcomes envisaged for each objective is presented in the Annex.

Issues for discussion

- Meeting participants are invited to comment on the suggested communication and outreach objectives, intended outcomes, activities, and result indicators for 2024.
- Meeting participants are invited to share possible communication actions that they envisage to undertake or wish to participate in, as well as suggest others not included above.



Annex. IFT communications and outreach strategy for 2024: target audiences, intended outcomes and result indicators

Strategic objective/Intended change	Target audience	Intended outcomes	Result indicators
<p>The International Forum on TOSSD (IFT) is recognised and gets involved in development dialogues.</p> <p>Targeted audiences recognise IFT and the TOSSD standard as politically and technically relevant for informing current and upcoming debates and decision-making on development finance and data for the SDGs.</p>	IFT members and observers	a) Increased recognition of TOSSD and the IFT in key international conferences and processes.	References to TOSSD and/or the IFT in outcome documents from key global conferences and processes related to TOSSD.
	TOSSD reporters	b) Increased, diverse membership to the IFT.	By December 2024, the IFT has at least 20 members, from all stakeholder groups (i.e., traditional providers, dual provider/recipient countries, recipient countries and international organisations).
<p>More and better TOSSD data.</p> <p>More countries and organisations report activity-level, quality data, to TOSSD in 2024, also informing the SDG indicator 17.3.1.</p>	Potential new TOSSD reporters	a) A broader, stronger community of TOSSD reporters.	By the end of the 2024 data collection round, the number of TOSSD reporters is higher than in the 2023 round.
	TOSSD reporters	b) Improved SDG reporting.	By the end of the 2024 data collection round, the TOSSD disbursements aligned to at least one SDG target will have increased in comparison to the 2023 round.
<p>TOSSD data informs policymaking.</p> <p>Target audiences know the basic concepts of the TOSSD methodology, and use TOSSD data to inform development finance decision-making and discussions.</p>	IFT members and observers	a) Increased presence of TOSSD in online conversations.	The TOSSD Secretariat LinkedIn account is active and maintained. IFT members and observers help disseminate TOSSD in social media.
	TOSSD reporters	b) TOSSD data or references to TOSSD are included in different types of publications.	The number of publications in 2024 (i.e., academic papers, working papers, book chapters, articles, blogs, and reports from governments and international organisations) including references to TOSSD will have increased in comparison to 2023.
	Officials from relevant government entities in developing countries (e.g., ministries of finance, planning, international co-operation).	c) Increased usage of TOSSD.org and TOSSD.online.	The number of users and views in TOSSD.org and TOSSD.online in 2024 will have increased, in comparison to 2023.
	Think tanks	d) Use of TOSSD data by recipient countries in their VNRs for the HLPF.	Countries reporting their VNRs at the 2024 HLPF are using TOSSD data and/or are including references to TOSSD.
	International organisations		
	Civil Society organisations		