



# **G-20 Data Gaps Initiative: Way Forward**

**IMF-FSB Global Conference on the G-20 Data Gaps Initiative (DGI)**

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# Introduction

- In the fourth progress report to G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors it was agreed:
  - To discuss the strategy for ... fostering the provision of comparable economic and financial statistics in line with policy needs.
- IMF staff in consultation with FSB and the members of the IAG developed a “way forward” document that was the basis of the discussions with G-20 economies.
- All 18 G-20 economies with whom we had bilateral/regional discussions provided constructive comments on the document.
- This presentation summarizes the outcomes and sets out the key questions for the conference to discuss.

# Comparable Data

- The bilateral and regional discussions brought out very broad support for the idea of enhancing and promoting comparable data compilation and reporting across G-20 economies.
- There was a clear consensus that in a second stage of DGI this should be the focus of the work.
- In other words strengthen and deepen the process the G-20 DGI had started.

# Comparable Data (continued)

- Among the many comments received:
  - Focus on the quality and availability of data across the G-20 economies.
  - Continuously improve the availability, quality, comparability and consistency of data.
  - Achieve further improvements on timeliness, periodicity, and coverage.
  - A common path of implementation for G-20 economies.
  - Focus should be on implementing the present data initiatives across the G-20 countries.
- **Key message: Going forward the G-20 DGI should aim to enhance and promote comparable data compilation and reporting of the datasets covered by the DGI across G-20 economies.**

# Comparable Data (continued)

- In this context, there was also support for harmonized templates:
  - Promote the standardized templates introduced by the DGI as disclosure of data and uniform reporting is needed for cross-country comparability.
  - Further harmonize reporting frameworks.
  - The importance of continuing the efforts by staff of statistical agencies to implement the harmonized reporting templates according to the new international statistical standards.
  - Authorities to agree on a work plan that would include completion dates for each of the recommendations to facilitate national agencies in monitoring and keeping their commitment to implement the DGI.
- **Key conclusion: International agencies to continue to promote harmonized reporting templates for key datasets.**

# Cooperation at the International Level

- The evidence of increased cooperation at the international level was welcomed and be maintained going forward:
  - Welcome the increased evidence of cooperation between international agencies and encouraged this to continue post the G-20 DGI, including between the IMF and FSB.
  - The involvement of the Inter-Agency Group on Economic and Financial Statistics (IAG) should be maintained.
  - To retain the Inter-Agency Group on Economic and Financial Statistics (IAG) as a global facilitator.
  - The work among international agencies to promote data sharing is welcomed.
- **Key conclusion: The IAG should be retained along with the efforts to increase data cooperation among IAG members.**

# Cooperation at the International Level (continued)

- There was also encouragement and ideas to go further:
  - The various databases of the international agencies should be integrated so to reduce the burden on reporting countries.
  - Support more operational coordination for G-20 statistical work.
  - An international forum/discussion on experiences could be considered and could help to spread best practice.
  - A data sharing mechanism among G-20 central banks could be considered.

# Cooperation at the National Level

- Cooperation at the national level appears to have been enhanced by the G-20 DGI and perhaps more can be achieved yet:
  - The importance of national data cooperation among the national agencies should be given greater attention.
  - Each country should create a single central control unit to coordinate the G-20 DGI work.
- **Key question: Should each G20 economy have a single point of contact on G20 DGI issues?**



# Resource Constraints

- Resource constraints are always uppermost in the mind. Comments received included:
  - Some G-20 economies (especially emerging economies) face significant capacity constraints.
  - The additional burden placed on statistical agencies and other data compilers in implementing the DGI should not be ignored.
  - International agencies should be made aware of the resources involved in responding to international initiatives.

# G-20 Process

- There were also comments received on the G-20 process more broadly and the possible impact on the statistical initiatives:
  - The G-20 process is heavily dependent each year on the country that holds the presidency.
  - The agenda can change from year to year and there is not the continuity that is needed for statistical work
  - There are already plenty of statistical committees and many G-20 initiatives.
  - Filter new G-20 data initiatives through statistical experts before they appear in a communiqué.
- **Key Question: What are the participants' views in managing the new user needs? Is there a need to coordinate these requests within a G-20 statistical framework?**

# New Recommendations

- Against this background, hesitation was expressed about new recommendations:
  - Concern about any new international initiatives that resulted in new data collections.
  - It is important to take account of the constraints faced by compilers and private sector reporters.
  - Be careful in launching a new DGI agenda, as an international agenda might cause inefficiencies with national priorities, if the data gaps are only relevant for a few G-20 countries

# New Recommendations (continued)

- On the other hand, it was commented that:
  - Data gap issues are not going to end in 2015, as different issues will inevitably arise on an ongoing basis.
  - The need to identify new emerging data needs for the strengthening of the international financial system.
  - Users should be consulted on their emerging needs.
- **Key conclusion: Any follow-up to the G-20 DGI could include new recommendations as new emerging data needs arise but they should be parsimonious in number.**

# Institutional Setting Going Forward

- The issue that generated the most discussion was the institutional setting going forward. The ideas put forward in the “way forward” paper were in essence:
  - Maintain the focus on the G-20 economies and FSB members.
  - The current consultation process with the G-20 economies could be continued but on a two-year cycle to allow progress in implementing the recommendations both at the national and the global level.
  - The consultation process could continue to encompass a combination of bilateral meetings, technical meetings, regional conferences, and a global conference, which will culminate in a biannual report updating progress, identifying emerging needs, to the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, IMF Executive Board, and FSB Plenary.
  - New emerging data needs might be identified through various forums.

# Institutional Setting Going Forward (continued)

- The overwhelming majority of G-20 economies support continuation of the G-20 DGI process, and in broad terms supported the proposals in the paper. Among the comments were:
  - Agree with the staff's proposal on how to take the initiative forward, including the suggested implementation targets.
  - In favor of maintaining a G-20 process with continued coordination through the IMF and FSB.
  - Continuing with a bi-annual frequency beyond 2015/2016 and supported the work process set out by the STA staff.
  - Retain the present requirement of the staff of the IMF and the FSB Secretariat to submit a report to the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, and respective governing bodies, on a bi-annual basis.

# Institutional Setting Going Forward (continued)

- Prefer to have a two-year consultation cycle to allow progress in implementing the remaining recommendations.
- The authorities support the plan outlined by the IMF staff in the paper on the way forward—essentially a continuation of the present structure but on a two year (not one year) cycle.
- Reporting to the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors should continue post the completion of the present DGI in 2015/2016.
- Welcome the bilateral meetings as an opportunity to get their views across to the IMF staff and enquire of IMF staff about issues of relevance to the authorities.
- **Key conclusion: The ideas for the way forward in the paper circulated by the IMF are broadly supported.**

# Institutional Setting Going Forward (continued)

- But there were some other ideas:
  - Regular monitoring report on the G-20 DGI recommendations across countries, preferably on an annual basis.
  - It would be better to go back to the “normal” reporting system that also involved other member countries.
  - The coverage of the DGI should extend beyond the G-20 countries.



# Institutional Setting Going Forward (continued)

- The bilateral discussions raised the idea of a more centralized structure than we have in the G-20 DGI.
- There was some support.
  - A reinforced institutional framework is necessary to support more operational coordination for G-20 statistical work.
  - The institutional framework for statistical work at G-20 level should be reinforced.
  - The current procedures mainly focus on updating and exchanging information on the implementation process and challenges faced in G-20 economies and less on discussing operational implementation targets and timeliness.
- But there was also some opposition:
  - Do not support adding other governance structures that could be unwieldy or an overload to the G-20 agenda.
  - Support for a looser rather than over-centralized framework but the need for a bridge between the technical work, policy makers and users more generally was identified.

# Institutional Setting Going Forward (continued)

- A permanent Committee was not the right fit for the G-20 given the latter's flexible nature and ever shifting agenda.
  - Not lead to creating new working groups, but making better use of the existing meeting and governance structure.
  - Welcomed the idea of maintaining the momentum created by the G-20 DGI but was also reluctant to endorse too formal a G-20 structure going forward.
  - Any post G-20 DGI process should be focused on the institutional bodies, such as IMF Executive Board and Financial Stability Board (FSB), which have the continuity and tradition of dealing with statistical issues, necessary for statistical work at the international level.
  - Not adverse to a continuing process post the G-20 DGI but considered this best taken forward through existing forums, particularly the IMF Executive Board and FSB.
- **Key conclusion: There may be a need for a bridge between the technical work, policy makers, and users but on balance there is not support for an over-centralized system.**

# Institutional setting going forward: (continued)

- There was support for a new mandate at the political level and with this a close involvement of national authorities and users:
  - Prominent involvement of national authorities to set priorities and assign the resources appropriately for fully implementing the DGI recommendations
  - Maintain the link with the G-20 process and foster ownership of the initiative through G-20 economies continuing to take a central role in shaping the work program.
- **Key questions: What are the participants' views on how best to ensure political support? Is there support to update the mandate from 2009 in consultation with national statistical agencies and users?**

# Key Messages from the Bilateral Consultations

- 1** Going forward the G-20 DGI should aim to enhance and promote comparable data compilation and reporting of the datasets covered by the DGI across G-20 economies.
- 2** There is support for retaining the IAG along with the efforts to increase data cooperation among IAG members. International agencies should continue to promote harmonized reporting templates for key datasets.
- 3** Any follow-up to the G20 DGI could include new recommendations as new emerging data needs arise but they should be parsimonious in number.

# Key Messages, continued

4. **The ideas for the way forward in the paper circulated by the IMF are broadly supported.**
  
- 5 **There may be a need for a bridge between the technical work, policy makers, and users but on balance there is not support for a over-centralized system.**

# Key Questions

- **What are the participants' views on the future of the direction of work under the G20 auspices once the G20 DGI is completed?**
- **What are the participants' views on how best to ensure political support? Is there support to update the mandate from 2009 in consultation with national statistical agencies and users?**
- **What are the participants' views in managing the new user needs? Is there a need to coordinate these requests within a G-20 statistical framework?**
- **Should each G20 economy have a single point of contact on G20 DGI issues?**

**Thank you**