



**Meeting of the Task Force on Finance Statistics**

ECB Headquarters, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

March 21–22, 2017

**Minutes**

**(Final)**

**Prepared by the IMF**



## I. Introduction

The 2017 Meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics (TFFS) was hosted by the European Central Bank (ECB) at its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on March 21–22, 2017. The minutes include the action points agreed during the meeting and the forward work program of the TFFS.

Opening remarks were provided by Mr. Gabriel Quiros, Deputy Director, Statistics Department, IMF, who also chaired the meeting, and Mr. Remigio Echeverria, Head of External Statistics Division, Directorate General Statistics, ECB. Mr. Quiros welcomed the TFFS members and thanked them for their work to date. The chair emphasized the importance of further improvements in the quality and coverage of the data submitted to the debt databases. He also asked members to reflect on the future work of the TFFS. Mr. Echeverria also reminded the meeting of the achievements of the group to date and stressed the importance of the cooperative and collaborative approach that the group has taken thus far. All TFFS member agencies were represented, except the Paris Club Secretariat. The final agenda and the list of participants are attached to these minutes.

## II. Exploring User Needs

### A. Gross and Net Government Debt Measures (17/01)

**Issue raised:** Previous meetings of the TFFS have welcomed and endorsed a paper on the “Availability of Net Debt” (TFFS Agenda Item 15/14a). Based on this paper, the PSDS WG (specifically the OECD and IMF) was asked to put together a flyer of two pages explaining the net debt measures for online dissemination (with the ultimate aim of putting it on the TFFS website as a resource). After the presentation of the flyer, TFFS members were concerned about the sufficiency of the discussion on caveats (e.g., valuation, maturity consolidation, different data sources, quality of financial assets in use of the measures). The members suggested that a short note be prepared that provides these statistical caveats more into focus for users. The TFFS members agreed that only data on financial assets and liabilities relating to highly comparable countries (in terms of data sources and methods) should be included in the note and that data on contingent liabilities (for example pensions) nor non-financial assets should not be included. Data used for the note are based on financial accounts and examples included in it would cover non-European countries. It was also agreed that the note should also make reference to the forthcoming ECB online publication on the Euro area net external debt following the *EDS Guide*.

**The agreement was:**

- The PSDS WG would review and revise the short note on gross and net debt measures taking into account the comments made by members at the meeting by end-April 2017. Based on the review, it was agreed that the PSDS WG would include additional emphasis on the caveats and guidelines for using the net debt concept in the note and once completed it will be circulated to the wider TFFS group for written comments and for final approval for publication.

## **B. The Use of External Debt Statistics (EDS) Among Fund Economists: Survey Results (17/02)**

**Issue raised:** The meeting discussed the results of the two surveys on the use of debt statistics within the IMF and World Bank. The IMF survey targeted Fund economists' use of EDS and the different channels from which the data are sourced. Survey findings have underscored that EDS are essential to the work of Fund staff for multiple purposes. Fund staff broadly rely on multiple EDS data sources, with, unsurprisingly, direct reporting by country authorities and national websites being the most used. Both the IIP as well as commercial data sources (mostly Haver Analytics) are widely used. On the other hand, the survey results also reveal that the Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS) database is unknown to a large number of Fund staff.

The World Bank carried out a similar in-house survey on the use of debt statistics within the organization. The World Bank's staff broadly rely on multiple EDS data sources, with their debt databases (including QEDS) being the most used, followed by national websites: 70 percent of them use the World Bank debt databases followed by other sources. These findings were different from the IMF results due to the different type of users. The World Bank also commented on the significant number of external users hits to the Debt Statistics (about 1.2 million per year hits on the overall page of debt statistics—of which the debt portals were about 25.5 percent of this total).

### ***The agreements were:***

- The World Bank and the IMF agreed to further prioritize outreach as a way to improve awareness of debt statistics databases.
- The IMF (STABP) will follow up with IMF survey respondents to better understand their data needs, including data sources currently used. The IMF will also facilitate access for IMF staff to the data (e.g. further facilitate access to the IIP for EDS purposes).

### ***Presentation by the ECB on new financial statistics: “Who to whom” and Securities Holdings (17/03)***

**Issue raised:** The ECB gave a short presentation on their newest data as part of their strategy to enhance further euro area financial statistics. The meeting welcomed the developments and took note that the ECB's efforts of presenting more granular information are hampered somewhat by issues of confidentiality.

### III. Debt Data Availability and Strategies

#### A. Quarterly Public Sector Debt (QPSD) Database

##### ***Quarterly Public Sector Debt Database (QPSD) Main work Program Results: Summary Table (17/04)***

**Issue raised:** This was a short presentation showing updated details on the number of countries reporting to the IMF/WB QPSD. The data used were taken from a data dump of the database from end January 2017. It also provided a short overview of progress on the work plan since the last TFFS meeting in 2016. While most of the items were completed, it was noted that while the use of Eurostat option for the reporting of QPSD data had passed from the pilot stage to regular use, it came up for discussion at the meeting (with both the World Bank and OECD voicing concerns regarding the loss of some data (and gain of other data) due to Eurostat also using the D2A definition of debt (i.e., Maastricht debt; debt securities + loans + currency and deposits).

##### ***Data Collection Alignment with Data Gaps Initiative (DGI) Recommendation II.16 (17/05)***

**Issue raised:** The World Bank presented the latest update on the implementation of DGI II.16 recommendation and its alignment with PSDS data collection efforts. TFFS members recalled that the Recommendation II.16 target related to general government with a broad instrument coverage.

##### ***The agreement was:***

- It was agreed that the IMF and the World Bank would examine further the institutional breakdown of public sector debt (General Government vis-a-vis the wider Public Sector) and produce a joint note for the IAG that will also be presented to TFFS members.

##### ***Current Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDS) Reporting (17/06)***

**Issue raised:** Both the World Bank and OECD gave an update of which countries are covered, the level of coverage and how timely they are. In addition, they made suggestions on further improvements that were made since last year and point out possible challenges such as the OECD looking for improved timeliness and getting consolidated data

##### ***Medium-Term QPSD Strategy: Report by the PSDS Working Group (17/07)***

**Issue raised:** A series of papers were presented in order to continue increasing the number of respondent countries, as well as improvements in the quality including the coverage of the data provided. It was pointed out that the work of the Country Engagement Group (CEG) will be the main driver in progressing the outcomes. The CEG has put together a list

of countries that should be targeted based on criteria agreed by the group, subject to funds available to go ahead with the work program.

On reducing the respondent burden for EU countries, the meeting also discussed the Eurostat option for reporting and the gains and losses in terms of country reporting and instrument coverage.

BIS updated the meeting in terms of their latest work with regard to expanding their database on credit to the government, which included the use of estimates to expand their time series and improve comparability across countries. The BIS also intends to start publishing its estimates of foreign currency borrowing based on creditor and market data, broken down by currency but not by instrument.

***The agreements were:***

- The World Bank, Eurostat and the OECD will draft joint a note to EU countries clarifying the prefilling done by Eurostat for all constituent countries, the deadlines and the wish of the OECD/World Bank to include D4 instruments (debt securities + loans + SDRs + currency and deposits + other accounts payable + insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantees) in the total gross debt and breakdowns requested in the PSD questionnaire. Eurostat will provide a D2A total as well as D4 instruments. This data will be used by the World Bank and the OECD if countries do not choose to provide any further detail. It was agreed that existing arrangements will be continued as before and that Eurostat would continue pre-filling for all countries.
- The CEG will report on back to TFFS on actions taken during the coming year.

**B. Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS) database**

***Main Work Program Results (17/08)***

***Progress Report on Data Availability and Metadata Questionnaire (17/09)***

***Issue raised:*** The World Bank presented to TFFS members updates on: (1) progress on data availability—number of QEDS reporters, *BPM6* reporters, tables reported, and timeliness; (2) the QEDS metadata questionnaire and access to the responses (already available on the website); and (3) the introduction of full new names for the indicators (series names) in the QEDS database, in order to make indicator names more user-friendly and self-explanatory. Currently, all 61 SDDS subscribers (including Seychelles), as well as the 13 SDDS Plus adherents, the Euro Area, and New Zealand report Table 1 to the SDDS/QEDS. There were no new GDDS economies joining the GDDS/QEDS database this year but two existing countries resumed reporting (Pakistan and Tajikistan). The number of tables being reported to SDDS/QEDS and GDDS/QEDS by participating economies increased during the year.

The meeting supported World Bank's work on the dissemination of the responses to the metadata questionnaire and also the introduction of full new names for the indicators (series names) in the QEDS database.

***The agreements were:***

- The World Bank confirmed that they will continue to identify in the cross country metadata tables the institutional coverage of public sector external debt data for GDDS/QEDS reporters.
- The World Bank agreed to continue to follow up to ensure that the metadata coverage for all participating economies is reported.

***Medium-Term EDS Strategy: Report by the EDS Working Group (17/10)***

***Issue raised:*** The World Bank presents to TFFS member agencies progress made by the EDS WG on the work plan to attain the four objectives of the strategy: (i) increase participation in the QEDS database, (ii) increase reporters for selected tables for both SDDS/QEDS and GDDS/QEDS, (iii) consistency within data series and across available macroeconomic datasets, and (iv) raise awareness of both end users and data compilers of the availability, scope, and other main features of the QEDS database.

ComSec also presented the debt-data export facility in CS-DRMS to support the reporting requirements to IOs (including data reporting to QEDS and QPSD). Specifically, ComSec mentioned that the QEDS template was ready in the system and it takes a press of a button to produce QEDS. ComSec also raised the possibility of these data be compiled by the World Bank (due to the low capacity of some countries) based on DRS data even though the QEDS template in CS-DRMS is ready. Following the 2016 TFFS meeting discussion, the World Bank demonstrated that the QEDS could be derived from DRS data (just for annual data); the intention of the exercise is to assist countries to commence compiling the QEDS return. The 2016 TFFS meeting nevertheless agreed that the ownership of the data reporting process should remain with the reporting countries.

UNCTAD presented the planned "automatic link" to produce QEDS and QPSD from the DMFAS, which will facilitate the generation of these templates. UNCTAD pointed out that the link is still under development; it was delayed due to some technical issues and that it is expected to be available by end-2017. Nevertheless, UNCTAD underscored that QEDS templates can still be generated from the available report menu (user defined report) of the DMFAS.

The ECB updated the meeting on the forthcoming online publication of net external debt data for the Euro area; time series will start in Q1 2013. The net external debt table for the Euro area will be reported to the QEDS database with the next data submission. The net external debt data are derived from IIP statistics at market value.

***The agreements were:***

- The TFFS members agreed that the agencies should ensure the appropriate level of coordination, where possible in the area of capacity development. Specific initiatives will be discussed further at the next meeting of the EDS WG.
- The World Bank agreed to consider the creation of a live FAQ document which would provide information on queries received by them.
- The TFFS members agreed that the EDS WG continue its work on discussing and implementing actions towards fostering countries' participation and awareness of the QEDS.

**IV. Other Issues Related to Debt Data****A. EDS: Creditor vs. National Data Sources: Results from the Joint External Debt Hub (JEDH) Comparator Table (17/11)**

***Issue raised:*** The JEDH is the only international database that brings together EDS and selected foreign assets from international creditor/market and national debtor sources. The creditor data are important for both users and compilers to supplement debtor data. It also allows users to assess the coverage of debtor data by enabling the comparison of creditor and debtor data on selected external debt components, based on data available on the JEDH comparator table. This comparison underscores the importance of the data. Both the World Bank and the IMF raised the need to review the flow of the creditor table and the metadata to make it more user friendly.

**B. PSDS: Consolidation Issues (17/12)**

***Issue raised:*** Eurostat presented a paper showing (i) the importance and differing importance of consolidation with and between subsectors of general government for European countries; (ii) the impact of valuation on consolidation; and (iii) the possible caveats even for European countries in identifying data sources allowing for consolidation at market/ nominal value. *Inter alia*, this paper highlighted the issues encountered when designing net debt measures using different valuations and puts severe caveats on cross-country comparability of net debt measures as well as limiting the analytical value of gross and net debt comparisons of countries not consolidating data (such as one of the countries in the draft net debt paper).

***The agreement was:***

- The updated paper on net debt (Agenda Item 17/01) will make reference to the Eurostat paper on consolidation as one of the caveat items.

### **C. Progress on Data Quality Framework: Quality of the Data Recorded in Debt Reporting Systems (17/13)**

*Issue raised:* ComSec and UNCTAD reported on progress made related to their Debt Data Quality Assessment Methodology (DeQAM). The DeQAM is composed of a Methodology and a Toolkit (functionality embedded in both systems). The toolkit offers means for identifying data coverage gaps/errors. The DeQAM complements other assessment tools available (including IMF's EDS and PSDS DQAFs); it adds granularity to these initiatives as it specifically targets countries' databases available in both debt management systems: the CS-DRMS and the DMFAS. Good progress has been made on this initiative. The first test will be manual (by end-2017).

*The agreement was:*

- TFFS members support the initiative (the tool can also be used to improve the quality of data reported by countries to international databases such as QEDS/QPSD) and look forward to improved debt data reporting from countries.

### **V. Forward Work Program of Task Force**

The TFFS Chair presented and discussed with participants a tentative work program for the next twelve months. The work program includes:

- The PSDS WG would review and revise the short note on gross and net debt measures, taking into account the comments made by members at the meeting by end-April 2017. Based on the review, it was agreed that the PSDS WG would include additional emphasis on the caveats and guidelines for using the net debt concept in the note and once completed it will be circulated to the wider TFFS group for written comments and for final approval for publication.
- The World Bank and the IMF agreed to further prioritize outreach as a way to improve awareness of debt statistics databases.
- The IMF (STABP) will follow up with IMF survey respondents to better understand their data needs, including data sources currently used. The IMF will also facilitate access of IMF staff to the data (e.g. further facilitate access to the IIP for EDS purposes).
- It was agreed that the IMF and the World Bank would examine further the institutional breakdown of public sector debt (General Government vis-a-vis the wider Public Sector) and produce a joint note for the IAG that will also be presented to TFFS members.
- The World Bank, Eurostat and the OECD will draft joint a note to EU countries clarifying the prefilling done by Eurostat for all constituent countries, the deadlines and the wish of the OECD/World Bank to include D4 instruments (debt securities +



loans + SDRs + currency and deposits + other accounts payable + insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantees) in the total gross debt and breakdowns requested in the PSD questionnaire. Eurostat will provide a D2A total as well as D4 instruments. This data will be used by the World Bank and the OECD if countries do not choose to provide any further detail. It was agreed that existing arrangements will be continued as before and that Eurostat would continue pre-filling for all countries.

- The CEG will report on back to TFFS on actions taken during the coming year.
- The World Bank confirmed that they will continue to identify in the cross country metadata tables the institutional coverage of public sector external debt data for GDDS/QEDS reporters.
- The World Bank agreed to continue to follow up to ensure that the metadata coverage for all participating economies is reported.
- The TFFS members agreed that the agencies should improve where possible the level of coordination in the area of capacity development. Specific activities will be discussed further at the next meeting of the EDS WG.
- The World Bank agreed to consider the creation of a live FAQ document which would provide information on queries received by them.
- The TFFS members agreed that the EDS WG continue its work on discussing and implementing actions towards fostering countries' participation and awareness of the QEDS.
- The updated paper on net debt (Agenda Item 17/01) will be discussed by the PSDS WG and if it is agreed by the group that it is appropriate will make reference to the Eurostat paper on consolidation as one of the caveat items.
- TFFS members supported ComSec and UNCTAD on the Debt Data Quality Assessment Methodology (DeQAM) initiative (the tool can also be used to improve the quality of data reported by countries to international databases such as QEDS/QPSD) and look forward to improved debt data reporting from countries.

## **VI. Next meeting/Future role of TFFS**

The Chair invited the TFFS members to convey their views on the future role of TFFS at the end of the meeting. The TFFS has been highly successful with the completion of the two *Guides* and the establishment of debt databases. In this regard, it is a good time to consider the future direction of the TFFS. The Chair then proposed that the future vision and mandate of the group be addressed during a videoconference to be tentatively scheduled for May 2017.

## Attachment I. Agenda Meeting of the Task Force on Finance Statistics (TFFS)<sup>1</sup>

European Central Bank (ECB) Headquarters

Room ET M13.04

Frankfurt am Main, Germany

March 21–22, 2017

Time		Items	Presenter	TFFS Paper
		<b>Tuesday, March 21</b>		
9:00 a.m.		Opening Remarks by the ECB Welcome by the Chair, Mr. Gabriel Quiros	ECB IMF	
	(1)	<b>Exploring User Needs</b> Gross and Net Government Debt Measures	OECD/IMF Discussants: IMF-GO Eurostat	17/01
	(2)	The Use of External Debt Statistics (EDS) Among Fund Economists: Survey Results	IMF-BP Discussants: WB/BIS	17/02
10:45 a.m.		Coffee break <sup>2</sup>		
11:15 a.m.	(3)	<b>Presentation</b> by the host. New ECB financial statistics: “Who-to-whom” and Securities Holdings	ECB	17/03
12:30 p.m.		Lunch <sup>3</sup>		
2:00 p.m.		<b>Debt Data Availability and Strategies</b>		
	(4)	<b>Quarterly Public Sector Debt (QPSD) Database</b> Main Work Program Results: Summary Table	IMF-GO	17/04
	(5)	Data Collection Alignment with Data Gaps Initiative (DGI) Recommendation II.16	WB	17/05
	(6)	Current Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDS) Reporting	WB/OECD	17/06
	(7)	Medium-Term QPSD Strategy: Report by the PSDS Working Group Public sector debt statistics -Reducing report burden by using the Eurostat Option Leveraging on existing data sources Work of the Country Engagement Group (CEG)	IMF-GO  Eurostat / OECD  BIS IMF-GO	17/07
4:00 p.m.		Coffee break		

<sup>1</sup> TFFS member agencies: BIS, ComSec, ECB, Eurostat, IMF, OECD, Paris Club Secretariat, UNCTAD, and World Bank.

<sup>2</sup> The group photo will be taken at xx.

<sup>3</sup> A light buffet will be provided on both days.

Time		Items	Presenter	TFFS Paper
4:30 p.m.	(8)	<b>Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS) Database</b> Main Work Program Results: Summary Table	WB	17/08
	(9)	Progress Report on Data Availability and Metadata Questionnaire	WB	17/09
	(10)	Medium-Term EDS Strategy: Report by the EDS Working Group Automated options to produce QEDS tables current workings and future plans Prefilling QEDS tables and contact countries Fostering e-GDDS country participation Reporting Net External Debt	WB ComSec/ UNCTAD IMF-BP ECB	17/10
6:00 p.m.		End of the day		
		<b>Wednesday, March 22</b>		
9:00 a.m.	(11)	<b>Other Issues Related to Debt Data</b> EDS: Creditor vs. National Data Sources: Results from the Joint External Debt Hub (JEDH) Comparator Table	IMF-BP	17/11
	(12)	PSDS: Consolidation Issues	Eurostat	17/12
	(13)	Progress on Data Quality Framework: Quality of the Data Recorded in Debt Reporting Systems (Joint paper)	ComSec/ UNCTAD	17/13
11:00 a.m.		Coffee break		
11:30 p.m.	(14)	<b>Wrap-up, Forward work Program, and Other Business</b> Wrap-up on Key Agreements	IMF	
	(15)	Forward TFFS Work Program Resulting from Key Agreements (Update of Work Program Summary Tables—see (4) and (7) above)	IMF	
	(16)	Other Business Closing of 2017 TFFS Meeting		
1:00 p.m.		End of the day		

Papers to be circulated for information:

Occasional Papers on Activities of TFFS Member Agencies (one paper per agency).  
2016 BOPCOM Paper on Negative Interest Rates.

TFFS Secretariat:

Marcelo Dinenzon (BP) and Roderick O'Mahony (GO)

## 2017 TFFS Meeting: List of Participants

	<b>TFFS Member</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Contact Info</b>
1	BIS	Philip WOOLDRIDGE	<p>Head of International Banking and Financial Statistics and Deputy Head of Statistics and Research Support</p> <p><a href="mailto:Philip.Wooldridge@bis.org">Philip.Wooldridge@bis.org</a></p> <p>Monetary and Economic Department Bank for International Settlements Centralbahnplatz 2 CH 4002 Basel Tel: +41 61 280 8006</p>
2	ComSec	Mac BANDA	<p>Business Analyst DMS Debt Management Unit <a href="mailto:m.banda@commonwealth.int">m.banda@commonwealth.int</a></p> <p>Commonwealth Secretariat • Marlborough House • Pall Mall • London SW1Y 5HX • United Kingdom Tel: +44 20 20 7747 6563 • Fax: Direct: +44 20 7004 3798 General: +44 20 7747 6450 • <a href="http://www.thecommonwealth.org">www.thecommonwealth.org</a></p>
3	ECB	Carmen PICON	<p>Senior Economist Statistician Balance of Payments Section Tel: 004969 1344 6316 <a href="mailto:Carmen.Picon_Aguilar@ecb.int">Carmen.Picon_Aguilar@ecb.int</a></p>
4		Jorge DIZ-DIAS	<p>Principal Economist Statistician Macroeconomic Statistics Division <a href="mailto:Jorge.Diz_Dias@ecb.int">Jorge.Diz_Dias@ecb.int</a></p> <p>European Central Bank Directorate General Statistics</p>
5	EuroStat	Laura WAHRIG	<p><a href="mailto:Laura.WAHRIG@ec.europa.eu">Laura.WAHRIG@ec.europa.eu</a> Team leader – GFS ESTAT D-4 GFS.</p>
6		Rita Mesias	<p><a href="mailto:Rita.MESIAS-CAMARGO@ec.europa.eu">Rita.MESIAS-CAMARGO@ec.europa.eu</a></p>

7		Matthias Ludwig	<a href="mailto:Matthias.LUDWIG@ec.europa.eu">Matthias.LUDWIG@ec.europa.eu</a>  EUROSTAT - Statistical Office of the European Commission L-2920 Luxembourg Tel: +352-4301-37687
8	IMF	Gabriel QUIROS	Deputy Director <a href="mailto:GQuiros@imf.org">GQuiros@imf.org</a>
9		Roderick O'MAHONY	Senior Economist <a href="mailto:ROMahony@imf.org">ROMahony@imf.org</a>
10		Marcelo DINENZON	Senior Economist <a href="mailto:mdinenzon@imf.org">mdinenzon@imf.org</a>  Statistics Department 1900 Pennsylvania Ave NW Washington, DC, 20431 Tel: + 1 (202) 623-7000
11	OECD	Yasmin AHMAD	Principal Administrator Development Co-operation Directorate <a href="mailto:YASMIN.AHMAD@OECD.ORG">YASMIN.AHMAD@OECD.ORG</a>
12		Isabelle YNESTA	Principal Statistician Statistics Directorate <a href="mailto:ISABELLE.YNESTA@OECD.ORG">ISABELLE.YNESTA@OECD.ORG</a>  Development Cooperation Directorate OECD 2, rue André Pascal 75775 Paris Cedex 16 France Tel: +33 1 45 24 82 00 Fax: +33 1 45 24 85 00
13	UNCTAD	Roula Katergi	Team Leader Quality Assurance and User Support <a href="mailto:Roula.Katergi@unctad.org">Roula.Katergi@unctad.org</a>  DMFAS Programme UNCTAD Tel: (41 22) 917 1719 <a href="http://www.unctad.org/dmfas">http://www.unctad.org/dmfas</a>

14	World Bank	Evis RUCAJ	Statistical Officer Tel: 202 473-6772 <a href="mailto:erucaj@worldbank.org">erucaj@worldbank.org</a>
15		Rasiel VELLOSO	Statistical Officer Tel: 202.473.0510 <a href="mailto:rvellos@worldbank.org">rvellos@worldbank.org</a>  Financial Data Team Development Data Group World Bank, 1818 H St. NW Washington, DC 20433