

Thirteen years after I created it George Osborne adopts...

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Thirteen years ago to celebrate my then infant son finally sleeping through the night I [wrote a draft International Accounting Standard](#). It was the first version of country-by-country reporting.

I thought just two people would read that proposal: John Christensen, who has since then been the director of the Tax Justice Network, and Prof Prem Sikka, who introduced us.

Today [the FT has reported that](#):

George Osborne is launching an initiative to force multinational companies to open up their tax arrangements to public scrutiny, in an effort to bring transparency to a system that was heavily criticised in the light of Google's £130m British tax settlement.

The chancellor's allies insist the plan – which is opposed by business groups such as the CBI employers' group – is not being driven by the row over Google, but is part of a British-led push to increase international tax transparency.

So, the UK government now backs the publication of country-by-country reporting. It is true that the OECD template for country-by-country reporting is slightly shorter than that I proposed back in 2003 but the principles are the same, as is the aim. The intention was always to reveal where companies undertook the substance of their transactions, how intra-group trading influenced the allocation of profit, who used tax havens and whether resulting nationally reported figures for profits and tax paid made any sense at all.

I stress, straight away, that this does not change in any way my calls for unitary taxation, reform of HM Revenue & Customs, the allocation of more resources to it or the need for better international cooperation. It just means we are one step closer to getting the data we need to deliver fair tax.

It's good to know more than two people read the idea, after all.

But if this is all just a game and is going to have conditions like all EU states agreeing before it can be adopted George Osborne had better take note that he will convince no-one of his good intentions.

Oh, [and the next time David Cameron derides me at Conservative Party](#) conference remind him his Chancellor uses my ideas.