The European System of Accounts (1995 ESA) is an internationally compatible accounting framework for a systematic and detailed description of a total economy (that is a region, country or group of countries), its components and its relations with other total economies.

The 1995 ESA is fully consistent with the revised world-wide guidelines on national accounting, the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) and replaces the European System of Integrated Economic Accounts published in 1970. However, the ESA is focused more on the circumstances and data needs in the European Union. Like the SNA, the ESA is harmonised with the concepts and classifications used in many other, social and economic statistics. Cases in point are statistics on employment, statistics on manufacturing and statistics on external trade. The ESA can therefore serve as the central framework of reference for the social and economic statistics of the European Union and its Member States.

The ESA framework consists of two main sets of tables:

- Sector accounts: provide, by institutional sector, a systematic description of the different stages of the economic process: production, generation of income, distribution of income, redistribution of income, use of income and financial and non-financial accumulation. The sector accounts also include balance sheets to describe the stocks of assets, liabilities and net worth at the beginning and the end of the accounting period.

- Input-output framework and the accounts by industry: describe in more detail the production process (cost structure, income generated and employment) and the flows of goods and services (output, imports, exports, final consumption, intermediate consumption and capital formation by product group).

The ESA encompasses concepts of population and employment. These concepts are relevant for both the sector accounts and the input-output framework. The ESA is not restricted to annual national accounting, but applies also to quarterly accounts and regional accounts.

Custodian: Eurostat

Knowledgebase on Economic Statistics - Methods and Country Practices