

### RECENT & UPCOMING TA MISSIONS

#### March

PFM	PNG	PEFA Self-Assessment Training
	Solomon Is.	PFM Reform Roadmap Development
		Strengthening Non Tax Revenue (NTR) 1 <sup>st</sup> Stage
	Tokelau	PEFA Assessment
	Samoa	Strengthening Non Tax Revenue
Nauru	Roadmap revisions and medium-term budgeting	
Tax	Palau	Public consultation and dialogue
	Kiribati	Kiribati Adviser selection
Statistics	Cook Is.	Quarterly National Accounts and Balance of Payments
	Solomon Is.	National Accounts
	Regional - Nadi	Measuring Tourism in the Pacific Conference
	Fiji	National Accounts
Financial Supervision	Regional - Sydney	Pacific Private Sector Development Donor Group Meeting
Macro	Samoa	Develop revenue forecasting methodology
	Regional_ Suva	Workshop on Monetary Policy Analysis & Operations
	Regional_ Nadi	Workshop on Fiscal Analysis and Forecasting (FAF)
		WB Debt Sustainability Workshop

#### April

PFM	Nauru	Roadmap revisions and medium-term budgeting
	Solomon Is.	Strengthening Non Tax Revenue (NTR) 1 <sup>st</sup> Stage
	Vanuatu	Strengthening Internal Audit
	Fiji	Support PFM roadmap Development, Budget Analyst training - MTB
	PNG	FMIS/ICT Assessment and PEFA Self-assessment follow-up
	Niue	Planning/Budgeting coordination
Tax	Nauru	Develop Tax Reform Agenda
	Palau	Prepare Tax Reform Agenda

#### IN THIS ISSUE

Recent & Upcoming TA Missions	1
Meetings, Seminars & Workshops	2
TA Issues: IMF Online Learning	2
Country TA Strategies: Samoa	4

#### April

Statistics	Fiji	National Accounts E&I
	Vanuatu	National Accounts Rebase
	Kiribati	National Accounts
	Regional_ Noumea	Workshop on household income and expenditure surveys
Financial Supervision	Tonga	Preparation for On-Site Examination
	Regional - Guam	Risk Based Banking Supervision Training for Palau/RMI/FSM
Macro	Palau	Develop revenue forecasting methodology
	Samoa	Develop macro-fiscal projection framework

#### May

PFM	Kiribati	Follow up on debt/cash management policy
	Nauru	Fixed Asset Valuation/ Annual Financial Statements
	Solomon Is.	Phase 2 - Scoping Study for Strengthening of NTR
		Follow-up on PFM Roadmap
Samoa	Wrap-up of review on NTR	
Tax	Regional-Cook Is.	Deep Sea Mining Workshop (jointly with SPC-EU DSM Project)
	Tuvalu	Meet new Commissioner & review compliance
Statistics	Regional - Guam	National Accounts Workshop for Palau/RMI/FSM
	Palau	National Accounts
	FSM	National Accounts
Financial Supervision	Tonga	Onsite examination of a bank (2 weeks)
Macro	Tonga	Develop macro projection framework
	Regional - Guam	Long-term fiscal planning workshop for Palau/RMI/FSM

## MEETINGS, SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

### WORKSHOP ON FISCAL ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING, NADI, FIJI, 10-20 MARCH

The workshop was presented by Paolo Dudine and Machiko Narita of the IMF's Institute for Capacity Development; Shinichi Nakabayashi of the Singapore Training Institute; and [Doug Hostland](#), macroeconomic advisor at PFTAC.

The workshop focused on providing participants with an overview of key fiscal issues and the macroeconomic effects of fiscal policy, as well as introducing practical tools for forecasting and analyzing revenues and expenditures, debt sustainability, and for preparing a baseline fiscal projection. [Doug Hostland](#) also made a presentation on the specific fiscal challenges related to natural disasters.

In addition to lectures, the workshop included an exercise in which participants developed baseline fiscal projections for Fiji; small discussion groups, blending lectures with applications based on another country case (India); discussion of the fiscal analysis in recent Article IV staff reports for PICs; and an un-programmed session where participants discussed the fiscal forecasting methodologies in their countries.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ISSUES

### IMF EXPANDS TRAINING THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING

By [Ellen Nedde](#), Unit Chief, IMF Institute for Capacity Development

The IMF has entered an exciting new phase in its training program, with the adoption of a new online learning program designed in partnership with edX, the nonprofit online learning initiative founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With this partnership, the IMF is able to expand the reach of its training program to member country officials and to offer access to its training courses to a wider public audience through so-called massive open online courses (MOOCs).

These new courses are designed with short video segments interspersed with quizzes and hands-on exercises, and include a discussion forum to allow participants to network and discuss course content. The use of computer grading saves on instructor time and means that the IMF can allow virtually unlimited enrollment. The IMF's first online course reached 320 government officials, compared with 40 officials that could normally be accommodated in a face-to-face course at headquarters. The public courses will likely attract many more.

### WORKSHOP ON MONETARY POLICY ANALYSIS AND OPERATIONS, NADI, FIJI, 24-28 MARCH

The workshop was organized jointly by Garreth Rule and Ole Rummel of the Bank of England's Centre for Central Banking Studies, and [Doug Hostland](#), macroeconomic advisor at PFTAC.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide participants with a conceptual framework for developing a deeper understanding of the constraints faced by central banks in the region. The specific focus in this course was on the monetary policy implications of weak interest rate transmission, limited international capital mobility, and chronic excess liquidity, all common features in the region.

The workshop involved a mix of lectures, discussion of country experience, and model-based exercises. Lectures covered both strategic and operational aspects of setting monetary policy. Two practical exercises were used to reinforce key elements of the lectures, using a stylized (FPAS) model designed to provide intuition for main linkages underlying the monetary policy transmission mechanism.

---

The courses are available to officials worldwide, including in the Pacific region, and will usefully complement the workshops, training and bilateral TA provided by PFTAC. Given the high cost of travel in the region, on-line courses such as these courses may be especially valuable to Pacific Island government officials. Courses will also soon be open to the general public, and should be of particular interest to university faculty and students.

Of course, as with any new initiative, there will be a learning process involved in getting courses just right and in increasing accessibility. But this is a great opportunity, and officials throughout the region are encouraged to try them out.

#### Upcoming Courses

The IMF is offering three online courses in 2014.

#### Financial Programming and Policies, Part 1: Macroeconomic Accounts & Analysis (FPP.1x)

This six-week course provides an introduction to financial programming, presenting the principal features of the accounts of the four main sectors that comprise the macroeconomy (real, fiscal, external, and monetary) and their interrelations. The course may be taken as a stand-alone introduction to the macroeconomic accounts, and will also serve as a prerequisite for eligible officials who

apply to the two-week residential FPP course, where the focus shifts to policy issues and the design of a financial program.

**Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSAx)**

This five-week course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of debt sustainability analysis and a medium-term debt management strategy framework as performed by the IMF and the World Bank.

The course will: (i) introduce the main principles of debt sustainability; (ii) cover recently updated DSA frameworks-both for advanced and emerging markets and for low-income countries-with an emphasis on country data; (iii) present a medium-term debt management strategy (MTDS) framework; and (iv) illustrate debt sustainability analysis under uncertainty.

**Energy Subsidy Reform (ESRx)**

This two-week course builds on an extensive cross-country analysis, which is reported in the recently published IMF book on “Energy Subsidy Reform: Lessons and Implications,” to make recommendations on how to best implement reforms aimed at reducing state subsidies on energy.

In the first part of the course, economists from the IMF will introduce the definition and measurement of subsidies, and then describe the economic, social, and environmental implications of subsidies. The second part of the course has two principal purposes: first, to review what works best in energy subsidy reform, in light of country experiences globally; and second, to illustrate successes and failures in particular country contexts by summarizing some case studies.

**Where Do I Sign Up?**

The IMF plans to offer its online courses both as courses exclusively for government officials, and as courses open to the general public (MOOCs). Government officials are welcome to take advantage of either option.

- For those courses exclusively for government officials, registration will take place through the IMF Institute for Capacity Development e-catalog: <http://imf.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Catalog/Online-Learning>. Currently, registration is open for the very first offering of the DSAx that begins on April 21, 2014. Over 400 officials have already registered. Registration closes on April 15, 2014.
- Registration is now open to the general public for all three course MOOCs at <https://www.edx.org/school/imfx>. The FPP.1x course begins on June 2, 2014. The DSAx and ESRx courses will begin in Fall 2014 (exact dates to be decided).

**Questions?**

Please send any inquiries to [ICDinfo@imf.org](mailto:ICDinfo@imf.org).



The banner features the International Monetary Fund logo on the left and the edX logo below it. To the right, the text reads: "IMF Online Courses", "Now Open to the Public", "Sign up @", and "www.edX.org/school/imfx". A QR code is positioned on the right side, and a Twitter hashtag "#IMFX" is located above it. The background of the banner shows a stylized globe and architectural lines.

## COUNTRY TA STRATEGIES



SAMOA

In the **Public Financial Management** area, inputs are expected to be relatively small given the large project-based support available to support the Ministry of Finance's PFM reform plan. A PEFA self-assessment and formal assessment (RBM objective 1.1) were conducted in September/October 2013. In addition, PFTAC in coordination with staff from the Australian Department of Finance and Deregulation has been assisting with a review of line ministry service charges. PFTAC will be available to provide follow-up support to previous work to strengthen the medium-term budgeting system (RBM objective 1.5), and (in cooperation with the Australian Department of Finance and Deregulation) improving management of non-tax revenues.

In the **tax revenue policy and administration** area, Samoa has made significant improvements in enhancing its overall administrative capacity through the 2010 – 2012 Institutional Strengthening Project (ISP). The ISP has been funded through multilateral aid and resources to implement reforms have been drawn from NZ Inland Revenue. However, the PFTAC 2013 mission to review tax policy and administration identified a number of reforms that would contribute to a more effective tax system and tax administration. PFTAC is available to assist Samoa in developing and implementing these reforms but resources have been made available under phase 2 of the ISP to commence policy and administrative reforms. . Amongst the reforms recommended by PFTAC was the introduction of a new Small Business Presumptive Tax regime. An adviser has been recruited to establish the framework for this reform and PFTAC will provide TA if requested. Given the success of phase 1 of the ISP, Samoa will be encouraged to play a greater role in supporting other PICs in their reform process.

In **macroeconomic statistics**, Samoa is relatively well advanced against the overall results framework; based on PFTAC advice, it produces quarterly National Accounts on 2 independent measures (RBM objective 4.1) with production of a range of income indicators (RBM objective 4.3). Balance of payments (BOP) statistics are now being developed according to BPM6 standards (RBM objective 4.9). Further development is expected to continue under the ISP, although PFTAC can assist with major methodological developments and rebases in the national accounts (RBM objective 4.1 & 4.2) and IMF headquarters will offer support in BOP and GFS.

In **financial sector supervision**, PFTAC will be ready to assist CBS adapt the base set of prudential returns developed by AFSPC to the Samoan context in advance of the regional implementation of RBNZ's Financial Sector Information System (FSIS) (RBM objective 3.1 & 3.2). CBS currently relies on the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority (APRA) for training support in conducting on-site bank examinations, but PFTAC would be ready to supplement this if requested. The Association of Financial Supervisors of Pacific Countries AFSPC will hold its annual banking supervision workshop in Samoa this September.

In **macroeconomic statistics**, Samoa is relatively well advanced against the overall results framework; based on PFTAC advice, it produces quarterly National Accounts on 2 independent measures (RBM objective 4.1) with production of a range of income indicators (RBM objective 4.3). Balance of payments (BOP) statistics are now being developed according to BPM6 standards (RBM objective 4.8). Further development is expected to continue under the ISP, although PFTAC can assist with major methodological developments and rebases in the national accounts (RBM objective 4.1 & 4.2) and IMF headquarters will offer support in BOP and GFS.