

ISWGNA Meeting
Thursday, 3 October 2019
Minutes

Participants: John Verrinder and Nicola Massarelli (chair, Eurostat), Jim Tebrake, Jennifer Ribarsky and Margarida Martins (IMF), Peter Van de Ven and Jorrit Zwijnenburg (OECD), Herman Smith (UNSD), Eric Metreau (World Bank), Tihomira Dimova (UNECE).

1. Coordination of the work of the subgroups

The co-chairs of the subgroups (Erich Strassner, Lis Soelistyowati, Catherine Van Rompaey, Carol Coy and Michael Connolly) joined the ISWGNA to discuss the coordination of the work of the subgroups. The discussion was chaired by John Verrinder (Eurostat)

Participants recognised the importance of not only coordinating the technical outputs of the subgroups among the relevant subgroup members, but also the need for the overall coordination of the work on the three priority areas to ensure that cross cutting issues are appropriately addressed and that outputs are delivered according to an agreed time line. It was agreed that the secretariats and co-chairs of the subgroups would take the lead in coordinating the workstreams of the technical outputs of the subgroups and that UNSD would arrange coordination meetings between the secretariats and co-chairs of all the subgroups at strategically important moments, approximately on a two-monthly basis. The secretariats and co-chairs of the subgroups will identify by the end of October relevant cross cutting issues to be addressed.

2. Report of the 13th AEG meeting

The ISWGNA welcomed the constructive discussions of the 13th AEG Meeting and the guidance on the way forward to finalise the SNA research agenda, advance work on the three priority areas, and the way forward for the next SNA update. The report of the meeting will be posted on the AEG meeting website in due course.

The next AEG meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2020, in Paris (to be hosted by OECD).

3. Preparation of the ISWGNA report to the 2020 Statistical Commission

The ISWGNA agreed that the key messages to include in the report to the 2020 UNSC are:

- Progress with resolving issues related to globalization, digitalization, and wellbeing and sustainability; a high-level planning with key milestones of the outputs of the work of the subgroups; and the finalisation of the consolidated research agenda, with a description of the potential impact on SNA and criteria for the including additional topics.
- An overarching strategy towards updating the 2008 SNA that includes the topics of collaboration with other working groups to address the conceptual harmonization among the several statistical areas and related economic statistics manuals and

classifications and the testing in countries; that an incremental update of the SNA poses risks in terms of the SNA coherence and international comparability, but that the provision of further guidance for the various research issues can be made available on an incremental basis, thus allowing countries to experiment with implementing the new guidance, which would make the actual implementation of an updated SNA much smoother. It will be essential to support developing countries in experimenting on features that are relevant for them; ways to consult users; a reflection on the meaning of “alignment with the SNA” and possible approaches to assess it; and that a potential SNA update will require substantial resources and contributions, both in kind and in cash, from countries.

- The proposed establishment of a fourth subgroup of the SNA Research Agenda Task Force to focus on communication and terminology. The objective of this subgroup is to update and further develop the communication on national accounts issues, taking into consideration the need for financial resources to accomplish this task. This update may include a more fundamental review of the SNA-website, including digitalized communication channels (e.g., a hub for knowledge sharing, a forum for discussion, webinars), in coordination with national and regional agencies.

UNSD in consultation with the Chair will prepare the first draft of the ISWGNA report to the 2020 Statistical Commission for comments by the members of the ISWGNA.

4. Preparation of the consolidated SNA research agenda

The consolidated SNA research agenda will be circulated to the AEG for comments with a deadline of end of October in order to meet the deadline for the submission of the ISWGNA report to the Statistical Commission.

The updated version of the SNA research agenda resulting from this consultation can be provided as a background document to the 2020 UNSC.

5. Preparation for the ISWGNA:MG meeting

The next ISWGNA Management Group meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2019 (by teleconference). The agenda will cover matters related to the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts and the report to the 2020 Statistical Commission, reflecting the progress attained so far on the potential update to the SNA.

6. Other issues

The next IARIW Conference General Conference (Oslo, Norway, August 24-28, 2020) might include special parallel sessions on the three priority areas, and a plenary panel session dedicated to the discussion of the SNA update.

7. Next meeting

The next ISWGNA meeting is scheduled for 6 November 2019 at 18:00 (CET) in Paris.