

**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts,  
27-29 November 2018, Luxembourg**

**Agenda item: 3.c**

**The role of data and the SNA asset boundary**

Introduction

The 1993 SNA introduced the notion of databases, with further clarifications provided in the 2008 SNA that specified that databases should reflect only the value of the underlying database management systems and the costs associated with the digitisation of data. This recommendation reflected the view that the underlying value (information content) associated with the data itself was de facto a non-produced asset (because to do otherwise would indirectly open the door to the capitalisation of knowledge), with outright purchases of databases recognised in the accounts as goodwill, and as such, their contribution, as a factor of production, is de facto invisible in the accounts. Recent years have seen an explosion in the generation of data, and the use of data, notably in advertising based business models, raising questions about the ‘invisibility’ of data in the accounts. The attached papers attempts to address these issues as a way of encouraging further debate, both conceptually and in the field of actual measurement.

Documentation

- Nadim Ahmad and Peter van de Ven, Recording and Measuring Data in the System of National Accounts, Paper presented at the meeting of the OECD Informal Advisory Group on Measuring GDP in a Digitalised economy (Paris, November 9, 2018), SDD/CSSP/WPNA(2018)5.
- Wendy C. Y. Li, Makoto Nirei and Kazufumi Yamana, Value of Data: There Is No Such Thing As A Free Lunch In The Digital Economy, Paper presented at the 2018 IMF Statistical Forum (Washington, November 19-20, 2018).

Main issues to be discussed

The AEG is requested:

- To provide its opinion on the way forward regarding the recording and measurement of the role of data, both from a conceptual and a measurement point of view.
- To provide its opinion on the possible extension of the asset boundary, by including the work of data analytics and storage costs in the sum of costs approach for measuring databases, as currently defined in the 2008 SNA.
- To provide its opinion on the further extension of the asset boundary, by including data acquired through bartering mechanisms, either as non-produced assets or produced assets.
- To provide its opinion on extending the production boundary beyond the above.