

Analysis of results of survey on external use of Demetra (15 May 2000)

The questionnaire has been sent to 209 contact persons from 46 countries worldwide either belonging to one of 90 institutes (22 European National Statistical Offices (NSO's), 17 Central Banks (CB's) in Europe, 2 non-European NSO's, 3 non-European CB's, 12 governmental institutions, 34 private organisations or banks) or being one of 52 private users mostly from universities. The surveyed potential users were selected from a list of people who have formerly shown some kind of interest in the Demetra programme or who have been participating to the informal working group on seasonal adjustment during the recent years.

83 answers were sent back until the 15 May 2000 from people either belonging to one of 55 institutes (19 European NSO's, 11 CB's in Europe, 1 non-European NSO's, 2 non-European CB's, 7 governmental institutions, 15 private organisations or banks) or being one of 15 private users mostly all from universities, hence resulting in a response rate of about 77% for NSO's/CB's, 49% for the other institutions and 29% for private users.

29% of the responding users said that they never did or do not use Demetra anymore. 4 users (5% of the responding users) declared that they use Demetra but did not give any information to the other questions of the survey. These users are excluded from the results that are presented in percentages in the following table.

	N° of users (% from 55 users who use Demetra)	N° of users from NSO/CB (total number of answers from users in NSO/CB who use Demetra: 27)
Question 1: The last time you used DEMETRA, which version was it?		
A beta version (<1.4)	17 (31%)	5
An (older) release version (1.4x)	15 (27%)	10
The most recent release version (1.43)	22 (40%)	11
Question 2: How often do you use DEMETRA?		
A: Regularly in a data production process	7 (13%)	4
B: Occasionally (e.g. for studies or treatment of single time series)	39 (71%)	20
C: Not now but plan to use it in the future	13 (24%)	5
D: Never or not anymore, please specify why..., skip question 3	24	15
Question 3: How many people(/units) use DEMETRA in your institution?		
A: Everyone(/every unit) who(/that) produces seasonally adjusted data	1 (2%)	1
B: An increasing number of people(/units)	12 (22%)	9
C: Just yourself(/your unit) or only few people (/units)	41 (75%)	17

Question 4: Why do you(/would you) use DEMETRA? Because it is...: (Several answers can be given)		
A: ... convenient, user-friendly	43 (78%)	21
B: ... fast	16 (29%)	7
C: ... automated, easy-to-use with limited SA knowledge	25 (45%)	12
D: ... compatible with your database type	18 (33%)	10
E: ... recommended by Eurostat	20 (36%)	15
F: ... imposed by your employer	3 (5%)	1
G: Other, please specify...	9 (16%)	5
Question 5: What is your opinion about DEMETRA? It is now...:		
A: ... a stable and professional tool that has proved its usefulness	32 (58%)	15
B: ... a tool that still needs improvements (before it can be used or better used), please specify in question 6...	18 (33%)	8
C: ... not a relevant product, please specify why...	1 (2%)	1
D: No opinion	5 (9%)	3
Question 6: On what should future improvements emphasise? (Several answers can be given)		
A: General structuring, programme presentation, user-friendliness	17 (31%)	8
B: Access to parameters of interfaced SA packages	19 (35%)	8
C: Access to databases	14 (25%)	8
D: Development of batch modules (completely automated code without GUI to be called from within other programmes)	10 (18%)	2
E: Presentation of output/results	25 (45%)	10
F: Documentation, help	24 (44%)	13
G: Others, please specify...	10 (18%)	5
H: Almost nothing, everything is ok for me(/our unit)	3 (5%)	1
Question 7: Concerning DEMETRA, in what kind of support are you interested? (Several answers can be given)		
A: More online-support	15 (27%)	7
B: Assistance for installations	1 (2%)	0
C: Public presentations (may be in your institution)	4 (7%)	1
D: Obtaining training courses	18 (33%)	10
E: Being official test user	9 (16%)	4
F: Other, please specify...	6 (11%)	4

Question 8: With which type of database do you use DEMETRA or in which type of database are your data organised? (Several answers can be given)		
A: ASCII files	20 (36%)	9
B: MS-EXCEL workbooks	47 (85%)	23
C: SAS databases on MS-Windows platform	11 (20%)	6
D: SAS databases on UNIX platform	5 (9%)	5
E: FAME databases on MS-Windows platform	5 (9%)	2
F: FAME databases on UNIX platform	2 (4%)	1
G: Other, please specify...	9 (16%)	5

Legend:

Blue bold figures: over or equal 50%

Magenta bold italic figures: over or equal 25%

Conclusions:

Under the producers of statistics and researchers consists a good interest in the Demetra software: A large number of users especially from the public European institutes (NSO's and CB's) replied to the questionnaire, of which 55 users really use the product. Most of them regularly update the programme. 40% of the actual users have installed the most recent version.

Demetra is not yet a tool that is widely used in statistical production. 7 users (of which 4 are European national statistical offices) use Demetra regularly in a data production process. However, 24 users in public or private institutions (of which 20 NSO/CB) started to test Demetra, and use it occasionally for studies (e.g. comparisons of methods) or the treatment of single time series.

13 users plan an application of Demetra in the future.

Knowing that a large number of the NSO's and CB's wanted to change the seasonal adjustment method from older methods (e.g. X-11) towards more advanced methods like X-12-Arima and Tramo/Seats during the recent years, it can be easily explained that many of them tried the Demetra interface that is recommended by Eurostat. More than the half of the users from the European NSO's and CB's mentioned also this as reason for their work with Demetra. The institutes with an advanced database management system did most often not implement Demetra in their production environment often caused by the GUI characteristic of the present version of Demetra. More success has Demetra by the institutes with less or newly developed database management's that could consider in their new implementations the way Demetra works.

There no systematic application of Demetra but there is a strong progress. Nearly no institute officially decided to use Demetra wherever seasonally adjusted series are produced. One NSO has several users of Demetra, what could be considered as an intensive use. One CB imposes the Demetra software inside its institution. Most of the time, Demetra is only used or tested by single persons in the institutes. However, the number of Demetra users increases e.g. in 9 public European institutes.

A large majority of the Demetra users like the programme for its convenience and user-friendliness (78%). It is also successful help of its degree of automation that makes it easy-to-use even with limited knowledge in seasonal adjustment. Compatibility with the databases and the fast processing were mentioned by a third of the users.

The majority of users in- and outside the public European institutions believe that Demetra is a stable and professional tool that has proved its usefulness. A third needs improvements on (in order of importance)

the documentation/help, the presentation of output/results, the access to parameters of Tramo/Seats/X-12-Arima, the general structuring, programme presentation, user-friendliness, and the access to databases. That shows that even if Demetra is a user-friendly programme, there are still problems with the understanding of some programme functions. A third of all users of which 10 from the public European institutes wish to obtain a training course, and nearly so many as these would like to get more online-support. One NSO expressed an interest in a presentation (in its institution). Three NSO's and one CB would like to become official test user of Demetra. One NSO wishes help for installations.

Most of the users access data in MS-Excel workbooks (85%) of which are 23 from public European institutes. A third of the users transfer data through ASCII files. 22% organise the data in SAS databases. That kind of data access will be provided with the next version of Demetra (1.44). Two CB's and one NSO have FAME databases. This NSO also wants to become an official test user.