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Tax Compliance Risk Management

By J. Alfredo Tijerina

1. Introduction

The Compliance Risk Management (CRM) process [1] "is a structured process for systematically identifying, quantifying, prioritizing, and defining treatments of compliance risks. It is an iterative process consisting of well-defined steps that facilitates the improvement process and decision making", OECD (2004) [2].

2. CRM Conceptual Framework

The CRM conceptual framework includes, in addition to the process itself, a description of the inputs, the relationship of the Strategic Plan to its goals and objectives, as well as its governance (Figure 1). In tax administrations where CRM governance does not operate effectively, the following is observed: a) there is no clear strategic direction; b) the tax administration operates in silos; and c) the CRM concept is typically limited to the selection of audit cases (auditing), leaving out other fundamental functions of tax administration (registration, declaration and payment, and collection).

Among the different products of the GRC process is the Compliance Improvement Plan. This results in the most relevant actions of the tax administration via the Annual Operational Program, whose execution is quantified and evaluated in terms of the impact it generates on compliance. Finally, the execution results must be fed back to the GRC process. [3]

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Tax Compliance Risk Management

Source: Own translation by Brondolo, John, Annette Chooi, Trevor Schloss, and Anthony Siouclis (2022). "Compliance Risk Management: Developing Compliance Improvement Plans". Technical Notes and Manuals. Fiscal Affairs Department. IMF.

CRM entails that tax administrations work by *processes*, I.e., as a "set of activities that take one or more types of inputs and create an output of value to the customer, which is reflected in some way in the organization" [4].

GRC entails that tax administrations work by *processes*, I.e., as a "set of activities that take one or more types of inputs and create an output of value to the customer, which is reflected in some way in the organization". This becomes more evident when, through a simple exercise using the *relationship diagram*, it is observed that CRM creates an interconnection between different areas of the tax administration, i.e., there are countless inputs and outputs or products within the tax administration itself as well as in its relationship with external entities, such as taxpayers, chambers of commerce, and other parties of interest. For example, this includes results feedback from selected cases to improve taxpayer service or control. In this case, the input to the *process* is the cases selected for service or control, while the output is the feedback of the execution outcome of those cases.

[1] In this article, "compliance risk management" is limited to the tax field. It is important to note that risk management or "administration" has been widely used in the financial field.

[2] OECD (2004). "Guidance Note. Compliance Risk Management: Managing and Improving Tax Compliance". Forum on Tax Administration Committee on Fiscal Affairs Compliance Sub-group. Centre for Tax Policy and Administration. Other references are: IMF. "Compliance Risk Management for Tax Administration Leaders. Recognizing the importance of compliance risk management (CRM) in modern tax administration", and IMF. VITARA. "Module 2: Compliance Risk Management".

On the other hand, the potential improvements in the selection of service and control cases are reduced if not working under *processes*.

3. CRM Benefits

CRM brings benefits to taxpayers, the tax administration, and the tax administration's staff.

- For taxpayers: a) it reduces unnecessary inconvenience to compliant taxpayers; b) it limits discretion by the administration; c) it facilitates and expedites the service to compliant taxpayers; and d) only the indispensable information is required.

- For the tax administration: a) it increases tax collection by encouraging voluntary compliance with tax obligations; b) it facilitates decision making by increasing the capacity and speed of response to changing circumstances; c) it introduces dissuasive elements for non-compliance and persuasive elements for compliance; d) it increases assertiveness in the selection of cases for control; e) it increases the administration's credibility; and f) it optimizes its human, material, and financial resources.

- For tax administration personnel, CRM a) minimizes reprocesses, verifications, validations, and updates; b) facilitates knowing and working with international best practices; c) increases their training and experience; d) reduces their risks and responsibilities in decision making; and e) shortens the time it takes to obtain results and makes them more productive.

Empirical studies have found that CRM favors tax compliance and, therefore, increases tax collection.

A recent study [5] shows that as the application of CRM becomes more effective, it has a positive and significant effect on revenue collection [6]. Thus, given the scarce resources generally available to the tax administration, the priority should be to further develop it.

4. CRM Implementation in CAPRD

CRM brings benefits to the taxpayer, the tax administration, and tax administration staff, provided it is implemented effectively. Effective CRM coordinates the actions to be taken among the key functions of the tax administration as a process, with each function interacting with other parts of the tax cycle rather than individual or siloed actions.

The feedback of the service outcome and control cases executed according to the designed strategies is relevant. Without it, the room for CRM improvement is drastically reduced. The implementation of the CRM conceptual framework requires continuous work, and undoubtedly, one of the best incentives for the tax administration is the expected increase in tax compliance and revenue collection.

CAPTAC-DR has supported CRM implementation -which has different development phases- in the region'; this ranges from the proposal of its governance to the feedback to the CRM process, as in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Similarly, we continue to support the CRM process by identifying and quantifying tax risks in the main taxes, such as the value-added tax and the income tax, as well as in international operations to detect aggressive tax planning mainly in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

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[3] It should be noted that feedback and progress are also generally considered in the future design of Strategic Planning. Other references include Betts, Susan (2022). "Revenue Administration. Compliance Risk Management Framework to Drive Revenue Performance". Technical Notes and Manuals TNM/2022/005. Fiscal Affairs Department. IMF; and similar for customs: Pérez Azcarraga, Augusto Azael, and San Juan, Rossanna (2022). "Strengthening the Core Customs Processes through Integrated Risk Management", Cap. 5 of the Book: Customs Matters: Strengthening Customs Administration in a Changing World. IMF.
[4] See Hammer, Michael and James Champy (2006). Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution. Collins Business Essentials.
[5] Chang, Eui Soon, Elizabeth Gavin, Nikolay Gueorguiev, and Jiro Honda (2020). "Raising Tax Revenue: How to Get More from Tax Administrations?" IMF Working Paper. WP/20/142. July. IMF.

The design of Compliance Improvement Plan (CIP) has been implemented in Costa Rica, and there are plans to develop it in El Salvador in the near future. In Panama, it is planned to strengthen CRM development.

The Center has also provided CRM training in the region. Recently, two seminars were held for all regional countries, presenting CRM in-depth, with the participation of approximately 130 officials from the different areas that make up the tax administrations. The latter is especially important since, as explained, CRM is a cross-cutting approach, and the greater the participation of the entire tax administration, the greater the benefits. Finally, in order to raise awareness among the tax and customs administrations executives, in the Advanced Management Course given by the Center for these administrations, they were asked to develop a CIP.

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[6] In addition, with regard to the inputs to the GRC process, as data analysis, data management and data use improve, the study shows that, for example, with the prefilling of tax returns, it is possible to expect a favorable effect on tax revenues.

Gender Equality in Customs in the CAPRD Region

By Selvin Lemus

Since 1948, gender equality and diversity has been considered a fundamental right in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This has gained strong impetus in recent decades in all areas of society, but there is still much to be done, both in the situational analysis, including on the relation of the issues with different aspects of social life, and on the actions to close the current gaps.

In fact, gender equality and women's empowerment today is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The objective is geared toward, among other things, ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls worldwide, as well as ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life (UN, n.d.) [7].

The IMF, recognizing that reducing gender disparities goes hand in hand with higher economic growth, greater economic stability and resilience, and reduced income inequality, launched the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy [8] in July 2022. This sets out how the IMF can help its member countries address gender disparities while carrying out its core functions: surveillance, lending, and capacity development.

As far as customs administrations are concerned, the World Customs Organization (WCO) has also incorporated gender equality into its agenda, through the adoption in 2020 of the Customs Cooperation Council Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity [9] in Customs. The purpose of this declaration is to encourage the implementation of comprehensive and sustainable policies, procedures, and activities aimed at promoting gender equality and diversity in customs offices of member countries.

In this context, with the agreement of the region's Customs Directors, CAPTAC-DR, in coordination with the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department, conducted a regional study in 2022 on gender equality in the region's customs administrations, with technical support from the WCO and Spain's Institute for Fiscal Studies, as well as with collaboration of the WCO Regional Vice-Presidency held by Guatemala. The study's objective was to establish the first baseline indicators that will determine a common starting point in terms of gender equality in customs, so that the region can implement concrete measures aimed at generating the conditions required to achieve true gender equality. From the methodological point of view, the Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT) was used [10].

This study, which is the first on the subject in the region, focused on customs administrations, and was made possible thanks to the efforts by customs authorities and officials, who completed the self-assessment contained in the GEOAT with information as of December 2021,

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[7] See United Nations, Igualdad de género y empoderamiento de la mujer - Desarrollo Sostenible (un.org)
[8] See "IMF Strategy Toward Mainstreaming Gender" for further information.
[9] See Customs Cooperation Council's Draft Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs through http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/es/pdf/about-us/legal-instruments/declarations/wco-gender-equality-declaration_es.PDF?la=en
[10] See Organizational Assessment Tool on Gender Equality (wcoomd.org).

showing their commitment to work in favor of gender equality. The general policies on the subject were evaluated, as well as five principles related to various customs' areas, allowing for an analysis of the situation at the institutional level from a regional perspective. These principles are: (i) employment and remuneration, (ii) reconciliation of work and family life, (iii) health, safety, and absence of violence, (iv) governance and leadership, and (v) customs administration and stakeholder relations.

The main findings of this study are as follows:

- The principles under analysis are being addressed in different ways by the customs administrations, though with a minimal level of implementation for most of them.

- Work still needs to be done to enact special policies that promote gender equality and, at the same time, create the conditions for its application at the institutional level.

- It was found that gender equality is not included in the agenda of most customs offices, which contributes to the lack of areas with delegated responsibilities on this topic, with a few exceptions.

- Women's participation in management positions does not exceed 35% in the region and in some countries is less than 20%.

- Although in general promotions appear to be balanced between men and women (56% and 44%, respectively), when evaluating management positions, 63% of promotions were granted to men.

- The above should be analyzed hand in hand with the fact that selection and hiring reflected that, of the overall number of new hirings, only 40% were women.

- Certain institutional maturity in terms of health, safety and absence of violence, especially in relation to health benefits, rotation, and absenteeism control, was found.

- It was found that there is a need to strengthen general preventive training, given that zero-tolerance policies for harassment is a matter for both men and women.

- It was confirmed that women continue to assume most of the domestic and dependent-care work.

- Results reflect progress in the simplification of customs processes and attention to small businesses. Nonetheless, more decisive actions are still required in the periodic training of women traders on customs procedures to ensure their easy and expeditious compliance, as well as their obligations with customs and other agencies involved at the borders.

The study's results conducted by CAPTAC-DR reflect the status of the situation in the region in terms of gender equality in customs administrations as of 2021. They show the gaps that require strategic and operational actions to overcome them, which are being used as a reference by the Center in the design of capacity building actions aimed at the region's customs in this area. They are similarly a reference for other international organizations and technical assistance providers that wish to support the region in the gender equality area.

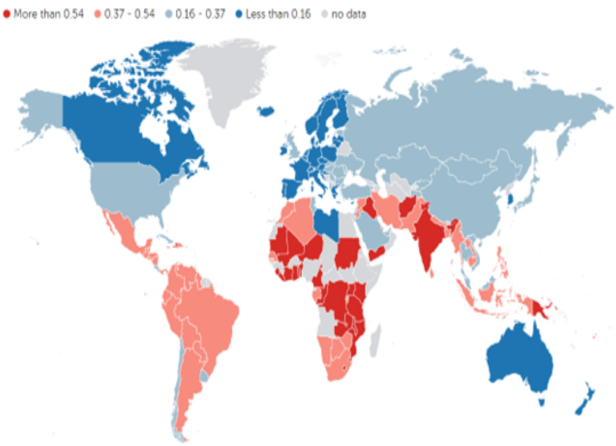
Public Financial Management

Budgeting as a Strategic Tool to Promote Gender Equality

By Luis Pablo San José y Martha Cubillo

Gender equality is a basic human right, closely related to the economic prosperity of a country and the well-being of all groups in a society. Gender-based interventions result in different types and degrees of need for different groups of citizens. The IMF recognizes that fiscal policies and budgetary decisions can contribute to reducing the gender gap [10]. At the same time, it has been shown that gender equality has positive effects on economic growth [11]. Image 1 shows the gender inequality index [12] according to 2013 data, which shows that countries with lower inequality are those that tend to have more developed and diversified economies (light blue and blue).

Image 1: Gender Inequality Index



Source: Gender Inequality Index (GII).: https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/GII_TC@GD/gbtier_1/gbtier_2/gb_othersource

Reducing these differences in opportunities and outcomes goes hand in hand with greater economic growth, more stability, a stronger economy, and less income inequality. The main benefits that could be seen are [10]:

- Increased participation of women in the labor force
- Increased productivity
- Higher wages
- Increased access to financial tools and resources
- Opening spaces for representation and leadership

To achieve these benefits, it is necessary to promote well-designed policies to obtain efficient and inclusive results, and to equitably benefit women, girls, and society in general. Gender-based budgeting (GBB) is a tool that seeks to ensure equity and equality in the distribution and allocation of resources.

For governments, the GBB has become a powerful instrument for promoting gender equality and reflecting the objective and policy of equality in public financial management instruments. This initiative is promoted in different international forums. Some examples are:

- **UN Beijing Platform for Action (1995):** calls for the integration of a gender perspective into government budgets.

[11] IMF's (2022). "IMF Strategy Toward Mainstreaming Gender". Other references are: Ostry and others (2018); Petersson and others (2017); Woetzel and others (2015); Caprioli (2005); Demeritt and others (2014); Cuberes and Teignier (2016, 2018); Bandara (2015); Gonzales and others (2015b); Hakura and others(2016); Hsieh and others (2019); Bertay and others (2020); Klasen (2002); Rock and Grant (2016); Cook (2019); Cook and others (2021); Sahay and others (2015); Khera and others (2021).
[12] Taken from: (IMF, 2016) "Gender Inequality Index (GII) Time Consistent". Otras referencias son: Stotsky, Shibuya, Kolovich, and Kebhaj (2016) "Trends in Gender Equality and Women's Advancement".

- **UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 (2015):** seeks to generate tools for monitoring public allocations to gender equality.

- **The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015):** calls for promoting gender-responsive budgeting and monitoring.

- **G20-Women (2020):** calls for greater investment in gender-related budgets to ensure that fiscal policies promote equality in the short and long term through financial management processes.

GBB is not limited to a distribution of funds, but also seeks to analyze policies and budgets to understand their impact on gap reduction and to obtain reliable and timely information to design or update programs, projects, and public policies that promote transparency and effectiveness. It is important to clarify that GBB is not a separation of budgets or decisions between men and women; rather, it is to present a cross-cutting analysis in terms of their possible effects. For governments, the introduction of GBB does not necessarily represent additional costs or funding requirements. Incorporating the practice of identifying resources with an impact on equality policy into budget management supports the efficiency of public spending and can be linked to other value chains, generating long-term returns for financial management.

Women's economic empowerment takes on greater importance in the CAPDR region. In the region, women play a fundamental role in the economically active population (EAP), with a 48.5% average participation in the EAP. However, there is still an unfavorable gap in employment and income levels [13].

In this sense, CAPTAC-DR promotes GBB capacity building. This is done both through regional training and bilateral technical assistance.

In this sense, CAPTAC-DR promotes GBB capacity building. This is done both through regional training and bilateral technical assistance. An example of training is the seminar on "Budgeting with a gender perspective", presented in No. 47 CAPTAC-DR Newsletter, in which 16 Latin American countries and 6 from the CAPRD region participated and addressed various topics such as the legal framework, policy design, and impact evaluation [14]. In Costa Rica, as a joint effort between the Fiscal Affairs Department (FAD) and CAPTAC-DR, the GBB was introduced. Costa Rica has established a working group made up of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, and the National Women's Institute. The results have been very satisfactory, and to date a GBB formulation guide, four pilot exercises, its incorporation into the budget policy guidelines, and a document that gives formality to the initiative have been established.

It is worth mentioning that for several years Guatemala has had a budget classifier with a gender perspective, which identifies the resources allocated to the institutions related to the National Policy for the Promotion and Integral Development of Women.

The CAPTAC-DR Public Financial Management work plan for the 2024 fiscal year includes a regional seminar to introduce budgeting as a strategic tool to reduce gender gaps. It is expected to serve as an approach for countries that have not yet been able to incorporate GBB into their budgetary practices and to continue with efforts to achieve a more transparent and gender-sensitive public financial management.

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[13] Adapted from SICA (2021), "The region of Central America and the Dominican Republic in figures".
[14] The complete newsletter can be found at: https://www.captac-dr.org/content/dam/CAPTACDR/News/CAPTAC-DR-Boletin%20Trimestral%2047.pdf

Summary of Capacity Development Activities

Tax Administration

- Technical Assistance (TA) in risk management was provided to Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras; in audit procedures to the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua; in taxpayer services and control in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Guatemala; and in the development of the large taxpayers' unit in Panama.

- Together with the Customs area, the in-person phase of the 5th edition of the Management Development Program was held, with the participation of 24 executives from the tax and customs administrations. The workshop focused on developing management skills in team building, management change, negotiation, adaptive leadership, and strategic planning. In addition, four webinars were held on risk management, control of obligations, and auditing procedures.

Customs Administration

- TA was provided to Costa Rica for the preparation of audits for its 2023 annual audit plan. Assistance was provided to El Salvador in the preparation of a compliance improvement plan, and to Panama in audit process improvement, as well as in defining a plan to assess staff training needs. Guatemala also received support in incorporating access to banking information in auditing to improve compliance, and its auditors were trained in customs valuation and good auditing practices. Honduras received TA to help prepare a new customs modernization plan and on improving the control of special regimes. A strategic evaluation was carried out with the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department in the Dominican Republic, which identified important advances and challenges to overcome in the coming years.

- The Center organized a regional online workshop to define a gender equality action plan, with the participation of the World Customs Organization, the Institute of Fiscal Studies of Spain and the Central American Economic Integration Secretariat.

Public Financial Management

- TA was provided to Guatemala to update and improve the financial programming model, improve and expand the macroeconomic forecasting model and apply the Fiscal Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) to determine a portfolio of fiscal risks. In Costa Rica, assistance continued to be provided on gender budgeting. Significant progress was made with the publication of the 2024 budget policy guidelines, which incorporate specific requirements for gender budgeting and institutional operating plans, providing legal support for this new practice.

- A regional seminar on modern treasury management was held with the participation of the treasurers of five countries and other senior executives of these entities. As an initiative by some treasuries, a proposal was presented to create a learning network of government treasuries for the region, as a tool for transferring best practices and experiences.

Financial Supervision and Regulation

- TA was provided to the Guatemalan Superintendency of Banks on regulation and supervision of outsourcing of cloud services.

- The Center provided training to the Superintendency of Banks and other Financial Institutions of Nicaragua on specific aspects of the International Financial Reporting Standard, to the Superintendency of the Financial System and the Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador on Insurance risk-based supervision, and to the different sectoral supervisors of Panama (Superintendency of Banks of Panama, Superintendency of Insurance and Reinsurance of Panama and Superintendency of the Securities Market) on regulation and supervision of financial conglomerates.

- Finally, we continued to assist the Central American Council of Superintendents on the implementation of Basel Standards.

Central Bank Operations and Modelling

- In-person TA was provided to the Central Bank of Nicaragua to develop a semi-structural model to support interest rate decision-making. In addition, staff was trained to strengthen their forecasting capabilities. A virtual technical assistance mission was carried out with the Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador to update the semi-structural model used for policy evaluation.

- A hybrid workshop on the Forecasting and Policy Analysis System (FPAS) process was held for a group of 44 officials from the region's central banks and the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Monetary Council.

Real Sector Statistics

- TA was provided to Honduras on GDP backcasting, to El Salvador on annual national accounts, and to Costa Rica on economic indicators based on big data. TA was also provided to Nicaragua to compile export and import price statistics, to Honduras on the producer price index and balance of payments, and to El Salvador on national accounts.

- A regional webinar was held on short-term indicators and another one on satellite accounts. A regional in-person workshop was held on quarterly national accounts and on the harmonization of national accounts.

Government Finance Statistics

- TA was provided to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic to follow up on previous recommendations. Topics addressed included expanding the institutional coverage of public finance and debt statistics, compiling accounts payable, and calculating accrued interest. In addition, it continued to support Costa Rica in the analysis of the statistical classifiers of the Hacienda Digital project.

- Regional meetings of macroeconomic statistics working groups were held with the support of the Central American Monetary Council and the Council of Ministers of Finance of Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

Free online courses in Spanish from the IMF's Institute for Capacity Development

Reform Management Fundamentals: Establishing a Reform Program (VITARA-RMF)

Apply before:
- **July 20th, 2023**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course explains the key concepts of reform management, the process of preparing a tax administration reform program, the key governance and management provisions of tax administration reforms, and the management of administration reform projects. tax.

VITARA - Reform Management Specific Topics: Managing a Reform Program (VITARA-RMS)

Apply before:
- **July 20th, 2023**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course introduces tools and methods for planning, monitoring, and reporting of tax administration reform programs; approaches to resourcing reforms and managing resourcing risks and stresses; successful change management practices, and the concept of post-implementation evaluation.

Programming and Financial Policies, Part 2: Program Design (FPP.2x)

Apply before:
- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course is especially for officials from ministries of finance, economy and planning, and central banks, who provide advice on macroeconomic policy or are involved in the implementation of such policies.

Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Statistics (BOP-IIPx)

Apply before:

- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course is for individuals interested in learning the fundamentals of compiling international accounts encompassing balance of payments and international investment position (IIP) statistics in accordance with internationally accepted standards.

Government Finance Statistics (GFSx)

Apply before:

- **March 4th, 2023**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course, delivered by the Department of Statistics, focuses on the conceptual framework of government finance statistics (GFS), in accordance with the IMF's Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014 (GFSM 2014), and on practical aspects of the data compilation.

VITARA - Strategic Management (VITARA-SMG)

Apply before:

- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course imparts fundamental knowledge on the concepts related to the strategic management of a tax administration. The different plans that the tax administrations draw up for the execution of their strategies are also highlighted, to later explain the content, the schedule, the resources and the tasks necessary to formulate a plan distributed in different stages.

Analysis of tax gaps PAB-AIP (VGAPx)

Apply before:
- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**

Course Description:

- This online course, delivered by the Fiscal Affairs Department, teaches how to prepare and run the VAT Gap Estimation Model (VGEM) of the IMF's Revenue Administration Tax Gap Analysis Program (RA-GAP).

Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDSx)

Apply before:
- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- This course analyzes the coverage and accounting standards applicable to public sector debt, its valuation, its classification, important methodological issues, and the sources and methods used to compile the statistics.

Debt Sustainability Framework for Low Income Countries (LIC DSFX)

Apply before:
- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register here.**

Course Description:

- The course explains all the steps to apply the low-income country debt sustainability framework. First, the data needed, and the tools used to realistically assess the plausibility of macroeconomic projections are determined. Later in the course it is explained how to calculate through the debt sustainability framework the capacity of a country to repay its debt, which is used to determine the thresholds of the debt burden indicators.

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

Apply before:

- **March 4th, 2024**

- **Government Officials, register here.**
- **General Public, register, here.**

Course Description:

- In this course, taught by the Training Institute, the basic principles or concepts necessary to carry out financial programming are explained; the main characteristics of the four large macroeconomic sectors (real, fiscal, external and monetary), and how they are related to each other. For each sector, the course presents the accounting framework, the interpretation of variables and indicators of these accounts and the basic analysis of the accounts.