

ISWGNA Meeting

20 April 2020

Minutes

Participants: Ivo Havinga (chair), Herman Smith, Benson Sim and Jonathan Gessendorfer (UNSD); John Verrinder and Nicola Massarelli, (Eurostat); Peter van de Ven, Jorrit Zwijnenburg, John Mitchell and Nadim Ahmad (OECD); Eric Métreau and Jose Pablo Valdes Martinez (World Bank); Jim Tebrake, Margarida Martins, Robert Dippelsman and Jennifer Ribarsky (IMF); Tihomira Dimova and Rami Peltola (UNECE)

1. Further clarifications of the 2008 SNA on the recording of certain flows in the context of COVID-19. How do we tackle these clarifications: distribution of work; prioritisation, process of consultation, branding of the outputs.

The ISWGNA recognized the need to provide additional guidance on the recording of certain flows in the context of COVID-19. To facilitate the process the group agreed to create a list of topics for which clarification is necessary.

The group decided that the notes should be concise (2-3 pages) and focus on the guidance. The reasoning will be provided later in an annex. This will allow a timely response, easier translation and will increase the usability of the notes.

2. Co-operation between ISWGNA/AEG and BOPCOM in the update of the respective international standards: consolidated research agenda, list of common issues, finalisation of terms of reference

The ISWGNA agreed to update the list of SNA research agenda items and identify specific issues relevant for the update of the 2008 SNA, taking also into consideration inputs from BOPCOM, ILO and other governing groups of macroeconomic statistics. The list is considered a living document and will also include potential issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic that need to be prioritized.

The ISWGNA will provide formal comments on the terms of reference of the five technical expert groups established for the update of the BPM6 and proposed to form a joint task team of the Financial and Payments Systems technical expert group.

The ISWGNA noted the need for a mechanism to resolve the conflicting recommendations proposed by members from different statistical domains in joint task teams.

UNSD to circulate the first draft of the list of task teams, including their terms of reference and planned outputs, to the other ISWGNA members for comments.

UNSD to circulate the list of SNA research agenda issues and an overview of the current work of the various task teams

UNSD to incorporate all comments on the TORs of the BOPCOM task teams and to submit these comments to the IMF.

3. AEG-meeting

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, a physical meeting of the AEG in October 2020 might not be possible. Therefore, the group will prepare an agenda for both a physical and a virtual meeting. UNSD to prepare and share the draft agendas.

4. User consultation of guidance notes

Given the current difficulties in organizing international meetings, the ISWGNA discussed alternative options for user consultations on the guidance notes. It was proposed to conduct country consultations on the available guidance notes, during July and August, using a structured questionnaire and webinars. For some of the research agenda topics, the consultation might be limited to conceptual issues, as it could be difficult for countries to test practical guidance. A prerequisite for such a decentralized but structured user consultation is that the guidance notes are translated to the UN languages. The outcomes of the user consultations would be used as a basis for discussion in the AEG meeting.

5. Any other business

The ISWGNA:NA will organize a meeting in May 2020 to prepare a brief to the ISWGNA Management Group on the effect of COVID-19 crisis on the SNA update programme.

6. Next meeting

The date of next meeting of the ISWGNA will be decided in due course.