

Distr.
GENERAL

Working Paper 1
16 August 2011

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE and
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN
STATISTICIANS**

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL DIVISION
EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION**

Workshop on the Implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts
Kiev, 29 November-2 December 2011

Item 3a of the provisional agenda

**DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE 2008 SNA AND SUPPORTING STATISTICS**

Prepared by UNSD

I Introduction

1. The Implementation Programme for the System of National Accounts 2008 and supporting statistics represents a global statistical initiative, which was mandated by the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session following the adoption of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) as the international standard for the compilation and dissemination of national accounts data. It has the dual objective in assisting countries in developing the statistical and institutional capacity to (a) make the conceptual change over from the 1968 or 1993 SNA to the 2008 SNA and (b) improve the scope, detail and quality of the national accounts and supporting economic statistics.

2. With the 2008 SNA being flexible to accommodate all countries and economies, regardless of their level of statistical development, each country has to review with its users the relevant changes from the earlier SNA versions to the 2008 SNA that are applicable to the country and

consider its adoption. At the same time, user consultation should revisit the scope, detail and quality of the accounts and supporting economic statistics by taking a view on which socio-economic and financial policies have to be informed by the structural and short-term economic statistics, including annual and quarterly national accounts.

3. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) is working closely with the United Nations regional commissions and other regional partners to pursue the implementation of the 2008 SNA. For this purpose the UNSD and the regional commissions (RC) are organising a series of seminars. Four of these have taken place already in May 2010 (Middle Eastern region); June 2010 (Caribbean region); November 2010 (Latin American region, also in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund); and in April 2011 (African region, also in collaboration with the African Development Bank and African Union Commission). It is expected that during the second half 2011 this seminars series will also be held for the Eastern Europe, Caucasus Central Asia and South East Europe countries; and the South and South East Asian and Oceania countries.

4. The purpose of these seminars is to facilitate the development of an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics with the objective of developing comparable economic statistics in those regions that have not done so yet and to support those regions that have already started with their own regional programmes, ensuring that these programmes are aligned with the global implementation programme as adopted by the UNSC.

5. This note describes an approach for preparing a national implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. The approach allows for setting up a national programme that is aligned with the regional and the global implementation programmes for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. Following the introduction is a summary of the global implementation programme for the 2008 SNA. Section III describes the elements of a statement of strategy, followed by a description of a Statistical System Information fact sheet in Section IV. Section V discusses the assessment of the adequacy of the statistical system for compiling national accounts and Section VI provides an overview of an outline for setting goals and actions to reach these goals. Section VII briefly describes the development of an action plan. Concluding remarks are provided in Section VIII.

II The 2008 SNA implementation programme

6. The efficiency and sustainability of the implementation of the 2008 SNA rest on the agreed principles of the implementation strategy, namely: (a) strategic planning, (b) coordination, monitoring and reporting; and (c) improving statistical systems. The strategy takes as a starting point the different levels of implementation of the SNA in various countries. It acknowledges the need for coordinated action, not only at the international level but also at regional and sub-regional levels and emphasizes the need for close cooperation with regional commissions and sub-regional organisations.

7. The principles of the implementation strategy are operationalised in the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA, which comprises four elements, namely: (a) use of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) as the strategic planning framework, (b) the programme information structure built around the statistical production process, scope and

compliance for the national accounts and supporting economic statistics, (c) the modalities of statistical capacity building through training and technical cooperation, publication of manuals and handbooks, research and advocacy, and (d) the stages of implementation leading to the change over to the 2008 SNA.

8. The NSDS is the most widely used tool for statistical planning in developing countries. Countries are encouraged to use the NSDS for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and many already have or are updating their NSDS for this purpose. This note elaborates on using a statement of strategy as a strategic planning frame work for the development of an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.

9. A programme information structure aims to facilitate the coordination, monitoring and reporting on the SNA implementation in this multi-stakeholder environment. The Inter Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) already reports to the UNSC about the scope of national accounts compilation and the conceptual compliance with the 1993 SNA in terms of milestones and a Minimum Required Data Set (MRDS) based on the United Nations National Accounts Questionnaire (UN-NAQ). At its forty-second session in 2011 the UNSC adopted an update of the milestone and data set measures to assess the scope and compliance with the 2008 SNA¹ and initiated a review to accommodate a broader scope of economic statistics and short term economic statistics, including quarterly national accounts, for early warning of exposures and risks². The ISWGNA organisations also apply other generally accepted frameworks in performing or facilitating data quality assessments for national accounts and supporting data sets. The sources of methodological and institutional descriptions used to perform these assessments include the International Monetary Fund's General Data Dissemination Standard (GDDS) and Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) metadata, information gleaned in the discovery process during quality assessment reviews, including self assessments, peer reviews, as well as IMF data modules of the Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC), and periodic international surveys.

10. In order to meet the challenges of national accounts development along with the supporting statistics, the UNSD and other members of the ISWGNA initiated dialogue with the regional commissions and other development partners to consider programmes for four modalities: (a) training and technical cooperation, (b) manuals and handbooks, (c) applied research and (d) advocacy. The initial focus on these four modalities will be applied flexibly.

11. Three distinct stages are identified for the changeover to the 2008 SNA through a multi-year programme, irrespective of the level of statistical development namely:

- (a) Stage I. Review of a strategic framework and detailing of national and regional implementation programmes;
- (b) Stage II. Adaptation of classification frameworks, business registers and frames, surveys, administrative data sources and information technology infrastructure; and

¹ ISWGNA report to the 2011 UNSC available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc11/2011-6-NationalAccounts-E.pdf>

² Report on Short term Economic Indicators to the 2011 UNSC available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc11/2011-11-Short-termEcoIndicators-E.pdf>

- (c) Stage III. Application of adapted frameworks and source data, backcasting and changeover to 2008 SNA.

III National statement of strategy

12. Strategic planning is a key principle in mobilizing political and financial support for investment in statistics for which strategic planning frameworks could be used to connect national development objectives with a programme of work for statistical capacity-building. Strategic planning can identify the current strengths and weaknesses of statistical capacity to produce key economic indicators and basic source data, and in consulting users. This approach could also lay out a schedule of tasks to mitigate weaknesses.

13. Countries are encouraged to develop their implementation programmes for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics within the framework of national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS). A statement of strategy, taking into account the national and regional policy needs, is an important step to establish a road map for developing the required scope, detail and quality of national accounts needed for assessing economic progress. For this purpose it is proposed that countries establish a statement of strategy for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics at the national level and to incorporate this statement of strategy in the review of their NSDS. The statement of strategy aims to establish the set of actions to accomplish statistical and institutional goals for the sustainable improvement of the economic statistics programmes, while ensuring adherence to best practices in official statistics.

14. In developing the statement of strategy consultations are needed, preferably in a national seminar, with all stakeholders, policy planners and other users including the academia and business community. Such a discussion is expected to help the national statistical office to prioritize the problem areas and ultimately write a plan for the improvement of the supporting economic statistics with a view to compile national accounts within the framework of the 2008 SNA.

15. The basic elements of a statement of strategy include a mandate, a mission statement, values, high level goals, specific goals and required activities. Table 1 provides an outline for a statement of strategy. For the purpose of an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics a statement of strategy could, for example, be: *The development of an economic statistics programme for compiling the required scope and detail of the National Accounts to inform policy makers*. The statement of strategy represents the overall objective for the successful implementation of the 2008 SNA to enable the evaluation of economic performance and the national and regional economic policy objectives.

16. The *mandate* for the statement strategy is determined by national and regional policy objectives and underpinned by the regulatory and institutional framework through a statistical act and international statistical standards such as, the United Nations principles of official statistics, 2008 SNA, BPM6, GFSM, ISICrev4, etc..

17. The *mission* statement describes the purpose, users, outputs, markets, philosophy and basic technology used to realise the strategy. In other words, what needs to be accomplished, for example, *The efficient and timely dissemination of high quality national accounts data*.

18. The set of *values* needs to reflect the values and principles portrayed by the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to produce useful high-quality data that will have the confidence of users of statistics. Values include for example statistical professionalism, independence and integrity, excellent service to customers, respect and understanding for data suppliers, value for money, etc..

19. *High-level goals* represent the overall accomplishments to be achieved. These goals aim to address important issues, which are identified during the assessment phase (described below). The goals should be creative and forward-looking by being specific, measurable, relevant and time bound. High-level goals could include, improvement in the scope, quality and timeliness of economic statistics, minimising the burden on respondents, increasing the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, achieving greater efficiencies using best practices, raising public awareness and use of national accounts, etc

20. The *specific goals* describe the ultimate results that need to be accomplished for fulfilling the vision described in the statement of strategy. The specific goals for the 2008 SNA implementation programme could be: *To compile national accounts according to milestone two of the SNA implementation, comprising the minimum required data set and to develop a national central data hub for short term economic statistics to facilitate the early detection of changes in economic activity as reflected by the national accounts.*

21. To reach the specific goals require particular activities. To determine these *required activities* an assessment of the national statistical system need to be carried out to determine the adequacy of the national statistical production process to support implementation of the 2008 SNA.

IV Statistical system information

22. To facilitate the assessment process and the development of the statement of strategy UNSD proposes to use a Statistical System Information fact sheet. The fact sheet, as presented in Table 2 allows for collating information available at the national level and at various international organisations on the national statistics system, bringing information together relevant for the development of an economic statistics programme.

23. The Statistical System Information fact sheet for economic statistics provides information on a country's statistical system available at the country level, at each of the international organisations of the Inter Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) and Paris21. The country level information reflects on the availability of a statistical law, a strategic framework for statistics (NSDS or Statistical Master Plan); relevant documents on development plans; current statistical projects or programmes such as the 2008 SNA Implementation programme, World Bank programmes, such as, STATCAP, Trust Funds For Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB) and those of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA); data dissemination platforms such as, websites and publications; the statistical standards in use for national accounts, balance of payments and government finance statistics; and the national accounts and price index base years. The information available from the international organisations include the Development of National Statistical Systems information and

Millennium Development Goals (MDG) reports available at the UNSD website; the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) and Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC) and the Special and General data Dissemination Standards (GDDS/SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF); Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) papers by the World Bank; and the country data on economic statistics disseminated by these organisations.

V Assessment of the statistical system

24. To help countries to carry out a self assessment of their national statistical system to evaluate the adequacy of the national statistical production process supporting national accounts compilation the UNSD developed a Diagnostic Framework for National Accounts and Supporting Economic Statistics (DF-NA&ES)³. The Diagnostic Framework uses taxonomies based on the CES Classification of International Statistical Activities.

25. The Classification of International Statistical Activities comprises a number of statistical domains providing a structured presentation of statistical activities. The statistical activities are classified in groups aimed at collecting, producing and disseminating data, developing standards, harmonization and implementation approaches in official statistics. It organizes the statistical activities in five broad types of statistical domains. Domains 1-3 constitute subject area classifications dealing with the outputs of the statistical process, namely, demographic and social statistics; economic statistics; and environment and multi-domain statistics. Domains 4 and 5 cover substantive issues that are more process and organisation oriented and also deals with the managerial aspects of official statistics. The DF-NA&ES cross classify the statistical activities of domain 2 and selected activities from domain 1 and 3 with that of domain 4 and 5. This allows for an assessment of the economic activities in terms of process, organization and managerial aspects of official statistics.

26. The tool is intended to facilitate a self assessment of the statistical prerequisites outlined in stages I and II of the global 2008 SNA implementation programme, which could be used for developing the statement of strategy for improving the availability and quality of the basic economic statistics required for the compilation of national accounts according to the 2008 SNA recommendations.

VI Consolidation of statistical requirements, assessment and actions

27. An important step in developing the statement of strategy is to determine the goals for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and requirements to reach those goals. For this purpose UNSD proposes to use an outline for setting goals and actions to reach these goals. The outline, as presented in Table 3, consists of six elements: the data items to be compiled, representing the scope and detail of the national accounts that a country wish to compile; the frequency of the data items, in nominal and volume measures; the requirements for compliance to the 2008 SNA and other statistical standards; the required data sources for the proposed data items; the current data sources

³ The DF-NA&ES questionnaire can be obtained from the UNSD web site at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/docs/WG4_20DiagnosticTool.pdf

and compilation methods; and the actions required to mitigate the gaps identified in the assessment relative to identified goals and needs.

28. The decision on the scope, detail and frequency, in nominal and volume measures, of the national accounts, representing the proposed goals, is firstly determined by the national and regional policy needs and secondly by the requirements for assessing the scope and detail of the implementation of 2008 SNA adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2011 and the short term economic indicators of the Ottawa data template for the early detection of changes in economic activity (see foot notes 1 and 2).

29. The data sets for assessing the scope and detail of the national accounts comprise a minimum required data set (MRDS), a recommended set and a desired set. The MRDS include quarterly accounts for the nominal and volume measure of GDP by industry or by expenditure components and the quarterly compilation of the integrated accounts until net lending for the total economy and the rest of the world. The MRDS also include the compilation of annual institutional sector accounts until net lending for the corporate, government, households and non-profit institutions serving households sectors, while the quarterly compilation of these sectors is recommended. The annual compilation of the sectoral financial accounts and sectoral balance sheets and other changes in assets accounts is recommended, while the compilation of their quarterly accounts is desirable.

30. The conceptual compliance to the 2008 SNA and other relevant statistical standards and the required data sources to compile the data items, together with the proposed goals described above, represent the statistical requirements for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.

31. The current data sources and compilation methods for the national accounts and short term economic statistics can be obtained from the results of the self assessment of the statistical production process for supporting the compilation of the national accounts that was carried out through the diagnostic tool.

32. By mapping the statistical requirements with the outcome of the self assessment, it is possible to identify the actions required for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. Examples of the type of topics that may need to be addressed include: the *modernisation of the national regulatory and institutional framework* by strengthening the functioning of the national statistical system (NSS), statistical regulation, management practises, personnel practises and information and communication technology; the *upgrading of statistical infrastructure* to accommodate issues such as, 2008 SNA compliance, classifications, registers and frames; and the *upgrading or development of statistical operations* such as, monthly price statistics; monthly and quarterly production and turnover surveys; economic activity surveys (structural business statistics and short term business statistics); household income and expenditure surveys, informal sector surveys, employment surveys and administrative data.

33. Table 3 provides two examples. Firstly, for the data item final household consumption expenditure. To comply to the 2008 SNA this item needs to take account of issues such as, the allocation of FISIM; the estimation of imputed rents; goods that are produced by households for own final consumption and the classification of the data items according to COICOP. The required

source information for the estimation of final household consumption include, household income and expenditure surveys, surveys of retail trade sales by type of expenditure items; housing stock; and price indices by type of expenditure items. The second example is the index for industrial production (IIP). The standard for compiling this data item is reflected in the *International Recommendations for the Index of Industrial Production, 2010*; and the underlying data are obtained through economic activity surveys and producer price index surveys.

VII Action Plan

34. Following the identification of the required actions for the development of an economic statistics programme for compiling the required scope and detail of the National Accounts an action plan needs to be prepared. The action plan indicates the interventions to be carried out with a time table to mitigate data gaps. The action plan also provides an information structure for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the SNA. The action plan therefore, needs to be specific, measurable, relevant and be executed in a particular time scale. Each of the required actions needs to include key features and key deliverables, for example, *the publication of the quarterly GDP release within 70 days of the end of the quarter.*

VIII Conclusions

35. This note described an approach for preparing a national implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, which is aligned with the regional and the global implementation programmes for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. When preparing the implementation programme it is necessary to take into consideration the national and regional policy needs to determine the scope and detail of the national accounts required to inform policy makers. These goals are also guided by the requirements set by the Statistical Commission for the assessing the scope and detail of the national accounts. The chosen scope and detail of the national accounts also determine the data sources needed for timely and accurate estimates of the national accounts aggregates. By mapping the statistical requirements – where you want to go, and the outcome of the assessment of the statistical system – where you are, it is possible to determine the required actions – how to get there. These required actions are translated into an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, providing key features and deliverable that are specific, measurable, relevant and can be carried out within a specific time frame. Countries are encouraged to develop their implementation programmes for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics within the framework of national strategies for the development of statistics.

Table 1. Outline for a statement of strategy

Mandate		
Policy needs Regional and national policy objectives	Legal Mandate Statistics Act	International Standards UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics; Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF); 2008 SNA, BMP6, GFSM, ISIC Rev.4
Mission		
The efficient and timely dissemination of high quality national accounts data		
Values		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical professionalism • Independence and integrity • Excellent service to our customers • Respect and understanding for our data suppliers • Value for money 		
High-level goals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in the scope, quality and timeliness of economic statistics • Minimising the burden on respondents • Increasing the use of administrative data for statistical purposes • Achieving greater efficiencies using best practices • Raising public awareness and use of national accounts 		
Specific goals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile national accounts according to milestone two of the SNA implementation, comprising the minimum required data set • Develop a national central data hub for short term economic statistics to facilitate the early detection of changes in economic activity 		
Required activities		
Modernisation of the national regulatory and institutional framework by strengthening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functioning of the NSS • Statistical regulation • Management practises • Personnel • Information and Communication Technology 	The upgrading or development of statistical operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Price statistics • Monthly and quarterly production and turnover surveys • Economic activity surveys (structural business statistics and short term business statistics) • Household income and expenditure surveys • Informal sector surveys • Employment surveys • Administrative data 	
The upgrading of statistical infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008 SNA compliance • Classifications, • Registers and frames 		

Table. 2 Statistical System Information fact sheet

Statistical System Information			
Country name			
Country	Statistical agency	Address:	Email Web
	Legal Framework	Statistical Law	
	Strategic Framework	NSDS/Statistical Master Plan	
	Relevant documents	Development plan	
	Projects/Programmes	2008 SNA Implementation programme (ISWGNA)	
		STATCAP (World Bank)	
		IBRD/IDA (World Bank)	
		TFSCB (World Bank)	
	Data	CSO website	
	Statistical Standards	National accounts methodology	
		National accounts base year	
		Balance of payments manual in use	
		Govt finance accounting concept	
		CPI base year	
	UNSD	Relevant documents	Development of National Statistical Systems
MDG report			
Data		Country profile	
		National Accounts	
		UN-NAQ Latest submission	
		UN-NAQ MRDS	
	HFI data		
IMF	Relevant documents	Country report	
		DQAF/ROSC	
		GDDS/SDDS	
	Data	World economic outlook	
World Bank	Relevant documents	PRSP	
		CAS	
	Data	Country data	
Eurostat	Relevant documents	Strategy paper	
	Data		
Paris 21	Relevant documents	National Strategies for the development of statistics	
		NSDS	

Table 3. Consolidation of statistical requirements, assessment and actions

Data item	Frequency Monthly, Quarterly, Annual; in nominal and volume measures	2008 SNA or other statistical standards	Required sources for nominal and volume measures	Principal data sources and compilation methods for nominal and volume measures used by the country	Actions required Actions required to mitigate the gaps identified in the assessment relative to identified goals and needs.
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
National accounts aggregates to comply to Milestone 2 - MRDS					
<i>For example: House hold final consumption expenditure</i>		FISIM allocated to users; Imputed rents; Goods that are produced by households for own final consumption COICOP.	Household income and expenditure surveys; Retail trade sales by type of expenditure items; Housing stock. Price indices; Volume series by type of expenditure items	From DF-NA&ES	<i>For example, Introduce a monthly retail trade survey</i>
Set of short term indicators					
<i>For example: Index of industrial production</i>		International Recommendations for the Index of Industrial Production, 2010	Economic activity surveys by industry, producer price index surveys	From DF-NA&ES	<i>For example, Introduce a monthly industrial production survey to compliment the quarterly economic activity survey</i>

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