DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION
UNITED NATIONS

Global Consultation Draft
Guidelines on
Integrated Economic
Statistics

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Comment Form

Draft *Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics*

Send responses to: sna@un.org
Deadline: 10 January 2011

Your name:	Jan Smit
Your country/organization:	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP
Contact (e.g. email address):	smit1@un.org

To submit responses please save the completed form and send it as an attachment to the following e-mail address: sna@un.org by Monday, 10 January 2011. You are encouraged to submit a short response to the questions (yes/no/no comment) even if you have no further comments to offer in the comment boxes. Please focus your comments on substantive issues since a final edit of the Guidelines will be conducted after the February 2011 Statistical Commission meeting.s

Relevant documents

The draft publication is available on the global consultation website:
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/ies/

Questions

1. Do you agree that the *Guidelines* covers well the practical aspects and experiences of the integration of economic statistics?

Yes   _____X___   No   _____   No comment   _____

Comment:

The document provides a good overview of the issues and strategies for developing economic statistics systems. However, there is quite a bit of duplication in the document (i.e., Chapter 2 has a number of phrases that are identical to chapter 1; for example, paragraph 1 is used in both chapters, paragraph 8 is very similar to a paragraph in chapter 1 and even uses the same quote). The explanation of the benefits of integrated and consistent economic accounts seems a little lengthy – it could be more concise.

The tone of the guide seems too strong; terms such as "must be recognized", "must be ...." and "should" are used throughout. This, in combination with the fact that the Guide only contains examples from the most developed statistical systems (Canada, USA, New Zealand, Netherlands, etc.) makes it sound as if these countries are "preaching" to the rest of the world on how things should be done.

The Guide could make available more references to other valid international guidelines and

manuals; for example, under the discussion of Business Registers and Seasonal Adjustment, reference could be made to the very good relevant Eurostat manuals.

2. Do you consider that the *Guidelines* takes due note of the difficulties faced by countries in the integrated collection, compilation and dissemination of economic statistics?

Yes   ___**X**_____   **No**   _____   **No comment**   _____

Comment:

Chapter 2 does a good job of recognising that a single global implementation approach towards integrated economic statistics is neither possible nor desirable because national statistical systems are different.

However, the Guidelines seem to be aimed primarily at statistical systems that are already rather developed. To help balance this, perhaps some case studies of less developed systems could be included (with more regional coverage). In the discussion on using administrative data at a "high frequency", perhaps the term "high frequency" could be clarified since less developed statistical systems may not be trying to achieve what is typically considered "high frequency" (i.e., monthly or quarterly may not be the priority for some small islands developing States).

3. Were there any aspects of integration which you feel have not been sufficiently well-covered?

Yes   _____   **No**   ____**X**_____   **No comment**   _____

Comment:

On pages 29-30 the manual/guide lists statistics that should be integrated. Point 2.6 is international trade and BOP, IIP was not mentioned.

On page 125, paragraph 18 makes a reference to "benchmarking GDP statistics through I-O accounts". Most countries do not have IO tables, and even countries which do have them may only produce them every 5 years or so.

4. Do you find the case studies useful and practical?

Yes   ____**X**_____   **No**   _____   **No comment**   _____

Comment:

The case studies definitely added to the content.
However, the case studies could be better introduced in the text (some case studies are introduced sufficiently, where others are not even mentioned in the text). Also, all case studies are of very developed statistical systems; perhaps a less developed system could be used as an example (this could help the document to appeal to a wider audience).
Using unique numbers for the case studies (as opposed to restarting every chapter) would make referencing the studies more user-friendly.
Case study 2 in Chapter 2 (on the US GDP history) is interesting history, but does not seem that relevant to the discussion in this document, plus there are already other USA examples in the document.
Chapter 2 Case study 1 and Chapter 3 Case study 2 (the first two Euro case studies) seem quite similar; perhaps a single case study could capture the information of both.

5. Would you like to make or seek any specific elaborations in Chapter 1 to Chapter 7 or in the Annexes?

Yes ____**X**_____ **No** _____ **No comment** _____
Comment:

Chapter 1: none

Chapter 2: Has too much duplication with Chapter 1; some sentences are identical.

Chapter 3: The section "Accessibility of normative recommendations for the various statistics domains" discusses a Knowledge Base for Domain 2 and 3, but no mention of such an initiative for Domain 1 is made. Will a comparable encyclopaedia exist for Domain 1? Will some information related to employment be housed in the knowledge base because it is "economic" even though employment is in Domain 1? Or should the reader look to the ILO?

Chapter 4: The section "International arrangements for the integration of economic statistics" starts by discussing achieving international comparability; however, the benefits of internationally comparable data are not really outlined. Perhaps a short paragraph could be added that discusses why this is important.
The four case studies in the "International arrangements for the integration of economic statistics" do not add much to the document and may not be that relevant for the reader; perhaps a single case study on international arrangements would be sufficient.

Chapter 5: The discussion on using administrative data was very thorough and useful.

Chapter 6: The section "Examples of international dissemination and communication practices section" could use additional description. Perhaps an extra sentence on DQAF could be added.

Chapter 7: Why were so many USA examples used?

Annexes:
Annex 3 is quite interesting, but the picture in Annex 3 is hard to read.