# Global Consultation on the Initial List of Issues for the Update of the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG)

## Introduction

The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its fifty-third session in 2022 “recommended the revision of the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) and an assessment of whether changes are required in the other classifications of expenditure according to purpose.” ([Decision 53/125(i) of E/CN.3/2022/41](https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_53/documents/2022-41-FinalReport-E.pdf)).

The update of COFOG will be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UNCEISC) and its Task Team on the Revision of COFOG (TT-COFOG). It is anticipated that the update will be completed by March 2027.

The primary objectives of the TT-COFOG are to develop a revised version of the COFOG, including the structure, explanatory notes and correspondences between the revised COFOG and the 1999 version of COFOG. In addition, the task team will provide an assessment on whether changes are required in other classifications according to purpose in the context of the COFOG revision and make a recommendation to UNCEISC.

The revision process of COFOG will be undertaken in coordination with the update process of other macroeconomic standards, including the update of the Government Financial Statistics Manual (GFSM), System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework.

The Global Consultation on the Initial List of Issues for the Update of COFOG is being conducted with countries, international/regional organizations and broader user communities to collect feedback on the initial list of issues which were identified by the TT-COFOG. The feedback from the global consultation will contribute to the finalization of the list of issues which will be presented to the 56th session of the UNSC in 2025.

## What is COFOG?

The classification of the functions of government (COFOG) is a classification of transactions designed to apply to general government and its subsectors. In the current version of the COFOG classification, there are ten divisions as follows:

01 General public services

02 Defence

03 Public order and safety

04 Economic affairs

05 Environmental protection

06 Housing and community amenities

07 Health

08 Recreation, culture and religion

09 Education

10 Social protection

These divisions are broken down into more details in groups, which again are broken down into classes. At the most detailed level, classes, whether the expenditure are being related to collective services or individual services are indicated. In practice, in many groups there is only one class, hence group and class are then equal.

Following the conceptual principles, all of divisions 01 to 06 are collective services, as are groups 07.5 and 07.6 of division 07 - Health, groups 08.3 to 08.6 of division 08 - Recreation, culture and religion, groups 09.7 and 09.8 of division 9 - Education, and groups 10.8 and 10.9 of division 10 - Social protection. These groups cover expenditures on general administration, regulation, research and so on. The remaining parts of the classification refer to expenditure related to individual services. However, the COFOG classification is periodically reviewed and the precise mapping of the COFOG classification to collective and individual services may also be updated during these revisions.

([Draft 2025 SNA, paras. 10.101-10.102](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/SNAUpdate/2025/Draft_2025SNA.pdf))

## Who should fill out this questionnaire?

This questionnaire is being circulated to national statistical offices, relevant international/regional organizations and the broader compiler and user community. It is intended to be completed by those who currently compile COFOG or use COFOG in analysis, or intend to do so in the future.

When filling out the questionnaire, respondents are encouraged to consult with or forward the questionnaire to relevant users/producers of the statistics related to COFOG in their institutions and/or in other relevant institutions in their country as appropriate.

## What is the aim of the questionnaire?

The aim of the questionnaire is to collect feedback on the initial list of issues and their suggested prioritization in order to finalize the list of issues for the revision of COFOG.

## How will the responses be used?

The responses to the questionnaire will be reviewed by the TT-COFOG to finalize the list of issues for the revision of COFOG. The final list of issues will be presented to the UN Statistical Commission at its 56th Session in 2025, along with a summary of the results of the Global Consultation.

In addition, to maximize transparency UNSD plans make the responses to this questionnaire available (no email addresses will be released) on the UNSD website here: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/classifications/cofog/revision>.

At the end of the questionnaire, you can indicate whether you consent to having your response published on the UNSD website. If you answer “no”, your response will only be used internally by the TT-COFOG.

## How to fill out the questionnaire?

This questionnaire is available in two formats:

* an online form, available here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J79YF28>; or
* a stand-alone Microsoft Word document, to be sent to [chl@un.org](mailto:chl@un.org).

Your response to this questionnaire should be submitted by **10 December 2024**.

Your input into this global consultation is very important and your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at [chl@un.org](mailto:chl@un.org).

**Part I. Contact and Background Information**

**1.** **Your name**:

**2.** **Country**:

**3.** **Institution**:

**4.** **Division/Area**:

**5.** **Job** **title**:

**6.** **Email address**:

**Part II. Use of COFOG in Your Institution**

1. **We encourage a coordinated response from your institution. Please indicate below if your response is coordinated with experts in the following areas within your institution**   
   **(Please select all that apply)**

Government finance statistics

National accounts

Classifications

Business and trade statistics

Environment statistics

Environmental-economic accounts

Social and demographic statistics

Health statistics

Education statistics

SNA extended and thematic accounts (please specify which: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Tourism statistics

Research and development statistics

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Is your response coordinated with other institutions (not your own) in your country?**

Yes. If yes, with whom? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

No

Not applicable

1. **Does your institution compile or use government expenditure statistics or accounts utilizing COFOG? (Please select all that apply)**

A. My institution compiles government expenditure accounts based on the COFOG classification

B. My institution provides data for the compilation of government expenditure accounts based on the COFOG classification

C. My institution uses government expenditure accounts based on the COFOG classification

D. My institution does not compile, use or provide data for government expenditure accounts based on the COFOG classification, but the framework is relevant to the work of my institution

**\*Please note the following regarding your response to Question 9\***

**If your response includes A and/or B only, answer Questions 10-16 and skip Questions 17-19**

**If your response includes A and/or B and C, answer all Questions 10-19**

**If your response includes C only, skip Questions 10-16 and answer Questions 17-19**

**If your response includes D only, skip Questions 10-19**

**Questions 10-16: For compilers and data providers**

1. **At what level of detail does your institution provide COFOG source data or compile COFOG? Please mark all that are applicable:**

☐ Division (2 digits)

☐ Group (3 digits)

☐ Class (4 digits)

☐ Additional level(s) of detail (5+ digits) for national adaptation

1. **At what level of detail does your institution publish COFOG data? Please mark all that are applicable:**

☐ Division (2 digits)

☐ Group (3 digits)

☐ Class (4 digits)

☐ Additional level(s) of detail (5+ digits) for national adaptation

1. **For which institutional sectors does your institution provide COFOG source data or compile COFOG? Please mark all that are applicable:**

☐ General government (S.13)

☐ Central government (S.1311)

*☐ (Of which): Budgetary central government (S.1311)*

*☐ (Of which): Non-budgetary central government (S.1311)*

☐ State government (S.1312)

☐ Local government (S.1313)

☐ Social security funds (S.1314)

☐ State-owned enterprises/public corporations

1. **Does your institution use budget tagging to identify primary expenditures in your data system?**

☐ Yes

☐ No. If no, please explain which method(s) are used to identify primary expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Does your institution identify secondary expenditures in the same way as primary purposes of expenditure? (See Annex for issue category B2. for more information)**

☐ Yes

☐ No, our institution uses alternative methods to identify secondary expenditure. Please explain how secondary expenditures are identified, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

☐ No, our institution does not identify secondary expenditure

1. **In the compilation or provision of COFOG data, do you ensure (or aim to achieve) consistency with other related data, such as non-financial data for government statistics and other domains (e.g. employment, energy, etc.)?**

☐ Yes. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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☐ No

1. **Are COFOG statistics compiled ex post or ex ante in the budgeting process?**

☐ Ex post (at the end of the budget cycle)

☐ Ex ante (at the beginning of the budget cycle)

☐ Not sure/not applicable

**Questions 17-19: For users only**

1. **At what level of detail does your institution utilize COFOG data? Please mark all that are applicable:**☐ Division (2 digits)  
   ☐ Group (3 digits)  
   ☐ Class (4 digits)  
   ☐ Additional level(s) of detail (5+ digits) for national adaptation
2. **For which institutional sectors does your institution utilize COFOG data?** General government (S.13)  
    Central government (S.1311)  
    State government (S.1312)  
    Local government (S.1313)  
    Social security funds (S.1314)   
    Government enterprises/public corporations
3. **Do you need COFOG time series for your analysis?**

☐ Yes. If yes, please note the length of the time series you use: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

☐ No

**Remaining questions for all respondents**

1. **Which types of expenditure are classified according to COFOG in your institution?   
   Please mark all that are applicable:**

Total outlays according to GFSM

Total expenditure according to ESA 2010

Final consumption expenditure (e.g. compensation of employees, intermediate consumption, consumption of fixed capital, market output, output for own final use, taxes on production paid/subsidies on production received)

Other types of current expenditure (e.g. current grants and subsidies)

Capital expenditure (e.g. capital grants and capital formation)

Transactions in financial assets and liabilities

Others (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Does your institution use COFOG in national accounts to identify individual and collective consumption expenditure for goods and services provided by government?**

Yes

No

Not sure/not applicable

1. **If yes to Question 21, how does your institution use COFOG to identify individual and collective consumption expenditure for goods and services provided by government?**

Precise mapping of the COFOG classification to collective and individual goods and services as defined in the SNA

Local adaptation (Please provide details): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Do you consider that your current data sources and compilation practices are of a sufficient quality to compile data in line with the current edition of COFOG?**

Yes. Please provide additional detail, if desired: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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No. If no, what are the main issues: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Does your institution implement some form of programme budgeting[[1]](#footnote-2)?**

☐ Yes. If yes, do you have a national programme classification structure? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

☐ No

☐ Not sure/not applicable

**Part III. List of Issues**

The Task Team on the Revision of COFOG (TT-COFOG) has compiled an initial list of issues to consider for the update of the COFOG classification.

Proposed issues are organized into two major issue categories. Group A is for thematic/subject matter issues pertaining to the current uses or compilation of the COFOG. Group B is for issues related to the underlying scope, principles, concepts and structure of the classification, and to strengthen the alignment with international reporting for relevant statistics and indicators:

1. **Current COFOG Divisions, Cross-cutting issues, and Other Thematic Issues[[2]](#footnote-3)**
   * A01. General public services
   * A02. Defence
   * A03. Public order and safety
   * A04. Economic affairs
   * A05. Environmental protection (includes alignment with Classification of Environmental Purposes (CEP), System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) and other environmental classifications/frameworks)
   * A06. Housing and community amenities
   * A07. Health (includes alignment with System of Health Accounts (SHA))
   * A09. Education (includes alignment with International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED))
   * A10. Social protection
   * A11. Cross-cutting issues
   * A12. R&D
   * A13. Digitalization
   * A14. Gender
   * A15. Indigenous peoples
2. **Structural, Alignment and Other Issues**
   * B1. COFOG structure/classification principles
   * B2. Primary/secondary purpose
   * B3. Additional uses of COFOG
   * B4. Compilation issues
   * B5. Individual/collective expenditure
   * B6. Internal consistency with the other classifications of expenditure according to purpose, namely COICOP, COPP and COPNI
   * B7. Alignment with other classifications/frameworks

Some issues, including the alignment with SNA and GFSM, are assumed to be fundamental and will be discussed during the course of the revision.

As noted above, issues pertaining to the alignment of classifications relating to environmental protection, health and education are considered as a part of thematic issue of the respective subject area under Group A.

1. **The table below contains the initial list of issue categories that the TT-COFOG identified for the revision of COFOG. For each issue category, please indicate:**
2. **Whether the issue category and its related proposals should be considered during the revision of COFOG**
3. **If so, whether you consider the issue category to be high, medium or low priority**
4. **How easy it would be to implement a revision of COFOG stemming from this issue category**
5. **Any comments on the issue category**

Detailed descriptions of the proposals relating to each issue category are available in Annex I of this document.

|  | Issue category | i) Should the issue category be included in revision process? Yes (Y) or No (N) | ii) If yes, please note whether you consider the issue category to be high (H), medium (M), or low (L) priority: | iii) For compilers only: Note whether you consider implementing a revision of COFOG stemming from this issue category to be easy (E), moderate (M) or difficult (D): | iv) Comments |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A01 | General public services |  |  |  |  |
| A02 | Defence |  |  |  |  |
| A03 | Public order and safety |  |  |  |  |
| A04 | Economic affairs |  |  |  |  |
| A05 | Environmental protection (includes alignment with CEP, SEEA and other environmental classifications/frameworks) |  |  |  |  |
| A06 | Housing and community amenities |  |  |  |  |
| A07 | Health (includes alignment with SHA) |  |  |  |  |
| A09 | Education (includes alignment with ISCED) |  |  |  |  |
| A10 | Social protection |  |  |  |  |
| A11 | Cross-cutting issues |  |  |  |  |
| A12 | R&D |  |  |  |  |
| A13 | Digitalization |  |  |  |  |
| A14 | Gender |  |  |  |  |
| A15 | Indigenous peoples |  |  |  |  |
| B1 | COFOG structure/classification principles |  |  |  |  |
| B2 | Primary/secondary purpose |  |  |  |  |
| B3 | Additional uses of COFOG: GFS; national & satellite accounts; government employment and public sector productivity |  |  |  |  |
| B4 | Compilation issues: improve compilation guidance taking into account diverse and country-specific differences |  |  |  |  |
| B5 | Individual/collective expenditure: remain as basis to draw borderline between individual and collective goods and services; retain alignment with SNA |  |  |  |  |
| B6 | Internal consistency with the other classifications of expenditure according to purpose, namely COICOP, COPP, COPNI |  |  |  |  |
| B7 | Alignment with other classifications/frameworks |  |  |  |  |

**Part IV. Additional Questions**

1. **In your view, are there other issues that should be considered for the revision of COFOG? Please explain.**

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1. **Are there divisions of COFOG that need a new group, class, or subclass?   
   Please be specific in your answer and indicate the relevant COFOG codes and/or titles**

☐ Yes. Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

☐ No

1. **In your view, are there divisions, groups or classes in COFOG that are now obsolete or less relevant to identify separately?   
   Please be specific in your answer and indicate the relevant COFOG codes and/or titles**

☐ Yes. Please specify:

☐ No

1. **Are there any modifications or national adaptations to the COFOG classification that your institution has made to facilitate the collection or dissemination/publication of government expenditure data in your country?**

**☐** Yes. Please explain:

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

☐ No

1. **Is your institution interested in actively contributing to the work of any of the following TT-COFOG Working Groups? You may select more than one option:**Please note that working groups of experts are being set up to advance the technical discussion on various issues. The TT-COFOG will review the composition of the working groups and may not be able to accommodate all requests.

Yes: Working Group A on Economic and public affairs (A01-A04)

Yes: Working Group B on Environment (Sustainability; SDGs) (A05)

Yes: Working Group C on Social and demographic (Health, Education, etc) (A06-A10)

Yes: Working Group D on Cross-cutting issues (A11-A15, B7)

Yes: Working Group E on Classification principles and cross-classification issues (Primary/secondary purpose; etc.) (B1-B6)

No, we are not interested

1. **In order to maximize transparency, do you give consent for UNSD to publish your response?**Please note that no email addresses will be released

Yes

No

Thank you for your response!

If you have any questions/concerns, please contact us at **chl@un.org**

**Annex I  
Summary of Proposed Issues**

This annex provides a summary of proposed issues with brief descriptions for the revision of COFOG, noting further details of each proposal will be developed as the revision process advances.

Note that in some cases proposals may conflict with each other, as they were put forward by different organizations. However, the purpose of this global consultation is to simply identify which topics are relevant to the revision of COFOG and should be discussed by the task team during the revision process, regardless of any agreement or disagreement with specific proposals.

1. **Current COFOG Divisions, Cross-cutting issues, and Other Thematic Issues**

Most of the proposed issues for consideration in the revision of COFOG relate to the existing Divisions 01 through 10 (including cross-cutting issues that relate to more than one Division), or other thematic issues.

Proposals relating to the current COFOG divisions (A01-A10) include suggestions to modify category titles, add new breakdowns, provide additional clarification, or to move/re-arrange categories within the existing structure for improved structural balance and coherence.

Proposals regarding cross-cutting issues (A11) generally seek clarification on topics that may span more than one division, or on emerging topics whose treatment has not yet been established.

Proposals regarding other thematic issues (namely R&D, digitalization, gender and indigenous peoples) (A12-15) similarly tend to focus on alignment with other classifications/frameworks, proposing additional breakdowns or re-structuring of categories, and seeking improved guidance on specific topics whose treatment has not yet been established.

Listed below are summaries of the specific proposals received relating to issue Group A:

**A01**. **General** **public** **services**

* Rename the Division to “General Public Services, Debt, and Transfers”
* Comprehensive reassessment of Division 01 in order to improve structural balance
* Modify the definition of 01.7 (Public debt transactions) to explicitly include expenditure related to a broader range of debt instruments, and/or to rename it “Public debt transactions (mainly interest)”
* Add new breakdowns in 01.8 (Transfers of a general character between different levels of government) to capture upward transfers to national governments, to include sub-categories reflecting reasons for transfers to local government, and to include transfers between other levels of government
* Rename 01.8 “Transfers of a general character between different levels of government (e.g. Intragovernmental transfers not related to a particular function)”
* Restructure 01.8 by moving transfers to other levels of government to its own Division, or by removing 01.8 entirely
* Create a new category for “Tax administration”, removing it from 01.1.2 (Financial and fiscal affairs)
* Provide more guidance on 01.7 and 01.8
* Distinguish climate or environmental-related transfers by creating other sub-categories

**A02**. **Defence**

* Add breakdowns to 02.1.0 (Military defense) to cover at least the operation of land, air and sea forces individually; and possibly for nuclear, cyber and space

**A03**. **Public order and safety**

* Create a new separate category in Division 03 for “Immigration and citizenship,” removing it from 03.1.0 (Police services)

**A04**. **Economic affairs**

* Clarify its organizing principle based on Eurostat COFOG Manual Section 2.8
* Move all construction activity under 04.4.3 (Construction), including construction and maintenance found under 04.5.1-04.5.5 and 04.6.0
* Include a breakdown of renewable/non-renewable energy in 04.4 (Mining, manufacturing and construction)
* Move “Active labour market policy” to 10.5 from 04.1 (General Economic, Commercial and Labour Affairs)
* Explicitly include livestock farming in 04.2.1 (Agriculture)
* Expand activities under 04.2.2 (Forestry) to include Conservation, Development and Regeneration of forests
* Rename 04.2.3 to “Fishing and aquaculture” or “Fishing” to align with ISIC, etc.
* Create a new category for “Marine resource management and conservation” covering fisheries management, marine biodiversity protection, and sustainable fishing practices
* Review 04.7.4 (Multi-purpose development projects)

**A05**. **Environmental protection**

* Review the scope of the division, including 05.1 (Waste management), 05.4 (Protection of biodiversity and landscape), resource management activities and disaster risk and emergency relief
* Improve alignment with CEP, SEEA and other environmental classifications/frameworks
* Identify activities potentially under 05.4 (Protection of Biodiversity and Landscape) that support forest related intervention and realign them under 04.2.2 (Forestry)
* Include a breakdown of renewable/non-renewable energy in 05.3 (Pollution abatement)
* Clarify the classification of water-related expenditure, which is split between Division 06 (water supply), and Division 05 (wastewater management)
* Consider recommendations of Data Gaps Initiative – Third Phase (DGI-3) on addressing statistical areas on climate change and its possible implication to COFOG
* Account for expenditure on climate change mitigation and adaption, by evaluating the option to introduce further breakdowns at the level of COFOG classes in this or other relevant divisions or to create a standalone COFOG division on climate change expenditure, which include the following (currently, few of these items are allocated in division 05):
* Investment in renewable energy
* R&D linked to climate change projects
* Transition assistance for households and businesses in moving towards energy transition, such as subsidies for insulation or heat pumps
* Electrification of transport vehicles and networks
* Flood defenses

**A06**. **Housing and community amenities**

* Reconsider the relevance of separately identifying 06.4 (Street lighting)
* Better distinguish expenditure related to “water”, including wastewater management currently under Division 05 (Environmental protection), which could be transferred to the Housing and community amenities category

**A07**. **Health**

* Revise the Division to distinguish between preventing and curative healthcare
* Add new categories for “Disease prevention and control” and “Health promotion activities” and revise the definition of 07.6 (Health n.e.c.) to exclude these
* Improve alignment with the System of Health Accounts (SHA 2011), including to:
* Add “Rehabilitative care services,” “Long-term care health services” and “Ancillary services”
* Split 07.4 (Public health services) into “Individual preventive services” and “Collective services”
* Add a new subcategory for “Immunization services”
* Reclassify foreign aid to health from 01.2 (Foreign economic aid) to Division 07
* Revise the definition of 07.1 (Medical products, appliances and equipment)
* Rename 07.3 (Hospital services) to “Inpatient services”
* Improve alignment with other health related classifications/frameworks including the Classification of Health Care Functions (ICHA-HC)
* Consider potential overlap with A10 (Social protection)
* Treatment of “digital health”

**A09**. **Education**

* Reclassify spending on goods and services for school meal/nutrition programs as transfers to households
* Clarify guidance on cross classification between GFSM and COFOG regarding education allowances and public loans for students
* Include “scholarships, grants, loans and allowances” at the primary education level (09.1) as with other levels
* Improve alignment with UOE [UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat] and ISCED-2011, including:
* Inclusion of early childhood educational development in Division 09
* Coverage of only formal education
* Clarification on the treatment of government dependent educational institutions
* Inclusion of public expenditure loans that are treated as financial transactions
* Clarification of educational expenditure classified as transfers or other payments from governments to households

**A10**. **Social protection**

* Clarify the treatment of expenditure related to migration which may currently be included under 10.7 (Social exclusion n.e.c.), 03.1 (Police services) and 01.2 (Foreign economic aid), or create a new dedicated category
* Clarify that 10.6.0 (Housing) includes cash benefits in addition to benefits in kind, as noted in the exclusion to 06.1.0
* Add a sub-category for support to low-income earners in 10.7 (Social exclusion n.e.c.)
* Clarify the individual/collective breakdown of residual expenditure classified in 10.9 “Social protection n.e.c.” given that 10.1-10.7 are considered for individual expenditure and 10.8-10.9 for collective expenditure
* Add a sub-category for housing aid to be provided after natural disasters

**A11**. **Cross-cutting issues**

* Civil protection in the event of disasters and climate change, land reclamation projects
* Long-term care, between Divisions 07 and 10
* Activities potentially under 05.4 (Protection of Biodiversity and Landscape) that support forest related intervention and realign them under 04.2.2 (Forestry)
* Water-related expenditure, which is split between “housing and community amenities” (water supply), and “environmental protection” (wastewater management)
* Net-zero related spending
* Food security and nutrition

**A12**. **Research & Development**

* Whether expenditures related to R&D are better grouped into a single COFOG division or stay aligned within their respective divisions
* Whether to include additional breakdowns on R&D expenditures at the lower group or class level
* Improved alignment with the “Nomenclature for the Analysis and Comparison of Scientific Programmes and Budget” (NABS) that is used for the reporting of Government Budgets for R&D
* Inclusion of R&D from tertiary educational institutions

**A13**. **Digitalization**

* Further develop guidance on the treatment of expenditures related to digitalization
* Review priority areas including the digital economy, data, free digital assets and services, and crypto assets
* Explore the feasibility in linking digitalization, which is considered as a tool in providing services to citizens in an efficient way, to the purposes of government expenditure

**A14**. **Gender**

* Incorporate a ‘gender’ group within each division
* Consider other dimensions of discrimination such as race and age

**A15**. **Indigenous peoples**

* There was a proposal to consider further guidance on treatment of expenditures related to indigenous peoples and local communities

1. **Structural, Alignment and Other Issues**

A summary of the proposals regarding structural, alignment and other issues under issue Group B is provided below:

**B1**. **COFOG structure/classification principles**

The revision of COFOG provides an opportunity to review the underlying scope, principles, concepts and the underlying structure of the classification and to strengthen the alignment with international reporting for relevant statistics and indicators. The revision process would benefit from a clear elaboration on the main COFOG classification principles, including but not limited to the following issues:

* consistency with the national accounts framework
* units of classification
* principles of mutual exclusive classes and primary purpose
* balance in size of main divisions
* level of hierarchical classification
* applicability for state and local government and social security fund sectors in addition to the central government sector
* treatment of preventative expenditure
* development of official alternative aggregates or indicators along cross-cutting themes
* development of guidance
* cross-classification of economic transactions and COFOG groups

**B2**. **Primary/secondary purpose**

The classification criteria of COFOG are based on purpose, where the term “purpose” as described in COFOG 1999 conveys the meaning of social-economic objectives that institutional units aim to achieve through various kinds of outlays. COFOG is currently a classification delineating general government expenditure by main purpose and does not consider multiple purposes or impact. The problem in unambiguously assigned government expenditure to a single function in the classification and the treatment of secondary purpose expenditures/functions of government, for example expenditure on environmental protection and resource management, and treatment of ministries and administrative expenditures, are documented in COFOG 1999.

More and more economic decisions nowadays are made with a view to fulfil some secondary goals. By not recognizing secondary purpose (or impacts) of a specific outlay, COFOG seriously limits the information in support of policymakers’ decision making and, above all, impact assessments. This revision issue will explore the feasibility and review various options on addressing expenditure with secondary purposes within the context of the primary purpose criterion, with an objective of finding a solution for the classification of expenditures by secondary purposes in COFOG.

**B3**. **Additional uses of COFOG: GFS; national & satellite accounts; government employment and public sector productivity**

These revision issues review uses of COFOG in the statistical and policy domains. COFOG is now considered primarily a classification of government expenditure. Proposals should be evaluated as to where COFOG are appropriately implemented in the government finance statistics, national accounts and the satellite accounts. Initial proposals also suggest that there could be further uses in the domain of government employment and public sector productivity.

**B4**. **Compilation issues: improve compilation guidance taking into account diverse and country-specific differences**

This revision issue calls for the strengthening of the compilation taking into account diverse and country-specific differences for the COFOG implementation. The COFOG classification and datasets produced provide rich and useful information that can be of more value if further guidance is provided for users (and compilers) on how to compile and use the data. However, there is a lack of data for COFOG II level in some countries due to difficulties in methodological interpretation or a lack of detailed source data at this level of classification. Moreover, the analytical usefulness of the COFOG data is severely curtailed if only budgetary units or the central government are captured rather than the whole general government sector. It is therefore important to collect data for the subnational government levels S1312 (for federal countries) and S1313, for S1314 and include extra-budgetary units in the compilation.

Compilation guidance should preferably be built starting from the existing Eurostat COFOG manual. The Manual on sources and methods for the compilation of COFOG statistics 2019 is a comprehensive guide to compiling COFOG statistics, which usefully discusses various methodological issues and EU country practices. A gap for non-EU compilers of COFOG statistics is how to practically compile these data. For example, guidance on incorporating COFOG into budgeting frameworks (which is common practice in the EU), or the best ways to cross-classify expenditure between GFSM/SNA with COFOG. In addition, budget programmes may include spending programmes that have more than one purpose in the sense of COFOG. Guidance on how to classify expenditures from budget programmes that have more than one purpose could be particularly useful. More generally, the COFOG guidance could usefully include more inclusion and exclusion examples across all groups and classes.

**B5. Individual/collective expenditure: remain as basis to draw borderline between individual and collective goods and services; retain alignment with SNA**

COFOG is important in national accounts as the basis to draw the borderline between individual and collective goods and services. Expenditures on a wide range of consumption goods and services are incurred by general government, either on collective services or on selected individual goods or services. The final consumption expenditures of general government can be classified according to whether the expenditures are on collective services or individual goods or services, or by functions according to COFOG. In COFOG 1999, all of Divisions 01 to 06 (General public services, defence, public order and safety, economic affairs, environmental protection, housing and community amenities) are collective services, as are Groups 07.5 and 07.6 of health, Groups 08.3 to 08.6 of recreation, culture and religion, Groups 09.7 and 09.8 of education, and Groups 10.8 and 10.9 of social protection. The remaining Groups of health, recreation, culture and religion, education and social protection (which dominate each of the classes) are individual services. This role and consistent integration of COFOG with the SNA is recommended to be maintained. It is important that the revision of COFOG is aware of and takes into account the SNA revisions in a coherent manner. The discussion on various issues may have implication to the precise mapping of the COFOG classification to collective and individual services, and such issues can be examined during the revision process.

**B6**. **Internal consistency with the** **other classifications of expenditure according to purpose**

Consider the alignment/consistency of COFOG with the related classifications of expenditure according to purpose:

* + Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP)
  + Classification of the Purposes of Non-profit Institutions Serving Households (COPNI)
  + Classification of Outlays of Producers by Purpose (COPP)

The original 1999 version of these classifications is available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_84E.pdf>

**B7**. **Alignment with other classifications/frameworks**

Consider the alignment of COFOG with any other relevant classifications/frameworks, (e.g. ISIC, SDGs)

Please note that:

* Alignment with the Classification of Environmental Purposes (CEP), System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), EU Sustainable Finance Taxonomy and other environmental classifications/frameworks is covered under issue A05 (Environmental protection)
* Alignment with the System of Health Accounts (SHA) is covered under issue A07 (Health)
* Alignment with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) and the joint UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT data collection (UOE) is covered under issue A09 (Education)
* Alignment with the Nomenclature for the Analysis and Comparison of Scientific Programmes and Budget (NABS) is covered under A12 (Research and development)

1. ‘Programme budgeting’ is a type of performance budgeting that allocates funds based on “programmes” trying to identify clear outputs and outcomes with clear objectives, this helps budget offices to improve expenditure prioritization. This approach requires a national “functional” programming classification structure [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Note that no specific proposals regarding A08. Recreation, culture and religion were received [↑](#footnote-ref-3)