

## BPTT Inaugural Meeting (June 15, 2020)— Summary of Discussions

### INTRODUCTION

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1. The inaugural meeting of the Balance of Payments Task Team (BPTT) was conducted via WebEx on June 15, 2020. Mr. Carlos Sánchez-Muñoz, Assistant Director of the IMF Statistics Department and Chief of the Balance of Payments Division chaired the meeting. He noted in his initial remarks that the BPTT has been assigned a key role in the architecture of the update of international statistical standards. The role of BPTT vis-à-vis the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (Committee) is similar to that of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts (AEG) vis-à-vis the inter-secretariat working group on national accounts (ISWGNA). Unlike other task teams (TTs), the BPTT would be operational during the entire *BPM6* update process and until the publication of the *BPM7*, which is expected to be released around March 2025.

### TOPICS PRESENTED FOR DISCUSSION

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2. The Chair and the Secretariat made a presentation covering the architecture of *BPM6/2008 SNA* update TTs, special role of the BPTT, governance procedure for the review/clearance of guidance notes (GNs), structure of the GNs, list of research topics assigned to the BPTT, and a proposed timetable for the preparation of GNs. The BPTT was also informed that a public website on the update of *BPM6* was launched (<https://www.imf.org/en/Data/Statistics/BPM>) with separate webpages for different TTs including the BPTT. The terms of reference (TOR) and the Compendium of Research Issues (CRI) have been posted. A separate webpage to post GNs for public consultations, link to provide feedback on GNs, and a collaboration site (restricted) for members will be added soon.

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

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3. The Chair clarified that for topics on the BPTT research agenda with links to other TTs (e.g., nationality concept), the draft GN could be sent to those TTs on a case by case basis, for quick comments or information, as the BPTT decides.

4. Regarding the topic *Reconciliation between Flows and Stocks* (item B.4), the IMF agreed that the issue is more of analytical and presentational nature. Given that a complete revamp or structural changes to the *BPM6/2008 SNA* are not envisaged, the motivation for including this topic is to bring the integrated presentation of flows and stocks to the forefront of *BPM7* and making it a central piece of the new manual. This approach could be considered as a next step to the enhanced importance given to the international investment position (IIP) in the *BPM6*.

5. While the topic on reserve related liabilities (B.2) is of methodological importance requiring improvements to the current guidance, on the definition of net international reserves (NIR), the BPTT agreed that developing a standard definition would be useful for surveillance purposes and could be used as a starting point for program negotiations with country authorities. Nevertheless, the IMF country desks have full flexibility to negotiate with each country the country specific definition of NIR to be incorporated in the Fund program documents.
6. On the possibility of including additional topics to the list of existing topics in the CRI, the IMF clarified that new items with methodological implications could be considered for inclusion until the end of 2022 and noted that the list already benefitted from the feedback received from the Fund departments.
7. On the preparation of GNs, the Chair noted that there will be flexibility on the timeline for the preparation and review procedure of GNs considering the complexity of the issue, need for consultations with stakeholders, and other priorities of members. The topics for which GNs are ready will be presented to the Committee meeting in October 2020, especially those topics that are controversial and require discussion. Other topics could be discussed and resolved via written consultations. Further, coordinating a gradual preparation is the key to ensure a proper and timely review of the GNs by the BPTT.
8. Regarding the proposed approach for public consultation of GNs, the Chair underscored that such consultation prior to their presentation to the Committee send a strong signal to the users that their views will be taken into consideration in the final version of GNs.
9. At this stage, it will be difficult to confirm whether there will be a physical meeting of the Committee in October 2020 or the meeting will be postponed. The possibility of conducting shorter virtual meetings dedicated to specific topics could also be considered. Overall, it will depend on how the situation would evolve in the next few months. The IMF will inform the Committee members and TTs as soon as a decision is taken.
10. Those members that had not yet volunteered to the preparation of GNs, could convey their topic of interest for the preparation of a GN to the Secretariat within two days. For each topic, a lead author and contributors will be identified based on the willingness received from the members, and bilateral consultations. As the IMF has been doing work on some of these topics, it could contribute and/or pair with the BPTT members in the preparation of GNs.
11. To support the work on the measurement of sustainable finance in external sector statistics, it was agreed that a stocktaking survey prepared by the ECB Expert Group on Climate Change and Statistics will be circulated to the BPTT members requesting their inputs within three weeks.

## ACTIONS

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### *BPTT members to:*

- communicate to the BPTT secretariat for which GN on research topics assigned to the BPTT they would like to contribute by cob June 17.

### *The BPTT Secretariat to:*

- prepare and circulate a table showing the lead author and contributors for the preparation of GN on each topic, based on the interest expressed by the members; and
- circulate the “Stocktaking Survey on Existing or Planned Studies and Data Sources Related to Climate Change and Relevant Measures” to the BPTT members requesting responses within three weeks (done).