

7th Meeting of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts, 23-25 April 2012, New York

Agenda item : V

: The development of training material on the SNA

The Virtual Statistical System

The Virtual Statistical System

1. The World Bank has developed e-learning courses on national accounts, including lessons on GDP calculation, supply and use tables (SUT), data sources, exhaustiveness, and estimates beyond GDP, such as institutional sector accounts. These courses, part of a library of e-learning courses on selected topics, are available on the web through the Virtual Statistical System (VSS) and are free of charge to all interested parties.

2. The VSS is a knowledge web-site of the World Bank dedicated to statistics. It is an online resource for national statistical offices, other data producing agencies, and data users – including policy makers, academia and students, as well anyone else who wants to know more about official statistics. The main objective is to provide well structured access to relevant statistical information for developing countries and other interested parties, and assist countries in addressing their specific needs. The “VSS-idea” is to provide information for researchers, policy makers, and statistical offices building or modernizing their statistical systems. The VSS website is a work in progress and will continue to be further developed in the coming years in order to always present up-to-date information and guidance. The World Bank, in partnership with others, are looking into ways of integrating the VSS and its training material into the curricula of training centers, as a way of providing a common approach to training and e-learning globally.

3. The VSS is organized around three main components:

- a. Knowledge Base: A repository of reference material in two main areas:
 - (i) the building blocks of National Statistical Systems,
 - (ii) Information on thematic or sector-specific statistical operations.
- b. E-learning through a rich library of courses on 10 selected topics.
- c. Knowledge Exchange designed to allow for the sharing of best practice and collaboration on issues related to national statistical systems development.

4. The e-learning part consists of modules on 10 main topics, one of them national accounts. The other topics covered are Management of Statistical Systems and Organizations; Labor Statistics and Survey Design; Justice, Crime, and Security Statistics; Geographical Information Systems (GIS); Agriculture Statistics; Project Management; Business Statistics; Quality Assurance for Census; Government Finance Statistics.

5. The national accounts module is divided into two parts– one introductory part and one more advanced part, each consisting of 10 lessons. Each lesson consists of a lecture (PowerPoint and reading materials) and exercises.

6. The introductory part covers:
 1. Supply of Goods and Services and the GDP
 2. The International Comparison Program
 3. SNA production boundary
 4. Intermediate consumption
 5. Final consumption expenditure
 6. Capital formation and trade balance
 7. Informal, non-observed, hidden activities
 8. Supply and use tables and commodity flow
 9. Estimating GDP
 10. Estimation methods

7. The more advanced part covers:
 1. Volumes
 2. Institutional Sectors
 3. Balancing Items
 4. Household Accounts
 5. Government Accounts
 6. GFS vs. SNA
 7. Rest of the World Accounts
 8. The 2008 SNA compared with Balance of Payments (BPM)
 9. Quarterly National Accounts and Seasonal Adjustment
 10. Satellite Accounts

8. The VSS home page: <https://www.virtualstatisticalsystem.org/>