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Implementation of 2025 SNA

**Approval process and branding for manuals, compilation guides
and handbooks**

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Agenda item 6 (c)

Procedures for agreeing compilation handbooks to support SNA 2025

The attached note on Procedures for agreeing compilation handbooks to support SNA 2025 has been prepared for the consideration of the AEG. The Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts welcomes AEG comments on the proposed approach.

Procedures for agreeing compilation handbooks to support SNA 2025

1 Several compilation handbooks are planned to be produced to support the implementation of the 2025 SNA. These include:

- A compilation manual on data as an asset – this work is being undertaken by the Eurostat/IMF Task Team on Data as an Asset
- A compilation manual on marketing assets – this work is being undertaken by the IMF Task Team on Measuring Marketing Assets
- A natural capital compilation guide – this work is being undertaken by the OECD Expert Group on Natural Capital.

2 In discussions, questions have arisen on the appropriate procedures for agreement of the handbooks that will be produced, including whether these should include global consultation. It has also been noted that agile mechanisms should be put in place for approval of the manuals.

3 From this, three questions are posed for consideration:

- What should be the consultation process for the development of the compilation handbooks?
- Who should approve the handbooks?
- Under whose auspices should the handbooks be published?

What should be the consultation process for the development of these handbooks?

4 Looking at past examples of handbooks, sometimes the only consultation appears to have occurred within expert group (or equivalent body) responsible for the developing the handbook. In other instances, there is broader consultation involving a wider group of practitioners. Only in a few cases does it appear that a formal global consultation process has been adopted.

5 It could be considered that the group responsible for developing the handbook should have the necessary expertise to produce a quality document. However, broader consultation processes enable potentially different approaches to be identified and can help 'polish' a product. Furthermore, broad consultation can provide a greater sense of 'ownership' of the finished product and enhance its validity in the eyes of those who will be using it. However, broad consultation processes – in particular global consultation – require time and effort which could impact on the timeliness of the handbook.

Who should approve the handbooks?

6 Again, there is a range of possibilities. The simplest is that the group responsible for producing the handbook sign it off, which seems to have occurred in some cases. Sometimes, bodies such as Eurostat's working groups and the OECD Working Party on National Accounts have been involved in sign-off processes. In other cases, higher level

bodies of individual international organisations have approved the publication of handbooks. In a few instances, handbooks have been approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

7 In the context of compilation guidance to support the SNA, the AEG and the ISWGNA should play a role in the sign-off processes, and should be recognised during the publication process and in the publication.

Under whose auspices should the handbooks be published?

8 Handbooks are typically published by the organization(s) responsible for leading their development. This may be a single organization or a combination of organizations.

9 Regardless of whoever is responsible for publishing the handbooks, the handbooks (along with other material to assist with compilation) should be made available on the proposed Compilers' Hub, and due recognition of inputs from other organizations should be made.

Way forward

10 Global consultation and high-level sign-off processes are seen as important to establishing the validity of handbooks. However, as mentioned, they require effort and may be time consuming.

11 It is suggested that a two-step process be adopted for agreement of the handbooks that will be produced in the SNA update 2025 process.

12 In the first step, an interim version of the handbook would be produced. This interim version would only be subject to consultation within the group responsible for its development (and with other key stakeholders if necessary). It would then be "signed off" by the AEG and then the ISWGNA.¹ It would be clearly labelled as an interim version, but would be available for any country that wished to use it. There would be no translation of this version into languages other than English.

13 In the second step, the interim version would be subject to global consultation (organised by the UNSD). The updated handbook -- taking account of the global consultation -- would then be signed off by the AEG and ISWGNA, as well as through whatever other sign-off mechanisms that the lead organization(s) thought appropriate. The handbooks would be subsequently submitted to the UNSC for information. The final versions would be translated into other languages according to the practices of the publishing organization(s).

14 It is proposed that the publication of the handbooks be organised by the organization(s) leading their development. Whilst the format of the handbooks may vary according to specific organisational rules, each handbook should have a standard and

¹ It may be that some of the compilation handbooks are also relevant to the BOP, in which case the IMF's BOPCOM should be involved in the sign-off process.

prominent form of recognition of the contributions of other organisations to their development, including references to the ISWGNA and AEG, so that the handbooks establish a close linkage to the SNA update process, and its outcomes.

15 A related issue is should the handbooks be stand-alone products, or should they be integrated with other handbooks? For some of the proposed handbooks, such as the ones on data and marketing assets, it may make sense to bring them together in a single handbook. It may even be sensible to create an overarching “Handbook on the compilation of intellectual property products”, which would bring together the work on developing compilation guidance for data and marketing assets with existing work.

16 The creation of an overarching handbook on intellectual property products is attractive. However, this would be a significant undertaking and would probably take several years to produce. Furthermore, relevant international organisations would need to commit to the work. Accordingly, it is proposed that the handbooks on data and marketing assets be developed as ‘stand-alone’ products in the interim. The question of whether these handbooks should be brought together as one is probably best answered by the task teams responsible for their development, recognising that there is good overlap between the two task teams and that resolving this issue is in the Terms of Reference for each of the task teams.

17 There is also the issue of methodological guidance that is produced for broader purposes, but will be used to support SNA 2025 implementation. For example, the IMF is developing a compilation guidance for crypto assets. This guidance will cover both national accounting and balance of payments requirements, as well as support the G20 DGI-3 Recommendation 11 on Digital Money, which will develop a common data collection framework for measuring crypto assets among the G20 and FSB countries. As this work is not being undertaken under the direct auspices of the SNA update program, it is not possible for the update program to impose conditions on the development of the guidance materials. However, it is suggested that the SNA update program work with the task team to ensure that any materials developed are subject to broad consultation (which is likely to be the case anyway).

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