



Seasonal Adjustment User Group

Kick-Off Meeting

Minutes

March 17th, 2017 – Brussels

List of Participants

Belgium (NBB): Jean Palate
Denmark (Statistics Denmark): Peter Stoltze
Eurostat: Dario Buono
France (Insee): Dominique Ladiray, Anne-Claire Laurent-Zuani
Germany (Bundesbank): Andreas Dietrich, Christiane Hofer, Nina Gonschorreck, Karsten Webel
Hungary: Gabor Lovics
Italy (Istat): Paola Anzini
Latvia (CSB): Ivars Getins
Lithuania: Inga Daunaravičienė
OECD: Roberto Astolfi
Poland (NBP): Sylwia Grudkowska
Romania: Andreea Mirica
Slovakia: Jan Pestun
Spain: Maria Novias Filgueira
United-Kingdom (ONS): Jennifer Davies

Excused

Finland: Lauri Saarinen
Luxembourg: Elter Véronique
Slovenia: Manca Golmajer

The meeting was organised on the basis of a provisional agenda which is attached in Annex.

1 Opening address and mandate of the new SAUG

Dario Buono opened the first meeting of the new SAUG launched for three years. Anne-Claire read out the new mandate of the SAUG. The mandate is attached in annex. The SAUG consists of eight new countries on SACE budget (Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia and Spain), Slovenia on its own budget, several partners (IMF, ECB, Eurostat, OECD etc.) and members of the SACE.

All members of the SAUG can express views and participate to the debates but, and according to the mandate of the group, when a vote is necessary, members belonging to the SACE cannot participate to the vote.

2 Election of the chairman

Andreas Dietrich, from Deutsche Bundesbank, is elected Chairman of the SAUG.

3 Administrative points

INSEE will provide the secretariat of the group. 5 physical meetings (including the kick-off meeting) are planned for the next 3 years (see annex). All administrative tasks are organised by the SACE.

4 Organization of the work

4.1 Overview

Dominique held a presentation on a status report which served as the basis for future tasks. Especially, the division of tasks between the SACE and SAUG was discussed.

The work will be organised by 5 meetings and a virtual network closely collaborating with the SACE, Eurostat and the developers group. CrosPortal and GitHub will be mainly used for sharing documents and reporting, respectively. Therefore, all members of the SAUG will check their accessibility to CrosPortal and GitHub.

The main objectives of the SAUG are reviewing and putting comments on SACE activities belonging to

- testing JDemetra+
- testing plug-ins
- documentations and
- knowledge sharing etc.

4.2 Testing JD+ 2.2

The highest priority will be given on testing the release candidate for JD+ version 2.2. Jean held a presentation on new features of JD+ 2.2 implemented in the user interface (UI) as well as some slight improvements on the core engines.

Dominique presented the results of large scale tests comparing JD+ 2.1 and a snapshot of JD+ 2.2 and concluded that only minor differences appeared. These tests used automatic model identification and will be repeated by INSEE with the release candidate. The results will be made visible to the user group.

All the new features, especially in the UI, have to be tested manually and carefully. The developers agreed to provide a list with changes to the SAUG by 24 March 2017 together with the release candidate. On that basis Andreas will allocate testing packages to the members of the SAUG. Bug reporting will be done directly and self-dependently by the members via opening issues on GitHub. The testing phase for the UI ends by 31 May 2017.

Besides, a comparative exercise shall be executed for testing the core engine. The SACE assured that a testing plan together with a reporting template will be provided to the SAUG. The benchmark software for the tests is JD+ 2.1. The testing phase for the core engines ends by 30 April 2017.

4.3 Stock-taking on the dissemination of JD+ across the members

Since the new SAUG has a significant different composition compared to the previous one, a stock taking will be undertaken. Andreas will send an Excel-form to be filled in by the members, including the following issues:

- which software is used at the moment
- which seasonal adjustment method is used
- who is responsible for the different indicators
- way of production process: batch mode or user interface
- plans for migration to JD+ 2.2

4.4 Documentation

Together with the release of the new version of JD+ the documentation has to be refreshed. After a short discussion it was agreed that Sylwia and the SACE will provide a schedule with the tasks for the SAUG. Furthermore, Peter will provide some thoughts on possible improvements concerning the structure and the style of the documentations to the SACE and the SAUG.

4.5 Other points

The connection between JD+ and the ESS guidelines on seasonal adjustment could be displayed more prominently. The SACE will discuss this point and develop a possible strategy.

5 To do list

Task	Responsible	Deadline
Provision of JD+ stock taking form	Andreas	24/03/17
Completion and return of stock taking form	all members	31/03/17
Check accessibility to CrosPortal (if necessary, creation of an account)	all members	31/03/17
Check accessibility to GitHub (if necessary, creation of an account)	all members	31/03/17
Allocation of testing packages	Andreas	31/03/17
Testing the core engines of JD+ 2.2	all members	30/04/17
Testing new features in the UI of JD+ 2.2	all members	31/05/17

6 Next meeting

The next meeting will be organised in Rome, ideally the last week of September. ISTAT has to check feasibility.

Annex: Agenda

Provisional Agenda

Friday 17 March

09h00-10h00	Mandate of the new SAUG Dario Buono (Eurostat)
10h00-10h30	Election of the President
10h30-10h45	Administrative points Anne-Claire Laurent-Zuani (INSEE)
10h45-11h00	Coffee Break
11h00-12h00	Organization of the work Working with the SACE Testing JD+, Testing the plug-ins etc. Road map
12h00-12h30	To do list, next meeting, AOB Conclusions President of the SAUG, Dario Buono (Eurostat)

Annex: Foreseen meetings

Meeting	Location	Date
SAUG meeting 1	Brussels	March 2017
SAUG meeting 2	Rome	September 2017
SAUG meeting 3	Lisbon	March 2018
SAUG meeting 4	Newport	September 2018
SAUG meeting 5	Riga	March 2019

Annex: Mandate



Seasonal Adjustment Center of Excellence

Composition and mandate of the Seasonal Adjustment User Group

1 The Seasonal Adjustment User Group

Members (NSIs)

	Name	Email
Denmark	George Poland-Müller	GPM@dst.dk
Finland	Lauri Saarinen	lauri.Saarinen@stat.fi
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Slovenia	Manca Golmajer	manca.golmajer@gov.si
Spain	Maria Novias Filgueira	maria.novas.filgueira@ine.es

Note: Slovenia is not on the SACE budget

Other members

	Name	Email
IMF	Marco Marini	mmarini@imf.org

SACE members and partners are also members of the SAUG.

2 The Seasonal Adjustment Center of Excellence

Members and international experts

	Name	Email
Belgium	Palate Jean	jean.palate@nbb.be
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Partners :

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3 Terms of Reference of the Seasonal Adjustment User Group

Background

The Seasonal Adjustment User Group (SAUG) will collaborate with the Seasonal Adjustment Center of Excellence (SACE) to assure the quality and the promotion of JDemetra+ (the European Seasonal Adjustment IT tool developed by the National Bank of Belgium and the National Bank of Germany) and the associated plug-ins.

The Seasonal Adjustment Expert Group (SAEG) agreed that the results of the Center of excellence should be reviewed by other experienced users than the SACE itself. The SAEG also recognized the importance of associating more users and institutes to the works of the SACE in particular to facilitate the adhesion to the software JDemetra+ through the European Statistical System.

Mandate

The SAUG will review and comment the activities of the SACE, especially in the following fields: testing of JDemetra+, testing of new plug-ins (Benchmarking, Quality reporting, High-Frequency data, Revision analysis, link with R etc.), testing of the JDemetra+ web service, user defined regressors for calendar adjustment, course material, documentation and knowledge sharing. The Group will provide feedback to the SACE on any development made around JDemetra+ (plug-ins, tests) it is aware of.

Communication of information to the SAUG

While the SAUG will be composed of skilled colleagues, who are encouraged to test JDemetra+ and the associated plug-ins themselves, the principal basis for the opinions issued of the SAUG is the outcome of the tests conducted by the SACE according to terms of the agreement signed with Eurostat in October 2015.

The SACE is responsible for communicating all test outcomes to the SAUG in a timely manner, well in advance of the time at which the opinion is sought.

Communication of the opinions of the SAUG

The SA User Group will report to the SAEG.

The opinions of the SAUG (and any other outcomes of the SAUG deliberations) will be communicated to the SAEG after validation by the User group members.

The SAUG secretariat is responsible for communicating the opinions of the SAUG to the SAEG.

Members of the Group

The Group will consist of representatives of NSIs, NCBs, Eurostat, the ECB and any other relevant International Organizations that can demonstrate a large experience in seasonal adjustment (methodology and software).

The number of participants should be limited to 20 people, including representatives of Eurostat and of the SACE. Representativeness of the different EU Member States should be ensured in the SAUG.

SACE members can participate as experts but whenever a formal opinion is to be issued by the User Group, only the members of the User Group would participate in the decision.

Chairman

The Chairman of the SAUG is nominated among the members for the duration of the current SACE. The Chairman remains a voting member of the SAUG.

Secretariat

The SACE will provide the secretariat. The Secretary, as a representative of the SACE, belongs to the category “other member”.

Duration of mandate

The group will have, as the SACE, a limited mandate that will come to an end in September 2019 (on the end date of the SACE grant agreement).

Meetings

The group is expected to work mainly in the form of virtual network and collaborating closely with the SACE, Eurostat and the Developers group.

The official communication channel to report on activities is the devoted webpage available on the CROS portal.

Up to 5 physical meetings of the SAUG will be organized, the first of which is scheduled on March, 17th 2017, in Brussels.