

**Revision Cycle Survey  
Summary Report  
October 2023**

**Introduction**

The United Nations Statistical Commission, at its 54th session in 2023, requested the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UNCEISC) to formulate a proposal for a regular revision cycle of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC), and the development of a research agenda for future revisions for consideration by the Commission (Report on the 54th session of the UNSC, decision 54/112d, [https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session\\_54/documents/2023-37-FinalReport-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_54/documents/2023-37-FinalReport-E.pdf)).

In response to this request, the United Nations Statistics Division conducted a Survey on Revision Cycles for the Classification of Economic Activities and Products under the auspices of the UNCEISC, from September-October 2023.

This survey aimed at collecting information on the revision cycles used by countries and international regional organizations for their classification(s) of economic activities, and their classification(s) of products. The information will be used as an input into the identification of a regular revision cycle for ISIC and CPC taking into consideration national and regional practices.

This document reviews the key findings from the survey, and includes an annex with a copy of the survey questionnaire.

**Key Findings**

- 96 respondents completed the survey, almost entirely from NSOs and with a fairly representative geographic distribution;

Industrial activity classification

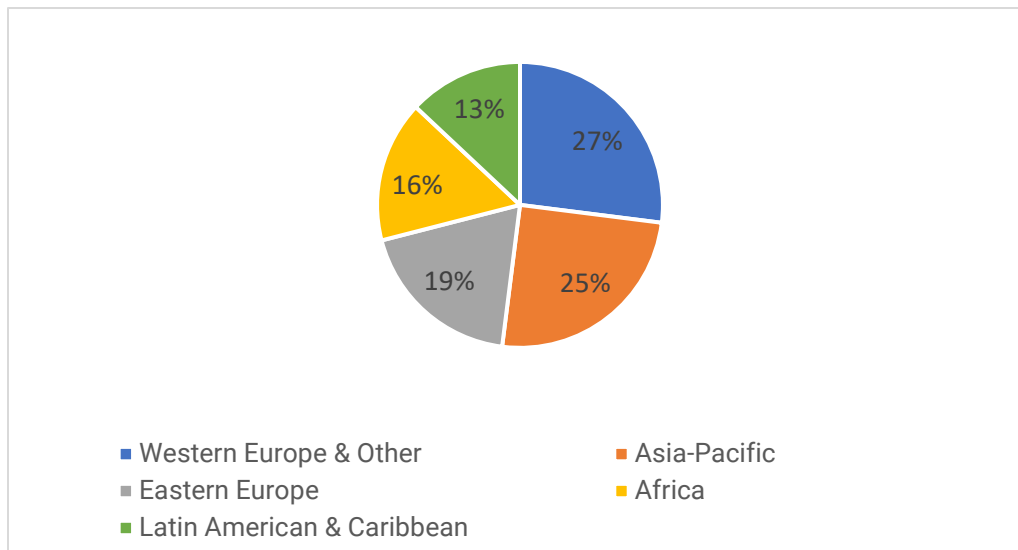
- The majority of respondents use ISIC, NACE or a national or regional adaptation for their industrial activity classification; all respondents noted that their classification is based on at least one other classification, and most note that their revision cycle is aligned with one of the international/regional standard classifications;
- Most respondents have a formal system at the national level to maintain the classification;
- Nearly 2/3 of respondents note that their classification has been updated since 2008, when ISIC and NACE were last revised;
- Most respondents note a regular revision cycle between 1-5 years; with the revision process itself taking 1-3 years to complete.

Product classification

- The majority of respondents use CPC, CPA or a national or regional adaptation for their product classification; almost all respondents noted that their classification is based on CPC, CPA or HS/CN classification, and most note that their revision cycle is aligned with one of the international/regional standard classifications;
- Most respondents have a formal system at the national level to maintain the classification;
- Over 40% of respondents note that their classification has been updated since the latest CPC update in 2015;
- Half of respondents with a regular revision cycle note that the cycle is between 1-3 years; with the revision process itself taking 1-2 to complete.

### **Respondents**

A total of 96 respondents completed the survey, with a fairly even distribution by region:



The vast majority of respondents, 97%, come from NSOs, with the remaining 3% from regional organizations.

### **Survey Results - Part A: Industrial Activity Classifications**

#### **1. What classification of industrial activity is used in your country?**

- 42% NACE or national adaptation
- 28% national classification
- 23% ISIC
- 3% NAICS or national adaptation
- 2% ANZSIC
- 1% NAEMA
- 1% PACSIC

Note: NACE (Eurostat), NAICS (North America), ANZSIC (Australia & New Zealand), NAEMA (AFRISTAT), PACSIC (Pacific Community)

**2. Is the industry classification in your country a national or regional adaptation of any of these industry classifications? (can select more than one)**

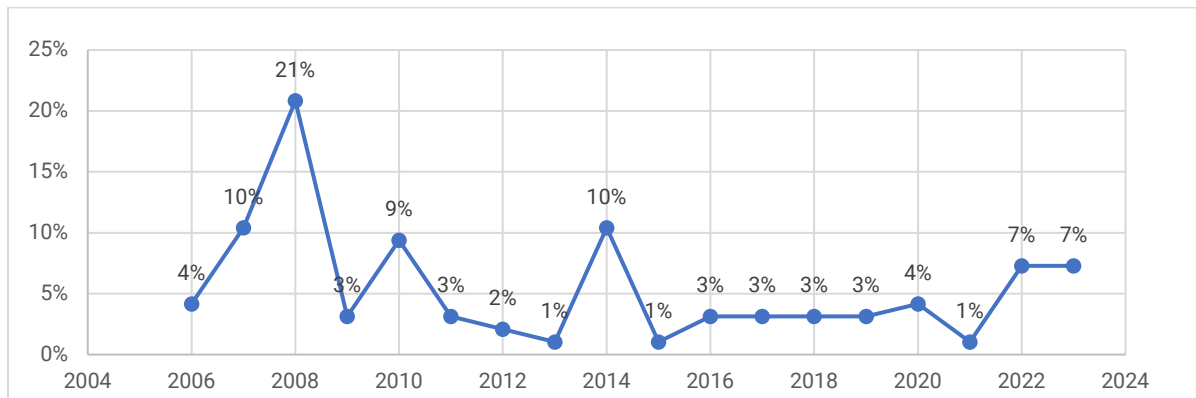
While 28% reported using a unique national classification in Question 1, the responses to Question 2 make it clear that even these are adaptations of at least one other international/regional standard:

- 59% ISIC
- 45% NACE
- 3% NAICS
- 3% Other
- 1% ANZSIC
- 100% at least one of the above

**3. When was the industry classification in your country last revised?**

Nearly 2 out of 3 respondents noted that their industry classification has been revised since the most recent ISIC/NACE update in 2008:

- 2006-08: 35%
- 2009-11: 16%
- 2012-14: 14%
- 2015-17: 7%
- 2018-20: 10%
- 2021-23: 16%
- N/A: 2%



**4. Does your country have a regular revision cycle for the national industry classification?**

- Yes 32%
- No: 68%

Those who responded “no” were asked what are the main factors that prompt a revision of their classification:

- Revision of international standards: 32%
- Own reasons: 68%
- Revision of standards + own reasons: 12%
- N/A; no classification or never revised: 7%

Among the “own” reasons provided by respondents are changes in the economy; and the GDP rebasing process.

**5. Please indicate the revision cycle of the industry classification in your country:**

- On a regular cycle: 58%
- On a continuous basis: 42%

Among those who noted using a regular cycle, we asked about the time period:

- Every 1-2 years: 36%
- Every 5 years: 36%
- Every 10 years: 14%
- Every 10 years (to be continuous): 7%
- When GDP is rebased: 7%

Nearly 3 out of 4 respondents noted that their current revision cycle is 5 years or less.

**6. Is the revision cycle of the national industry classification in your country linked to the revision cycle of any regional or international classification?**

- Yes 80%
- No: 20%

Those who responded “yes” were asked what their revision cycle is linked to:

- Revision of ISIC/NACE: 76%
- Revision of ISIC/NACE/other + national circumstances: 16%
- Revision of other regional/national classification: 8%

Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents stated that their revision cycle is linked to that of ISIC/NACE.

**7. Is there a formal system at the national level (e.g. committee, working groups) to maintain the classification including organizing the consultation with users and discussion with experts to revise the classification?**

- Yes 76%
- No: 24%

Over 3 out of 4 countries noted that they have a formal system for maintaining and revising their activity classifications.

**8. If yes, please describe the consultation process for revising the industry classification in your country (Can select more than one)**

- Institutional and governmental stakeholders outside institution are consulted: 63%

- User feedback collected continuously between revisions: 32%
- User feedback collected only during specified periods prior to revision: 30%
- Other: 13%

“Other” responses included consulting with other countries in the region, or allowing any individual in the country to request a change in the classification.

**9. Once the industry classification revision process has started, how long does it generally take to complete the revision?**

- Less than one year: 16%
- 1 to 5 years: 72%
- More than 5 years: 5%
- Other: 7%

Where specified, those who responded 1-5 years generally noted 1-3 years.

**Survey Results - Part B: Product Classifications**

**1. What product classifications are used in your country?**

- National adaptation of CPC or CPA: 30%
- CPC or CPA: 28%
- National/regional classification: 11%
- CPA/CPC + HS/CN: 10%
- CPA/CPC + HS/CN + others: 5%
- CPA/CPC + national/regional classification: 3%
- HS/CN + national/regional classification: 3%
- HS/CN only: 3%
- N/A: 3%
- Other combinations: 2%

The majority of respondents use CPC, CPA or a national adaptation of them, at times in conjunction with the Harmonized System (HS) or another national/regional classification.

**2. Are the product classifications in your country national or regional adaptations of any of the following international or regional product classifications? (can select more than one)**

- |        |     |          |    |
|--------|-----|----------|----|
| • CPA: | 50% | • Other: | 4% |
| • CPC: | 46% | • NAPCS: | 3% |
| • HS:  | 38% |          |    |

96% of respondents noted that their product classification is based on at least one of the above standards. And a fairly significant proportion (38%) use HS (which has a 5-year revision cycle) or an adaptation of it.

**3. Please note below the primary product classification used in your country [and respond to the remaining questions based on this classification]:**

As countries often use multiple product classifications, we asked respondents to name one primary product classification, and to respond to the remaining questions based on it.

- |                                     |     |                           |    |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|----|
| • CPA or CPC:                       | 49% | • N/A:                    | 3% |
| • National/regional classification: | 27% | • National version of HS: | 1% |
| • National version of CPA:          | 14% | • PRODCOM:                | 1% |
| • HS/CN:                            | 5%  |                           |    |

63% named CPC, CPA or a national version of them as their primary classification. 27% use a unique national or regional classification; and 6% use HS or a national adaptation of it.

**4. When was the primary product classification in your country last revised?**

- |            |     |            |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| • 2008-13: | 16% | • 2020-23: | 36% |
| • 2014-15: | 37% | • N/A:     | 4%  |
| • 2016-19: | 7%  |            |     |

As with the industry classification, we see a large spike at the time of the most recent revision of the international and European standards. Nonetheless, over 40% noted that they have updated their primary product classification since that time (2015).

**5. Does your country have a regular revision cycle for the national product classification?**

Yes: 32%

No: 68%

Those who responded “no” were asked what are the main factors that prompt a revision of their classification:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • Revision of international standards:         | 65% |
| • Own reasons (new products; economic census): | 14% |
| • Revision of int’l standards + own reasons:   | 12% |
| • N/A; no classification or never revised:     | 16% |

As with the activity classification, most respondents note the revision of international standards. This may be in conjunction with their own unique reasons, such as the emergence of new products or the conducting of an economic census.

**6. Please indicate the revision cycle of the primary product classification in your country:**

- On a regular cycle: 55%
- On a continuous basis: 45%

Among those who noted using a regular cycle, we asked about the time period:

- Every 1-3 years: 50%
- Every 5-6 years: 36%
- Every 10+ years: 7%
- When GDP is rebased: 7%

86% noted that their revision cycle is every 6 years or less.

**7. Is the revision cycle of the primary product classification in your country linked to the revision cycle of any regional or international classification?**

- Yes: 71%
- No: 29%

Those who responded “yes” were asked what their revision cycle is linked to:

- Revision of CPC/CPA: 77%
- Revision of HS/CN: 11%
- Revision of regional classification: 3%
- Revision of PRODCOM: 3%
- Revision of CPC/CPA + national circumstances: 2%
- Revision of CPA but will soon be independent: 2%
- Revision of HS/CN + regional tariff system: 2%

Nearly 90% of respondents noted that their revision cycle is linked to either CPC/CPA or HS.

**8. Is there a formal system at the national level (e.g. committee, working groups) to maintain the classification including organizing the consultation with users and discussion with experts to revise the classification?**

- Yes: 53%
- No: 47%

A small majority of countries noted that they have a formal system for maintaining and revising their product classifications (notably lower than the 76% who said so for the activity classification).

**9. If yes, please describe the consultation process for revising the industry classification in your country (Can select more than one)**

- Institutional and governmental stakeholders outside institution are consulted: 44%
- User feedback collected continuously between revisions: 24%
- User feedback collected only during specified periods prior to revision: 20%
- Other: 8%

“Other” responses included consulting with other countries in the region.

**10. Once the product classification revision process has started, how long does it generally take to complete the revision?**

- Less than one year: 21%
- \*1 to 5 years: 71%
- More than 5 years: 5%
- Other: 3%

Where specified, those who responded 1-5 years generally noted a 1-2 year process.



## Annex A – Survey Questionnaire

UNCEISC - Revision cycle survey

### Survey on Revision Cycles for Classifications of Economic Activities and Products

#### Introduction

The United Nations Statistical Commission at its 54th session in 2023 requested the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UNCEISC) to formulate a proposal for a regular revision cycle of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC), and the development of a research agenda for future revisions for consideration by the Commission (Report on the 54th session of the UNSC, decision 54/112d, [https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session\\_54/documents/2023-37-FinalReport-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_54/documents/2023-37-FinalReport-E.pdf)).

In response to this request, the United Nations Statistics Division is conducting the Survey on Revision Cycles for Classification of Economic Activities and Products under the auspices of the UNCEISC.

This survey aims at collecting information on the revision cycle used by countries and international regional organizations for their classification(s) of economic activities, and their classification(s) of products. The information will be used as an input into the identification of a regular revision cycle for ISIC and CPC taking into consideration national and regional practices.

We would appreciate it if your office could complete the survey by **Friday, 13 October 2023**. If you have any questions, concerns, or technical issues with filling out the survey online, please contact Mr. Pedro Farinas (Email:[chl@un.org](mailto:chl@un.org)).

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#### Contact Information. Please enter your contact information

Country: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### PART A. INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION

**A1.** What classification of industrial activity is used in your country?

*Please provide link if available*

\_\_\_\_\_

**A2.** Is the industry classification in your country a national or regional adaptation of any of the following industry classifications?

*Please mark all that apply.*

- International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)
- Nomenclature of Economic Activities (NACE)
- North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**A3.** When was the industry classification in your country last revised?

*Please indicate the year*

\_\_\_\_\_

**A4.** Does your country have a regular revision cycle for the national industry classification?

Yes

No. *If no, what are the main factors that prompt a revision of your classification? (and skip to Question A6)* \_\_\_\_\_

This Question is Conditionally Hidden if: (A4 = No. If no, what are the main factors that prompt a revision of your classification? (and skip to Question A6) )

**A5.** Please indicate the revision cycle of the industry classification in your country:

On a continuous basis (i.e. the industry classification in your country is updated on an ongoing basis)

On a regular cycle, every X number of years. *Please indicate 'X'* \_\_\_\_\_

**A6.** Is the revision cycle of the national industry classification in your country linked to the revision cycle of any regional or international classification system of economic activities?

Yes. *Please explain:* \_\_\_\_\_

No

**A7.** Is there a formal system at the national level (e.g. committee, working groups) to maintain the classification including organizing the consultation with users and discussion with experts to revise the classification?

Yes

No. *(Skip to Question A9)*

This Question is Conditionally Hidden if: (A7 = No. (Skip to Question A9))

**A8.** Please describe the consultation process for revising the industry classification in your country.

*Please check all that apply:*

User feedback on the industry classification in your country is collected continuously between revisions

User feedback on the industry classification is collected only during specified periods prior to a revision

Institutional and governmental stakeholders outside your institution are consulted on the industry classification in your country

Other. *Please specify:* \_\_\_\_\_

**A9.** Once the industry classification revision process has started, how long does it generally take to complete the revision?

Less than 1 year

1 to 5 years

More than 5 years

Other. *Please specify:* \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART B. PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION

**B1.** What product classifications are used in your country?

*Please provide links if available*

\_\_\_\_\_

**B2.** Are the product classification(s) in your country national or regional adaptation(s) of any of the following international or regional product classifications?

*Please mark all that apply.*

- Central Product Classification (CPC)
- Statistical Classification of Products by Activity (CPA)
- North American Product Classification System (NAPCS)
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Product Classification (ANZSPC)
- The Harmonized System (HS)
- Other. *Please specify:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond to questions B3-B10 on the *primary* product classification used in your country. Primary product classification in this survey is defined as a classification framework within which data on products can be collected and presented according to economic principles and perceptions for the monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the performance of an economy over time, such as the product classification used for compiling national accounts.**

**B3.** Please note below the *primary* product classification used in your country.

\_\_\_\_\_

**B4.** When was the primary product classification in your country last revised?

*Please indicate the year*

\_\_\_\_\_

**B5.** Does your country have a regular revision cycle for the primary national product classification?

- Yes
- No. *If no, what are the main factors that prompt a revision of your classification? (and skip to Question B7)* \_\_\_\_\_

This Question is Conditionally Hidden if: (B5 = No. If no, what are the main factors that prompt a revision of your classification? (and skip to Question B7))

**B6.** Please indicate the revision cycle of the primary product classification in your country:

On a continuous basis (i.e., the product classification in your country is updated on an ongoing basis)

On a regular basis, every X number of years. *Please indicate 'X'* \_\_\_\_\_

**B7.** Is the revision cycle of the primary product classification in your country linked to the revision cycle of any regional or international product classification system?

- Yes. *Please explain:* \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**B8.** Is there a formal system at the national level (e.g. committee, working groups) to maintain the classification including organizing the consultation with users and discussion with experts to revise the primary product classification in your country?

- Yes
- No. *(Skip to Question B10)*

This Question is Conditionally Hidden if: (B8 = No. (Skip to Question B10))

**B9.** Please describe the consultation process for revising the primary product classification in your country.

*Please check all that apply:*

- User feedback on the product classification in your country is collected continuously between revisions
- User feedback on the product classification in your country is collected only during specified periods prior to a revision
- Institutional and governmental stakeholders outside your institution are consulted on the product classification in your country
  
- Other. *Please specify:* \_\_\_\_\_

**B10.** Once the primary product classification revision process has started, how long does it generally take to complete the revision?

- Less than 1 year
  - 1 to 5 years
  - More than 5 years
  - Other. *Please specify:* \_\_\_\_\_
-

PART C. CONSENT TO PUBLISH YOUR RESPONSE

**C1.**

Do you give consent that your response to this questionnaire can be published?

*Please note that no email address will be released*

- Yes
- No

**End of questionnaire**

As the last step, please click on the "Submit" button below to complete the questionnaire.

On the next page, you will see all the answers that you submitted. You will also be able to print a copy of your complete response, or to send it to your own email address, by clicking on the links on top.

Thank you for your participation in the revision cycle survey!

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