

PEMPAL TCOP Workshop Concept

Experiences with Designing and Implementing Public Sector Accounting Reforms.

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenija

Dates: April 18-19, 22d 2011 (2 days, starting from the afternoon on April 18th).

Background

The main objective of PEMPAL program is to strengthen professional skills of public finance specialists in the member countries and support them in implementing various aspects of reforms of their national PFM systems. The main tools used by the program to achieve this objective are exchange of experiences and knowledge transfer among the practitioners.

PEMPAL Treasury Community of Practice has identified several themes of priority interest for its members. One of such themes is public sector accounting and reporting reform. The theme is of particular relevance for PEMPAL member countries as the majority of them are either already reforming their public sector accounting and financial reporting systems or are in the process of designing the respective reforms. The scope of reforms being implemented or considered varies by country, but in many instances the reforms involve transition to broader use of the elements of accrual accounting and introduction of national public sector accounting standards aligned to various degrees with IPSAS. The event organized by TCOP in April in Ljubljana is part of activities envisaged under the public sector accounting and reporting theme of TCOP activity plan for 2011-2012.

The event is linked to a conference on international trends in public sector accounting reforms organized by CEF on April 20-21st. The conference will discuss the increased role of accounting in the public sector, especially in the post financial crisis era, revisit its evolution in the recent years and discuss lessons learned and offer recommendations on the design of future public sector accounting reforms. The concept and draft agenda of the conference are available (attached).

Objectives

The main objective of the TCOP workshop is to offer an opportunity to the interested TCOP members to exchange experiences in designing and implementing public sector accounting reforms with a particular emphasis on experiences in designing and implementing public sector accounting standards.

TCOP sessions are expected to not duplicate the sessions of the CEF conference, but will offer opportunities for more interactive and less formal discussions among the members than traditional conference format allows.

The first two days of TCOP sessions are also expected to prepare TCOP members for more active participation in the CEF conference and help them to formulate the questions to be raised with the experts at the conference.

Contents

Based on the preferences expressed by TCOP leadership group during the meeting held on February 22d, the main focus of TCOP discussions will be on conceptual issues in designing and implementing public sector accounting standards.

TCOP leadership group has come up with the list of questions proposed to be discussed at the event. The questions initially proposed by countries are listed in annex 1. The meeting held on February 22d decided to focus the discussion on conceptual issues. The main questions for the TCOP session are therefore proposed, as follows:

- Pros and cons of transition to accrual accounting in the public sector;
- Issues to be considered when designing national public sector accounting standards;
- Pros and cons of direct adoption of IPSAS versus development of the national standards
- Sequencing the implementation of IPSAS based standards

All PEMPAL countries are invited to take part in the event. The total number of expected participants is 35-40 (including the experts). The format of the workshop will be very informal and aimed at stimulating the debate and encouraging maximum participation of the country representatives. The working languages will be Russian, English and Serbo-Croatian, using simultaneous interpretation.

The workshop will start in the afternoon on April 18th. Expert presentation on issues to be considered when designing public sector accounting reform will set the stage for thematic discussions. It will be followed by the presentation of the results of thematic survey of the member countries. The main objective of the survey is to give a snapshot of the basic features of the accounting practices used in the member countries and reflect on the scope and stage of ongoing or planned public sector accounting reforms. Survey results are already partially available from the September member survey undertaken in preparation for the Dushanbe workshop.

The introductory presentations will be followed by a series of country case presentations by the member countries that will start at the end of the first day and will continue at the beginning of the second day of the event. The cases selected for these presentations will reflect on the countries well advanced in implementation of respective reforms and will illustrate different approaches to the design of the reforms. The particular focus of the country presentations will be on lessons learnt, mistakes to be avoided and associated risks. Time will be reserved for questions and answers and a follow up whole group discussion on the country cases presented.

The second half of the second day will be devoted to discussions of practical questions in small groups facilitated by the experts. The groups will also be tasked formulate the questions that would be good to raise at the CEF conference.

The event will be facilitated by the World Bank team working with TCOP. Selected experts involved in CEF conference will be invited to join TCOP sessions.