Global Consultation Round 3 - Update of the World Bank DRS

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Overview

This report presents the preliminary findings from Round 3 of the Global Consultation on the update of the World Bank's Debtor Reporting System (DRS). As the final stage of consultation process, Round 3 serves as an important step in validating the revised reporting framework prior to implementation. It was designed to collect structured, operational feedback on the proposed DRS framework in order to assess its practicality and overall readiness.

The consultation centered on an Excel-based version of the revised template, emphasizing the core reporting structure, supplementary modules, and reference tables. The approach enabled respondents to review the framework in a format closely aligned with its intended application and provide both quantitative assessment and detailed qualitative feedback on its design and usability.

The consultation targeted key stakeholders directly involved in sovereign and external debt statistics, including debt management offices, central banks, national statistical offices, international organizations, and academic experts. Responses were collected between March 12 and April 12, 2026.

The report is structured as follows: **Section I** summarizes key findings and the distribution of responses; **Section II** synthesizes qualitative feedback on the revised template; **Section III** outlines the Debt Statistics Team's response; and **Section IV** outlines next steps toward implementation.

Section I: Key Findings and Response Distribution

A total of 75 respondents participated in Round 3, representing institutions from over 50 countries across all geographic regions. The largest share came from Debt Management Offices and Ministries of Finance (approximately 51%), followed by Central Banks (approximately 39%), International Organizations (8%), and Academia and Researchers (3%). This distribution is broadly consistent with prior rounds.

In terms of debt management systems, respondents reported a diverse landscape of tools and platforms. A large share indicated the use of UNCTAD’s DMFAS across different versions, while others reported using systems provided by COMSEC. At the same time, a significant number of respondents rely on in-house solutions or Excel-based frameworks, ranging from more advanced internal data systems to simpler spreadsheet-based approaches. A smaller group noted the use of commercially licensed third-party platforms, while some respondents indicated that they do not currently operate with a dedicated debt management system. Overall, the responses reflect a high degree of heterogeneity in system environments across countries. Respondents were asked to assess four

dimensions of the revised DRS template using a scale from 0 to 10. After excluding one invalid submission, a total of 74 valid responses were retained.

Across all components, the revised DRS framework received consistently strong evaluations, with average scores clustering in a relatively narrow and favorable range slightly above 7. This indicates a broadly positive assessment of both the design and usability of the proposed reporting framework.

The overall template was rated at 7.3, suggesting that, on average, respondents view the revised DRS as well-structured and fit for purpose. The core template received a similar assessment (7.2), indicating general confidence in the main reporting architecture, while also reflecting some concerns around complexity and reporting burden. The supplementary modules and reference tables were rated marginally higher (7.4 and 7.5, respectively), pointing to strong appreciation for the additional detail, guidance, and flexibility they provide in supporting more comprehensive and standardized reporting.

Taken together, the tight distribution of scores across components signals a high degree of internal consistency in respondents' evaluations, with no major divergence in perceptions across different parts of the framework. The slightly stronger ratings for modules and reference tables further suggest that respondents value the supporting structures that facilitate implementation, even as they express some caution regarding the operational demands of the core template itself.

Overall, the findings suggest strong support for the direction and design of the revised DRS, while highlighting the need for a carefully managed implementation phase. In particular, the concerns raised are less about the conceptual framework and more about countries' ability to operationalize the new requirements, underscoring the critical role of phased rollout, system integration, and targeted capacity building in ensuring successful adoption.

Section II: Qualitative Feedback on the Revised DRS Template

A substantial share of respondents provided detailed written feedback. The qualitative input converges around seven core themes that, taken together, paint a clear picture: **The updated DRS is widely seen as conceptually strong and aligned with international statistical standards, but its successful implementation will depend critically on addressing operational complexity, system readiness, and capacity constraints.**

1. Broad endorsement of the consolidated template structure signals strong support for the direction of reform. The shift from fragmented reporting forms to a unified framework is viewed as a major step toward consistency and usability. At the same time, concerns about file size and manageability suggest that usability at scale will need to be carefully managed during implementation.

2. Concerns related to data granularity and reporting requirements highlight a key consideration for implementation. While the expanded scope of variables is understood as necessary to close data gaps and align with international standards, several

respondents raised considerations regarding the practical implementation of certain expanded reporting requirements. In particular, feedback indicates that some elements of the proposed framework may require additional effort to operationalize, especially where they introduce more detailed classifications, greater data granularity, or new data dimensions that are not consistently captured in existing systems. More broadly, respondents noted that the scope and structure of the reporting framework may imply a higher level of reporting effort, particularly for countries with more limited technical or institutional capacity. The volume of data fields and supporting materials was highlighted as an area that may require phased implementation or prioritization to ensure smooth adoption. Some also indicated that aligning existing systems and processes with the revised requirements could involve adjustments over time. In addition, several respondents observed that national data systems are often tailored to specific regulatory or statistical frameworks and adapting them to accommodate enhanced requirements may entail system refinements and process updates. Overall, the feedback suggests the importance of a calibrated implementation approach that supports countries in progressively integrating the enhanced reporting framework while maintaining feasibility and sustainability.

3. The need for comprehensive reporting manuals and clear field-level guidance emerged as a critical requirement for effective implementation. Respondents across regions indicated that, in the absence of detailed definitions and instructions, it is difficult to fully interpret the reporting requirements and assess their practical implications. This highlights the importance of structured documentation that clearly explains concepts, data fields, and expected reporting practices, including embedded guidance within the template itself. The feedback also points to the importance of accompanying capacity-building efforts to support adoption. Timely training, user-friendly manuals, and practical examples will be essential to ensure that reporting entities can confidently understand and apply the new requirements. Together, these elements will help promote consistency, reduce ambiguity, and enable a smoother and more sustainable implementation process.

4. The need to ensure smooth system integration and interoperability emerged as an important implementation consideration. Feedback highlighted the importance of aligning the revised template with existing platforms to facilitate efficient data reporting and avoid disruptions during transition periods. This includes ensuring continued compatibility with current system versions while new upgrades are being introduced. The feedback also points to the value of close coordination with system providers to support integration of the revised reporting framework, thereby promoting consistency and interoperability across platforms.

5. Transition readiness and implementation capacity emerged as important considerations for the rollout of the revised framework. Many respondents indicated the need for a substantial transition period to align existing systems, processes, and institutional arrangements with the new requirements. Feedback suggests that implementation will benefit from a phased approach that allows sufficient time for system enhancements, process adjustments, and internal coordination. Respondents noted that

adapting to the revised framework may coincide with ongoing system upgrades and other reporting commitments, underscoring the importance of careful sequencing and planning. The consolidation of data currently managed across different institutional units was also highlighted as an area that may require strengthened coordination mechanisms. Overall, these inputs point to the value of a well-calibrated transition strategy that supports countries in progressively adopting the revised framework in a sustainable and efficient manner.

6. Technical and methodological alignment emerged as an important area for further refinement of the revised framework. A subset of respondents, particularly from international organizations, provided detailed observations highlighting the importance of ensuring consistency with evolving international statistical standards and classifications, as well as clarity in how specific concepts and coding structures are applied within the template. More broadly, the feedback points to the need for clear methodological guidance and user-friendly design features to support consistent interpretation and reporting. Suggestions included enhancing standardization through predefined options, allowing appropriate flexibility where data cannot be fully disclosed, and refining certain data fields to better reflect practical reporting realities. Some respondents also proposed revisiting the classification and prioritization of selected data elements to ensure alignment with established frameworks and to support a balanced and effective implementation approach.

7. Language accessibility was identified as an important consideration for effective implementation. Several respondents noted that reliance on a single language may pose practical challenges for some reporting entities, particularly in contexts where other working languages are more commonly used. The feedback highlights the value of providing multilingual versions of the template and supporting materials to facilitate broader accessibility and ease of use. Expanding language options would help ensure more inclusive participation, improve understanding of reporting requirements, and support consistent application of the framework across diverse country contexts.

Section III: Debt Statistics Team Response

The feedback received through the consultation is being carefully reviewed and will directly inform the finalization of the revised DRS template. Overall, respondents expressed appreciation for the move toward a consolidated reporting framework and highlighted several design features that enhance usability. At the same time, inputs regarding the size and complexity of the template are being taken into account, with efforts underway to further streamline the user experience. In this context, the development of the Data Collection Platform is expected to play an important role in facilitating data submission and processing.

Considerations related to data granularity and reporting requirements are being addressed through the design of a phased implementation approach. This approach will differentiate between core data elements and additional information that can be incorporated

progressively, allowing countries to adapt over time while maintaining continuity with existing reporting processes. The final template design and reporting calendar will also reflect practical suggestions received during the consultation.

The importance of clear manuals and guidance has been strongly emphasized. In response, a revised DRS Manual is being developed as a key deliverable, including detailed field definitions, practical examples, and validation rules. Additional guidance will also be embedded within the template to support consistent interpretation and application.

Ensuring alignment with existing debt management systems remains a priority. Ongoing collaboration with system providers is focused on enabling compatibility with updated platforms while supporting countries that will continue to operate with current system versions during the transition. These efforts are being advanced through close inter-agency coordination to promote interoperability and consistency across reporting environments.

The need for a well-calibrated transition period is also recognized. Implementation will be supported through a phased timeline, accompanied by clear communication and targeted support to help countries align systems, processes, and institutional arrangements. This includes accommodating varying levels of readiness and ensuring that capacity constraints are addressed through appropriate sequencing and support.

On capacity development and training, the Team is committed to working closely with countries throughout the transition to the revised framework. In-country and regional training sessions will continue to be organized, alongside sustained engagement by debt specialists with national counterparts to ensure that implementation issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner. This direct support will be complemented by updated e-learning modules and targeted assistance for countries facing more significant system constraints.

From a methodological perspective, the revised template has been designed to align with evolving international statistical standards. At the same time, specific technical observations raised during the consultation are being reviewed to ensure full consistency and clarity in areas such as classifications, coding structures, and the treatment of emerging instruments.

Finally, language accessibility is being considered as part of the implementation approach. Options to expand the availability of the template and supporting materials in additional languages are being explored to facilitate broader accessibility and ease of use across diverse reporting contexts.

Section IV: Next Steps

Round 3 marks the conclusion of the formal Global Consultation process. The immediate next steps will focus on finalizing the revised DRS template, incorporating feedback received on the structure of data fields, the use of validation features such as drop-down menus, the inclusion of an Instructions tab, and the refinement of coding conventions. In parallel, work will be completed on the revised DRS Manual, which will provide

comprehensive field-level definitions, validation guidance, and practical examples to support consistent reporting.

A key priority will be to define a phased implementation timeline, with clearly communicated milestones and appropriately differentiated compliance expectations to reflect varying levels of country readiness. At the same time, coordination with key partners including UNCTAD, COMSEC, and the IMF will be further strengthened to ensure alignment with evolving and upgraded debt management systems that support the revised template. This will be complemented by interim guidance for countries that continue to operate with existing system versions during the transition period. Consideration will also be given to enhancing accessibility, including exploring the feasibility of producing an additional language version of the template and associated guidance materials.

The Debt Statistics Team extends its appreciation to all participants who contributed to the consultation. The feedback received across the three rounds will play a central role in shaping the final version of the revised DRS, with the objective of delivering a framework that is more comprehensive, more closely aligned with international statistical standards, and more adaptable to diverse institutional contexts.