

Web Box 3.5 ROSCs and Data Standards Initiatives

Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs). Members can request ROSCs, assessments of observance of standards and codes, in any of the following 12 areas: accounting; auditing; anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT); banking supervision; corporate governance; data dissemination; fiscal transparency; insolvency and creditor rights; insurance supervision; monetary and financial policy transparency; payments systems; and securities regulation. The reports—about 76 percent of which have been published—are used to help sharpen Fund and World Bank policy discussions with national authorities and to strengthen national capacity to participate in, and benefit from, the globalized economy. They are also used in the private sector (including by rating agencies) for risk assessment. Participation in the Standards and Codes Initiative continues to grow. As of end-April 2009, 942 ROSC modules had been completed; 918 of those were completed by member countries of the Fund, and most systemically important countries had volunteered for assessments. Of the full complement of ROSCs completed, 449 were on financial sector standards. Of these, about one-third were related to banking supervision, and the others were fairly evenly distributed (13–19 percent) across the other financial sector standards and codes (securities, insurance, payments and securities settlement systems, and AML/CFT).

Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). Created in 1996 by the Executive Board, the SDDS is a voluntary standard whose subscribers—countries with access to international capital markets or seeking it—commit to meeting internationally accepted norms of data coverage, frequency, and timeliness. SDDS subscribers provide information about their data compilation and dissemination practices (metadata) for posting on the IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB),¹ as well as disseminate macroeconomic and financial data according to advance-release calendars

on their national websites. As of April 30, 2009, there were 64 SDDS subscribers. Following the Seventh Review of the Fund's Data Standards Initiatives in December 2008, the SDDS was modified to require that subscribers indicate in their metadata where statistical practices deviate from internationally accepted statistical methodologies and to encourage subscribers to undertake periodically and publish a data quality assessment.

General Data Dissemination System (GDDS). The Executive Board established the GDDS in 1997 to help IMF member countries improve their statistical systems. The 95 participants in the GDDS at end-April 2009 provide metadata describing their data compilation and dissemination practices, as well as detailed plans for improvement, for posting on the IMF's DSBB. Of the 101 countries and territories that have participated in the GDDS since it was introduced, 6 have graduated to the SDDS. During the Seventh Review it was agreed that the GDDS would be recast to emphasize data dissemination and facilitate graduation to the SDDS, including through closer conformity to SDDS specifications.

To complement the SDDS and GDDS, IMF staff have launched the **Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX)** initiative and the **Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)**. The SDMX initiative, which is being sponsored by seven international organizations including the IMF, aims to develop and use more efficient processes for exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata among international organizations and their member countries by providing standard formats for data and metadata, together with content guidelines and an information technology architecture for exchange. The DQAF is an assessment methodology that was integrated into the structure of the data ROSCs following the Fourth Review of the Data Standards Initiatives in 2001.

¹The website address is <http://dsbb.imf.org/>.