

**MINUTES**  
**of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts**  
**(ISWGNA)**

**Teleconference, 30 June 2004**

**Participants:** A. Bloem, C. Gorter (IMF), I. Havinga, Viet Vu (UNSD), L. Bratanova (UNECE), B. Hexeberg, M. Dinc (World Bank), B. Newson (Eurostat) and F. Lequiller, C. Aspden (OECD)

**1. Adoption of the Agenda.**

At the request of the UNSD two items were added to the draft agenda, namely consideration of:

- a) the initiative taken by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and Statistics Canada in consulting major users of the national accounts on the major changes being proposed in the update of the 1993 SNA; and
- b) the presentation of a progress report on the update of the 1993 SNA at the forthcoming International Association for Review of Income and Wealth (IARIW) conference in August 2004.

**2. Review action items agreed at the meeting in March 2004**

Most action items from previous meetings have been completed, only the following remain:

- a) The task of consulting task forces to identify and/or clarify overlapping issues and ensure their satisfactory coordination is still outstanding, but will be undertaken shortly (UNSD).
- b) Revised guidelines for the preparation of issue papers have been finalized, and the next step is to distribute them to all task forces (UNSD).
- c) Requests for funding from central and regional banks have been delayed, but will be made shortly (IMF, UNSD).
- d) Preparation of an article for *SNA News and Notes* on the extent of the implementation of the 1993 SNA.

**3 and 4. Review progress of each issue agreed at the February 2004 meeting of the AEG flagged for discussion at the November 2004 (3) and November 2005 (4) meetings of the AEG**

The OECD presented tables describing summarily the progress of each issue, including the expected date at which an issue paper will be sent to the ISWGNA, the risk that this will not be achieved and changes to the scope of issue papers. The ISWGNA expressed general satisfaction with the progress being made on these issues, and considered that no special action was required to pursue the progress of any of them. The ISWGNA agreed that its members should provide comments on the format of the tables to the OECD with a view to developing a standard reporting tool which will be used for all issues. These tools will be developed further by the project manager when appointed.

The ISWGNA agreed that when the moderator or chairman of a task force resigned it was the responsibility of the sponsoring international organisation to appoint a replacement.

#### **5. Outcome of the AEG consideration of the expansion of the issues for the update**

At the first meeting of the AEG in February 2004 several members proposed additional issues. It was agreed that they should submit their proposals to the ISWGNA for consideration. The ISWGNA considered the proposals at its meeting in March 2004 and made a recommendation with respect to each proposal (which are recorded in the minutes of the meeting). All AEG members were then asked to vote on whether they agreed or not with each of the ISWGNA recommendations. The vote has now been completed and the outcome is that the AEG has decided that no further changes to the SNA of substance should be considered. However, it has been agreed that a number of clarifications are required. Accordingly, the ISWGNA agreed that the UNSD should: (a) prepare a report on the outcome of the AEG's consideration of the proposals and place it on its website, and (b) append to the list of issues already agreed the list of additional clarifications.

#### **6. Role and support of regional meetings and meetings of other groups of countries**

A number of regional and other meetings of national statistical offices (such as ESCAP, EU and OECD-ECE) are planned to discuss issues under consideration for the update of the 1993 SNA. The ISWGNA considers that such meetings play a valuable role in the world wide consultative process it is attempting to foster. However, the ISWGNA is not in a position to provide funding for such meetings.

It was agreed that the ISWGNA should be informed of the outcome of the discussions of SNA update issues at regional meetings.

#### **7. The initiative taken by the BEA and Statistics Canada in consulting major users of the national accounts on the major changes being proposed in the update of the 1993 SNA**

The BEA and Statistics Canada have jointly developed an information package and questionnaire concerning major issues under consideration in the update of the 1993 SNA. The ISWGNA welcomes this initiative and encourages other national statistical offices to consider consulting their own users if they have not already done so.

#### **8. The presentation of a progress report on the update of the 1993 SNA at the forthcoming IARIW conference in August 2004**

It was agreed by the ISWGNA that the OECD, as the current chair of the ISWGNA, should submit a paper and prepare a slide presentation giving a progress report on the update of the SNA at the forthcoming IARIW conference in Cork. However, as none of the OECD participants in the ISWGNA will be attending the meeting it was agreed that Brian Newson (Eurostat) would give the presentation.

## **9. Funding and expected expenditures**

The World Bank has created a trust fund in which monies received from donors will be deposited. At the present time the sum of the amount in the fund and promised future donations falls well short of the total expected expenditures, although there is sufficient for the first year's employment of the project manager and editor. The ISWGNA agreed on the following steps:

- a) One of the tasks of the project manager will be to prepare regular financial reports of the update of the 1993 SNA. Prior to the project manager taking up their position, the UNSD and the World Bank should provide the ISWGNA with frequent updates of the amount of money in the trust fund, how much money has been promised by donors and when the payments will be made, and expected expenditures.
- b) As noted under item 2 of the agenda, above, it is intended to contact regional and central banks for funds. This needs to be done quickly and vigorously.

## **10. Review procedures for coordinating the update of the SNA, BPM and GFS**

The ISWGNA discussed the adequacy of the current arrangements to ensure satisfactory coordination of the updating of the SNA, BPM and GFS manuals. It noted that:

- a) national accountants from ISWGNA institutions take part in the meetings of the Balance of Payments (BoP) Committee and the Task Force for the Harmonisation of Public Sector Accounts (TFHPSA),
- b) all the papers and reports produced by these committees are publicly accessible,
- c) the implementation of item 2(a), above, should ensure that the implications for the SNA of proposed changes to the BPM or GFS will be carefully considered,
- d) the various task forces are working in a cooperative spirit,
- e) once appointed, the project manager and editor will provide further assurance of good coordination,
- f) it has already been agreed that time should be set aside at AEG meetings for representatives from the BoP Committee and the TFHPSA to give briefings on issues under consideration, and
- g) all the issue papers are considered by the AEG.

The ISWGNA agreed that it would be useful if at least some ISWGNA member delegations to AEG meetings included representatives from the BoP Committee and TFHPSA. Ideally, the delegations should include the chairpersons of the two committees. The UNSD was asked to provide a link from its website to that of IMF so as to provide ready access to BPM and TFHPSA documents. In conclusion, for the time being at least, the ISWGNA felt that the current arrangements were satisfactory

## **11. Appointment of project manager and editor**

It was agreed by the ISWGNA that the project manager should be appointed before the editor, and that the first task of the project manager should be to draft a framework of coordination, which includes establishing working arrangements for all stakeholders, including the ISWGNA and its secretariat and the editor. When the framework has been approved by the senior management of the ISWGNA institutions the appointment of the editor will go ahead.

It was also agreed that the contracts of the project manager and editor would be with the World Bank – the agency managing the trust fund.

## **12. SNA News and Notes**

It was agreed to defer discussion of this issue.

## **13. Next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the ISWGNA should be hosted by the OECD and take place in Paris from 7-8 October 2004.

## **14. Other business – the AEG meeting in November 2004**

Concern was expressed by some members of the ISWGNA about the length of the forthcoming meeting of the AEG in November 2004. The UNSD has anticipated that it could last up to two weeks. It was agreed that the UNSD and OECD should draft an agenda for the meeting, paying particular attention to the time required for each issue, and present it to the ISWGNA for their consideration.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **AGENDA**

#### **Meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA)**

**Teleconference 30 June 2004**

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Review action items agreed at the meeting in March 2004**
- 3. Review progress of each issue agreed at the February 2004 meeting of the AEG flagged for discussion at the November 2004 AEG (including overlapping BPM and TFHPSA issues). (ISWGNA sponsor)**
- 4. Review progress of each issue agreed at the February 2004 meeting of the AEG flagged for discussion at the November 2005 AEG (including overlapping BPM and TFHPSA issues). (ISWGNA sponsor)**
- 5. Outcome of the AEG consideration of the expansion of the issues for update**
- 6. Role and support of regional meetings and meetings other groups of countries**
- 7. Funding and expected expenditures**
- 8. Review procedures for coordinating the update of the SNA, BPM and GFS**
- 9. Appointment of project manager and editor**
- 10. SNA News and Notes**
- 11. Next meeting – OECD, 7-8 October 2004**
- 12. Other business**

## APPENDIX II

### Actions agreed upon at the teleconference on 30 June 2004

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>When</b>
2(a)	Consult task forces to identify and /or clarify overlapping issues and ensure their satisfactory coordination.	UNSD	July 2004
2(b)	Distribute revised guidelines for the preparation of issue papers	UNSD	July 2004
2 (c)	Request funding from central and regional banks	IMF, UNSD	July 2004
2 (d)	Preparation of article for <i>SNA News and Notes</i>	UNSD	October 2004
3&4	Develop and implement progress reporting tools	All members/project manager	
5(a)	Prepare and disseminate a report of the outcome of the AEG's consideration of the recent issue proposals.	UNSD	July 2004
5(b)	Append agreed list of clarifications to list of issues.	UNSD	July 2004
8	Prepare report and presentation for the IARIW conference in Cork	OECD	July 2004
9	Prepare regular reports of financial position	World Bank, UNSD	
10	Provide website link to IMF website	UNSD	July 2004
14	Prepare draft agenda for the AEG meeting in November 2004 and determine expected duration	UNSD and OECD	July 2004