



Thirty-Fourth Meeting of the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics

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For discussion

B.4 Reconciliation Between Flows and Stocks: Outcome of the Public Consultation

Prepared by the Balance of Payments Task Team (BPTT)

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Public consultation showed strong support for the proposals in the guidance note (GN). Almost all discussants agreed to make the integrated IIP the centre of the new BPM. Nevertheless, many voiced concerns that an over-ambitious disaggregation of the integrated IIP table or too tight a timeline for its implementation might backfire. The usefulness of a further breakdown of “other changes in volume” was questioned for similar reasons. The vast majority welcomed the term “accumulation accounts”. A wide range of opinions was voiced concerning the category “unallocated”. Among the analytical paragraphs, only the “rate of return” concept received comments, which were mostly critical. In the light of the wide agreement received during the public consultation, the GN is proposed to be considered by the Committee for final decision.

1. **The public consultation drew in comments from around 20 discussants.** The majority of them represent official institutions, mostly central banks. Some of the BPTT members as well as several IMF staff members voiced their opinion.
2. **Most discussants welcomed the proposal to put the integrated presentation at the centre of the new version of the Manual.** Nevertheless, many voiced concerns that an over-ambitious disaggregation of the integrated IIP table might weaken general acceptance and support for it. The strongest opposition came from one of the respondents, who called for a deeper analysis to evaluate the benefits and costs of each functional category, concluding that an overall implementation should not be recommended. Other comments focused on the timeline, suggesting that the project be presented as a medium to long-term goal and an implementation roadmap provided.
3. **The usefulness of a further breakdown of “other changes in volume” was questioned by a number of discussants.** There were two lines of argument. The first echoes the point made above, which is that asking for too much disaggregation might weaken acceptance, especially given the additional burden for both the reporting population and compilers. The second argument points to the fact that cancellation and write-offs are often not a relevant issue.
4. **The vast majority welcomed the term “accumulation accounts”.** There was widespread acceptance that the introduction of the term “accumulation accounts” in external statistics enhances the integration and comparability of the international accounts with the SNA because the term “accumulation accounts” is used for the accounts that reconcile stocks and flows in the SNA. Thus, the new term was found to be explanatory and in line with the SNA.
5. **A wide range of opinions was voiced concerning the category “unallocated”.** Some welcomed the new category on the grounds that it might make an integrated IIP more achievable. Others feared that the category might become a dustbin, concealing uncertain data and reducing the overall quality of the statistics. Guidance was requested on what to report in this category (e.g., statistical discrepancies caused by different revision circles are known and thus do not fit the description of “unallocated” or unknown).
6. **Among the analytical paragraphs, only the “rate of return” concept received comments.** Some were concerned with the disaggregation level of the proposed table, others questioned the suggested calculation methods. One respondent argued that compilers should not have to publish data that analysts can and should calculate themselves.