



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

ZIMBABWE

Report on Data Quality Assessment for Public
Sector Debt Statistics Mission
(February 6–12, 2025)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGD	Accountant General Directorate, MoFEDIP
BCG	Budgetary Central Government
CSD	Central Securities Depository, RBZ
DMFAS	Debt Management and Financial Analysis System
DQAF	IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework
EDDC	External and Domestic Debt Management Committee
e-GDDS	IMF's Enhanced General Data Dissemination System
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
<i>GFSM 2014</i>	<i>Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014</i>
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
MDAs	Line Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MoFEDIP	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion
NSDP	National Summary Data Page (under IMF's e-GDDS)
PDM Act	Public Debt Management Act, September 2015
PSDS	Public Sector Debt Statistics
<i>PSDSG 2013</i>	<i>Public Sector Debt Statistics: Guide for Users and Compilers 2013</i>
QPSD	Joint IMF-World Bank Quarterly Public Sector Debt Statistics Database
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
ZiG	Zimbabwe Gold (currency)
ZIMCDD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
ZimStat	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZPDMO	Zimbabwe Public Debt Management Office, MoFEDIP

Overall Assessment

1. This report provides an assessment of the data quality of the public sector debt statistics of Zimbabwe. The assessment has been conducted against the [IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework \(DQAF\) for Public Sector Debt Statistics \(PSDS\) 2024](#). The DQAF lays out internationally accepted practices in statistics, ranging from good governance in data-producing agencies to specific practices in compiling and disseminating public sector debt statistics (PSDS).

2. The mission was undertaken under the auspices of a two-year project to strengthen the quality of public sector debt statistics in selected African countries. The project is funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan Administered Account for Selected IMF Activities (JSA). The IMF mission team extends its appreciation to the authorities for the warm reception and candid discussions throughout the mission and to Mr. Rasiel Velloso (World Bank) and Mr. Ricardo Murillo (UNCTAD), who participated in the mission, for kindly sharing their expertise and insights.

3. This report is based on information provided prior to and during a mission from February 6 to 12, 2025, as well as publicly available information. The agencies compiling the datasets assessed in this report are the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion (MoFEDIP), and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ).

4. The latest IMF-World Bank debt sustainability analysis (DSA), published in November 2024¹, determined that Zimbabwe's debt remains unsustainable and assessed it to be in "external and overall debt distress". The country has been accumulating external arrears to its official creditors since the early 2000s, estimated at about US\$7.3 billion. The bulk of the external arrears are owed to Paris Club creditors (55 percent) and multilateral creditors (35 percent). Arrears to non-Paris Club creditors are also significant (about 9 percent of total). Zimbabwe's reported total public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt stood at US\$21.2 billion or 97 percent of GDP at end-2023².

5. Due to limited access to external finance, Zimbabwe domestic debt as a proportion of total public debt has grown significantly in recent years. As at end-September 2024 domestically issued debt securities accounted for 24 percent of total PPG up from 9 percent as at end-2022. While some of this increase was for budget financing a significant proportion (US\$2.85 billion) was used to on-lend to the Mutapa Investment Fund (Zimbabwe's sovereign wealth fund) and to settle legacy debts of the RBZ.

6. Zimbabwe has received significant capacity development (CD) from STA in the recent past to support the MoFEDIP in improving the quality of PSDS compilation. Technical assistance (TA) provided to the Public Debt Management Office of Zimbabwe (ZPDMO) has been facilitated through the Data for Decision (D4D) Trust Fund (2019, 2021, and 2023). TA recommendations have focused on broadening the coverage of PSDS and on improving the coverage, accuracy, and consistency, of source data. Although initially the COVID-19 pandemic impacted negatively the pace of progress in implementing the STA TA recommendations, this has shifted recently and there has been a renewed commitment to providing more timely and more comprehensive public debt reports.

¹ <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099110624101529109/bosib116aa767707419a681c949b74e3ebe>

² According to the Annual Public Debt Bulletin 2023 of the MoFEDIP

7. Against this background, the main objective of the mission was to identify: (a) key strengths and areas for improvement in PSDS compilation and dissemination processes through the application of the IMF's standardized Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) and, (b) priority actions to help Zimbabwe enhance public debt data transparency. Discussions with various stakeholders, as well as review of data received and published, indicate that Zimbabwe has made significant strides in improving debt data transparency with a level of granularity far exceeding its comparing peers. Sustained commitment is needed in enhancing public debt transparency including re-disseminating the published data in easily downloadable form through the National Summary Data Page (NSDP). The main findings and conclusions of the mission are summarized below in the order of the DQAF's dimensions (Table 1).

8. Prerequisites of quality: This category in the DQAF assesses the conditions that have an impact on data quality within the main agencies in charge of producing PSDS in Zimbabwe. The assessment focused on the legal and institutional environment, resources, and quality awareness.

(a) **Legal environment:** The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating public debt statistics in Zimbabwe is clearly specified and well established in the law. The Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 22:21] of September 2015 (PDM Act) assigns the responsibility of public debt management to ZPDMO. The Act also bestows the responsibility of compiling, verifying, and reporting public debt arrears (including domestic arrears to service providers), and monitoring and reporting implicit and explicit public sector contingent liabilities. ZPDMO functions are audited annually by the Auditor-General and the Report submitted to Parliament.

(b) **Institutional environment:** Working arrangements of ZPDMO align with its assigned responsibilities which are well executed by its Front Office, Middle Office, and the Back-Office, all with a combined staff complement of around thirty. The core responsibility of data collection, processing and validation is done by the latter. There is evidence of strong and frictionless oversight provided by the top management of ZPDMO. Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies is adequate. The flow of information needed to compile Zimbabwe's PSDS is efficient and well-coordinated. Timetables for public debt reporting by MDAs (line ministries, departments, and agencies), and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are well established in the law. For domestically issued debt securities, data is received monthly from RBZ. Coordination between the ZPDMO, RBZ and the Accountant General Directorate (AGD) is excellent and ensures sharing of data on Government debt guarantees, domestic payment arrears, and accounts payables as required under the law. The External and Domestic Debt Management Committee (EDDC) is the overarching body responsible for approving government guarantees for endorsement by Parliament. Staff, facilities, and financing are commensurate with ZPDMO's assigned responsibilities. However, the current Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) is outdated (last revised in 2021) and needs to be upgraded to the latest version (DMFAS 7) which will handle a broader range of debt instruments (including account payables) and interface with other systems for efficient data exchange. The ZPDMO has elaborate internal procedures for data production and publication that guarantee quality while recognizing tradeoffs—unverified claims by the Auditor-General are excluded from reported public domestic debt arrears to service providers. The relevance and practical utility of PSDS in meeting users' needs are monitored but could be expanded to the wider user community.

9. Assurances of Integrity: This dimension assesses the features that support firm adherence to objectivity in the collection, compilation, and dissemination of public debt data so as to maintain users' confidence. PSDS are produced on an impartial basis. ZPDMO recognizes the importance of ensuring professional independence for personnel compiling statistics. Of the seven officers of the Back-office, three are certified accountants, and three are in the process of certification. Public debt statistics are carefully reviewed and validated before they are cleared for publication and dissemination, to protect the

professional independence and, importantly, to protect ZPDMO's good reputation. Conceptual and methodological considerations are largely driven by the tools embedded in the DMFAS software that allow application of international statistical standards (*Public Sector Debt Statistics: Guide for Compilers and Users (PSDSG 2013)*). ZPDMO is free to explain technical aspects of the public debt statistics and to respond publicly to misinterpretations of its products including data issues flagged by the Auditor General in its Report to Parliament. Ad hoc queries are handled expeditiously through the Secretary to the Treasury. Choices of sources of data as well as decisions about dissemination, are informed mainly by the need to comply with the law. ZPDMO staff are, in practice, free from political, or other influence, in choosing the most appropriate sources and methods for compiling public debt statistics. The terms and conditions under which public debt statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are disclosed and clearly referenced in all ZPDMO's debt publications. Guidelines for staff behavior are in place to ensure irreproachable conduct within and beyond the ZPDMO, and to fulfill obligations to maintain the public credibility of the debt data produced and disseminated. All staff must swear every year to abide with the Official Secrets Act and take the Integrity Pledge.

10. Methodological Soundness: This dimension assesses the extent to which the PSDS of Zimbabwe comply with international statistical methodologies to foster cross country comparability and facilitate analytical value. Reported PSDS cover all loans and debt securities of the budgetary central government (BCG), partial information on BCG accounts payable, and debts of the RBZ which the Government is servicing and settling. In line with the international statistical standards³, supplemental information is provided on all outstanding government guarantees, and PSDS are reported by creditor, currency, residency, and maturity. Although the PSDS are broadly in accordance with the international statistical standards not all the methodological concepts and principles are fully applied. The main deviations are that face value rather than the preferred nominal value is used to record stocks of debt securities; the residency principle for identifying external debt is not always strictly applied – with assumptions used where the necessary information is not readily available; and some terminology (e.g., debt assumptions) does not fully accord with its use in the statistical standards. More material is the need to expand the sector and instrument coverage of the PSDS beyond the BCG and Central Bank. Debts of local governments and public corporations require inclusion as do debts stemming from Special Drawing Right (SDR) allocations, other accounts payable, pensions, and currency and deposits. Based on information shared with the mission it is suggested to initially include the debts of local governments, and from SDR allocations, where there would appear to be comprehensive and timely quarterly data available. As the PSDS are further expanded then care should be taken to consolidate the data to avoid double counting of liabilities.

11. Accuracy and Reliability: This dimension assesses the extent to which the PSDS of Zimbabwe accurately reflect the reality of public sector liabilities. Source data on external loans and domestically issued debt securities are subject to extensive validation and as a result the reported data were found to be accurate and reliable. The data quality is further assured through the auditing of the statements of public debt data by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). This mechanism for identifying issues and discrepancies signals a strong approach to quality assurance. However, there is a lack of system integration which presents future risks for the data quality. In particular, it would be beneficial to have automated flows of data between the DMFAS and the Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS), as well as between DMFAS and the RBZ's Central Securities Depository (CSD). The first system interface would facilitate the payments related to debt servicing, and the second the process

³ References to the international statistical standards refer to the *PSDSG 2013* and the *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014 (GFSM 2014)*.

of issuing and managing debt securities. In both cases the major benefits of automation would be to increase efficiency and reduce process risks. Such system integration will not happen overnight but to achieve this consideration should be given to procuring the latest version of DMFAS (DMFAS 7), which not only has the web services needed to interface systems but also includes improvements for statistical reporting, such as by facilitating the reporting of other accounts payable and contingent liabilities.

12. Serviceability: This dimension assesses the extent to which Zimbabwe's PSDS are disseminated with an appropriate periodicity and timeliness, are consistent with other publications, and follow a revision policy. The timeliness, frequency, and comprehensiveness of debt reports published by the ZPDMO have been steadily improving over recent years. Since 2018 annual public debt bulletins have been published, but in June 2024 quarterly debt bulletins were introduced. These are published within three months of the end of the quarter. Although the regularity and frequency of debt publications aligns with best statistical practices, the lack of a pre-announced release calendar is not good practice, and one should be developed so that users are informed about when future reports will be published. With respect to the content of the public debt reports, the debt data shows good consistency both with other debt publications and wider macroeconomic statistics. The detailed instrument level debt tables are valuable to analysts and researchers as is the long external and domestic debt time series from 1980. However, it would be beneficial to users to provide shorter time series for other component debt aggregates so that the latest debt positions can be put into the context of the evolving debt. Similarly, the publication of reconciliations between opening and closing debt stocks and the flows that have led to the change in debt stocks would add to the value of the debt reports. Increasingly revisions are to be expected now that quarterly data are being published and so a revision policy should be developed to guide how revisions are highlighted and explained. It is also recommended that annual central government debt data published via Zimbabwe's NSDP is updated and maintained, as should be the associated metadata.

13. Accessibility: This dimension assesses the extent to which Zimbabwe's PSDS are presented clearly and impartially, in a format that facilitates use of the data and enhances understanding of the data. The commentary, tables, and charts in the public debt reports are well considered, and provide information of interest to a broad range of user groups. However, the metadata provided in the reports is currently insufficient. Examples of where metadata can be improved include the lack of information on the valuation used when reporting Treasury bills and bonds, little information on the coverage of the debt bulletins in terms of public entities and debt instruments, and no explanation of concepts such as public and publicly guaranteed debt and external or domestic debt. In addition, the data in the public debt reports should be made available to users not only in pdf format but also in a format that supports analysis and re-dissemination (such as Excel, csv, SDMX). To further increase the availability of public debt data to users, Zimbabwe should consider dissemination of PSDS via the National Summary Data Page of the e-GDDS and the Joint IMF-World Bank Quarterly Public Sector Debt statistics database (QPSD) - a database which includes public debt data from over one hundred countries. The collaboration between ZPDMO and the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCDD) is very much welcomed and should be maintained and strengthened as it provides an excellent way to engage with a wide range of users. However, outside of this partnership, more could be done by the ZPDMO to promote and encourage comments, queries, and requests from users. The purpose being to both provide a service to users and also to receive feedback which can shape future improvements to the public debt reporting of Zimbabwe.

Table 1. Zimbabwe: Summary Results of PSDS DQAF Assessment

Dimensions/Elements	Rating	Assessment	Priority Recommendations
0. Prerequisites of quality			
0.1 Legal and institutional environment	O	The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating public debt statistics in Zimbabwe is clearly specified and well established in the law.	
0.2 Resources	O	Staff, facilities, and financing are commensurate with ZPDMO work programs, but computing resources needs enhancement.	<i>Procure DMFAS 7 and develop plans to interface DMFAS with the IFMIS system (to automate debt payments) and the CSD (to automate flows of data on debt securities) in order to make the flow of data more efficient.</i>
0.3 Relevance	LO	The relevance and practical utility of PSDS in meeting users' needs are monitored but could be expanded to the wider user community by conducting periodic user surveys.	<i>Conduct periodic user surveys to gauge the relevance and practical utility of PSDS in meeting users' needs.</i>
0.4 Other quality management	O	Processes are in place to focus on quality of PSDS. ZPDMO management is very sensitive to the dimension of accuracy and reliability and promotes the shared concern in routine work programs. ZPDMO validates and reconciles debt data concerning the Government of Zimbabwe including on all public debt arrears.	
1. Assurances of integrity			
1.1 Professionalism	O	Choices of sources of data as well as decisions about dissemination, are informed mainly by the need to comply with the law.	
1.2 Transparency	O	The terms and conditions under which public debt statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are referenced in all ZPDMO publications.	
1.3 Ethical standards	O	ZPDMO has clear Guidelines for staff behavior which are well known to the staff. All staff must swear every year to abide with the Official Secrets Act and take the Integrity Pledge.	
2. Methodological soundness			
2.1 Concepts and definitions	LO	The published debt reports broadly follow the concepts and definitions of the international standards with data presented by creditor, currency, remaining and original maturity (domestic debt only). However, residency principle not always strictly applied.	<i>Apply the residency principle throughout when distinguishing between domestic and external debt.</i>
2.2 Scope	LNO	Sector coverage is limited to BCG and central bank borrowing. Guarantees on borrowing of other public entities are also reported as memorandum items but not non-guaranteed debt of	<i>Include liabilities related to the IMF SDR allocations within the public debt reports of Zimbabwe.</i>

Table 1. Zimbabwe: Summary Results of PSDS DQAF Assessment

Dimensions/Elements	Rating	Assessment	Priority Recommendations
		the public entities. Other accounts payable are generally not reported, except for select BCG other accounts payable. Liabilities of special drawing right (SDR) allocations are also not reported.	<i>Expand the sector coverage of the public debt reports to include direct non-guaranteed borrowing of public units outside the budgetary central government.</i>
2.3 Classification / sectorization	LNO	The debt reports do not use the standardized presentation or nomenclature of the international statistical standards.	<i>Include tables in the public debt reports which present the PSDS by instrument, as defined in the international statistical standards.</i>
2.4 Time of debt recording, valuation, and consolidation	LO	Valuation of loans follows statistical standards by including accrued principal and interest arrears as well as penalties due to the accumulated arrears. Time of recording is also in line with statistical standards but debt is not consolidated.	<i>Apply the statistical principle of consolidation as the PSDS sector coverage is extended.</i>
3. Accuracy and reliability			
3.1 Source data	LO	All data sources used currently in the production of the public debt reports are timely and the accuracy of source data on external loans and domestically issued debt securities is assured through regular reconciliation and validation exercises. However, to broaden the sector and instrument coverage of the public debt reports additional data sources for local governments, public corporations, and arrears will need to be introduced.	<i>Use available quarterly data on the non-guaranteed debt (including trade payables) of local authorities to expand the sector coverage of public debt reports.</i> <i>Explore how to best use the available data on expenditure arrears (MDAs) and accounts payable (local governments and public corporations) to expand the debt instrument coverage of the public debt reports of Zimbabwe.</i>
3.2 Assessment of source data	O	The annual statements of debt produced by the ZPDMO are subject to audit by the OAG.	
3.3 Statistical techniques	LNO	No statistical techniques are employed to include additional liabilities (such as finance leases) or refine existing ones (such as on assumptions of residency).	<i>Review the materiality of liabilities related to PPPs and finance leases.</i>
3.4 Assessment and Validation of Statistical Outputs	O	The Macroeconomic Consistent Framework Working Group meets regularly to review the consistency between different macroeconomic statistics and where necessary agree any steps to align the outputs.	
3.5 Revision studies	NO	No revision analysis undertaken, and those revisions that are observed are not explained.	<i>Periodically analyze revisions to understand the drivers of revisions and where relevant use the results of the analysis to inform PSDS compilation procedures.</i>
4. Serviceability			
4.1 Periodicity and timeliness	LO	Comprehensive annual debt reports have been published since 2018 and are now published within six months of the end of the year. In addition, quarterly debt reports were introduced in June 2024 and are being published	<i>Regularly update the annual public debt data on the NSDP and update the related metadata.</i>

Table 1. Zimbabwe: Summary Results of PSDS DQAF Assessment

Dimensions/Elements	Rating	Assessment	Priority Recommendations
		within three months of the end of the quarter.	
4.2 Consistency	O	The published PSDS demonstrate good levels of consistency and comparability between publications. In addition, the long timeseries of external and domestic debt back to 1980 provides users with a valuable data source for analyzing economic trends.	<i>Include in public debt reports additional tables to show the recent evolution of public debt (by component) and to demonstrate the drivers of changes in debt stocks.</i>
4.3 Revision policy and practice	LNO	Users are informed in the quarterly data report that the data are preliminary and “pending finalization of the validation and reconciliation process”. However, revisions in debt reports are not highlighted or explained.	<i>Develop, publish, and apply a PSDS revision policy to guide users and PSDS compilers on the process for reporting and classifying revisions.</i>
5. Accessibility			
5.1 Data accessibility	LO	Public debt reports include commentary, tables and charts which serve the needs of different user groups. The initial pages of each report provides a good overall picture of the public debt position in the reported period with more detailed and granular information available in the remainder of each report, including the report annexes. The public debt reports are published on the MoFEDIP website allowing equal access to all users, although they are not released according to a pre-announced schedule.	<i>Disseminate public debt data in a format that supports manipulation, analysis, and re-dissemination (e.g., Excel, csv, SDMX).</i> <i>Disseminate quarterly PSDS through the Joint IMF-World Bank QPSD to facilitate comparison with data from other countries in a standardized format.</i> <i>Publish a release calendar to inform users when each public debt report will be published and disseminate reports in accordance with this calendar.</i>
5.2 Metadata accessibility	LNO	Some limited metadata is included within the text of the debt reports, but there is no structured presentation of metadata to which users can refer.	<i>Provide more comprehensive and accessible metadata within the public debt reports to explain to users the coverage of the reported debt, concepts and definitions applied, data sources, and basis of recording, highlighting any divergencies from the international statistical standards.</i>
5.3 Assistance to users	LO	ZIMCODD re-disseminate public debt data (as published by the ZPDMO) in simplified and alternative formats designed to reach different audiences in the Zimbabwean society. In addition, contact details are provided on the ZPDMO debt reports.	<i>Promote an on-request user service where users can directly raise queries with the public debt compilers and receive responses.</i>
O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed			

Section I. Detailed Assessment and Recommendations

This section on the Detailed Assessment and Recommendations expands on the information provided in the Overall Assessment. It describes in more detail the mission findings in relation to Prerequisites of Quality as well as each of the five DQAF dimensions, highlighting both strengths of the current arrangements and recommendations on areas for improvement.

A. PREREQUISITES OF QUALITY

14. The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating public debt statistics in Zimbabwe is clearly specified and well established in the law. The Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 22:21] of September 2015 (PDM Act) assigns the responsibility of public debt management to the ZPDMO of the MoFEDIP. The reporting of public debt is considered under the Act, and the ZPDMO is required, inter alia, to:

“Keep timely, comprehensive and accurate records of outstanding public debt, guarantees and onlending, in a computerized database, and in particular—

- (i) compile data on all debt servicing obligations of the Government, local authorities, and public entities, and prepare and publish debt statistical bulletins in relation thereto regularly, either globally or on a selective basis as required*
- (ii) validate and reconcile debt data concerning creditors of the Government of Zimbabwe;”*

15. The PDM Act also bestows the responsibility of compiling, verifying, and reporting public debt arrears (including domestic arrears to service providers), and monitoring and reporting implicit and explicit public sector contingent liabilities. Working arrangements of ZPDMO align with its assigned responsibilities which are well executed by three sections, the Front Office, Middle Office, and the Back-Office with a combined staff compliment of around thirty. The core responsibility of data collection, processing, and validation is done by the latter, with seven graduate staff several of whom are certified public accountants. There is evidence of strong and frictionless oversight provided by the top management of ZPDMO.

16. Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies is adequate. The flow of information needed to compile Zimbabwe’s PSDS is efficient and well-coordinated, thanks to the strong legal framework and cooperation among key debt data producing agencies, mainly the AGD and RBZ. Timetables for public debt reporting by MDAs and SOEs are well established in the law. For domestically issued debt securities, there are clear arrangements and timetables for monthly data exchange between the ZPDMO, AGD and RBZ, the latter as the Government agent. Coordination between the ZPDMO and AGD ensures smooth flow of data on Government debt guarantees, domestic payment arrears, and accounts payables reported by MDAs to the AGD under the law.

17. Individual reporters’ data are kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only. Data on debt securities is provided in aggregated form and in broad categories without identifying individual debt holders. A key exemption is assumed debt and guarantees which must be disclosed to Parliament and published under the law.

18. Public debt reporting is ensured through legal mandate. The reporting of public debt by ZPDMO is enshrined in the Zimbabwe Constitution (Section 300 (4a)) and PDM Act (Section 36 (1)). Under the latter, the MoFEDIP is required to report to Parliament on the performance of loans raised and guaranteed by the State, at least twice a year. To meet this requirement, all beneficiaries of loans raised and/guaranteed, as well as borrowing authority granted by the State are required by law to report to the MoFEDIP—SOEs, local authorities, and private sector (guaranteed borrowing). Further, the law specifies detailed information that should be reported on a monthly basis, including latest financial and management accounts (PDM Act, Section 30). However, while the law (PDM Act, Section 22 (5)) specifies that guaranteed borrowing should be reported no later than 10 working days after date of loan agreement signature or drawdown of overdraft, this is not the case. The 2022 Auditor General's Report to Parliament concluded that most local authorities and public entities are not complying with the Act in the submission of their financial statements for audit and some lag as far back as 2018.

19. Staff, facilities, and financing are commensurate with ZPDMO work programs, but computing resources needs enhancement. The human and financial resources devoted to the compilation, processing, and dissemination of PSDS are, in general, commensurate with ZPDMO's assigned responsibilities including coordination of information flow from key stakeholders and production of key debt documents required under the law. However, computing resources particularly the current DMFAS (DMFAS 6.1) are outdated and DMFAS needs immediate upgrade as is it cannot easily handle specific debt instruments (e.g. accounts payables) to provide an overall public debt portfolio of Zimbabwe. Moreover, its functionalities are limited with respect to computing debt transactions as per international standards. There is urgent need therefore to implement the latest version of the DMFAS (DMFAS 7) to (a) allow effective capturing of new debt terms, and (b) interfacing with other systems such as the RBZ's CSD and enhance efficiency in data sharing. It is noteworthy that MoFEDIP has obtained funding from the African Development Bank to secure and implement DMFAS 7. Prior to this the MoFEDIP is in the process of upgrading to an interim version of DMFAS (DMFAS 6.2).

20. The relevance and practical utility of PSDS in meeting users' needs are monitored but could be expanded to the wider user community. ZPDMO middle-office publishes several debt reports for the budget preparation and compliance with its requirement to report public debt to Parliament. These include the *Annual Debt Bulletin*, *Quarterly Public Debt Report*, and monthly debt reports. ZPDMO also submits regularly various debt reports to international organizations including the IMF and the World Bank, the latter to the Debtor Reporting System (DRS). ZPDMO also compiles financing and debt data to inform policymakers on borrowing strategy and for its work of preparing the Medium-Term Debt Strategy and Debt Sustainability Analysis. ZPDMO is also the primary source of external debt used for compilation of the balance of payments by RBZ. ZPDMO does not conduct periodic surveys to get sentiments on the adequacy of its published data. Nonetheless, it received high appreciation from ZIMCODD for its great strides in enhancing debt transparency—they noted "its public debt reports are timely, comprehensive, and facilitate further simplification (by ZIMCODD) for layman's understanding what the growing size of public debt implies".

21. Processes are in place to focus on quality of PSDS. The PDM Act encourages production of high quality PSDS as one of the key functions of ZPDMO as noted above. It validates and reconciles debt data concerning the Government of Zimbabwe including on all public debt arrears (PDM Act, Section 5 (j) and (k)). ZPDMO management is very sensitive to the dimension of accuracy and reliability and promotes the shared concern in routine work programs. Debt related transactions must go through three stages of verification before they are approved and cleared as official record—the initiating officer prepares the claim, a senior officer cross-checks the claim, and Director of Back-office approves and clears the claim for processing and record. Staff training programs emphasize the importance of quality.

Moreover, data compiling officers have access to DMFAS system quality controls and receive expert guidance from UNCTAD in Geneva on routine software issues.

22. Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in the ZPDMO work program.

The processes of monitoring quality are based on indicators for performance in the production of debt reports required under the law—the budget statement to Parliament, annual public debt report, annual and quarterly public debt bulletin, and annual borrowing plan. Data is validated with primary source (accounts payables with the Auditor General and payment claims/ transactions with direct creditors both external and domestic). Steps have been taken to enhance data quality, including improved coverage, periodicity, and timeliness. Notably, the IMF technical assistance mission of March 2023, provided renewed impetus for improvement in coverage of public debt by enhancing data on local authorities and SOEs, including public debt arrears. Consequently, the Treasury issued a Budget Circular (2024 Budget Call Circular) notifying all public entities and local authorities that “*periodic reporting of debt will be a prerequisite for issuance of borrowing certificates and Government Guarantees*”. As noted, plans are underway to implement the updated DMFAS system (Version 7), thanks to generous support from the African Development Bank to secure the requisite software and hardware.

23. Work programs consider and apply trade-off among the dimensions of quality

(e.g. methodological soundness versus accuracy and reliability). While there is scope to increase debt coverage to include accounts payables (whose data is readily available in the OAG, this work has been kept on hold owing, partly, to the need to ensure the data are audited for accuracy and reliability, and partly to the limitations of the current DMFAS system which does not allow recording of debt instruments in aggregated volumes. Internal procedures and the code of practice of professional accountants dictates that public debt data and information must be based on the right sources of statistical data with transparent judgements about the strengths and limitations of the source data. ZPDMO has developed internal procedures to guide data publication, recognizing tradeoffs between quality and coverage (unverified claims by the Auditor General are excluded from reported public debt on domestic arrears to service providers).

Strengths:

- Strong legal framework for public debt management (including collection and dissemination of debt data).
- Strong institutional arrangements for public debt management.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Urgently implement the latest version of the DMFAS system (DMFAS 7) to (a) allow effective capturing of new debt terms, (b) facilitate full compliance with international standards, and (c) interface with other systems to enhance efficiency in data sharing.
- Conduct periodic user surveys to gauge the relevance and practical utility of PSDS in meeting users’ needs.

B. ASSURANCES OF INTEGRITY

24. Public sector debt statistics are produced on an impartial basis. ZPDMO recognizes the importance of ensuring professional independence for personnel compiling statistics. Of the seven officers of the Back-office, three are certified accountants, and three are in the process of certification. PSDS are carefully reviewed and validated before they are cleared for publication and dissemination, to protect the professional independence and good reputation of the ZPDMO. Choices of sources of data as

well as decisions about dissemination, are informed mainly by the need to comply with the law. ZPDMO staff are, in practice, free from political, or other influence, in choosing the most appropriate sources and methods for compiling public debt statistics that must meet the requirement set in the law.

25. The choice of data sources and methods of compilation and verification is driven mainly by accounting principles. Information from other Government departments such as data on state-owned enterprises, and accounts payables are provided under internal data sharing arrangements facilitated by the OAG. Regarding domestic debt, while there is no signed Memorandum of Understanding between ZPDMO and RBZ, data is shared freely monthly. Consideration of statistical concepts and methodologies is largely driven by the tools embedded in the DMFAS software that allow application of international statistical standards in *PSDSG 2013*. Disclosure of information is embedded in the law and implemented with rigor by ZPDMO through internal staff guidelines and written procedures.

26. ZPDMO is allowed to explain technical aspects of public debt statistics contained in its publications. However, all queries must be channeled through the Secretary to the Treasury. Regarding, questions emerging from the Parliament, the OAG collates the responses and transmits them to Parliament on behalf of the Minister. ZPDMO also arranges meetings with key stake orders to explain its position on issues flagged by the Auditor General in the Annual Report to Parliament.

27. The terms and conditions under which public debt statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are referenced in all ZPDMO publications. Zimbabwe's public debt is compiled and published in compliance with the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) of 2013, Act 1 of 2013) Section 300 (4a+4b) and the PDM Act [chapter 22:21], Sections 30 and 36. ZPDMO publications provide specific reference to the law under which PSDS are produced. Under section 300 of the Constitution, *"The Minister responsible for finance must—*

- (a) at least twice a year, report to parliament on the performance of –*
 - (i) loans raised by the State; and*
 - (ii) loans guaranteed by the State;*
- (b) at the same time as the estimates of revenue and expenditure are laid before the National Assembly in terms of Section 305, of the Constitution of Zimbabwe table in Parliament a comprehensive statement of the public debt of Zimbabwe."*

28. Similarly, under the PDM Act [chapter 22:21], Section 30, ZDMO is required to prepare monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on loan and guarantees with strict deadlines. The reports must be submitted to the Secretary of Finance and Accountant -General *"within thirty days of the respective month, quarter, or year concerned"* and subsequently laid before the National Assembly at least bi-annually by the Minister *"within sixty days at the end of the period concerned."* PDM Act specifies information that should be included in the reports which in turn dictates the work program of the ZPDMO—specifically the Middle and Back Office. To a larger extend the granularity of debt information disclosed by Zimbabwe in its public debt publications, far exceed the norm in many countries. It is no surprise that at a meeting held with officials of the Zimbabwe Coalition of Debt and Development (ZIMCDD) they acknowledged with great appreciation the major strides made by ZPDMO in the last few years in enhancing debt transparency and its communication.

29. Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is not publicly identified. The autonomy that the ZPDMO enjoys guarantees that its statistics are not disclosed until they have been tabled in Parliament by the Minister of Finance as per the Constitution and PDM Act. Thus, other than the relevant senior officials of MoFEDIP, no government unit or public servant is expected to have access to the public debt data before they are officially published. Public debt statistics disseminated by ZPDMO

are labeled as its products and as the primary source of the data. The mission could not obtain any evidence that ZPDMO identifies individuals that have access to public debt statistics prior to release nor any changes in methodology or source data in advance of publication. As a good practice, substantive change in source data and/or methodology should be announced in advance.

30. ZPDMO has clear Guidelines for staff behavior which are well known to the staff. All levels of management are aware of the need to ensure irreproachable conduct within and beyond the ZPDMO, and for officials to fulfill their obligations to maintain the public credibility of the debt data they process. To support this noble practice ZPDMO has developed General Guidelines for staff and a Procedures Manual for the Back Office staff to guide them on routine DMFAS operations. All staff must swear every year to abide with the Official Secrets Act and take the Integrity Pledge.

Strengths:

- High level of professionalism in the collection, processing, and dissemination of public debt statistics.
- High level of transparency in disclosure public debt information far exceeding comparable countries in the region.
- Strong ethical standards.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Announce in advance any substantive change in source data and/or methodology used in the public debt reports.
- List individuals (agencies) that have access to public debt statistics prior to their release

C. METHODOLOGICAL SOUNDNESS

31. Public debt reporting for Zimbabwe can be broadly characterized as the debt liabilities of the BCG and central bank borrowing. Although this terminology from the international statistical standards is not used in the ZPDMO public debt reports, the reported gross debt is in line with the statistical standards as it captures outstanding noncontingent contractual liabilities. The Zimbabwe public debt principally includes liabilities in the form of loans and debt securities, although specific other accounts payables are also captured.

32. The reporting of external loans is at nominal value as recommended in the PSDSG 2013. This valuation is driven by nearly all loans being in long term arrears. If only the outstanding loan principal was reported, then this would grossly under report the outstanding debt. However, the transparency of the public debt reports in separately reporting principal arrears, interest arrears and arrear penalties is to be commended.

33. Domestically issued debt statistics are reported using the face valuation (redemption value) which is not the preferred valuation. The PSDS DQAF highlights that debt securities should ideally be captured at nominal value, with the market value included as a memorandum item. Although this practice is not followed in Zimbabwe, it is not unusual in the region to find debt securities only valued at face value.

Figure 1. Coverage and Accounting Basis of Debt Stocks 1/									
Debt securities						Financial Public Corporations 3/ 4/		included	
						Nonfinancial Public Corporations 3/		not included	
						Local Governments		not applicable	
						State Governments		guaranteed borrowing is captured	
						Social Security Funds			
						Extrabudgetary Units			
						Budgetary Central Government			
Loans									
Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)									
Currency and deposits									
Accounts payable									
Insurance, Pensions, and Standardized Guarantee Schemes									
Valuation of debt stock 2/			Consolidation		Arrears 5/		PPPs / Finance Leases		
Face value	Nominal value	Market value	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
1/ Assessment relates to the MoFEDIP's annual and quarterly public debt reports.									
2/ Debt securities are valued at the face value, while loans are best characterized as being at nominal value as they include principal and interest arrears as well as accumulated penalties.									
3/ External borrowing of local governments and public corporations is included in the reported debt statistics only if it is (a) contracted through the budgetary central government with the proceeds on-lent to the public entities, or (b) subject to a government guarantee. Where a guarantee has been called then it is included in the public debt total, whereas uncalled guarantees are captured separately as contingent liabilities. Non-guaranteed debt of the local governments and public corporations is not reported.									
4/ RBZ liabilities "assumed" by government through legislation in 2015, 2021, and 2023 are captured as RBZ debt which is being serviced and settled by government.									
5/ Debt servicing arrears are fully captured as well as expenditure arrears relating to service providers.									

34. The distinction between external and domestic debt is based on the residency principle of the statistical manuals, although with some simplifying assumptions. All debt included under external debt relates to liabilities to nonresident creditors, but some elements of debt reported as "domestic debt" may actually be external debt. Specifically, some of the liabilities to former farmers, as agreed under the Global Compensation Deed, may be external if the farmers are no longer resident in Zimbabwe. Similarly, some domestically issued debt securities could be held on any given date by nonresidents.

35. Public debt reports break down PSDS using standard concepts found in the statistical standards. This includes reporting debt by creditor type, currency, original maturity and remaining

maturity. Other disaggregations are also provided in the annual report, such as external debt by interest rate type.

36. Although there is good coverage of BCG debt and central bank borrowing there is a need to expand the coverage to other subsectors of the public sector. Currently not reported within the ZPDMO public debt reports are the non-guaranteed debts of local governments, extrabudgetary units and public corporations, as well as debts of social security funds. To report comprehensive PSDS the debts of these other subsectors of the public sector should also be captured.

37. There is also a need to expand the coverage of debt instruments. The debt reports capture loans, debt securities and some other accounts payable, but liabilities related to the allocation of special drawing rights (SDRs) should also be capture for comprehensive coverage as should pension related liabilities. With respect to other accounts payable, these should be expanded beyond the agreed compensation for former farm owners and the identified domestic arrears to service providers. In addition, there potentially exist other debt liabilities not currently captured, such as those related to financial leases and to public private partnerships (PPPs).

38. One small area of divergence between the Zimbabwe PSDS reporting and that of the international statistical standards is in the application of the term “publicly guaranteed debt”. The headline debt metric of Zimbabwe is described as “public and publicly guaranteed debt”, as it consists of direct liabilities of central government as well as debt that has been assumed through the calling of guarantees. From the perspective of the macroeconomic statistical standards, called guarantees are simply debt, while publicly guaranteed debt are contingent liabilities for the guarantor (government).⁴ However, the Zimbabwe debt totals explicitly exclude contingent liabilities in the form of guarantees. Instead, information on the contingent liabilities is provided as supplementary information. This presentation is in accordance with the statistical standards and it is only the terminology that is not consistent.

39. Similarly, the use of the term “debt assumption” differs from its use in macroeconomic statistics. In the international statistical standards, debt assumption is a trilateral agreement between a creditor, a former debtor and a new debtor under which the new debtor assumes the former debtor’s outstanding liability to the creditor. In the Zimbabwe debt bulletin the Treasury is described as having assumed the debts of RBZ (in 2015, 2021 and 2023). However, the mission understood that the liabilities have remained on the RBZ balance sheet with the Treasury being obliged to provide the funds (and mechanism) for RBZ to service and settle these debts. Although this is not debt assumption the overall recording at the public sector level remains the same, with the only difference being that these debts remain debts of RBZ and not the central government.

Strengths:

- Published debt reports broadly follow the concepts and definitions of the international statistical standards.
- Valuation of loans is in accordance with statistical standards (although debt securities are recorded at face value which is not the preferred valuation).

Recommendations for improvements:

⁴ “Publicly guaranteed debt is defined as debt liabilities of public and private sector units, the servicing of which is contractually guaranteed by public sector units.” (PSDSG 2013, para. 5.37)

- Include tables in the public debt reports which present the PSDS by instrument, as defined in the international statistical standards.
- Include liabilities related to the IMF SDR allocations within the public debt reports.
- Strictly apply the residency principle when distinguishing between domestic and external debt.
- Expand the sector coverage of the public debt reports to include direct non-guaranteed borrowing of public units outside the budgetary central government.
- As the sector coverage is extended, apply the statistical principle of consolidation so as not to double count any liabilities.

D. ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY

40. Source data on external loans and domestically issued debt securities are subject to extensive validation. The ZPDMO hold instrument-level data related to external loans (principal and arrears) and domestically issued debt securities in the Debt Management Financial Analysis System (DMFAS), purchased from and supported by UNCTAD. In the case of external loans the mission was informed that the information on each loan in DMFAS is reconciled with the creditor on at least an annual basis. While in the case of debt securities, the outstanding stocks and related flows are validated against the data held by the RBZ in the Central Securities Depository (CSD) on a monthly cycle.

41. The quality of the data on external loans is supported by observations on the data submitted to the World Bank's Debtor Reporting System (DRS). The World Bank notes that over recent years, Zimbabwe's reporting of the external public debt to the DRS has improved significantly, particularly in addressing data gaps. This progress has been primarily due to the prompt and effective communication of ZPDMO staff, ensuring timely and accurate provision of the information to the World Bank. Cross-checks and validations by the World Bank help assure external debt data quality and, at an aggregate level, discrepancies in the BCG external debt stock position (excluding penalties and RBZ liabilities assumed by Treasury) between the ZPDMO and DRS positions have significantly narrowed. However, penalties and RBZ liabilities assumed by Treasury are not currently reported to the DRS, and this data gap needs addressing.

42. Some public debt instruments and positions are not held in DMFAS which complicates the process of validating these data. Information not held in DMFAS include the penalties incurred on the external loans in arrears, the RBZ liabilities which are being serviced and settled by Treasury, the domestic arrears to service providers, and the compensation obligation to former farm owners.

43. Validation processes are also complicated by the lack of system integration. By way of example, it was explained to the mission that when a debt security is coming to maturity and needs to be settled then the ZPDMO is informed of this via the DMFAS, and must prepare off-system instructions for the AGD. The AGD adds the payment information in to the IFMIS and passes the payment information to the RBZ (off-system). The RBZ will make the payment to settle the debt security, updating their CSD in the process, and then share an off-system report with the ZPDMO so that they are informed and so the DMFAS can be updated. The various stages where data are shared off-system is inefficient and have potential for the introduction of errors.

44. If Zimbabwe were able to procure the latest version of DMFAS (DMFAS 7) then many of the above challenges and complications could be removed or mitigated. As noted earlier, DMFAS 7 introduces new functionality in several areas, including (i) web services to allow the integration of DMFAS

with other systems such as IFMIS and CSD, (ii) forms to capture and report “non-traditional” instruments including SDR allocation liabilities, and (iii) improvements in the capturing of contingent liabilities.

45. The statements of public debt and contingent liabilities are audited annually by the OAG.

These audits are an important component in the quality assurance of the reported public debt data. For each audit the results are discussed with the ZPDMO so that any remedial actions can be identified and the audits are shared with the Parliament's Public Account Committee and published. However, at the time of the mission there had been a significant delay in carrying out the audits with the latest audited statement being from 2020. The OAG explained that they expected to have audited the statements for 2021 and 2022 by end-March 2025.

46. Given the need to expand the coverage of the public debt statistics, the mission explored the availability of data sources for reporting on other accounts payable.

As part of Zimbabwe's Arrears Clearance and Debt Resolution process the MoFEDIP has begun the process of systematically collecting data on expenditure arrears of the MDAs. In parallel to this the MDAs are expected to begin IPSAS-based accrual accounting in 2025. Local councils submit quarterly management reports to the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, within 1 to 2 months of the end of the quarter, which contain outstanding stocks of all forms of debt including trade payables. The mission was not made aware of any similar quarterly reporting requirements for public corporations.

47. The ZPDMO are recommended to review the available data from MDAs, local authorities and public corporations to develop a strategy for expanding debt coverage to include both other accounts payable and direct non-guaranteed borrowing.

In the view of the mission there is good quality and timely quarterly data available for the debts of local authorities (non-guaranteed loans, borrowing facilities, and trade payables) from the Ministry of Local Government and Public Corporations and therefore these debts could be incorporated in the ZPDMO public debt reporting before any further expansion to the debt coverage.

Strengths:

- Data on external loans is validated at least annually with creditors.
- Data for domestically issued debt securities is reconciled with the AGD and the RBZ, and any differences are investigated and resolved.
- The statements of debt and contingent liability are subject to annual audits by the OAG with the results of those audits presented to Parliament.
- Due to the robust controls on borrowing within the public sector, good data sources are available on non-guaranteed borrowing by public entities which could be used to expand the public debt reporting.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Use available quarterly data on the non-guaranteed debt (including trade payables) of local authorities to expand the sector coverage of public debt reports.
- Explore how to best use the available data on expenditure arrears (MDAs) and accounts payable (local governments and public corporations) to expand the debt instrument coverage of the public debt reports.
- Once DMFAS 7 is procured, develop plans to interface DMFAS with the IFMIS system (to automate debt payments) and the CSD (to automate flows of data on debt securities) in order to make the flow of data more efficient.

- Submit to the DRS penalties by individual loan as well as supplemental information on RBZ liabilities being serviced and settled by the Treasury.
- Review and publish the materiality of liabilities related to PPPs and finance leases.
- Periodically analyze revisions to understand the drivers of revisions and where relevant use the results of the analysis to inform PSDS compilation procedures.

E. SERVICEABILITY

48. The timeliness and frequency of disseminated public debt reports has steadily improved over recent years. Comprehensive annual debt reports have been published since 2018 and have become more timely with the last report for 2023 published within six months of the end of the year. In addition, a statement of public debt as at the end of September is produced for consideration alongside budget documents and this is placed before Parliament before the end of November each year.

49. Quarterly debt reports were introduced in June 2024 and as at the time of the mission two had been published. The first was published within three months of the end of the period and the second within two months. This is in line with good statistical practice which is to disseminate quarterly central government debt data within three months of the end of the quarter. In addition, quarterly Treasury bulletins have included a summary table on the PPG debt stock at the end of the quarter, along with monthly debt servicing payments, since the report for 2024 Quarter 1. As with the quarterly debt reports, these Treasury bulletins are published within three months of the end of the quarter.

50. Although the public debt reports are disseminated in a timely and large predictable manner there is no release calendar informing users of when the next report will be published. It is good statistical practice to pre-announce to users when statistical reports will be published with reports then disseminated on the specified dates. This allows users to anticipate when updated debt data will be available and promotes equality of access as all users know to look for the debt report on the specified dates. This practice is currently not followed in Zimbabwe.

51. Annual debt reports include a long historic debt time series back to 1980. Such a long time series is invaluable to users who wish to explore debt trends and their relationship with wider macroeconomic changes and shifts in fiscal policy. However, the long time series are only available for external debt (in US dollars) and domestic debt (in Zimbabwe dollars). No such time series are available for total public debt, or further breakdowns of debt, such as external debt by bilateral and multilateral creditors, which limits the usefulness of the data to analysts and researchers.

52. Public debt reports almost exclusively focus on the debt stocks as at the end of the reported period and do not show systematically the drivers of changes in debt. Debt reports do include useful commentary on the largest drivers behind movements in debt stocks. However, the inclusion of tables showing the change in debt stocks over a period and how this can be reconciled to the flows during that period would enrich the information in the debt reports. An example table is shown in Appendix III (Table A2).

53. A Macroeconomic Consistent Framework Working Group helps ensure good consistency across the macroeconomic statistical outputs of Zimbabwe. The working group meets three to four times a year and its membership includes representatives from the MoFEDIP (including ZPDMO), RBZ, and the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat). The officials review macroeconomic statistics produced by the different organizations and analyze them to identify and understand the reason for any inconsistencies, correcting outputs where necessary.

54. The mission found good consistency both within public debt publications and with other macroeconomic statistics. Figures in public debt bulletins were found to be consistent with the published government component of external debt, and changes in debt stock appeared to be comparable to net incurrences of liabilities published in the balance of payments, with exchange rate fluctuations understood to explain any differences. The one area where small differences were observed was between debt data as at the end-June 2024, published in the quarterly debt bulletin, and equivalent figures in the quarterly Treasury bulletin for this period. However, the figures in the two bulletin as at end-September 2024 were found to exactly match.

55. The ZPDMO has yet to develop and publish a policy for revisions to the PSDS. It is recommended that, in accordance with international statistical standards, such a policy be developed, published and implemented. Currently, quarterly debt reports flag to users that the data are “preliminary pending finalization of the validation and reconciliation process” and so revisions are anticipated, but the reason for revisions is not explained. For example, the 2022 external debt was revised from USD\$12,827 million to USD\$12,800 million between the 2022 and 2023 publications, but this revision was not highlighted in the 2023 debt report nor was the reason for the revision explained. In this regard, the lack of tables showing the recent time series for debt, highlighted in the paragraph above, hinders the ability for the ZPDMO to transparently show any revisions to the reported data.

56. The Zimbabwe authorities have been disseminating macroeconomic statistics, including PSDS, via the National Summary Data Page (NSDP). The NSDP includes data on government debt (both domestic and external) and external debt (both public and private) as well as other macroeconomic statistics, such as balance of payments, GDP, and consumer price index. Overall coordination of the NSDP lies with the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat), but the MoFEDIP and RBZ disseminate data via the NSDP. With respect to PSDS, annual central government gross debt (and external debt) is disseminated for the period 2019-2021. ZPDMO is encouraged to extend this data series to 2023 and maintain the time series going forward. The NSDP serves users who want to quickly access macroeconomic statistical data for a country and supports users who wish to download the data for further analysis. The associated metadata on the IMF Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB) should also be updated as this provides a structured way to capture important metadata using the framework of the DQAF.

Strengths:

- Quarterly debt reports are published within three months of the quarter end.
- Comprehensive annual debt reports are published within six months of the end of the year.
- The PSDS demonstrate good levels of consistency and comparability between publications.
- The long timeseries of external and domestic debt back to 1980 provides users with a valuable data source for analyzing economic trends.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Publish a release calendar to inform users when each public debt report will be published and disseminate reports in accordance with this calendar.
- Include in public debt reports additional tables to show the recent evolution of public debt (by component) and to demonstrate the drivers of changes in debt stocks.
- Regularly update the annual public debt data on the NSDP and update the related metadata.
- Develop, publish, and apply a PSDS revision policy to guide users and PSDS compilers on the process for reporting and classifying revisions.

F. ACCESSIBILITY

57. The public debt reports are well presented and are structured so as to serve the needs of different user groups. The reports start with summary information on the stocks of external and domestic debt and provide high level commentary on the constituent elements of the total debt stock and principal drivers in any change in debt stock. This information is illustrated with appropriate tables and charts. However, the public debt reports also include much more detailed and granular information which is primarily of interest to expert users or those with an interest in specific debt instruments. This more detailed data includes information on individual loans, Treasury bill and bond issuances, and guarantees, as well as the composition of liabilities on the RBZ balance sheet. Also presented is information on government policies and initiatives of relevance to public debt, such as the clearance of arrears.

58. The public debt reports include limited metadata to help users interpret the data in the report. Examples of where metadata is lacking include the lack of information on the valuation used when reporting Treasury bills and bonds, little information on the coverage of the debt bulletins in terms of public entities and debt instruments, and no explanation of concepts such as public and publicly guaranteed debt and external or domestic debt.

59. Good statistical practice is to provide metadata in a structured format to which users can refer. The DQAF framework provides such a structure and Zimbabwe has developed some metadata using this structure for inclusion in the IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board.⁵ However, this metadata was last updated in 2013 and so is in urgent need of review. It is also recommended that more summary metadata is included in the public debt reports themselves, which could be in tabular format, as footnotes to tables and text, or in an annex.

60. Most public debt data is only available in reports in pdf format and not in electronic formats which support further analysis, or reuse (such as MS Excel, csv files, SDMX). The ZPDMO should enhance accessibility and usability by providing data standardly to all users in these other more user-friendly formats. This change would enable users to manipulate the data more easily, facilitating a more detailed analysis and better-informed decision-making.

61. The ZPDMO should disseminate PSDS via the Joint IMF-World Bank Quarterly Public Sector Debt statistics database (QPSD). The QPSD is subscribed to by over one hundred countries and presents quarterly government or public sector debt data in a standardized format which facilitates cross-country comparability of public debt statistics and exposes a country's debt statistics to a wide group of international users. If Zimbabwe were to subscribe then this would also provide users with access to data in easily manipulable formats such as Excel and SDMX, without the need to post data in these formats on the MoFEDIP website.

62. In recent years the ZPDMO has developed a strong partnership with the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCDD) which supports user access to public debt statistics. ZIMCDD is a social advocacy group that seeks to promote community understanding and engagement in several areas, including government debt. ZIMCDD re-disseminate data published by the ZPDMO in simplified and targeted formats to inform different user groups. This increases the accessibility to users of the public debt data as well as supporting user understanding. The ZPDMO has recognized these benefits and has partnered with ZIMCDD on initiatives such as an annual public debt factsheet.

⁵ <https://dsbb.imf.org/egdds/dqaf-base/country/ZWE/category/CGD00>

63. The public debt bulletins include contact information for the ZPDMO, and the 2023 annual report encourages readers in the preface to share comments and provide feedback. However, the mission found little evidence of significant volumes of user queries. The ZPDMO is therefore encouraged to further promote user feedback. Consideration should be given to providing an email address to users rather than just a physical address and phone number; elaborating on the user services that are offered by the ZPDMO; and conducting outreach to users in the form of workshops, events, and surveys.

Strengths:

- Public debt reports include detailed and useful commentary, tables and charts which serve the needs of different user groups.
- Contingent liabilities, in the form of government guarantees, are clearly reported as supplementary data, with annual public debt reports providing details of each individual loan guarantee.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Provide more comprehensive and accessible metadata within the public debt reports to explain to users the coverage of the reported debt, concepts and definitions applied, data sources, and basis of recording, highlighting any divergencies from the international statistical standards.
- Disseminate public debt data in a format that supports manipulation, analysis, and re-dissemination (e.g., Excel, csv, SDMX).
- Disseminate quarterly PSDS through the Joint IMF-World Bank QPSD to facilitate comparison with data from other countries in a standardized format.
- Promote an on-request user service where users can directly raise queries with the public debt compilers and receive responses.

Appendices

APPENDIX I. OFFICIALS MET DURING THE MISSION

Name	Designation / Title
Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion	
Mr. Andrew Bvumbe	Head of Zimbabwe Public Debt Management Office (ZPDMO)
Ms. Lindiwe Tirivanhu	Director, Debt Settlement & Recording, ZPDMO
Ms. Petronella Mavhinga	Deputy Director, Debt Strategy, Policy and Analysis, ZPDMO
Ms. Judith Masikati	Chief Accountant, Debt Recording & Settlement, ZPDMO
Mr. Leonard Mafunthya	Chief Accountant, ZPDMO
Mr. Henry Dutiro	Accountant, ZPDMO
Ms. Valentine Katiyo	Accountant, Debt Recording & Settlement, ZPDMO
Mr. Collins Simoyi	Economist, Debt Resource Mobilisation, ZPDMO
Mr. Tendai Kachasu	Deputy Accountant General
Mr. Innocent Mugauri	Principal Accountant, Accountant General Directorate (AGD)
Ms. Charmaine Kaseke	Director, Macroeconomic Division, AGD
Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe	
Dr. Innocent Matshe	Deputy Governor
Dr. Nebson Mupunga	Director, Economic Research & Policy Division
Mr. William Kavila	Deputy Director, Economic Research & Policy Division
Mr. Tongai Tarubona	Chief Economist, Economic Research & Policy Division
Mr. Willie Nakunyada	Director, External Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement
Ms. Charity Tembo	Deputy Director, Capital Flows
Ms. Sikhangezile Manyati	Principal Analyst, Capital Flows
Mr. Dishoni Jere	Economist, Financial Markets
Mr. Henry Mushayi	Economist
Office of the Auditor General	
Ms. Rheah Kujinga	Acting Auditor General
Mr. Richard Mukahanana	Acting Deputy Auditor General
Mr. Jealous Vutete	Deputy Director
Ministry of Local Government and Public Works	
Mr. Emmanuel Ngwarati	Chief Director, Finance and Administration
Mrs. Elina Karwi	Director, Strategic Policy Planning Monitoring & Evaluation
Mr. Alpha Nhamo	Chief Financial Advisor
Dr. Thompson Marufu	Senior Accountant
Ms. Theodora Dzvairo	Accounting Assistant
Mr. Manwa Batanayi	
Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development	
Mr. Tashinga Zamba	Manager, Fiscal Justice and Youth Engagement
Ms. Machanyara Midzi	Programme Manager, Social and Climate Justice

Mr. Tinashe Madondo	Senior Programme Officer
Mr. Nimrod Nyaleadyano	M&E Lead
Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa (MEFMI)	
Dr. Patrick Mutimba	Programme Director, Financial Sector Management Programme
Mr. Jacob Mkandawire	Director, Debt Management Programme
Dr. Sehliselo Mpofu	Programme Director, Macroeconomic Management Programme

APPENDIX II. USERS' SURVEY RESULTS

Overview

There were a total of 9 respondents to the user survey, mainly from community organizations and academia or research institutes. Nearly all respondents said that they made use of the national debt bulletins, but other data sources were also used.

All respondents felt that the disseminated PSDS were analytically either useful or very useful. However, a significant minority of respondents raised concerns that the PSDS presentation may represent a biased picture of public sector debt as a result of the partial sector and instrument coverage of debt.

Coverage and concepts

Users were split on their satisfaction with the instrument and sector coverage of the disseminated PSDS. Nearly all respondents cited concerns with respect to the lack of coverage of arrears and other accounts payable, with most also wanting more information on pension liabilities. There was also strong support for the PSDS to be expanded to cover more comprehensively the public sector, in particular with respect to local governments and public corporations.

Periodicity and timeliness

Most respondents who used the official national debt bulletins were satisfied with the timeliness and periodicity of reporting, with some welcoming the recent introduction of quarterly reporting.

Dissemination practices

Users were largely unaware of any specific dissemination practices.

Accessibility and usefulness

Although respondents recognized the PSDS as being analytically useful, there were mixed view on whether sufficient metadata was provided and whether the PSDS presentation was accessible to all user groups.

IMF PSDS USER SURVEY SUMMARY RESPONSES

Survey responders by institution

Financial institutions	Research Institutes	Foreign governments	International organizations	Community organizations	Other
1	3	0	1	4	0

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

						Yes	No
1. The results of this survey will be aggregated and anonymized for reporting purposes, but on occasion it may be helpful to the narrative of the quality report to include specific quotes from users, do you give consent to your responses being quoted?						9	0
		Policy-making	Compilation of other macro-economic statistics	Investment decisions	Academia or research	Other analytical work	No response
2. As a user of PSDS what is your main interest in the disseminated PSDS data?		4	0	0	4	1	0
	Official national debt bulletins and press releases	IMF or World Bank databases and/or publications	Other international organization databases and/or publication	Media reports	Data published on the National Summary Data Page (NSDP)	Private sector summaries and analyses	Other sources
3. From where do you obtain PSDS and related data?		7	6	3	2	3	0

B. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	Undecided
4. In your view, are the disseminated PSDS analytically useful?	5	4	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: The disseminated PSDS are unbiased and accurate.	3	2	2	1	1
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
6. Indicate your level of satisfaction with the timeliness and level of detail of the disseminated PSDS.	3	4	2	0	0

C. COVERAGE AND CONCEPTS

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
7. Indicate your level of satisfaction with the sector coverage of the PSDS (e.g., inclusion/exclusion of budgetary unit, extrabudgetary entities, subnational governments, public corporations).	0	2	4	2	1

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
8. Indicate your level of satisfaction with the coverage of debt instruments (e.g., inclusion/exclusion of loans, bonds, arrears, accounts payable, pension liabilities).		0	4	1	3	1
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
9. Indicate your level of satisfaction with the coverage of public debt of public nonfinancial corporations (i.e., state-owned enterprises).		0	3	1	3	2
	None – coverage is adequate for all debt instruments	Accounts payables (arrears)	Loans	Debt securities	Pension liabilities	Other
10. In your view, which debt instruments are inadequately covered in disseminated public debt?	0	8	3	1	5	0
	None – coverage is adequate for all subsectors of the public sector	Local government / State governments	Public corporations	Budgetary central government	Extra-budgetary units	Other
11. In your view, for which subsector would you like to see more coverage of PSDS?	0	8	6	1	1	0
					Yes	No
12. In your view, is the way that the PSDS outstanding stock positions are valued appropriate (e.g., market, nominal, face, principal outstanding)?					6	3
D. PERIODICITY AND TIMELINESS						
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
13. Indicate your level of satisfaction with the periodicity of disseminated PSDS (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annual).		1	4	2	2	0
				Yes	No	Not sure
14. Do you consider that the PSDS are disseminated in a sufficiently timely manner (i.e., the time lag after the period to which the PSDS pertain)?				3	3	3
E. DISSEMINATION PRACTICES						
		Yes, and the data is released on schedule	Yes, and the data is sometimes released on schedule	Yes, and the data is never released on schedule	No	Not sure
15. Is there a published release schedule/calendar for PSDS and are the PSDS released punctually as per the pre-announced schedule?		3	1	1	2	2
			Yes	No	Not sure	No response
16. Is analysis published to identify and explain the causes of revisions, breaks, adjustments, and discontinuities in time series data and/or unusual changes in economic trends?			3	3	3	0
			Always informed	Sometimes informed	Never informed	Not aware
17. At the time of PSDS dissemination, are users informed whether the nature of data is preliminary, revised or updated?			1	4	1	3
			Always	Sometimes	Never	Not sure

18. Do you receive advance notice as to when major changes will be introduced into the PSDS (such as changes to coverage, methods or data sources)?	0	0	3	6	
F. ACCESSIBILITY AND USEFULNESS					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
19. Do you agree that the disseminated PSDS are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons?	1	3	2	2	1
		Yes, available and accessible	Partial information available	No information available	Not sure
20. Is there comprehensive published source and methods document or information (metadata) readily accessible to users?		3	2	0	4
		Fully consistent	Partly consistent	Not consistent	Not sure
21. To your knowledge are the PSDS largely consistent and reconcilable over time with other macroeconomic data sets like, government finance statistics, national accounts, international investment position, external debt statistics, and monetary and financial statistics?		2	4	0	3

APPENDIX III. STANDARDIZED DEBT TABLES FOR REPORTING PSDS

Table A1. Standardized Quarterly Debt Reporting Table						
	yy/yy	yy/yy	yy/yy	yy/yy	yy/yy
	...	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<u>By maturity and type of instrument¹:</u>						
Short-term by original maturity						
Currency and deposits						
Debt securities						
Loans						
Insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantee schemes						
Other accounts payable						
Long-term, by original maturity:						
With payment due in one year or less:						
Currency and deposits						
Debt securities						
Loans						
Insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantee schemes						
Other accounts payable						
With payment due in more than one year:						
Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)						
Currency and deposits						
Debt securities						
Loans						
Insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantee schemes						
Other accounts payable						
Total gross debt						
Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)						
Currency and deposits						
Debt securities						
Loans						
Insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantee schemes						
Other accounts payable						
<u>By currency of denomination:</u>						
Domestic currency						

Foreign currency						
<u>By residence of the creditor:</u>						
Domestic creditors						
External creditors						
<u>By interest rate type:</u>						
Fixed interest rate instruments						
Variable interest rate instruments						
<u>Memoranda items:</u>						
Debt securities at market value						
Publicly guaranteed debt						
Arrears						

Table A2. Reconciliation between Public Sector Debt Flows and Stocks

Debt Instrument ¹	Debt stocks: Opening balance	CHANGES DURING THE PERIOD							Debt stocks: Closing balance
		Transactions					Other Economic Flows		
		Incurrence of liability		Repayment of liability		Other ³	Revalua- tions ⁴	Other Volume Changes ⁵	
		Principal	Interest ²	Principal	Interest ²				
Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)									
Currency and deposits									
Debt securities									
Loans									
Insurance, pensions, and standardized guarantee schemes									
Other accounts payable									

1. If data for particular instruments are not available then these may be left blank. Further breakdowns of instruments (such as by type, creditor residency, currency) are encouraged.
2. If debt stocks are being reported at face value then interest transactions will generally not impact the change in debt stocks other than interest included in issuance/redemption payments (i.e., discounts/premia) and when interest is in arrears.
3. Other transactions include penalties, debt forgiveness and debt assumption.
4. Most common revaluations are due to foreign exchange rates, where these are material then the provision of further information is encouraged.
5. Additional information should be provided as footnotes to explain the reasons for the other volume changes.

APPENDIX IV. AUTHORITIES RESPONSE TO ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Zimbabwe authorities accepted the findings and recommendations detailed in this report with no additional comments.