

**8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts,  
29-31 May 2013, Luxembourg**

**Agenda item: 10**  
**Topic: Compilation of manuals and handbooks**

Introduction

An update on the progress made regarding the compilation of manuals, handbooks and guidance notes, as initiated by the ISWGNA, to strengthen the statistical capacity for compiling national accounts, in accordance with the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.

Guidance on documentation provided

A document on the status of compilation of manuals and handbooks has been attached.

Main issues to be discussed

The AEG is requested to provide guidance on the compilation of manuals and handbooks.



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**The compilation of manuals and handbooks**

1. This note provides an update on the progress made regarding the compilation of manuals, handbooks and guidance notes, as initiated by the ISWGNA, to strengthen the statistical capacity for compiling national accounts, in accordance with the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. The list comprises three categories, namely completed publications, publications in progress and planned publications.

a. Completed publications

- Guide on Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts (UNECE)
- 2008 SNA in Russian
- 2008 SNA in Chinese
- Technical Compilation Guide on Pensions in National Accounts (Eurostat/ECB)
- Essential SNA: Building the basics, 2012 Edition (Eurostat)
- Residential Property Price Indices Handbook (Eurostat)

b. Publications in progress

- Handbook on Financial Production, Flows and Stocks in the SNA (UN/ECB)
- The 2008 SNA – Concepts in Brief (World Bank)
- The 2008 SNA – Compilation in Brief (World Bank)
- Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics (UNSD)
- Glossary on Rapid estimates (Eurostat)
- Handbook on Rapid estimates (Eurostat/ UN)
- Handbook on Composite Indicators (Eurostat/UN)
- Handbook on Tendency Surveys (UN)
- 2008 SNA in French (Draft already on ISWGNA website)
- 2008 SNA in Arabic (Draft already on ISWGNA website)
- (Revision to the) Methodological Guide for Developing Producer Price Indices for Services (OECD/Eurostat)
- International Recommendations for the Index of Industrial Production (Revised) (UNSD)
- Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001 (update) (IMF)

c. Planned publications

- Handbook on Input Output Compilation (UN)
- Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers (UNECE)
- Guide on Global Production (UNECE)
- Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual and Compilation Guide (revision) IMF
- Handbook on Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) (IMF)
- 2008 SNA in Spanish (Preliminary draft available on the UN-ECLAC website)
- Revised Handbook on Prices and Volumes (Eurostat)

- Compilation Guide on Goods for Processing (Eurostat)
- Compilation Guide on Research and Development (Eurostat)
- Statistical guide for the short term indicator data template and metadata structure

2. The following paragraphs provide a short description of publications in progress and planned.

- (i) Handbook on Financial Production, Flows and Stocks in the SNA (UN/ECB)

3. The aim of with the Handbook is to provide a comprehensive guide on the compilation of the full set of the financial components of the sequence of integrated economic accounts for all sub-sectors of the financial corporations sector, as well as guidance on estimating the financial services produced by moneylenders in the households sector. The scope and purpose include guidance on the compilation of the interrelationship of the financial stocks and flows for all the institutional sectors and rest of the world (From-Whom-to-Whom approach). The From-Whom-to-Whom accounts extend the central SNA financial accounting framework to include counterparty sector positions and flows and are a powerful tool for ensuring reconciliation of the financial flows and stocks for the whole economy. Moreover, the economic and financial crisis highlighted the need for such information as a by-product of compilation guidance for developed and developing countries alike.

4. Conceptually, the Handbook complements the 2008 SNA and related publications. Where appropriate, worked examples are provided in the Handbook to give compilers and users a better understanding of the various concepts. The Handbook makes many references to the 2008 SNA, and also provides detailed explanations of classifications and concepts where: (a) the 2008 SNA is not detailed enough for the accounting of financial services, flows and balance sheets; (b) the demands of compilers and users require more explanation than is given in the 2008 SNA, such as for the balancing processes or for more detailed breakdowns of financial instruments. A second draft of this handbook is currently under review. It is expected that it will be circulated for global review in the second half of 2013.

- (ii) The 2008 SNA – Concepts in Brief (World Bank)

5. As the 2008 SNA aims to cover all aspects of economies – large or small, advanced or developing - necessary to measure economic activity comprehensively and in a manner that will be comparable over time and across countries, the resulting standard may seem daunting to someone approaching the task of compiling national accounts for the first time. Moreover, some of the details of the SNA are simply not applicable to all economies, such as the treatment of complex financial instruments. Thus, the *2008 SNA – Concepts in Brief* is an abbreviated version of the full SNA leaving out aspects that may be less relevant to a small developing country, or even if relevant, may be too resource intensive to attempt in the first instance. Complimenting the *2008 SNA – Concepts in Brief* will be the *2008 SNA – Compilation in Brief* (discussed below). It is expected that these handbooks will be available in spring/summer 2013.

(iii) The 2008 SNA – Compilation in Brief (World Bank)

6. The aim of the *2008 SNA – Compilation in Brief* is to provide practical advice and tips on compilation of the national accounts. It does not aim at being a comprehensive guide, but gives indications of how to approach the task of implementing the SNA in a country where resources are strictly limited yet the demands for a comprehensive set of national accounts still exists. It also suggests a number of places where a pragmatic approach to the trade-off between the competing goals of accuracy, comprehensiveness and timeliness can bring the task of implementing the SNA within reach even with limited resources. The publication is intended as a complement not only to the 2008 SNA and the *2008 SNA- Concepts in Brief*, but also to the many handbooks and guidelines that have been developed over many years providing comprehensive advice on data collection and compilation practices in many areas of economic statistics. It is expected that the handbook will be available in spring/summer 2013.

(iv) Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics (UNSD)

7. The development of the *Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics* has been initiated by the Statistical Commission as it recognized the significance of an integrated approach for increasing the consistency and coherence of economic statistics to enhance the quality and analytical value of the information the statistics contain for short term, annual and benchmark economic statistics and macroeconomic statistics.

8. These *Guidelines* are published as part of the methodological series *Handbook on National Accounting* to assist countries in producing macroeconomic statistics that are consistent and coherent with short-term, annual and benchmark economic statistics. The *Guidelines* present the integration framework of economic statistics based on best current practices for the entire spectrum of statistical agencies, from countries with centralized and decentralized statistical systems, as well as from countries at different stages of economic and statistical development. A pre-edited version of the *Guidelines* is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc12/RD-IntegratedEcoStats.pdf> ; it is expected to be published by the end of 2013.

(v) Guidance, best practices and harmonized principles to compile and report internationally comparable short-term statistics

9. The United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-second session considered an international programme of work on short-term economic statistics as part of a coordinated statistical response to the economic and financial crisis. The Commission amongst other things approved preparation of handbooks that provides guidance, best practices and harmonized principles to help countries compile and report internationally comparable short-term statistics. The guidelines are prepared by the technical expert groups under the aegis of an ad hoc advisory expert group on short-term economic statistics (Canada, Netherlands, Russia, Eurostat and UNSD). The development of four handbooks are foreseen and it is expected that the first drafts of the handbook will be ready by the end of 2013 for further consultation and finalization; these are:

*Handbook on Rapid estimates (Eurostat/ UN)*

10. This handbook intends to provide international statistical guidance based on best practices and harmonized principles for the compilation and reporting of rapid estimates. The handbook explains the different typologies of rapid estimates, their methodological background, their technical construction, their characteristics and their usefulness for different purposes. The handbook outlines practical and suitable compilation methods and issues, draws on a wide range of experience and expertise, and benefits from recent theoretical and practical developments in the area. The handbook is intended to assist compilers in producing rapid estimates of key short-term macroeconomic indicators in a comparable manner, using best international practices, to serve as reliable international comparisons of economic performance and behaviour. It is also intended to assist countries that plan to set up a more comprehensive system of estimates of key macroeconomic indicators by providing not only the methodological foundations for the compilation of rapid estimates, but also by giving practical guidance on individual steps and elements of the compilation process.

*Handbook on Composite Indicators (Eurostat/UN)*

11. There is no existing international statistical guidance that provides best practices and harmonized principles on the compilation and reporting of business cycle composite indicators. This handbook proposes to address the standards for the compilation and presentation of business cycle composite indicators to fill this gap. The handbook is intended for compilers and users of business cycle composite indicators. It draws on a wide range of experience and expertise, and outlines practical and suitable compilation methods and issues and benefits from recent theoretical and practical developments in the area. The handbook is intended to assist compilers in producing the business cycle composite indicators in a comparable way so that they can serve as reliable international comparisons of economic performance and behaviour using the best international practices. It is also intended to assist countries that plan to set up a more comprehensive system of business cycle measures by providing not only the methodological foundations for business cycle compilation, but also by giving practical guidance on individual steps and elements of the compilation process. Moreover, the handbook is intended to serve the needs of producers of short-term statistics and analytical users by making them aware of the statistical methods and techniques employed in the construction of composite indicators.

*Handbook on Tendency Surveys (UN)*

12. The handbook builds and expands on the current guidelines of the European Commission and OECD on tendency surveys. The new handbook will expand the scope of the existing guidelines to include more economic sectors (e.g. agriculture, energy) and explicitly focus on the needs of developing countries in administering tendency surveys. It will draw on a wide range of experience and expertise, and outlines harmonization practices focusing in particular on the harmonization of the list of questions by economic activity. The handbook will be used as a guide for the process of setting up sample survey operations, data processing and analysis. The handbook will also guide users on the applicability of tendency surveys with respect to macroeconomic situations and provide guidance for the dissemination of survey results. The handbook is intended to serve the needs of analytical users by making them aware

of the statistical methods and techniques employed in tendency surveys and composite tendency indicators.

*Guide on short- term economic indicators (UN)*

13. The guide elaborates methodological descriptions and the use of individual short-term economic indicators. It explains the statistical and analytical properties of short-term economic indicators, why they are relevant in explaining economic activity and how they relate to an integrated set of short-term economic statistics of quarterly national accounts and component data. The guide is intended to serve the compiler and the user of the indicators. It will contain useful links to reference material for more in-depth expositions.

(vi) (Revision to the) Methodological Guide for Developing Producer Price Indices for Services (OECD)

14. The aim of this guide is to aid countries in the development of producer price indices for ‘business services’, i.e., those services that are mainly aimed at uses other than household consumption, although services like telecommunication are also included. The guide is intended to complement the PPI Manual, which discusses index theory and provides general guidelines to be applied in different steps in the compilation of price indices. In addition, many business services differ from “typical” products and require individual discussion. Also, the methods used to achieve constant quality pricing are often complex and dependent on the particular service industry and product.

(vii) International Recommendations for the Index of Industrial Production (Revised) (UNSD)

15. This revision of the 1950 *Index Numbers of Industrial Production* manual takes into account methodological developments in the field of index number calculation that emerged over the past decades and describes new recommended methodological standards for the compilation of index numbers of industrial production. In addition, this updated publication also provides practical guidance for actual steps in the index number calculation and presents recommended methods for each industry in its scope to assist countries in producing high-quality short-term economic indicators that are also internationally comparable.

(viii) Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001 (update) (IMF)

16. The GFSM 2001 will be updated to maintain consistency with the overarching framework of the 2008 SNA.

(ix) Handbook on Input Output Compilation (UN)

17. The Handbook of Input Output Table Compilation and Analysis (hereinafter referred to as UNIO Handbook) was issued by the UNSD in 1999. A revision of this handbook is now under consideration with the purpose to (i) incorporate changes in the underlying international accounting standards and classifications, (ii) extend the scope of the UNIO Handbook and (iii) provide practical compilation guidance for countries. The timing of the revision of the UNIO Handbook is good because it will contribute to

the endeavours of the international organizations and regional commissions in advancing the 2008 SNA implementation as mandated by the Statistical Commission. As has been good practice, this revision should build on existing material whereby the Eurostat Manual of Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables 2008 may serve as a good starting point for developing the content of the revised UNIO Handbook.

(x) Handbook on Statistical Registers (UNECE)

18. The aim of this handbook is to provide guidance on issues concerned with the creation and maintenance of a statistical business register, response burden, use of administrative data sources and the role of business registers in streamlining the statistical production that are relevant for developed as well as developing statistical systems.

19. The need for international guidance or recommendations of good practices on statistical business registers has been raised on different occasions by countries participating in the Wiesbaden Group and in the meetings of the UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on Business Registers. The proposal to develop international guidelines was discussed at the Wiesbaden Group meeting in 2010 in Tallinn where it was supported by Eurostat and some of the participating countries. The Steering Group of the Wiesbaden Group at its meeting on 14 September 2011 supported the idea of developing international guidelines, taking existing relevant materials into account and targeting developed as well as developing economies. The meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers on 14-15 September 2011 supported the development of a set of international guidelines on business registers.

20. The CES Bureau on its meeting in November 2011 established a Task Force to develop international guidelines on statistical business registers and agreed on the terms of reference. The Task Force, lead by Statistics Austria, should present a final report to the CES plenary session in 2014 for endorsement, after consultation with countries and relevant organisations.

(xi) Guide on Global Production (UNECE)

21. The aim of this handbook is to provide guidance on the unresolved conceptual issues arising from the 2008 SNA and the sixth edition of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual in relation to global production and to provide further guidance on implementation aspects of these new global standards.

(xii) Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual and Compilation Guide (revision) (IMF)

22. Ten years from the publication of the IMF's *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual (MFSM)*, and three years from the publication of its companion the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Compilation Guide*, major developments, including the release of the new *System of National Accounts* in 2008 and the *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual*, sixth edition in 2009, make it an opportune time to update the methodology underpinning the compilation of monetary and financial statistics (MFS) and to revise the *MFSM*, as appropriate. As part of this process, the *MFSM* and the *Compilation Guide* would be merged in one single volume.



(xiii) Handbook on Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) (IMF)

23. The Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) manual was published by the IMF's Statistics Department in 2001. The manual is aimed particularly at compilers of QNA, and it is also of interest to advanced users of QNA data. The manual is focused primarily on the compilation of quarterly GDP. It discusses data sources for the compilation of GDP by the production approach, the expenditure approach, and the income approach. It provides guidance and recommendations on statistical techniques largely used in the QNA compilation process, such as benchmarking, seasonal adjustment and chain-linking. The manual is fully consistent with the System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA). The IMF's Statistics Department intends to update the manual in light of the changes introduced with the 2008 SNA. In addition, the topics covered in the manual will be reviewed according to the most recent advances in the QNA methodology and best international practices. This updating work will benefit from the experience gathered by the IMF's Statistics Department through its technical assistance and training activities on the compilation of quarterly GDP in its member countries. It is expected that the new version of the QNA manual is finalized by the end of 2014.

(xiv) 2008 SNA in all UN language versions

24. The Chinese and Russian versions of the 2008 SNA are already available in print. The French and Arabic versions of the 2008 SNA are available on the UNSD website. It is foreseen that these versions will be published in print later in 2013. A draft Spanish version is available on the website of ECLAC and is still being reviewed.