



Press Release

Luxembourg, 12 February 2019

EU Auditors examine data behind budget support to partner countries

The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit on the reliability of the data underlying nearly one fifth of EU financial aid to partner countries outside the Union. Known as budget support, the payments support the EU's partner countries in their reform efforts and in achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

In 2017, budget support represented 18% of total EU aid to non-EU countries from the EU budget and the European Development Fund. By the end of the same year, the EU had concluded 270 budget support contracts for an estimated €12.7 billion.

The auditors have today published an Audit Preview on EU Budget support. Audit Previews (previously called Background Papers) are designed as a source of information for those interested in the policy or programmes being audited. They provide information on an ongoing audit task.

EU budget support is divided into two parts or "tranches": one fixed and one variable depending on results achieved. For the variable part, data on progress plays a fundamental role since it determines whether or not the money is paid out.

During the audit, the auditors will consider whether the European Commission has access to relevant and reliable performance data to determine whether to disburse the variable part of budget support. In particular, they will examine whether:

- the Commission thoroughly assesses partner countries' capacity to produce relevant and reliable performance data;
- budget support contracts include provisions for effective monitoring of progress in the sectors supported; and
- the Commission verifies effectively the data used as a basis for paying variable tranches.

ECA Press

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“High-quality, timely data is an essential input for smart decision-making,” said Hannu Takkula, the member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. “Using relevant and reliable performance data for paying budget support is therefore of the utmost importance.”

Note to Editors

The European Court of Auditors has already published two special reports on other aspects of the EU’s budget support: special report 11/2010 “The Commission’s management of general budget support in ACP, Latin American and Asian countries” and special report 35/2016 “The use of budget support to improve domestic revenue mobilisation in sub-Saharan Africa”.

In addition, several other reports have covered budget support to differing degrees. This audit will draw on these reports.

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors’ Audit Preview. The full preview is available at eca.europa.eu in English.