

Governance arrangements of the work programme for updating the 2008 SNA

1. At its fifty-first session, the United Nations Statistical Commission requested the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) to submit, for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-second session in 2021, a road map for the revision of the 2008 SNA for adoption by the Commission in 2025. This paper details the governance arrangements of the 2008 SNA update project and expands on the paper that sets out the *Work Programme for updating the 2008 SNA*.

2. The major elements of the governance arrangements are presented below, working down from the commissioning of the project, responsibility for success, management, technical work, and support.

Statistical Commission

3. The United Nations Statistical Commission mandated the updating the 2008 SNA at its fifty-first session and is the entity that will approve the project's final output—the 2025 SNA. More specifically, the Statistical Commission expects, based on the work programme, endorsed at its fifty-second session, a consolidated set of recommendations for consideration at its fifty-fifth Session in 2024, and a final draft of the 2025 SNA for its fifty-sixth session in 2025. Further, it is expected that the Statistical Commission will endorse work on the implementation of the new SNA by member countries with the assistance, as needed, of a number of international and regional organizations.

Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA)

4. The ISWGNA is one of the longest standing interagency bodies set up by the United Nations Statistical Commission to enhance cooperation among international organizations working in the same field. Since the early 1980s, it has had five member organizations: Eurostat, the IMF, the OECD, the United Nations¹, and the World Bank. It is assisted by an Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts in carrying out its work programme. The mandate of the ISWGNA and Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts is available in the ISWGNA website at: [ISWGNA governance](#). In the mid-1990s, it was agreed that the chair of the group would rotate among the five organizations and that the secretariat would be at the United Nations Statistics Division. The usual practice has been that the ISWGNA functions at two levels: referred to in this note as the “Management Group” and “National Accountants.”

5. The Management Group’s function, as shown in the diagram, is—collectively—to ensure appropriate outputs and inputs for the governance of SNA standards and lay the ground for successful outcomes. The managers also act within their own organizations to pursue the agreed goals and objectives of the ISWGNA.

¹ Represented by the United Nations Statistics Division and the Statistical Divisions of United Nations Regional Commissions

6. The specific activities and tasks of the ISWGNA: Management Group are as follows:
- a) Agree on the governance arrangements for the update project and endeavour, collectively and individually, to support the thrust of those arrangements for the duration of the Project.
 - b) Set the strategic direction of the update project (within the parameters set by the Statistical Commission), ensure appropriate input and outputs, and agree on desired outputs and outcomes with the project management team.
 - c) Assess and ratify the overall work plan, schedules, communication strategy, and budget of the update project.
 - d) Address resource issues, and raise funds as needed to support the update project.
 - e) Receive, and act upon as needed, regular reports on progress toward outputs and outcomes, budgets, and stakeholder views and concerns, including any matter (for example, on the scope of the update project) that puts the agreed outputs/outcomes at risk.
 - f) Report to the Statistical Commission on project activities, expected outputs and recommendations.
 - g) Liaise with stakeholders, managing their expectations and gaining their support.

Project management team

7. For the efficient execution of the governance and decision-making process of the update project, the ISWGNA: National Accountants, assisted by the task team leads, a project manager and an editor, in consultation with the AEG, manages the scope of the update on technical and conceptual issues in conjunction with the other groups and committees of experts responsible for specific domains of economic statistics. Dedicated task teams were established, consisting of subject matter experts, to undertake the technical research and to lead the drafting of guidance notes. For overlapping issues in the research agendas identified for SNA, the Balance of Payments and other economic statistics-related manuals, joint task teams were established.

ISWGNA: National Accountants

8. ISWGNA: National Accountants, collectively, sponsors and facilitates the governance and decision-making process of the update project and has the following tasks and responsibilities:

- a) Provide secretariat services to the task teams.
- b) In consultation with the AEG, consider the proposals for new guidance and take decisions on the scope of the update and associated technical issues.
- c) Circulate decisions to countries and/or regional and other expert meetings for discussion and feedback.
- d) In consultation with the AEG, consider the response to proposed guidance from countries and/or regional and other expert meetings.
- e) Liaise with the editor, the project manager, the AEG and relevant other groups and committees of experts responsible for specific domains of economic statistics to

assess and evaluate the consistency of the recommendations for the update of the 2008 SNA and the coherence with other macroeconomic statistical standards.

Task team leads

9. The chairs of the task teams are selected from the members of the AEG and have the following tasks and responsibilities:

- a) Prepare the recommendations of their teams, with, if possible, indications of the paragraphs of the 2008 SNA and other manuals that are impacted or additional sections or chapters required.
- b) Supports the ISWGNA in managing the scope of the update with respect to technical and conceptual issues.

Lead editor and project manager

10. As the work on the update of the 2008 SNA progresses, it was decided to appoint a lead editor to facilitate the drafting of the update of the 2008 SNA and a project manager to assist the ISWGNA in coordinating the update process within the existing institutional arrangements and project infrastructure. A letter announcing the two positions was dispatched on behalf of the ISWGNA to the heads of national statistical offices and the governors of central banks. In addition, the members of the ISWGNA placed a call for candidates on their websites and also circulated the announcement among their respective national accounts constituents. It was further decided to establish an editorial team comprising of the lead editor and supporting editors. The lead editor will be responsible for the overall editorial process and the final updated SNA. Members of the editorial team will be brought on board, in consultation with the lead editor, on an as-needed basis according to their areas of specialty.

Editor

11. The lead editor is responsible for:

- a) preparing a detailed annotated outline and timetable for the drafting the update of the 2008 SNA in close consultation with the project manager of the update of the 2008 SNA and agreeing with the editorial team for the update of the BPM 6 to ensure consistency between the outlines and timetables for the drafting of the update of the 2008 SNA and BPM 6.
- b) preparing successive drafts of the text of update of the 2008 SNA, drawing on textual inputs from the guidance notes and recommendations of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts (AEG) in close coordination with the drafting of the update of the BPM6;
- c) ensuring that the reports, textual inputs and draft texts of the editorial team for the update of the 2008 SNA are of high quality;
- d) consulting with authors of the guidance notes and other substantive documents to clarify ambiguities and rectify substantive errors;
- e) ensuring internal consistency and integrity of the update of the 2008 SNA and external consistency with the update of the BPM 6, ISIC Rev 4, CPC v2, IMTS 2010, and MSITS 2010 following the agreed clearance approach;

- f) participating in the task team meetings related to the updating of the 2008 SNA and BPM6 as necessary;
- g) co-developing text for drafting the update of the 2008 SNA and BPM6 on a collaborative authoring platform using an agreed document schema to ensure the conceptual-cross referencing between the manuals;
- h) preparing the semantically enabled master copy of the update of the 2008 SNA by consolidating and integrating all drafts of the text in the update of the 2008 SNA to be submitted to the ISWGNA for clearance by May 2024, updating the draft for approval by the AEG by October 2024 and for approval by the Statistical Commission in March 2025 and finalizing the update of the 2008 SNA in 2025 according to United Nations publication guidelines;
- i) Support the project manager in preparing regular progress reports.

12. The lead editor reports to the ISWGNA and works in close collaboration with the project manager. On a day-to-day basis, he/she works with the task team leads and secretariat of the ISWGNA, and as necessary with the secretariats of the Balance of Payments Committee, and other groups and committees related to international classifications and international trade statistics. Annex I presents the terms of reference of the lead editor.

Project Manager

13. The project manager is responsible for:
- a) coordinating the activities of the agreed upon work programme of the update of the 2008 SNA, facilitating the integration and collaboration between task teams, and ensuring the timely delivery of high-quality outputs within budget;
 - b) building on the project infrastructure arrangements for the coordination of the work programme of the update of the 2008 SNA;
 - c) supporting the editor in preparing and maintaining a detailed schedule for drafting the update of the 2008 SNA;
 - d) coordinating the flow of information between the SNA and BPM editorial teams and other upcoming editorial teams related to the ISIC/CPC and IMTS/MSITS update;
 - e) ensuring the outreach programme and the programme on experimental estimates provides feedback to inform the update of the 2008 SNA and its early implementation;
 - f) coordinating the timely development and use of a collaborative authoring platform for the drafting of the semantically enabled update of the SNA and BPM in close consultation with the editorial teams for the update of the SNA and the BPM;
 - g) participating in regular AEG, Task Team leads and ISWGNA meetings, and other relevant meetings of experts for the update of the SNA, BPM, ISIC/CPC, and IMTS/MSITS, as necessary;
 - h) preparing regular joint progress reports with the BPM update team on the work undertaken to the ISWGNA and other relevant Committees using the shared project monitoring tool for the update of macroeconomic standards and classifications.

14. The project manager reports to the ISWGNA. On a day-to-day basis, he/she works with the lead editor for the update of the 2008 SNA, task team leads and secretariat of the ISWGNA and as necessary with the secretariats of the Balance of Payments Committee, and other groups and committees related to international classifications and international trade statistics. Annex II presents the terms of reference of the project manager.

Advisory Expert Group

15. The AEG assists the ISWGNA in resolving issues on the research agenda for the update of the 2008 SNA. Based on the guidance notes prepared by the task teams, the AEG deliberates on the proposed recommendations of the task teams and makes recommendations on whether to accept the proposals or request the authors for further work or revisions. If an agreement is reached on the outcome of the work by the task teams, the AEG will propose for each one a final recommendation of clarification, interpretation or change.

Task teams

16. Dedicated task teams were established to undertake the technical research and to draft guidance notes. The guidance notes identify issues affecting the central framework, as well as those that will be addressed in supplementary tables or extended accounts. Issues are first deliberated by the various task teams prior to going further in the approval process. The terms of reference for each task team (or joint task team) have been formulated, with a specific timeline for drafting the guidance notes.

17. The recommendations of the task teams will subsequently be considered for discussion and final decision by the AEG and the ISWGNA, in consultation with the other relevant groups and committees of experts, including the Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics. The chairs of the task teams are responsible for preparing the recommendations of their teams, with, if possible, indications of the paragraphs of the 2008 SNA and other manuals that are impacted.

Supporting editors

18. The supporting editors report to the lead editor. In collaboration with the lead editor, on an as-needed basis and according to their areas of specialty, the supporting editors are responsible for preparing successive drafts of the text for the updated 2008 SNA, drawing on textual inputs from the guidance notes and recommendations of the AEG, according to the agreed outline and timetable for updating the 2008 SNA.

Project Support

19. In these governance arrangements, UNSD as secretariat of the ISWGNA is the main source of logistical and administrative support for the project. Among the tasks that the secretariat undertakes are the following:

- a) Maintenance of the project website (Towards the 2025 SNA).
- b) Preparation of project correspondence with the Statistical Commission and national statistical offices.
- c) Preparation of reports to the Statistical Commission on behalf of the ISWGNA.
- d) Logistical and other support to the project manager and editor.

20. The World Bank provides support by managing the trust fund set up for the project. Also in that capacity, among other tasks, the World Bank will facilitate contractual arrangements for the project manager, lead editor and supporting editors. Along with other ISWGNA organizations, it will also provide logistical and administrative support to the consultants.

Annex I. Terms of reference: Lead editor for the 2008 SNA update

Background and Objectives

1. At its 51st session, the United Nations Statistical Commission requested the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) to submit, for consideration by the Commission at its 52nd session in 2021, a road map for the update of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) for adoption by the Commission in 2025, including the resource requirements, taking into account the required alignment of the revision cycles of other major statistical manuals and relevant classifications standards for purpose of consistency between the manuals and classification standards. At around the same time, the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM) also decided to launch a parallel process to update the sixth edition of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, (BPM6). Meanwhile, the Statistical Commissions also launched the revisions of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Central Product Classification (CPC), and international trade statistics manuals on merchandise trade (IMTS) and trade in services (MSTIS).
2. A three-pronged approach is followed for the update of the 2008 SNA: (a) undertaking technical research in prioritized and current national accounts issues exploring a broader measurement framework supporting sustainable development from a macroeconomic perspective; (b) engaging in a broad consultation on the issues relating to the thematic areas defined as globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, and communication; and (c) ensuring overall consistency with the system of economic statistics.
3. Dedicated task teams were established to undertake the technical research and draft guidance notes and participate in joint task teams with members of other Committees of Experts. An outreach programme was established to inform compilers and users about the update issues and to facilitate the experimentation and testing of the new guidance. Joint task teams with the BOPCOM were formed to ensure that substantive discrepancies are avoided, and consistent terminology is used across manuals and to reduce duplication of effort which would lead to optimal outcomes given the broader range of consultations.
4. The Advisory Expert Group (AEG) and ISWGNA agreed that an Editor, supported by an editorial team, should facilitate the drafting of the update of the 2008 SNA.
5. As part of the efforts to improve the way the international macroeconomic statistical standards are communicated, revised, and made accessible to both data users and national accounts compilers, the digitization of the SNA, and related manuals, handbooks, and guides was introduced as a workstream for the 2008 SNA update. This workstream is to advance the use of innovative semantic web technologies allowing for cross-referencing and navigation between the various statistical standards for economic statistics and classifications. It is therefore expected that the editorial team should adopt a database approach by maximizing the use of digital tools to ensure that the updated SNA can be easily maintained and linked to other manuals on macroeconomic statistical standards and classifications and, where appropriate, other thesauri, vocabularies, taxonomies and dictionaries. This database approach should pave the way for the new generation of manuals to be digitally enabled.

Work assignments

6. The lead editor is responsible for:
 - a) preparing a detailed annotated outline and timetable for the drafting the update of the 2008 SNA in close consultation with the project manager of the update of the 2008 SNA and agreeing with the editorial team for the update of the BPM 6 to ensure consistency between the outlines and timetables for the drafting of the update of the 2008 SNA and BPM 6.
 - b) preparing successive drafts of the text of update of the 2008 SNA, drawing on textual inputs from the guidance notes and recommendations of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts (AEG) in close coordination with the drafting of the update of the BPM6;
 - c) ensuring that the reports, textual inputs and draft texts of the editorial team for the update of the 2008 SNA are of high quality;
 - d) consulting with authors of the guidance notes and other substantive documents to clarify ambiguities and rectify substantive errors;
 - e) ensuring internal consistency and integrity of the update of the 2008 SNA and external consistency with the update of the BPM 6, ISIC Rev 4, CPC v2, IMTS 2010, and MSITS 2010 following the agreed clearance approach;
 - f) participating in the task team meetings related to the updating of the 2008 SNA and BPM6 as necessary;
 - g) co-developing text for drafting the update of the 2008 SNA and BPM6 on a collaborative authoring platform using an agreed document schema to ensure the conceptual-cross referencing between the manuals;
 - h) preparing the semantically enabled master copy of the update of the 2008 SNA by consolidating and integrating all drafts of the text in the update of the 2008 SNA to be submitted to the ISWGNA for clearance by May 2024, updating the draft by October 2024 for approval by Statistical Commission in March 2025 and finalizing the update of the 2008 SNA in 2025 according to United Nations publication guidelines;
 - i) Support the project manager in preparing regular joint progress reports with BPM update team on the work undertaken.

Reporting and working relationship

7. The lead editor reports to the ISWGNA and works in close collaboration with the project manager. On a day-to-day basis, he/she works with the task team leads and secretariats of the ISWGNA, Balance of Payments Committee, and where relevant, other Committees under the Statistical Commission related to international statistical classifications and international trade statistics.
8. UNSD and World Bank will provide administrative and logistic support.

Qualifications

9. The lead editor must be an internationally recognized expert on national accounts who has a thorough understanding of the 2008 SNA and its research agenda, proven experience in international coordination work on national accounts, and excellent drafting skills in English. An excellent understanding of other macroeconomic statistical domains and classifications including BPM 6, GFS, ISIC Rev 4, and CPC v2 would be an advantage. The editor must have a university degree and at least 20 years of experience in research in economic statistics, particularly in national accounting.

Annex II Terms of reference: Project manager for the 2008 SNA update

Background and Objectives

1. At its 51st session, the United Nations Statistical Commission requested the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) to submit, for consideration by the Commission at its 52nd session in 2021, a road map for the update of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) for adoption by the Commission in 2025, including the resource requirements, taking into account the required alignment of the revision cycles of other major statistical manuals and relevant classifications standards for purpose of consistency between the manuals and classification standards. At around the same time, the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM) also decided to launch a parallel process to update the sixth edition of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, (BPM6). Similarly, the revisions of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Central Product Classification (CPC), and international trade statistics manuals on merchandise trade (IMTS) and trade in services (MSITS) have been initiated.
2. A three-pronged approach is followed for the update of the 2008 SNA: (a) undertaking technical research in prioritized and current national accounts issues exploring a broader measurement framework supporting sustainable development from a macroeconomic perspective; (b) engaging in a broad consultation on the issues relating to the thematic areas defined as globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, and communication; and (c) ensuring overall consistency with the system of economic statistics.
3. Dedicated task teams were established to undertake the technical research, draft guidance notes, and participate in joint task teams with members of other Committees of Experts. An outreach programme was established to inform compilers and users about the update issues and to facilitate the experimentation and testing of the new guidance. Joint task teams were formed to ensure that substantive discrepancies are avoided, and consistent terminology is used across manuals. and to reduce duplication of effort.
4. As work on the update of the 2008 SNA progresses, it was decided to establish the position of Project Manager to assist the ISWGNA in coordinating the update process using the existing institutional arrangements and project infrastructure. The tasks include drawing up of time schedules, monitoring resource use and needs, coordinating the contributions of the various task teams, liaising with other expert committees on the update of the BPM, ISIC, CPC, international trade statistics manuals etc. The project manager would prepare reports to the ISWGNA on a regular basis. In the execution of the tasks, the project manager would be working closely with UNSD as the secretariat of the AEG/ISWGNA.

Work assignments

5. The project manager is responsible for:
 - a) coordinating the activities of the agreed upon work programme of the update of the 2008 SNA, facilitating the integration and collaboration between task teams, and ensuring the timely delivery of high-quality outputs within budget;
 - b) building on the project infrastructure arrangements for the coordination of the work programme of the update of the 2008 SNA;

- c) supporting the editor in preparing and maintaining a detailed schedule for drafting the update of the 2008 SNA;
- d) coordinating the flow of information between the SNA and BPM editorial teams and other upcoming editorial teams related to the ISIC/CPC and IMTS/MSITS update;
- e) ensuring the outreach programme and the programme on experimental estimates provides feedback for the update of the 2008 SNA and its early implementation;
- f) coordinating the timely development and use of a collaborative authoring platform for the drafting of the semantically enabled update of the SNA and BPM in close consultation with the editorial teams for the update of the SNA and the BPM;
- g) participating in AEG, Task Team leads and ISWGNA (TT/ISWGNA) meetings, and other relevant meetings of experts for the update of the SNA, BPM, ISIC/CPC, and IMTS/MSITS, as necessary;
- h) preparing regular joint progress reports with the BPM update team on the work undertaken to the ISWGNA and other relevant Committees using the shared project monitoring tool for the update of macroeconomic standards and classifications.

Reporting and working relationship

6. The project manager reports to the ISWGNA. On a day-to-day basis, he/she works with the lead editor for the update of the 2008 SNA, task team leads and secretariats of the ISWGNA, Balance of Payments Committee, and other Committees under the Statistical Commission related to international classifications and international trade statistics.
7. UNSD and World Bank will provide administrative and logistic support.

Qualifications

8. The project manager must have a proven ability to undertake international coordination work, good interpersonal skills, and excellent management and communication skills. An excellent understanding of official statistics and of the 2008 SNA, other macroeconomic statistical manuals, and classifications, including BPM 6, ISIC Rev 4, CPC v2, IMTS 2010, and MSTIS 2010 and their update processes would be an advantage. The project manager must have a university degree and at least 15 years of experience in managing large international or national statistical programs or agencies.