

Concept note

Developing a Programme for the Implementation of the 2008 SNA and Supporting Statistics for ECOWAS, EAC and COMESA countries

9 – 11 December 2013, Kampala, Uganda

Background

1. The Implementation Programme for the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) and supporting statistics represents a global statistical initiative, which was mandated by the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session following the adoption of the 2008 SNA as the international standard for the compilation and dissemination of national accounts.
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 that are applicable to the country and consider its adoption for the change over to the 2008 SNA. 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. 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
 - (c) Stage III. Application of adapted frameworks and source data, backcasting and changeover to 2008 SNA.
4. When preparing a national implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics 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 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 an 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 deliverables 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.

Purpose

5. The purpose of the seminar is to initiate the formulation of a national strategy and implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting system-wide socio-economic statistics for selected countries in the ECOWAS, EAC and COMESA regions. The objective of the initiative is strengthening the national statistical system (NSS) in support of improved policy making. It is expected that this initiative would lead to a multi-year statistical programme to move these countries over to the 2008 SNA and to establish a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics with quality “fit for purpose”.

Organizers of the seminar

6. This seminar will be organized by UNSD in collaboration with ECA, the AfDB, COMESA, EAC and ECOWAS, hosted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). The seminar will provide an opportunity to bring together the users and producers as well as the technical and financial partners who are involved in the area of economic statistics and national accounts.

Participants

7. Senior managers from national statistical offices and senior representatives from Central Banks, from selected COMESA, EAC and ECOWAS countries, are invited to discuss the development of a national implementation strategy for the 2008 SNA, to share experiences among countries in the region and to facilitate cooperation amongst the neighbouring countries and national and international development partners.

Organisation of work

8. The seminar will be organized over 3 days as a back-to-back meeting with the seminar of environmental economic accounts. The first day (9 December) will be a national seminar focusing on policy needs and priorities of Uganda. For the purpose of this initiative, consultations will be held with senior staff of UBOS, the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, and other relevant ministries. The second and the third days (10-11 December) will be a regional meeting focusing on priorities for COMESA, EAC and ECOWAS.

9. The initiative is expected to review the adequacy of the national statistical production process and institutional arrangements supporting national accounts compilation through consultations with all stakeholders of the NSS. This system wide assessment should lead to a shared strategic vision for the development of the statistics for monitoring and evaluating policy programmes with clear country and government ownership and leadership and which is integrated with the national planning and budget processes.

10. It is understood that for the development of an effective strategic vision for the development of statistics, a broad participation of the ministries and agencies being part of the NSS, including users and producers of statistics, is good practice. In addition, donor community should be involved in the assessment, particularly those that are already active in supporting statistical capacity building, to ensure donor coordination for technical and financial support at an early stage.

Expected outcome

11. UBOS in collaboration with national partners and in consultation with UNSD, ECA and the AfDB will prepare an outcome document which will contain:

- (a) an initial assessment of the current capacity of the NSS to produce and disseminate a core data set of annual and high frequency statistics consisting of economic statistics and national accounts in support of national policy programmes;
- (b) a consolidation of the statistical requirements, assessment and actions for preparing a national implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics; and
- (c) a proposed institutional arrangement to coordinate activities in the formulation of the statistical implementation programme for economic statistics and national accounts

Supporting documents

12. UNSD has developed a number of tools to support the development of a programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. These include:

- (a) The note: *Developing a programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics*;
- (b) Statistical System Information fact sheet;
- (c) Diagnostic Framework for National Accounts and Supporting Economic Statistics (DF-NA&ES);
- (d) Status of National Accounts and Supporting Economic Statistics; and
- (e) Template for a statement of strategy for the development of SNA implementation programme.

13. 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 organizations also apply other generally accepted frameworks in performing or facilitating data quality assessments for national accounts and supporting data sets, which include the IMF's GDDS and 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 ROSC, and periodic international surveys.

¹ Guidelines for monitoring the 2008 SNA implementation available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/docs/guidelines.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>