



PERSPECTIVES FOR
THE FUTURE

SEMIANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

October 15, 2020 - April 10, 2021

© 2021 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank

1818 H Street NW

Washington DC 20433

Telephone: 202-473-1000

Internet: www.worldbank.org

This work is a product of the staff of The World Bank with external contributions. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of The World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent.

The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the data included in this work and does not assume responsibility for any errors, omissions, or discrepancies in the information, or liability with respect to the use of or failure to use the information, methods, processes, or conclusions set forth. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of The World Bank concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Nothing herein shall constitute or be construed or considered to be a limitation upon or waiver of the privileges and immunities of The World Bank, all of which are specifically reserved.

Rights and Permissions

The material in this work is subject to copyright. Because The World Bank encourages dissemination of its knowledge, this work may be reproduced, in whole or in part, for noncommercial purposes as long as full attribution to this work is given.

Any queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to World Bank Publications, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA; fax: 202-522-2625; e-mail: pubrights@worldbank.org.

**PULSAR REGIONAL PROGRAM
SEMIANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

**Reporting period from
October 15, 2020
to April 10, 2021**

Date of the report: April 15, 2021

SUBTASK 1: RAISING AWARENESS OF REFORM RATIONALE

Key Project Data

Subtask title: Subtask 1: Raising Awareness of Reform Rationale (P165094; TFA5779: parallel window)

Duration of project: September 15, 2017 - June 30, 2022

Progress to date

Overall performance of Subtask 1 is on track.

Component 1a – Stocktaking of PSA environment: Following the publication of the paper individual country sheets including main feature of PSA environment in PULSAR beneficiary countries have been published on the website.

Component 1b – Awareness raising events: During the period the dissemination webinar was organized to present key findings and messages from the new paper “Drivers of Public Sector Accounting Reform”, discuss impact of political economy and non-technical drivers on reform implementation, and share experience from Albania, Austria, Georgia, and Switzerland on key drivers of Public Sector Accounting Reforms using panel discussion.

Component 1c – Knowledge creation and sharing:

Drivers of Public Sector Accounting Reforms – new knowledge paper was published in February 2021. The implementation of accrual accounting is a long-term project in the public sector, and clarity of direction is important. The paper explores the types of key drivers of public sector reforms, discusses the main challenges and obstacles associated with those drivers, and shares case study experiences from selected countries in an effort to illuminate the way to improved efforts and results in PSA reforms.

The PULSAR program website (pulsarprogram.org) contains a comprehensive library for PSA related documents and info sites with video recordings and materials from PULSAR virtual events. The website is continuously updated with information on upcoming and past PULSAR events including presentations and other learning materials, knowledge products translated into main languages of PULSAR. The PULSAR website has been enhanced and some more features will be added in the forthcoming period.

The PULSAR Newsletter including news, information on the most recent publications, virtual events has been prepared and distributed in November 2020 and the April 2021.

Next steps

Planned knowledge products include: (i) Paper to identify benefits of accrual based Public Sector Accounting as compared to the basic cash-based budget execution reports, (ii) Public Sector Accounting and Financial Reporting Transparency Guide, (iii) Public Sector Accounting Communication Toolkit.

Due to COVID-19 extended pandemic restrictions the organization of the PULSAR events for high level officials is moved to future. In lieu of face-to-face meeting, virtual events promoting latest publications will be organized to engage PULSAR participants.

SUBTASK 2: FINANCIAL REPORTING FRAMEWORKS

Key Project Data

Subtask title: Subtask 2: Financial Reporting Frameworks (P165095; TFA5788: parallel window)

Duration of project: September 11, 2017 - June 30, 2022

Progress to date

Overall significant progress has been achieved under the subtask in terms of activities/deliverables, and progress made towards the objectives of the subtask. Particularly: (i) Financial Reporting Frameworks Community of Practice (FinCoP) has been established following nomination from MOFs and Treasuries of 13 PULSAR beneficiary countries; (ii) FinCoP identified priority topics and knowledge products and ranked these in order of importance; (iii) five face-to-face, including working group, meetings have been organized; (iv) nine Smart Interactive Talks (SITs) has been delivered; (v) six knowledge products have been developed and the planned update of the REPF toolkit has been finalized; (vi) FinCoP team established collaboration with Forum of Accountants General of Latin America (FOCAL), who were actively participating in the latest FinCoP virtual events. In addition, a core team of volunteers from FinCoP has been established. This core team is actively consulted on all the FinCoP activities, including coverage and scope of the agenda for the FinCoP events.

Face-to-face meetings

#	Title	Discussion topics	Venue	Date
1	Inaugural meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latest developments in IPSAS• Progress made towards EPSAS introduction	Vienna, Austria	December 12-13, 2017
2	Second workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similarities and differences between GFSM/ESA/SNA and IPSAS/EPSAS• Sequencing of IPSAS implementation and roadmap development	Vienna, Austria	April 23-25, 2018

#	Title	Discussion topics	Venue	Date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for consolidation of financial statements at the entity and whole of government levels 		
3	Third workshop, jointly organized by STAREP and EU-REPARIS CoP, that took place during Senior Officials Workshop and the Ministerial Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of recent corporate scandals on the accounting profession How technology is changing accounting and auditing The accounting profession's role in the public and private sectors SOEs in the scope of public accounts: enhancing transparency and improving accountability mechanisms 	Vienna, Austria	November 26 – 29, 2018
4	Fourth workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similarities and differences between GFSM/ESA/IPSAS frameworks; International practices in unified Chart of Accounts CoA linkages with IFMIS and typical challenges in rollout 	Winterthur, Switzerland	June 3-4, 2019
5	Fifth workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed asset management IFMIS implementation in the public sector 	Vienna, Austria	November 21-22, 2019

It is worth mentioning that the sixth face-to-face event was originally scheduled to take place in Minsk, Belarus, May 27-29, 2020 to discuss: (i) consolidation of financial statements at different levels of government; and (ii) impact of accrual accounting on budget reporting. However, it was postponed because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that, depending on the development of the ongoing situation, the event may take place in Vienna some time during the CY2c.

Smart Interactive Talks (SITs)

Nine following SITs have been delivered since FinCoP establishment, using KUDO platform. It worth noticing that the eight latest SITs were organized and delivered jointly with EduCoP since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as a new format for PULSAR activities during

the health crisis time. All SITs were delivered in English offering simultaneous translation into three PULSAR official languages: (i) Albanian; (ii) Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian; and (iii) Russian. The six latest SITs also offered simultaneous translation into Spanish for FOCAL colleagues.

#	Title	Platform	Date
1	Accrual Budgeting	KUDO	July 10, 2018
2	How to develop financial reporting and budget literacy programs	KUDO	May 26, 2020
3	Balance Sheet Approach in Times of COVID-19	KUDO	June 23, 2020
4	Financial Reporting and Consolidation in Times of COVID-19	KUDO	July 7, 2020
5	COVID-19 Intervention Assessment Tool	KUDO	October 5, 2020
6	Interpretation of financial information and the use of performance indicators in the public sector	KUDO	November 11, 2020
7	Financial reporting for debt and investment transparency	KUDO	December 1, 2020
8	Strengthening fixed asset management through public sector accounting	KUDO	February 9, 2021
9	The Implications of Sustainability Reporting on Public Sector Accounting	KUDO	March 30, 2021

Knowledge products

The following six knowledge products have been delivered under FINCOP so far:

#	Title	Date
1	Good Practice Template to PSA Reform Roadmap on sequencing of PSA reforms	June 2018
2	Updated version of the REPF (Report on the Enhancement of Public Sector Financial Reporting) Diagnostic Tool	February 2019
3	Benchmarking Guide of Differences between IPSAS/GFS2014/ESA2010	June 2019
4	Multipurpose (unified) Chart of Accounts (MCoA) for financial, budgeting, statistical, performance, and management reporting purposes	August 2019
5	Strengthening fixed asset management through public sector accounting	November, 2020
6	First-time Adoption of Accrual Basis IPSAS	April 2021

The overall performance of the subtask 2 is on track; however, given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the FinCoP team moved toward using virtual working format, including organization of periodic SITs and intensification of delivery of knowledge products.

Conclusions / lessons learned

Participants appreciated the use of group work to stimulate discussions and the use of interactive formats for the face to face meetings. The frank and open discussions along with the detailed practical country experiences shared were also greatly valued.

The recent collaboration with FOCAL network and presentation of experiences of Latin American countries have been considered as an important step forward toward globalization of FinCoP agenda.

To continue and reinforce learning outcomes and, based on feedback received from the participants and taking into account ongoing pandemic situation, FinCoP events will continue to use groupwork and interactive sessions to reinforce learning.

Next steps

FinCoP jointly with EduCoP and FOCAL teams will continue organizing virtual events (SIT) on bi-monthly basis. The topics to be covered by the SITs would be related to: (i) business continuity and capacity building during the times of COVID-19; (ii) first-time IPSAS adoption; and (iii) consolidation at different levels of government, among others.

In terms of the knowledge products, the following deliverables are planned to be developed during the next few months:

#	Product	Due date
2	Book on PSA reform status in PULSAR beneficiary countries	June 30, 2021
3	PULSE assessment tool	December 31, 2021
4	Paper on consolidation at different levels of government	March 31, 2022

SUBTASK 3: ACCOUNTING EDUCATION AND CAPACITY

Key Project Data

Subtask title: Subtask 3: Accounting Education and Capacity (P165096; TFA5772: parallel window)

Duration of project: September 15, 2017 - June 30, 2022

Progress to date

Overall performance of Subtask 3 is on track. Significant progress has been achieved related to outputs under Subtask 3 as per the Results Framework, particularly: (i) Education Community of Practice (EduCoP) has been established. Membership includes representatives from Ministries of Finance, universities, and Professional Accountancy Organizations (PAO) of beneficiary countries involved in PSA education development. (ii) EduCoP has convened four face to face Community of Practice events before the pandemic. Agendas for each of the events are available in the PULSAR website. (iii) nine Smart Interactive Talks (SITs) have been delivered.

EduCoP has continued to adapt to the current context as per COVID-19 restrictions and has fully moved to virtual events, a modality that is expected to continue for the near future. On average, one event was conducted each month, either as an EduCoP event or as a joint FinCoP/ EduCoP event, further events are being shaped taking into account the results of the recent survey completed in March 2021.

Face-to-face meetings

#	Title	Discussion topics	Venue	Date
1	Inaugural meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latest developments in IPSAS• Progress made towards EPSAS introduction	Vienna, Austria	December 12-13, 2017
2	Second workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educational pathways designed for the development of public sector accounting professionals.	Vienna, Austria	April 23-25, 2018

#	Title	Discussion topics	Venue	Date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of CFRR toolkit to help for integrating PSA into educational curricula • Good practice examples of PSA education in participating countries and Austria 		
3	Third workshop, jointly organized by STAREP and EU-REPARIS CoP, that took place during Senior Officials Workshop and the Ministerial Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and practices on the development of educational pathways for the development of accounting professional in PULSAR countries. • Mechanisms of implementing “Training of Trainers” (ToT) approach • Results of Good Practice Guide Survey were presented and a working group for development of a Good Practice Guide on Continuing Professional Development in Public Sector Accounting was established 	Vienna, Austria	November 26 – 29, 2018
4	Fourth workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors in the development of a PAO membership tier for public sector accountants • Exemption model to coordinate the development of accounting professionals among various educational institutions • IMF presented its paper on Implementing Accrual Accounting in the Public Sector • Working session on refining Country Strategy and Action Plans for the roll-out of the PSA ToT activity 	Ljubljana, Slovenia	April 8-9, 2019

(iii)The IPSAS Training of Trainers (ToT) Program for the core group of trainers from PULSAR participating countries was completed. A total of seventy-nine (79) participants were trained by ACCA and the end of course assessment pass rate was 97%. The persons trained were from

the Ministry of Finance, universities involved in accounting programs, Professional Accounting Organizations or Government training academies. Four training sessions were completed as follows:

Language	Location	Status
English	Vienna	Completed in October 2019
Albanian	Tirana	Completed in November 2019
Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian	Sarajevo	Completed in December 2019
Russian (#1)	Batumi	Completed in January 2020

Following the IPSAS ToT program, the participants enrolled to do the online ACCA IPSAS Certification Program. In order to maximize the benefits of this program for the participant countries and due to the fact that as of the end of December, 2020 there were still participants who had not yet completed their certification, the team discussed this issue with ACCA and obtained a 6-month no cost extension for the remaining participants. To date, this ongoing program has benefited over 60 trained participants who have attained the ACCA IPSAS certification.

Smart Interactive Talks (SITs)

#	Title	Platform	Date
1	Accountability. Now	Webex	June 27, 2018
2	Is cash still king? Benefits of accrual information through education programs	KUDO	April 30, 2020
3	How to develop financial reporting and budget literacy programs	KUDO	May 26, 2020
4	Balance Sheet Approach in Times of COVID-19	KUDO	June 23, 2020
5	Financial Reporting and Consolidation in Times of COVID-19	KUDO	July 7, 2020
6	COVID-19 Intervention Assessment Tool	KUDO	October 5, 2020
7	Interpretation of financial information and the use of performance indicators in the public sector	KUDO	November 11, 2020
8	Strengthening fixed asset management through public sector accounting	KUDO	February 9, 2021
9	The Implications of Sustainability Reporting on Public Sector Accounting	KUDO	March 30, 2021

A survey on “PULSAR EduCoP progress update and 2021 workplan” was launched on February 16, 2021 among PULSAR EduCoP members in all PULSAR languages. The objectives of the Survey were to receive an update of participating countries’ status on scaling up the IPSAS ToT Rollout; and to identify key priorities for further support within PULSAR EduCoP work.

The survey was open until the end of March, aiming at maximizing member participation. Responses were received from around 80% of EduCoP members representing 11 of the 13 PULSAR participating countries. Despite the slowdown caused by COVID-19, the survey results demonstrated a strong commitment of participating countries to initially agreed plans for disseminating a high-standard IPSAS-based accounting education training. The Survey results and findings will be presented and discussed in more detail during our upcoming EduCoP event: "Accounting Education in the Public Sector: Updates on IFAC initiatives and tools and Presentation of Survey results on PULSAR EduCoP progress update and 2021 workplan" on April 21, 2021.

Knowledge products

The following knowledge products have been delivered under EduCoP so far:

#	Title	Date
1	Accrual Based Accounting Core Competency Framework for Public Sector Finance Professionals	September 2018
2	Toolkit: Public Sector Accounting Education Plan Educational Pathways for the Public Sector based on IES	2018

Conclusions / lessons learned

Participants continue to appreciate the ability to interact with other PSA education stakeholders and MoF representatives and see this as a useful way to stimulate discussions, collaboration, and coordination on the topic. The opportunity that these events provide for sharing detailed practical country experiences is greatly valued. Moreover, the ongoing collaboration with other networks such as FOCAL (Latin-American Network of Government Accountant Generals) has provided further opportunities for learning experiences from other regions. Other priority topics include development of IPSAS knowledge, development of curriculum, materials, trainers, and certifications, and potential partners/resources. These topics were addressed in large part through the PSA ToT. Because many representatives from government and universities were not familiar with IES technical content, there was a focus on developing foundational knowledge in accounting education, IES and related core competencies throughout EduCoP’s delivery. Another priority area included increasing the newly established cooperation between Governments, universities and PAOs. To address this,

the establishment of a PSA Educational Committee at country levels has been encouraged. In sharing PSA educational pathways, many countries expressed a need for strengthening dialogue at the country level. In response, the team will strive to support dialogue at the country-level by participating in country-level PSA steering committee meetings. The joint EduCoP/FinCoP Smart Interactive Talks and the incorporation of other regional networks such as FOCAL are considered good practices and will be continued.

Next steps

The team will revise the workplan based on the results of the latest survey, which will be presented and discussed within EduCoP members during the next EduCoP SIT. Further support in the post IPSAS ToTs processes is foreseen, including scaling up IPSAS training to the member country programs and cascading the ToT to the next level of trainers. Potential approaches under discussion in consultation with PULSAR member countries include whether this support will be done at country or at a regional level. These activities could involve consultancy support to the member countries. Other activities under consideration are (i) more frequent virtual workshops for country specific work with focal points from Government teams; (ii) a potential knowledge product on 'IPSAS education' in post covid19 world; and (iii) the continuation of webinars and virtual meetings not only for EduCoP but also joint EduCoP/FinCoP activities.

THE PULSAR PROGRAM IS

MANAGED BY:


CO-FUNDED BY:



 **Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Finance**

CFRR 
**Centre for Financial
Reporting Reform**



 **Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra**

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO