

## Task Team leads and ISWGNA meeting

30 April 2021

### Minutes

#### Participants:

Ivo Havinga (Chair), Herman Smith, Michael Stanger, Benson Sim, Jonathan Gessendorfer (UNSD), Jim Tebrake, Jennifer Ribarsky (IMF), Catherine van Rompaey, Eric Roland Metreau, Jose Pablo Valdes Martinez (World Bank), John Verrinder, Nicola Massarelli (Eurostat), Jorrit Zwijnenburg, John Mitchell (OECD), Tihomira Dimova, Rami Peltola (UNECE), Sanjiv Mahajan (UK), Erich Strassner (USA), Celestino Giron (ECB), Pedro Lines (Argentina), Gabriela Saborio (Costa Rica), Albert Braakmann (Germany)

#### 1. Progress report of the SNA Update Project

Participants welcomed the draft progress report and agreed that it is important to also include a forward-looking agenda and risk assessment of the update in the monitoring and reporting tool. They took note of the need to ensure consistency in reporting progress and the proposal by UNSD to collect data directly from the Task Teams using an online questionnaire and to centrally update the existing monitoring and reporting tool.

Some participants expressed concerns about an increased response burden; the complexity of updating the current tool; and balancing the need between collecting relevant information that will be used and information that may be nice to have but not necessary. When specific processes are clarified (for example the process to send guidance for global consultation) time frames specified in the existing tool may be more relevant. Some participants favoured clarifying required updates to the existing tool over introducing a new mechanism.

The UNSD will provide more specific guidance to address these concerns which will include a specific data collection method aiming to increase consistency and higher granularity while keeping the administrative burden in line (or reduced) with updating the existing reporting tool directly.

UNSD will coordinate with the IMF the proposed collection method in more detail and discuss some minor adjustments to the reporting tool. Subsequently, the updated procedure will be presented at the next meeting of the TT leads and ISWGNA.

#### 2. Assessment and outreach activities

UNSD proposed to split the baseline assessment into structural and specific requirements with the aim to reduce the response burden on countries. Specific requirements are those relevant to the implementations of the new recommendations proposed in the guidance notes and could be collected during the global consultation for each guidance note. Structural requirements are those related to the scope and detail of the statistical production process in general but can be linked to specific guidance notes such as the availability of SUTs in support of certain recommendations. Information about these

structural requirements can be extracted, by UNSD, from already available repositories held by international and regional organizations.

Participants raised concerns about the response burden on countries, international organizations, Task Teams and the AEG; and proposed to streamline the decision making process on which guidance notes should be subject to experimentation and testing; to develop a forward looking calendar; to use existing mechanisms; and to evaluate the trade-offs on the feasibility of implementing new recommendations.

Participants noted that the proposed outreach activities consist of regional inception webinars and thematic webinars and that these webinars will, if possible, be part of existing regular regional meetings.

### **3. Arrangement for AEG and Global Consultations**

Participants welcomed the elements of the SNA update web site and the proposed arrangements for organising global consultations on the guidance notes that include the preparation of structured online questionnaires and standardized reporting of the consultation outcome.

Participants agreed that guidance notes should only go for global consultation after the AEG cleared the guidance note and that the guidance note should include only specific recommendations, while guidance note for discussion by the AEG would allow for questions on various options. Limiting the global consultations to specific conceptual recommendations and its feasibility and relevance in the local context will reduce the burden on countries.

Participants noted the large number of guidance notes and welcomed the proposal of UNSD to consider consolidating guidance notes according to their main topic and go for global consultation in a single document, where appropriate.

Participants expressed concern on the misalignment in timing and content of Balance of Payments public consultations and SNA global consultation and requested UNSD and IMF to coordinate with BOPCOM on how best to address the global consultations of joint task teams and guidance notes from other task teams that may affect both SNA and BPM.

### **4. Elaboration of funding strategy**

In response to a request of the ISWGNA:MG, UNSD provided various budget scenarios for the editorial task team and the experimental estimate component using different assumptions. Participants took note of the options and, in an effort to reduce the need for external funding, expressed a preference for a consultancy contract for the lead editor; considered that international organizations and countries could be taking on the role of subject matter editors in producing publishable guidance notes in support of the updated SNA; that UNSD performs the project management duties; and to reconsidering the cost estimate for the Digitized SNA and Collaborative Hub by meeting the expenses from regular budgets.

Participants noted that the ISWGNA:MG should be requested to explicitly discuss the arrangements for a centralized trust fund for funding the SNA update, following explicit commitments from countries and agencies to meet the expenditures. A clear decision on the funding requirements and arrangements will facilitate the required fundraising effort.

It was agreed that UNSD will revise the note and provide preferred budget estimates and subsequently consult the TT leads and ISWGNA in its May 2021 meeting with the aim to provide an unified proposal for consideration by the ISWGNA:MG for its next meeting.

## 5. Other matters

The next meeting of the ISWGNA:MG meeting is expected to take place during June 2021.

Participants took note of the retirement of Lis Soelistyowati from BPS-Statistics Indonesia and consequently also the AEG; expressed their appreciation of her contribution to the AEG and as co-chair of the Digitalization task team; and noted the need to fill the vacant AEG and co-chair positions.

Participants also noted that Carol Coy (Statistical Institute of Jamaica) stepped down as co-chair of the Well-being and Sustainability task team and agreed that Gabriela Saborio (Central Bank of Costa Rica) should take over as co-chair.

The TT leads and ISWGNA members will coordinate through written consultation when to organize the next AEG meeting and which guidance notes to present at the meeting.

Future TT leads and ISWGNA meetings will be held in MS Teams; will be recorded; and to ensure better planning, UNSD will provide the dates of future meetings scheduled for the last Friday of every month.

The next meeting will take place on Friday 28 May 2021 at 7am EDT.