

# SNA News

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## NEW UN NATIONAL ACCOUNTS QUESTIONNAIRE BASED ON THE 1993 SNA

By Felizardo Suzara, UNSD

(For Information)

As agreed to by the UN Statistical Commission, the new National Accounts questionnaire based on the 1993 SNA was implemented in October 1999. Two complete sets of the new questionnaire, one blank and one pre-filled, together with a companion reference booklet were sent to 151 out of the 207 countries included in the UNSD National Accounts database. To minimize the reporting burden of countries, data for the remaining 56 countries will be directly converted from the replies to the SNA93/ESA 95 questionnaire implemented by Eurostat and OECD. Countries that have substantially implemented the 1993 SNA are also being asked to continue reporting data according to the 1968 SNA for the main aggregates (Part I of the new questionnaire). This is very important for international comparability and analysis of the

data series and, in particular, when national accounts statistics are used for administrative purposes as in the case of the UN Committee on Contributions. The scale of assessment of member states for the UN regular budget is calculated every three years and next year a new scale will be decided based on the Gross National Income (GNI) data reported this year including data up to 1998. To facilitate the understanding of the new questionnaire, the companion reference booklet includes the instructions for the tables to be completed, SNA glossary with definitions, and the conversion rules used for changing the reported data from the 1968 SNA format to the 1993 SNA format. For further information, please contact Felizardo Suzara (e-mail: [suzara@un.org](mailto:suzara@un.org)).

## SNA AMENDMENT REGARDING FINANCIAL DERIVATIVES

By Adriaan Bloem, IMF

(For Information)

In accordance with a request of the 1999 Statistical Commission the proposed revision of the 1993 SNA regarding the treatment of financial derivatives was circulated to all national statistical offices worldwide for review in June 1999. A broad consensus supporting the proposed change emerged. The ISWGNA reviewed carefully all the comments received. As a result of this analysis it asked

the IMF to add one sentence to mention explicitly that the service charge component (involved in derivative transactions) should be separately recorded, where possible. The final text has been sent to the 24 members of the Statistical Commission for approval. If no objections are raised by 31 December 1999, the amendment will be considered formally approved by the Commission.

## DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA OF THE TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNTS

By Cristina Hannig, UNSD

(For Information)

The ACC Sub-committee on Statistical Activities at its latest session in Madrid, 14-16 September 1999 noted the positive progress in

and the plans for the cooperative effort by WTO, OECD and Eurostat to develop a common conceptual framework for a Tourism

Satellite Account, with the objective of presenting it for the next session of the United Nations Statistical Commission scheduled for 29 February - 3 March 2000. A joint article on this topic by WTO/OECD/Eurostat including

the recommendations by the Statistical Commission regarding the proposed conceptual framework will be published in the next issue of the SNA News and Notes.

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## REMINDER

Electronic discussion groups now exist in the areas of

- Treatment of nominal holding gains and interest on financial assets ([www.WorldBank.org/data/working/iswgnna\\_background.html](http://www.WorldBank.org/data/working/iswgnna_background.html))
- Cost of transferring ownership of assets ([www.oecd.org/std/na/home.htm](http://www.oecd.org/std/na/home.htm)) - click on the button "Papers under discussion".
- How to treat interest in macroeconomic statistics that record transactions on an accrual basis ([www.imf.org/external/np/sta/na/interest](http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/na/interest))

If you are interested in these topics, please visit the above specified homepages and/or refer to the articles published in SNA News and Notes Issue #9, page 7.

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## IMPLEMENTATION OF SNA93 IN AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

By Peter Harper, Australian Bureau of Statistics (For Information)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) introduced SNA93 in the September quarter 1998 national accounts publication, which was issued in December 1998. Subsequently, SNA93 has been implemented in all other national accounts and, where relevant, non-national accounts releases. The annual Australian System of National Accounts publication contains a full set of accounts (including balance sheets) for each sector on an SNA93 basis, as well as extensive supporting information. As part of the implementation of SNA93, chain volume measures, compiled using annually reweighted Laspeyres indexes, replaced constant price estimates. Also, the quarterly production account estimates were benchmarked to annual, balanced, supply-use (SU) tables.

The implementation of SNA93 raised the level of Australia's GDP by about 2.7%, with the main contributors being the capitalisation of expenditure on computer software and FISIM. The introduction of chain volume measures generally had little impact on movements in GDP volumes. However for some components – most noticeably, capital expenditure on machinery and equipment and imports of goods and services – movements were revised significantly. Movements for these two components for the most recent years were revised downward, due to the impact of prices

for computers falling relative to the prices of other products. Benchmarking the quarterly production account to the annual SU tables had little impact on GDP; however, estimates of capital expenditure on machinery and equipment and gross operating surplus of private non-financial corporations were revised significantly in some periods. Prior to SU balancing, the estimates for these components had been based on taxation records, which were adjusted to a national accounts basis using data sources that were less than ideal.

An important aspect of the implementation of SNA93 was that all historical data were recompiled on the new basis. A variety of "backcasting" techniques were used when data on the new basis were unavailable. Prior to the implementation of SNA93 the ABS released several information papers to educate users about the proposed changes. The most notable were "Implementation of Revised International Standards in the Australian National Accounts", "Introduction of Chain Volume Measures in the Australian National Accounts" and "Upgraded Australian National Accounts". Each of these publications is available from the ABS's WebSite ([www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)). For further information on Australia's implementation of SNA93 please contact me (email: [peter.harper@abs.gov.au](mailto:peter.harper@abs.gov.au) or fax: +61 2 6251 1053.

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1993 SNA IN ETHIOPIA, GHANA AND ZIMBABWE**  
**By Dr. Meshesha Getahun, Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation,**  
**Ethiopia and Dickson Mzumara, UN Economic Commission for Africa**  
(For Information)

Ethiopia, Ghana and Zimbabwe have a long tradition of compiling national accounts statistics. A major revision exercise to update the coverage, sources and methods and prepare a new series of estimates with 1996 as the base year is currently underway in Ethiopia. Ghana is currently revising its national accounts including the sources and methods manual to produce revised and updated series with 1993 as the base year. Zimbabwe completed extensive improvements of the methodology and the estimates of the country's national accounts in 1997 and published the results in September 1997.

**Sources of data:**

Business accounts are extensively used as sources of data in all three countries. The financial statements of the major activities like electricity, water, airlines and the banking and insurance institutions are also used directly. However, data in the financial statements of incorporated enterprises have been found to be highly aggregated or incomplete resulting in additional requests for information to the institutions concerned. For the most part, national statistical services rely on censuses of production and household surveys. In a few instances the commodity flow approach is used.

For Ethiopia, the National Bank of Ethiopia (monetary authority) provides the data required for the compilation of the estimates of gross output and value added of the banking sub-sector. In Ghana, financial statements and other data are available from the annual reports of the Bank of Ghana, for the State Bank of Ghana and rural banks. In Zimbabwe, the estimates are compiled from the annual reports of the financial institutions. Additional data are collected by questionnaire directly from the banks or other financial intermediaries for items not explicitly shown in the annual reports or in their financial statements

**Institutional sectors and elaboration of the accounts:**

Institutional sectors specified in the 1993 SNA are not fully identified by the countries.

However, some details are shown in summary form to distinguish between public and private sub-sectors. The series of accounts compiled by the countries are the production account and, in some cases, generation of income account, allocation of primary income account and secondary distribution of income account. None of the accounts are fully elaborated by institutional sector.

**Financial corporations:**

In Ethiopia efforts are made to allocate financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM) in accordance with the recommendations of SNA1993 between intermediate consumption of industries and final consumption. The gross output of the insurance sub-sector is calculated for life and non-life insurance as the difference, between premium income earned (net of premium income paid to re-insurers), and claims paid (net of amounts received from re-insurers in respect of claims), less the change in the provision for future risks and the change in the technical reserves in respect of life insurance adjusted to exclude interest earned on those reserves. There are no autonomous pension funds operating in Ethiopia. A social security scheme controlled and partly financed by the government is in place and is treated as part of general government.

In Ghana the estimation of FISIM is done in accordance with SNA1968. For the insurance sub-sector, gross output for life insurance is calculated either as premium income plus: (i) investment income and (ii) other income less (i) reinsurance and commissions, (ii) claims paid and (iii) additions to actuarial reserves. The activities of autonomous pension and provident funds are not very important and are not included in the estimation of gross domestic product.

In Zimbabwe the gross output of the banking sub-sector is estimated as the sum of actual service charges and imputed service charges. The whole of FISIM so computed is allocated to the intermediate consumption of a nominal industry. Gross output of the life insurance sector is calculated as premiums less claims

plus property income received less the change in the reserves to the life funds. For non-life insurance, gross output is calculated as premiums less claims plus property income received less the value of changes in reserves. The activities of pension funds have grown significantly in Zimbabwe. The output produced by autonomous pension funds is measured in the same way as that of insurance enterprises.

The three countries have all started implementing some aspects of SNA1993. The

problems facing them include lack of basic data and shortage of trained and experienced staff. Data on informal and small unincorporated enterprises are either lacking or inadequate. Data on prices, distributive trade and services as well as construction activities are generally inadequate. The quality of data generated through censuses and surveys needs to be improved. There has been a high staff turnover in the countries, which is a serious problem requiring careful attention to sustain achievements.

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## UNSD AND JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY JOINT PROJECT ON NPIS

By Károly Kovács, UNSD

(For Information)

The United Nations is working, along with other international organizations, to implement the 1993 SNA. One important aspect of this task is to expand the understanding of the nonprofit sector. This sector has a substantial impact on the other sectors, yet this impact is not always fully reflected in the current national accounts system. In order to facilitate this work, the United Nations Statistics Division has formed a partnership with the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Political Studies to assist in the development of a handbook on treatment of the NPIS.

The two institutions organized the first expert group meeting on the topic "Toward an Official Global Economic Data System on

Nonprofit Institutions" on April 13-14, 1999 at the UN Headquarters, New York. Experts in the field as well as members of the ISWGNA participated, in an enriching discussion on the definition and the classification of nonprofit institutions and their identification in a satellite account. The main focus of the meeting was of course the handbook outline and the project implementation phases. After pilot testing a framework for data compilation and analysis in some countries, the results will be incorporated in the draft handbook in the second half of 2000. A global expert group meeting will then review and discuss the handbook in 2001 and decide on its publication as part of the UN handbook series on the 1993 SNA.

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## MEETINGS, SEMINARS

December 1999 Workshop on economic statistics for statisticians, academics, and government officials, India, organized by the World Bank

18 January - 3 March 2000: National Economic Accounting, training course, BEA, Washington\*

19-21 January 2000 8<sup>th</sup> symposium of the National Accounts Association (Association de Comptabilité National, ACN) for Francophones organized by Michael Boëda, INSEE {phone #: 33-141-17-52-71, fax #: 33-141-17-39-66} and Edith Archambault, Université Paris I {phone #: 33-155-43-41-29, fax #: 33-155-43-43-36}. The sessions of the symposium: National accounts and production, income and capital concepts, Assets accounts: Use and measurement, New base and the European harmonization, National accounts in the developing countries, National accounts, teaching of economics, university research

February 2000, Two weeks course on national accounts and price statistics, South African Reserve Bank, organized by IMF

6 March - 28 April 2000: U.S. National Income and Product Accounting, training course, BEA, Washington\*

March 2000, Seminar on prices and purchasing power parities, the World Bank, Washington D.C.

26-28 April 2000: Joint ECE/OECD/Eurostat meeting on national accounts (Geneva)

Topics: gross capital formation and changes in inventories, capital stock measurement, what is required for SNA 93 implementation?, FISIM - examine results of experimental calculations.

1 May - 23 June 2000: Prices and Constant-Price Accounting, training course BEA, Washington\*

26 June - 18 August 2000: Economic and Social Indicators, training course, BEA Washington\*

21 August - 13 October 2000 Input-Output Accounting, training course, BEA Washington\*

26-29 September 2000: Annual OECD national accounts meeting (Paris)

16 October - 8 December 2000: Capital and Financial Accounts, Balance Sheets, and International Transactions, training course, BEA Washington\*

\* Nominations are being accepted for these BEA training courses. Further inquiries should be directed to BEA, U.S. Department of Commerce, tel. +202-606-9728, fax+202-606-5322, e-mail: [FKMITCH@bea.doc.gov](mailto:FKMITCH@bea.doc.gov)

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### Editorial Note

SNA News and Notes is a bi-annual information service of the ISWGNA prepared by United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). It does not necessarily express the official position of any of the members of the ISWGNA (European Union, IMF, OECD, United Nations and World Bank)

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