

Madrid, 20 October 2009

Rt. Hon. Mr. Douglas Alexander,
DFID
1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE

CC: Martin Dinham, Director General DFID

Dear Mr. Alexander,

We are writing to you to present the findings of a survey conducted by Access Info Europe of the level of access to information on aid agency websites which is published today as the report "Not Available! Not Accessible!" The report can be [accessed by clicking here](#).

The monitoring study reviewed the availability of information on the websites of five governmental aid agencies including (CIDA (Canada), FDA (France), Norad (Norway), AECID (Spain) and DFID (UK). To test access to country-level information we tracked aid given to a sample of five recipient countries: Afghanistan, Kosovo, Mozambique, Peru, and Sierra Leone.

The main findings of the report are that:

- Much basic information about aid funding cycles is still **not available** and there is certainly not enough available to permit monitoring of aid flows or for citizens in developing countries to take ownership of aid. Our recommendation is that, in line with the proposals of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, donor governments take urgent steps to increase the level and quality of published information.
- Where information is available, it is lacking in detail and/or hard to find as it is buried inside websites which are **not accessible** to the average user. Our recommendation is that there should be more of a user-centred focus in the design of websites to ensure that information is accessible, and is available in sufficient detail to be meaningful for stakeholders.
- Some **classes of information** such as financial data, contracts, evaluations and anti-corruption mechanisms are notable by its absence. Our recommendation is that a particular effort should be made to ensure the availability of these key classes of information which are needed to ensure that aid is free of corruption and to permit the public independently to evaluate its effectiveness.

We hope that this report will be useful to DFID as you work with other governments to improve the transparency and effectiveness of aid. We are open to discussing the methodology of this report, the finding, and the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Darbishire, Executive Director