

DMFAS Programme News

April 2015

Inside this issue

1. 10th UNCTAD Debt Management Conference
2. Uzbekistan: Translation of DMFAS 6 to Russian
3. Use of DMFAS 6 in subnational entities
4. The case of Argentinian provinces
5. Cambodia final evaluation mission
6. Annual TTFS meeting in UNCTAD headquarters
7. Interview with Balliram Baball
8. DMFAS 6 Update
9. Selected upcoming events
10. Contact info

Save the date !

10th UNCTAD Debt Management Conference and DMFAS Advisory Group meeting

UNCTAD is proud to announce the organization of its 10th biennial Debt Management Conference which will be held in Geneva from the 23 to the 25 November.

This is an important international event during which officials and other professionals working in the area of debt management are able to exchange views and gain perspectives in regards to the latest developments in this area, as well as to network.

The Conference will be followed by the DMFAS Advisory Group meeting. More information will be posted on the DMFAS website as it becomes available. Official invitations will be sent this summer.

Uzbekistan and UNCTAD signed a technical assistance project: Translation of DMFAS 6 to Russian

In February 2015, UNCTAD and the Asian Development Bank signed a new technical assistance project for the implementation of DMFAS 6 at the Ministry of Finance of Uzbekistan.

Former DMFAS user, Uzbekistan installed version 5.1 of the system in Russian at the Ministry of Finance in 1996. In 2000, the DMFAS system was replaced by a locally-developed software called "Debt Manager" to better respond to county-specific needs, in particular analytical features that were not available in the DMFAS system at that time. Two-years ago, at the last UNCTAD Debt Management Conference, the country expressed interest in the new version as DMFAS 6 incorporates the features and analytical functions required by the debt management office.

The technical assistance project signed between the Government of Uzbekistan, the Asian Development Bank and UNCTAD includes the translation of the DMFAS 6 interface to Russian, install the system in the country, and provide related training. Project activities started in March with the technical work related to the translation and the project will continue until the end of the year.



BMZ

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO



Use of DMFAS 6 in subnational entities: The case of Argentinian provinces

Argentina is one of the oldest DMFAS users, since 1993. It is also the host of a DMFAS regional office in Buenos Aires. The central Government public debt database is installed at the Ministry of Finance and Argentina was a pioneer country for the installation of DMFAS 6.

In November 2014, a technical assistance project was signed with, the Ministry of Hacienda of the Province of La Rioja, a subnational Government of the Republic of Argentina, a new DMFAS user institution.

It is the fourth province of Argentina to adopt DMFAS 6, after the provinces of Buenos Aires, Rio Negro, and Chaco, in addition to the central Government.

Since the 1990s, Argentina has started an important process of decentralization where the provinces gained new responsibilities requiring them to closely manage their resources. Argentinian provinces are responsible for the management of public education, security, justice and health which implies a rise in provincial debt and requires new capacities to face these responsibilities. In this context, provinces consider that sound financial management is key to ensuring service delivery and they have initiated a series of reforms to strengthen fiscal policies at subnational level.

The Ministry of Hacienda of the province of La Rioja initiated the modernization of its financial administration, including in the area of debt management, and signed a project with UNCTAD to strengthen the public finances in the province through the implementation and establishment of the provincial debt database in DMFAS 6.

The installation of DMFAS 6 will allow the provincial financial administration to benefit from the relational database, and to upgrade and modernize its IT systems. In addition, the project will enhance human capacity to record, report and analyse all the elements of its public debt using a more modern system and will allow staff to stay abreast of the latest best practices in debt management. Additionally, DMFAS 6 will facilitate linking the debt database to the foreseen integrated financial system to be developed in the province, as was the case of the province of Rio Negro that has already linked its DMFAS database with its integrated financial management system. This will ultimately improve the Ministry of Hacienda's efficiency.



* A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)



Cambodia final evaluation mission

A final evaluation mission from the latest ADB-financed DMFAS technical assistance project in Cambodia took place in Phnom Penh from 23 to 27 February.

DMFAS users since 2007, the mission revealed the continuous dedication and diligence by the staff of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) to record, process, monitor, report and analyze the external debt of the country. Following the latest project, which took place over a six-month period, from August 2014 to February 2015, DMFAS 6 has now replaced DMFAS 5.3 as the official software used for day-to-day debt management, and the specification for an interface between the DMFAS system with the MEF's project management system (containing project disbursement information) has been updated.

The mission evaluated the users' satisfaction and ability to use the new system, the training received, as well as progress regarding the development of the interface. In ten years, the Asian Development Bank-financed technical support provided by UNCTAD to the Government has seen an accumulation of results, including the creation of the DMFAS database, an expansion of DMFAS users with defined recording, reporting or reading rights, a regular debt data validation mechanism, trained staff in debt statistics and debt portfolio analysis. There are currently 24 staff within the MEF, across three different Departments (Budget, Treasury, Economic and Finance Public Policy) using the DMFAS system.

Annual Task Force on Finance Statistics meeting in UNCTAD headquarters

UNCTAD hosted the Annual Meeting of the Task Force on Finance Statistics (TFFS) at its Geneva headquarters on 12 and 13 March 2015. The TFFS meets annually, alternately in Washington or in Europe, at the Headquarters of one of its members.

This year's meeting focused on several topical issues, including contingent liabilities, net debt and the different methods applied to value public sector and external debt. A new approach to presenting General Government debt data based on the different categories of debt instruments - the D1-D4 approach - was also considered, in order to promote transparency and cross-country comparability of debt data, and is in the process of being implemented. This approach will present General Government debt data according to the instrument coverage of each country - those that only covers loans and securities will be classified as D1 and those which cover all debt instruments will be classified as D4.

Follow-up issues in which UNCTAD is involved include:

- Assessing ways to include measures of nominal value for positions of debt securities in DMFAS.
- The D1-D4 approach to presenting General Government debt data by instrument.
- The implementation of the gradual approach for dissemination of contingent liability data with initial focus on government sector guarantees at face value/nominal value.
- To report on the work to increase the emphasis on data quality.
- To report on the availability of net debt measures and assess the value added of including such measures in the QPSD.
- Debt statistics flyer, which will feature topical issues.

UNCTAD is actively involved with the TFFS in promoting the development and implementation of standards for reporting on external and public debt. It contributed to the development and dissemination of two major guides on the compilation and dissemination of external debt statistics and public sector debt statistics under the coordination of the TFFS, the 2013 *External Debt Statistics: Guide for Compilers and Users* and the 2013 *Public Sector Debt Statistics: Guide for Compilers and Users* provides clear and comprehensive guidelines for the measurement and presentation of external and public debt statistics.

The DMFAS software is also continuously updated to incorporate the latest standards and methodologies established by the TFFS. The DMFAS Programme also encourages adherence to these international standards in debt reporting and assists its member countries through capacity building support offered by the Programme in data validation, debt statistics and debt portfolio analysis activities. Furthermore, the Programme actively supports the contribution of its client countries to the Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS) and Quarterly Public Sector Debt (QPSD) databases of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank's Debtor Reporting System (DRS). It also promotes the dissemination of debt statistics through debt statistics bulletins by offering customized workshops and follow-up activities.



Participants at the TFFS meeting

Created in 1992, the TFFS sets methodological standards for statistics on external debt and on public sector debt; promotes data availability on financial stocks; encourages internationally accepted statistical practices to enhance data quality; and fosters inter-agency collaboration in statistical capacity building.

UNCTAD has been participating in the TFFS since 1999, represented by the DMFAS Programme. It is chaired by the International Monetary Fund Statistics Department, and other members comprise the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec), the European Central Bank (ECB), Eurostat, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Paris Club Secretariat and the World Bank.



Interview with Balliram Baball, DMFAS Senior Debt Management Expert, on his retirement

DMFAS. Can you tell us about your experience before joining the DMFAS Programme ?

Balliram. I started to work in the area of debt management in 1985 at the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (CBTT), when I returned from postgraduate studies in New York University. I was charged to create the debt unit at CBTT as the country needed to restructure its debt and CBTT had no debt office. No reliable data was available, and the debt data was recorded on a simple spreadsheet. Before going to the first Paris Club meeting, we had to ask for the support of an external consulting company to prepare the dataset.

At that time, I read an article on UNCTAD launching a computerized debt management system and I shared it with the authorities at CBTT. Soon after, the first UNCTAD needs assessment mission was sent to Trinidad, and with the support of the UNDP, CBTT acquired DMFAS in 1987. The system imposed discipline on us and required to record loans information in detail. Having the DMFAS at the CBTT built credibility in our debt data, and soon resulted in the Government discontinuing the services of the expensive consulting company.

DMFAS. How did you start working with the DMFAS Programme ?

Balliram. From 1987 to 1990, several DMFAS missions came to T&T, and saw how DMFAS was being actively utilized for strategic decisions and for Paris Club and London Club reorganizations. Then, in the 1991, I was contacted by the DMFAS Programme to work as advisor to the Philippines debt office for six months to also help them develop their DMFAS database. After accomplishing this, I was then sent to Uganda to help in validating its debt database before that country went the Paris Club. I returned to CBTT in December 1991. In October 1992, DMFAS offered me to become Chief Technical Adviser in Bangladesh for two years.



Then I had to choose: UNCTAD or CBTT. I opted to resign from CBTT after 13 years of great experience, and launched my full-time career as an international civil servant. Towards the end of my two-years in Bangladesh, I moved to Zimbabwe to work with the Eastern and Southern African Initiative in Debt and Reserves Management (ESAIM), which was successful and evolved into the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (MEFMI). In total, I stayed 4 years to help develop the debt department.

Thereafter, I worked for 4 years as an independent consultant, during which time I also worked with UNCTAD in Vietnam, the Philippines and other countries, as well as other organizations such as Debt Relief International. Finally, I rejoined the DMFAS Programme in 2002, as Chief Technical Adviser in Bangladesh, and then moved to UNCTAD HQ in 2003, where I will now retire.

DMFAS. What were your responsibilities with DMFAS Programme central team?

Balliram. With the central team, I worked a lot on capacity-building and training modules. The Programme decided to take an innovative approach and to build training curricula with tangible results such as a draft debt statistical bulletins and validation calendars. I really enjoyed developing these new capacity-building modules, delivering the workshops and supporting countries to create statistical bulletins and other products that sustain to today. I was also appointed coordinator for the organization of the UNCTAD biennial debt management conferences, and managed three conferences. In addition, I served as project manager for comprehensive technical assistance projects in Ethiopia, Indonesia and the Philippines. As coordinator of the TDU, I also appreciated very much working with strong professionals on DMFAS documentation. Finally, I was also the UNCTAD focal point for the Task Force on Finance Statistics (TFFS).

DMFAS. Now you are retiring this month, what are your plans ?

Balliram. I have prepared a list of things I want to do - my 30 year bucket list! Basically, the first 2 things are to write my memoirs and to create short video clips using the material I have collected since 1984 (videos and photos). The idea is develop stories around the friends and family, the people I've met over the years. Coming from a small village in Trinidad and having travelled throughout the world, I have plenty of stories to tell !

I will continue being in the profession. But my first objective is to enjoy the summer and go hiking in the Alps. I would like to spend more time with my wife, and my family, and to do things together. As for my wife, she was very supportive during my entire career and after 40 years of marriage, we still enjoy each other's company and share many interests in common, such as travelling and hiking.

I came into this career with excitement for my work, and leave it with the same passion. I have worked with a Team of strong professionals at UNCTAD, and I would like to thank them for the opportunity to work with them. The debt management discipline is a continuously changing panorama, there are so many developments which continue to captivate, even after three decades in the profession. Just look around and see the new dynamics now unfolding in the developed world.

Change is good and I have no regrets. Retirement is for me a new challenge. I would like to thank all of those with whom I came into contact during my very interesting career. **There was never a dull moment...**!



DMFAS 6 Update: Release of 6.1.0.1

The DMFAS Programme is currently working on the next release of the DMFAS 6 software, the release 6.1.0.1 of DMFAS 6, which is planned for end of May 2015. This release will include a number of enhancements to existing features as well as additional new functionalities and corrections to problems reported in the use of DMFAS 6. Detailed information regarding the list of enhancements and problems fixed will be provided with the corresponding release note. The current list contains about 60 issues to be addressed.

In summary, the corrections/enhancements currently under testing are:

- A series of new modules to facilitate integration, such as the disbursements interface, (integrating functionalities of a module already in use by some DMFAS 5.3 countries) and the introduction of a new web-services module, which will allow institutions to seamlessly integrate the DMFAS with other applications, like the IFMIS.
- Introduction of the data verification features, for the disbursements and debt service modules (this module was foreseen for the previous release, but it did not pass the validation for release, an important stage for the quality assurance of the system). Initially this module will be used for debt service operations and disbursements, later releases will include more modules as required.
- Additional enhancements to the data export features, including corrections to problems encountered in the module.

Information and instructions about DMFAS 6 releases are available in the Client area of the DMFAS website under the section DMFAS releases at unctad.org/dmfas.



Selected Current and Upcoming Events

Contact Info

Correspondence should be sent to:

DMFAS Programme

Villa Bocage

UNCTAD

Palais des Nations

CH-1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 917 5924, Fax. +41 22 917 0045

Website: unctad.org/dmfas

E-mail: dmfas@unctad.org

The full list of forthcoming activities is also available at: <http://unctad.org/dmfas>.

DMFAS 6 advanced functional training and final project evaluation, Lebanon, April-May

Workshop on creating interface - conceptual design, Uganda, April-May

DMFAS 6 advanced functional training, Zambia, April-May

DMFAS 6 customized training, Congo, May

Workshop on creating interface - conceptual design, El Salvador, May

DMFAS 6 installation and maintenance training, La Rioja, Argentina, June

DMFAS 6 basic functional training, La Rioja, Argentina, June

Debt statistics workshop, Côte d'Ivoire, June

Debt Management Performance Assessment mission (partner coordination), Côte d'Ivoire, June

DMFAS Programme News is not an official UNCTAD document and does not reflect official opinion from UNCTAD or any of the donors of the Programme.

Produced by the DMFAS Programme with the support of the following donors: European Commission, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.

