
Meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics
Bank for International Settlements, Basel, Switzerland
March 19–20, 2009

**World Bank Occasional Report on Activities Relating to External Debt Statistics:
March 2008-March 2009**

Prepared by The World Bank

March 2009

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I. Data and Publications

Global Development Finance 2009. The *Global Development Finance 2009* country and summary data were disseminated through an online advance release in January. Country tables include comprehensive data on external debt stocks and flows for 128 countries that report debt under the World Bank Debtor Reporting System. Data by regions and income groups are also available. The online database presents historical time series indicators (country-level) from 1970 to 2007. The book and CD-ROM, with regional estimates for 2008, will be available in June 2009.

Little Book of External Debt 2009. The ‘Little Book’ is a pocket version of the GDF, and it was first introduced in 2006. It provides a quick reference for users interested in external debt stocks and flows, major economic aggregates, key debt ratios, and the currency composition of long-term debt for all countries reporting through the DRS. It contains statistical tables for 128 countries as well as summary tables for regional and income groups.

Quarterly External Debt Database. The Quarterly External Debt (QEDS) database, jointly developed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, brings together detailed external debt data of countries that subscribe to the IMF’s Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and a selected number of countries that participate in the IMF’s General Data Dissemination System (GDDS). The benefit of bringing together comparable external debt data is to facilitate macroeconomic analysis and cross-country data comparison.

In December 2005, selected non-SDDS subscribers were invited to join the Quarterly External Debt Database. The goal was to extend participation to all countries where external debt data could be disseminated according to the SDDS requirements. Currently, under the SDDS/QEDS sixty one countries have agreed to provide data.

In February 2008, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank released the new enhanced version of the Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS) database, which provides data mainly on low-income countries that subscribe to the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS). These countries report a simplified quarterly set of data focusing on the external debt of the public sector. The QEDS expansion initiative to GDDS countries comprises two phases. Under the Phase I of the initiative, a priority list of 27 countries (mainly low-income countries) was invited to participate and in November 2008; under the Phase II of the project, additional 67 GDDS countries were invited to participate. As of end February 2009, 41 countries have agreed to participate in QEDS/GDDS and 23 countries have provided quarterly data. Some of the countries that agreed to participate but did not provide data are in the process of doing so.

The QEDS Database, which is maintained by the World Bank, can be accessed through the Bank's website at <http://www.worldbank.org/qeds>. The website displays two separate headings: "SDDS/QEDS," and "GDDS/QEDS."

Joint External Debt Hub. The World Bank has actively contributed to the development and maintenance of the Joint External Debt Hub. The JEDH provides a one-stop source of comprehensive external debt statistics compiled from international creditor/market sources and national debtor sources, namely QEDS (see above). It replaced the Joint BIS-IMF-OECD-World Bank External Debt tables and expanded the available range of information.

The JEDH uses the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) standards, which the World Bank has been involved in advancing, and the World Bank's latest generation of web service, the Development Data Platform.

The Joint External Debt Hub can be currently accessed through the Bank's web site at www.jedh.org.

II. Ongoing Initiatives

The Government Debt Management Performance Assessment (DeMPA) is a methodology for assessing public debt management performance through a comprehensive set of performance indicators spanning the full range of government debt management functions. It consists of 15 performance indicators that cover six core areas of public debt management: governance and strategy development; coordination with macroeconomic policies; borrowing and related financing activities; cash flow forecasting and cash balance management; operational risk management; and debt records and reporting. The DeMPA highlights strengths and weaknesses in government debt management practices in the respective country. A DeMPA assessment report is useful in: (i) guiding the design of actionable reform programs, (ii) facilitating the monitoring of performance over time, and (iii) enhancing donor harmonization based on common understanding of priorities.

Since the development of the tool in November 2007, and after field-testing it in five developing countries, the tool has been applied in 19 developing countries¹. The results from the assessments help to identify common reform priorities across countries. The assessment reports have been used in Albania and Ghana to facilitate the design of detailed reform plans and a preliminary one in Bangladesh; in Togo to upgrade the debt data recording and reporting systems; and to inform financial sector technical assistance work in Mozambique. Several assessments are planned for FY 2009.

More information about the DeMPA tool and methodology can be accessed through the World Bank's website at: <http://go.worldbank.org/5AHEF2KF70>

¹ The tool was field-tested in five developing countries – Malawi, The Gambia, Albania, Guyana and Nicaragua. The 19 countries where it has been applied are: Togo, Zambia, Bangladesh, Sao, Tome and Principe, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Moldova, Mali, Mongolia, Burkina Faso, Republic of Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Honduras, Swaziland, Cameroon, Guinea, Rwanda, and Cape Verde.