

Box 8. Data Management Practices in Comparable Institutions

While models differ across institutions, and data management frameworks must adapt to the needs of each organization, the 2005 Towe Report and the interviews conducted for this evaluation identified a number of successful practices in organizations comparable to the Fund.¹ These practices imply higher levels of centralization and coordination than those currently in place in the IMF:

- A single unit is responsible for the institution's database that provides inputs to all or most publications.
- This unit is responsible for collecting, validating, and documenting the data, and providing tools to access data for official publications.

¹The Towe Report studied the Asian Development Bank, the Federal Reserve, the OECD, and the World Bank. The IEO has extended the analysis to the BIS, ECB, and Eurostat.

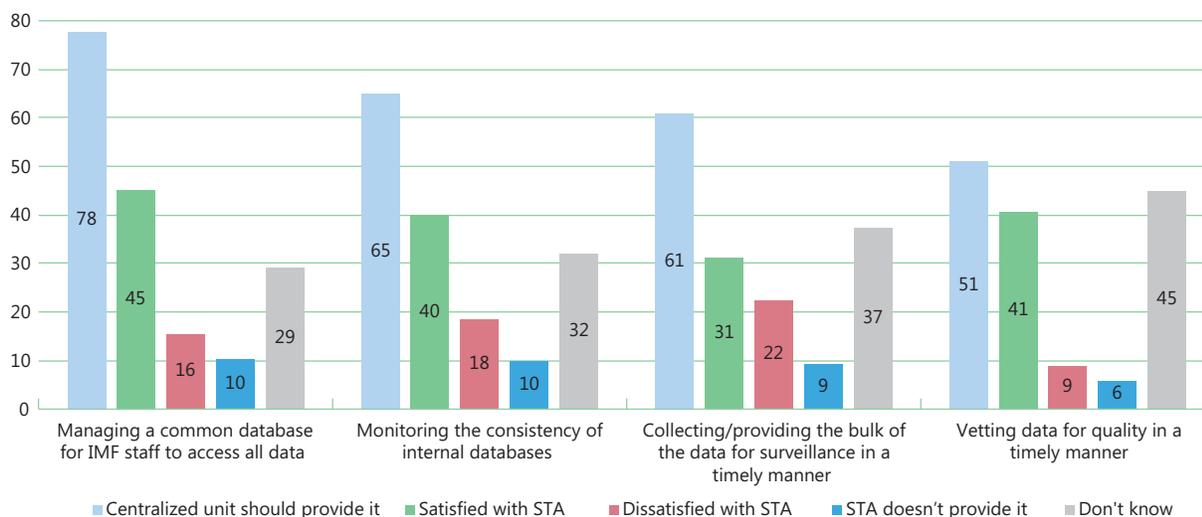
- This unit also ensures that (preliminary) data are available to analysts with minimal delay.
- A common nomenclature is used across all series stored in official databases, and this nomenclature is maintained by the centralized data unit.
- Desk economists use the institution's database because they are mandated to do so, and—more importantly—because they receive the array of tools and the support to access the data.

The Towe Report also highlighted how, in contrast with the other institutions, data management initiatives in the Fund depend largely on unrewarded work. This, of course, hampers their effectiveness, sustainability, enforcement, and standardization.

Sources: IMF (2005) and IEO interviews.

Figure 8. Staff Perceptions of Centralized Provision of Data Services

(In percent)



Source: IEO Survey.

... and getting the incentives right.

85. The problem of staff incentives for proper data management remains largely unsolved. During interviews, staff made clear that good data management in the Fund relies mostly on personal interests and attitudes towards data, and that the low visibility of such

work discourages staff from investing time in it. In fact, only one-third of survey respondents perceive data work as being part of their annual performance review discussions, although data management guidelines claim this should be mandatory (Figure 9). The de facto incentive structure is perceived as not rewarding good data management. Indeed, according to staff interviews,