

Essential SNA: Building the basics



2012 edition

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Foreword

National accounts are an essential tool for analysing, evaluating, and forecasting economic phenomena. The main indicators of national accounts and related statistics are used to provide information for the design and assessment of policies and for the comparison of economic growth and development at international and national level and over time.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a tool to countries that want to implement, improve or update the System of National Accounts (SNA), in accordance with the 2008 SNA, following the strategy proposed by ISWGNA (Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts).

“Essential SNA” intends to support a successful implementation of the SNA in the Least Developed Countries, micro-states and other countries that have not implemented it yet, giving them instruments to make an analysis of basic data when preparing national accounts statistics for the first time or improving the existing situation.

Compared to the first edition, this edition contains improved and more complete descriptions of specific methodological aspects, as for example information about volume measure, useful for the implementation and development of the SNA. This version incorporates as well the opinions and recommendations from various stakeholders and users. These opinions were received during the different actions promoting the handbook and implementing a knowledge transfer, such as workshops and coaching, e-learning and monthly papers (all available on: <http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/snabuildingthebasics/info/data/website/index.html>).

We hope a good use is made of these guidelines and we welcome your feedback to further update this handbook.



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Finally, Eurostat accepts the sole responsibility for all remaining errors in the text; please consider this as a work in progress.

All statements on policies within this publication are given for information purposes only. They do not constitute an official position of the European Commission and are not legally binding.

Acronyms and abbreviations


1968 SNA	System of National Accounts 1968	IPI	Industrial Production Index
1993 SNA	System of National Accounts 1993	ISIC, Rev. 4	International Standard Industrial Classification, Revision 4
2008 SNA	System of National Accounts 2008	ISTAT	Italian National Statistical Institute
BEC	Classification by Broad Economic Categories	ISWGNA	Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts
BPM6	Balance of Payments Manual and International Investment Position, sixth edition	LFS	Labor Force Survey
CHAPO	Calcul Harmonisé des Prix par Ordinateur	LIFO	Last In, First Out
CIF	Cost, Insurance and Freight	MPI	Import Price Index
CIS STAT	Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	MRDS	Minimum Requirement Data Set
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government.	NOE	Non-Observed Economy
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose	NPISHs	Non-profit Institutions Serving Households
CPA	Classification of Products by Activity	NSDS	National Strategies for the Development of Statistics
CPC	Central Product Classification	NSO	National Statistical Office
CPI	Consumer Price Index	NSS	National Statistical System
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework (IMF)	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe	P	Production
ERETES	Equilibres ressources emplois, Tableaux entrées-sorties	PALOP	Portuguese-Speaking African Countries
FIFO	First In, First Out	PC	Personal Computer
FISIM	Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured	PPI	Producer Price Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	R&D	Research and Development
GDDS	General Data Dissemination Standard	SBR	Statistical Business Register
GFCF	Gross Fixed Capital Formation	SBS	Structural Business Survey
GFSM	Government Finance Statistics Manual	SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
GVA	Gross Value Added	SITC	Standard International Trade Classification
HBS	Household Budget Survey	SUTs	Supply and Uses Tables
HS	Harmonized System	UEMOA	Economic Community of West African States
IAS	International Accounting Standards	UK	United Kingdom
IASC	International Accounting Standards Committee	UN	United Nations
IC	Intermediate Consumption	UVI	Unit Value Indices
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians	VAT	Value Added Tax
ICP	International Cooperation Programme	WB	World Bank
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards	XPI	Export Price Index
ILO	International Labour Organization		
IMF	International Monetary Fund		

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Introduction



1. Scope and aims

Building the System of National Accounts (SNA) in the framework proposed by the last revision (the 2008 SNA) is a complex task, especially for developing countries. The main aim of this handbook is to provide statistics producers with clear and simple guidelines for implementing the SNA.

Developing countries have to face two kinds of challenges in implementing the 2008 SNA: the first refers to the political will and the economic capacity to create the general framework; the second is how to adapt the methodological requirements of the 2008 SNA to the country's specific situation and with the available resources (data sources, human resources and financial support). This raises the question of what is the best strategy to adopt for implementing the 2008 SNA and satisfying user needs (national and international).

The handbook is especially designed to clarify, prioritize and present alternative ways of facing these challenges and preparing countries for estimating national accounts indicators. It focuses on presenting ways of laying the groundwork for compiling national accounts.

The key issues for implementing the 2008 SNA presented in the handbook are:

- Institutional issues, such as the need to create the legal framework for implementing national accounts and the strategy for developing the statistical system, which forms the basis for the implementation of national accounts;
- Technical issues relating to statistical infrastructure, such as the business register and classifications;
- Technical issues relating to statistical and administrative data sources required for compiling national accounts, and especially the use of this data for estimating national accounts indicators;
- Specific issues for the compilation of national accounts, common in developing countries, such as the non-observed economy and the informal sector;
- Conceptual background of price and volume measures in national accounts, the main data sources and methods used for annual estimates.

The most reasonable approach to implementing the SNA consists of a gradual compilation of the accounts and tables required for addressing policy issues and deemed the highest priority for a country. For this reason, the main reference framework is provided by the Minimum Requirement Data Set (MRDS), developed by the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) and approved by the UN Statistical Commission during its March 2001 meeting. The MRDS includes a set of required, recommended and desirable data on national accounts that should be provided by countries intending to implement the SNA for the first time (see Table II.4).

In order to implement the SNA in line with the MRDS, priority should be given at the first stage to compiling GDP data according to production and expenditure and by industry for the overall economy and external counterpart sector. This will enable estimates of the major SNA aggregates to be made.

Incorporating the SNA into routine practice requires a transformation of the entire system of producing socio-economic statistics. This will entail changes and improvements in statistical areas, linked to the SNA or integrated with it, such as government finance statistics, banking statistics, balance of payments, statistics based on households surveys, etc. It will also involve introducing new economic classifications closely linked to the 2008 SNA, such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev.4, the Central Product Classification (CPC) Ver.2, or the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG).

2. Contents

To achieve the objectives outlined above, the handbook has been divided into seven chapters, each focusing on a key issue.

Chapter I: System of national accounts offers a short introduction to the national accounts system, and in particular the 2008 SNA, stressing the importance for a country of national accounts. This chapter aims to provide arguments for implementing national accounts, providing Chief Statisticians with the tools for justifying the need to allocate human and financial resources to this activity.

The definition and characteristics of the national accounts system are presented, as well as how it may be used in the economy. One section is devoted to the new SNA: it includes a brief history of SNA developments and the main improvements in the 2008 SNA with respect to previous versions.

Chapter II: Building the SNA presents the guidelines for drafting a national strategy for implementing the SNA and compiling national accounts, these can be adapted to the specific situation in each country.

Three phases of the 2008 SNA implementation process may be identified:

- i. Elaborating or reviewing the strategic framework and implementation plan as part of the national statistical development strategy;
- ii. Adapting the classification framework and business registers, surveys, and administrative data sources that make up the infrastructure for the compilation of national accounts;
- iii. Collecting data sources and applying the 2008 SNA methodological requirements to calculate the main economic aggregates.

This chapter focuses on the first phase of the process; the last two phases are outlined in Chapter IV: Statistical infrastructure for national accounts.

The first section of the chapter highlights the main point of the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), as a basic foundation for the SNA implementation strategy. The NSDS is expected to provide countries with a strategy for strengthening their statistical capability across the entire national statistical system (NSS) in response to evolving user needs and priorities.

Section 2 presents the main phases of the SNA implementation strategy, starting with the establishment of an appropriate institutional environment (including organizational, human resources and management approaches) followed by drawing up an inventory of data sources, and collection, analysis and translation of indicators into national account concepts.

In detail, the strategy of SNA implementation includes:

- Defining the objectives;
- Setting priorities based on the Minimum Requirement Data Set (MRDS);
- Ensuring institutional conditions are in place;
- Designing a compilation strategy:
 - Inventory of data sources: general principles, statistical sources, administrative sources;
 - Classification and nomenclature implementation: units, institutional sectors, flows and stocks, activities, function adapted to the country's situation;
 - Use of data sources: collection of data sources, analysis of quality and coverage, translation into national accounts concepts, estimation of indicators, reconciliation of data;
 - Use of IT tools for national accounts – the case of ERETES (Equilibres ressources emplois, Tableaux entrées-sorties).
- Drawing up the dissemination strategy to meet users' needs.

Chapter III: Basic concepts: an introduction to SNA 2008 concepts is made. The chapter outlines who are the stakeholders in an economy and how they are grouped; the kind of actions they undertake and how these are translated into national accounts indicators; and the purpose of their actions and how the SNA describes and evaluates these actions to obtain the main aggregates.

The main aggregates of the SNA are presented in the second section of the chapter and introduce users to the main results that national accounts provide.

Chapter IV: Statistical infrastructure for national accounts outlines the statistical basis needed for compiling national accounts, set out in two sections: the basis (business register and classifications), and the statistical sources.

The first section deals with objectives, variables, updating methods and uses of the Statistical Business Register (SBR). A short presentation of the following classifications is included: International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev. 4), Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG), Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP), Central Product Classification (CPC Ver. 2), Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4) and Harmonized System (HS 2007). For detailed content and explanations, various references are provided (UN website, manuals, etc.).

The second section of the chapter focuses on the main statistical data sources, such as census and surveys, broken down according to main domains. Recommendations concerning the minimum statistical data sources necessary for implementing the SNA are also given.

Chapter V: Administrative data sources, presents in the first sections the administrative data and the advantages of their use for statistical purposes; in Section 2, the administrative sources are grouped into three main categories: data from the accounting system of non-financial units and financial units, data concerning government revenues and expenditures as well as international trade data and examples of how each of these administrative indicators are translated into national accounts concepts are provided.

Chapter VI: Informal sector provides general guidelines for identifying and assessing the informal sector, a phenomenon found in many developing countries. The first section presents a general overview of the non-observed economy and the role of the informal sector within it. Criteria for identifying the informal sector, measurement methods and the main sources used for its estimation are to be found in the second section.

Finally, **Chapter VII: Volume measures,** introduces the need for main methods used and data sources to compile price and volume measures in national accounts. Section 1 deals with price and volume measures of GDP explaining the aim of the estimations, the main conceptual issues, the basic and specific measurement methods, and main data sources. Section 2 provides a brief description of volume measures of the GDP components by production and expenditure approaches. The main recommendations and conclusions are presented in Section 3, via a tabular synthetic overview of the methods used for volume measures of the main national accounts indicators by activities.

Common to all chapters is a list of references to other manuals and documents to provide guidance for users interested in further developing the topics covered by the handbook. The references can be found at the end of each chapter.

Boxes ‘To find out more...’ complete the above-mentioned list of references, providing supplementary information for users of the handbook.

System of National Accounts

1



The chapter in brief

The essential phenomena comprising a country's economic behaviour (production, consumption, accumulation and associated concepts of income and wealth) are identified and measured in the general framework of the System of National Accounts (SNA). Questions such as 'what is the SNA?' and 'what is it for?' are explained in this chapter advocating basic arguments for encouraging the implementation and maintenance of viable statistics.

There is a section in which the new 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) is described, including a brief history of recent SNA developments and the main recommendations contained in this revised system.

1. SNA in the economy

1.1 What is SNA?

National accounts are an essential tool for evaluating, analyzing and forecasting economic phenomena. Their existence is justified by economic necessities, because they measure what needs to be developed and highlight the size and structure of the economy and all its components. Accordingly, by using national accounts concepts and indicators, economic phenomena are better described and understood. Economic forecasts based on the national accounts framework become realistic and provide tools for decision-makers.

Two different levels of analysis may be identified in an economy:

- Microeconomic analysis, based on the interpretation of the individual behaviour and inter-individual relationships of economic stakeholders;
- Macroeconomic analysis, in which a collective analysis of relationships associated with homogeneous groups of individuals is provided. The referent of macroeconomic analysis is often the nation. This enables coherent analysis of an integrated market, a monetary unit, or social behaviour, to name but a few.

The models used in economic analysis are based on four main groups of relationships:

- Accounting equations (linking flows and economic goods);
- Technical equations (for physical units);
- Institutional equations (for certain legal or contractual constraints);
- Behavioural equations (that highlight the proposed rules).

The economy needs a special framework in which to put these equations into practice. This framework has been developed gradually by economists and it represents what are

called 'national accounts'. The system of national accounts is a measurement tool offering a suitable means of quantification adapted to macroeconomic needs. It provides the conceptual framework required for developing macroeconomic equations and measuring all aspects of an economy.

Definition

The System of National Accounts (SNA) is the internationally agreed standard set of recommendations on how to compile measures of economic activity in accordance with established accounting conventions based on economic principles. The recommendations are expressed in terms of a set of concepts, definitions, classifications and accounting rules that comprise the internationally agreed standard for measuring such items as gross domestic product (GDP), the most frequently quoted indicator of economic performance. The accounting framework of the SNA allows economic data to be compiled and presented in a format that is designed for purposes of economic analysis, decision-taking and policy-making.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 1: Introduction.

National accounts provide a unique overview of the economy, of the main groups of economic stakeholders, and of various economic flows, stocks and economic processes. The concepts contained in national accounts give specific meaning to the economy and provide factual data for users.

The main characteristics of the national accounts system are:

- i. **Universality**
National accounts constitute a universal system which takes into consideration the specific circumstances existing in different economies. By way of example, the 2008 SNA includes a new treatment of goods for processing and remittances from persons working abroad, especially relevant for developing countries that are moving into the global economy.
- ii. **Transparency**
National accounts are transparent. The accounting system has a uniform base: the written handbooks and manuals. Furthermore, qualitative descriptions of calculation rules and basic data ensure that the whole process of compilation is intelligible.
- iii. **Harmonization**
National accounts are harmonized statistics; they employ concepts and classifications that are also used for other social and economic statistics (industry, trade, employment statistics, etc.). Concepts and methodology are harmonized with those of other major international guidelines on economic statistics, in particular the IMF Balance of Payments Manual (BPM) or the IMF Government Finance Statistics (GFS). This harmonization enables results to be linked and compared.

iv. Flexibility

The SNA incorporates satellite accounts, which offers evidence of its flexibility: by using satellite accounts the relevance of national accounts is increased without affecting the comparability of the central framework. Satellite accounts provide a framework, linked to the central accounts, so that attention can be focused on a certain field or aspect of economic and social life. Common examples are satellite accounts for the environment, tourism or health.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 29: Satellite accounts and other extensions.

1.2 SNA and the economy

National accounts represent a broad and comprehensive statistical system aimed at describing a national economy and how it works. The system uses data on economic activities and relevant classifications to provide a systematic picture of the structure and evolution of a national economy.

A national economy circuit is illustrated in Figure. I.1.

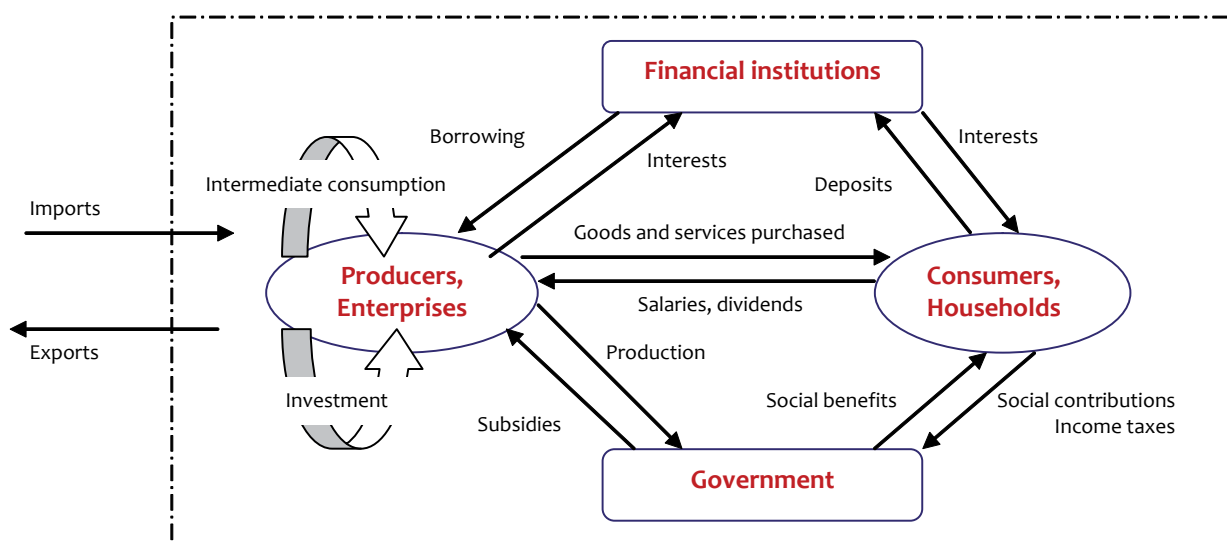
A national economy encompasses a closed space (a country), the outside is the rest of the world. This circuit can be analyzed on two levels:

- The first describes only those flows included in the scheme and corresponds to what are called the consolidated national accounts;
- The second more detailed level (such as the Input Output Table or Social Accounting Matrix), proposes a breakdown of internal flows highlighting the different economic agents involved in the economy. National accounts evaluate the flow of the economy as represented by the income created by the nation. Income is generated by productive activity.

In Figure I.1, the economic circuit presents the distribution of income within a national economy and between a national economy and the rest of the world. The economic circuit describes economic flows (transactions of various types) carried out by the resident economic stakeholders as producers or consumers, based on symmetrical transactions that entail the existence of a financial counterpart (e.g. a household consumes goods and services produced by enterprises that pay salaries or dividends to households; households pay taxes to the government and receive services such as education, health, justice and other social benefits). Relations with the rest of the world deal with aspects such as imports and exports of goods and services, the development of the economy based on foreign aid or foreign direct investment, remittances sent by members of a family working abroad, etc.

The concept of residence is presented in Chapter III: Basic concepts.

Figure I.1 National economy circuit



Sources: European Statistical Training Programme, Course: Advanced national accounts, 2007

Transactions and flows that take place in an economic circuit are diverse and, for this reason, the SNA classifies them into four groups:

- *Transactions involving goods and services* (products) describes the supply source (domestic output or imports) and use (intermediate consumption, final consumption, capital formation or exports) of goods and services;
- *Distributive transactions* consist of transactions by which the value added generated by production is distributed to labour, capital and government and transactions involving the redistribution of income and wealth (taxes on income and wealth and other transfers);
- *Transactions involving financial instruments* (or financial transactions) refer to the net acquisition of financial assets or the net incurrence of liabilities for each type of financial instrument;
- *Other accumulation entries* cover transactions and other economic flows not previously taken into account that alter the quantity or value of assets and liabilities.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009;

Guide méthodologique pour l'élaboration des comptes nationaux dans les états membre d'Afristat, Afristat, Serie Méthodes no.4, 2001;

National Accounts: A practical introduction, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.85, UN 2003;

Understanding National Accounts, Lequiller F., Blades D., OECD 2006.

The concept of national accounts makes a substantial contribution to the quality, stability, neutrality and international comparability of the system and describes transactions in national economies and/or the links between different national economies. National accounts concepts are based on the different systems in an economy, such as: business accounting, production, employment, productivity, monetary policy, inflation, budgetary policy, government finance, personal income, wealth and consumption, balance of payments, etc.

Each system describes a different aspect of a national economy, and explains some of the specific national accounting conventions. National accounts combine these systems into a single accounting framework. As a result, the system of national accounts offers an overview of each of these specific aspects and can also show all kinds of interactions between them and with the national economy as a whole.

1.3 Need for the SNA

The System of National Accounts was developed to provide a tool to be used for macroeconomic analysis and for checking

the assumptions that drive economic policy measures. This role has been confirmed over time; but the SNA has succeeded in other areas too.

The key indicators of national accounts such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), economic growth rate, national income or government deficit play a central role in managing and analyzing economies all over the world. Many economic decisions which have a direct impact on the level of households' income and expenditure are directly influenced by the data provided in the national accounts.

Furthermore, development aid policies include targets for aid flows as a percentage of GDP, and the effectiveness of aid programmes is measured by their impact on GDP growth. In the same way, international programmes aimed at poverty reduction use per capita GDP to identify target regions and to evaluate the results of actions taken.

National accounts data is used by governments, economic policymakers, economic modellers and analysts, financial markets, etc. The stakeholders range from the general public to business, from domestic institutions and government to international organizations. This means that the level of detail of the estimated indicators should be adapted to user needs and should be set out in the framework of the national accounts dissemination strategy.

Chapter II: Building the SNA sets out the national accounts dissemination strategy.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter I Introduction; part C 'Uses of the SNA'

To read more about the promotion of economic and official statistics in general as input for evidence-based decision-making, please refer to the documents of Paris21

<http://www.paris21.org/advocacy>

The particular importance of national accounts is determined by their diverse uses:

1. The SNA is an excellent tool for obtaining information **on the structure and evolution of a country's economy**. It offers users coherent, comprehensive and permanent access to the main macroeconomic indicators, useful for monitoring an economy's overall performance, strengths and weaknesses.
2. The SNA is the framework used for **economic forecasting**. It provides the accounting framework for formulating the equations used in macroeconomic models. From the data series provided, the national accounts indicators can be used to assess the significant parameters which show how the economy behaves. National accounts can also be used for predictions, such as for testing specific

economic policy measures (fiscal policy, currency parity, allocation of subsidies, investments, etc.).

- The SNA is the **central statistical framework** that must be used as the **coordinating framework** for all other statistics so as to obtain consistent definitions, and hence data. This is especially true of countries in the early phases of organizing their statistical production.
- National accounts indicators help to establish a country's

economic policy: they are used by policy makers to analyse the current situation, identify the major problems and find a common solution for development.

- International comparisons** should be based on national accounts indicators. The performance of one economy as compared to that of another is evaluated by economists, journalists, or other analysts in accordance with the common concepts, definitions and classifications provided by the SNA.

Box I.1: Examples of national accounts uses for economic policy

National accounts indicators	Policy uses
Agricultural accounts with data on farmer income	Agricultural policy
Growth of particular types of manufacturing or service industries using the input-output tables or data on value added by type of activity	Industrial policies
Government deficit and debt as a percentage of GDP	Monetary policy and public finance
Economic growth, expenditure on Research and Development as percentage of GDP	Productivity and growth policy
Expenditure on defence as a percentage of GDP	Defence policy
Social protection statistics closely linked to national accounts concepts	Social policy
Regional gross value added (GVA) per capita; regional households consumption per capita	Regional policy for granting regional funds
GDP per capita	Used to identify countries that need development funds and to establish measurements for poverty reduction
Satellite accounts: health, tourism, environments	Economic policy in the specific domain

Source: *Policy uses of National Accounts: an OECD perspective*, paper presented to the joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD, Meeting on national accounts, 2002

National accounts have an important role in society, being the main tool for communication and decision-making. They provide a coherent set of concepts and facts about national economies all over the world and serve as frame of reference for thinking and communicating about national economies and their major components. All the users as private and public actors, e.g. households, non-profit organizations, various layers of government, international organizations, economists, journalists and trade-unions think and communicate in terms of national accounting concepts, like economic growth, final consumption expenditure of households, capital formation, government deficit, taxes and subsidies, and the external position with the Rest of the World. Forecasts of national accounts statistics are also available all over the world. The monopolistic position of national accounts statistics, and their worldwide use and acceptance reinforce their role as a universal language and body of factual information.

Decision-making is affected by national accounts in a direct way, because it is formulated in terms of SNA, and in an indirect way by shaping our general perceptions about the performance of the national economy and how it works. National accounts' main uses are:

- Frame of reference for decisions on investment, consumption and wages.

Economic growth is used as an indicator of financial strength and economic performance of the country. As a consequence, it can influence e.g. foreign direct investments, the purchase and sale of equity and currencies, and the granting and conditions of international loans. These changes can then influence many other variables, like exchange rates, interest rates, consumer prices, and imports and exports. National accounts data indicating poor economic growth can also cause governments to lose elections. Wage negotiations by trade unions can be partly based on forecasts of the macro-economic productivity increase according to the national accounts. Negotiations on big investment projects (e.g. planes, dwellings and infrastructure) are based on national accounts indicators such as economic growth, capital formation, wage increases, public debt, etc.

- Target of public policy.

Some examples of the national accounts indicators used to define the economic objectives are:

- The supply of money growth is based on the nominal growth of domestic product corrected for changes in the velocity of circulation (monetary policy target in order to avoid excessive inflation);
- Development aid should be at least 0.7% of national income (international norm of development aid);
- The modification of taxes and social security contributions is established by taking their value as a percentage of national accounts aggregates;
- The European budget for stimulating Research and Development should grow in line with the average nominal growth of European national income;
- The government deficit should not exceed 3% of national income (entrance-criterion for the European monetary union);
- Expenditure on Research and Development is established as a percentage of GDP.

c) Tax or aid measure for nations and regions.

National accounts statistics as a tax or aid measure includes e.g.:

- The contributions to international organizations like the UN, OECD and IMF and to supra-national economic and political unions, like the EU. These contributions are generally based on national income figures;
- Development aid should be 1% of national income (national policy on development aid);
- Development aid is only provided to the 20 countries with the lowest GDP per capita (national policy on aid);
- Regions with a relatively low GDP per region per capita receive funds from the European Structural Funds.

The uses of national accounts can be improved; for this purpose, the role of the statistical offices is crucial. More attention should be paid to giving guidance to data users about the proper use and misuse of national accounts indicators.

This can be achieved by different methods. Some of them are:

1) Investigating user practice.

The major uses of national accounts should be investigated critically in order to identify major cases of misuse, sub-optimal use and improper use. These have to be remedied by taking proper actions, such as, for example, presenting in a practical way the capacity of national accounts to meet specific economic and social purposes.

2) Accompanying national accounts statistics with supplementary information.

National accounts figures reflect the operational concepts, data sources, statistical techniques and compilation strategies

used. Providing information on these (e.g. publish statistics and economic analyses based on national accounts indicators) is indispensable for a proper use of national accounts. International databases of specific sets of national accounts statistics from various countries seem to be a major help for data users. However, if they do not provide information on the meaning, comparability and limitations of these statistics, they create conditions for misuse and misinterpretation of national accounts indicators.

3) Efficient and accessible presentation of national accounts results.

Providing guidance to users implies that the presentation of national accounts is clear and simple and responds to their needs. If very detailed information which requires deeply knowledge of the methodology is disseminated, the attention of the users can be drawn away from the real content of national accounts indicators and national accounts are regarded as an unattractive and inaccessible subject. For example, there is a tradition of emphasizing the subtle differences between net domestic product, gross domestic product, gross national income and net national income. However, for most users, these differences are irrelevant: they only want to use what they always used or what is the best according to official or international standards. The role of the statistical office is to provide the useful information for the major part of the users and to keep the “door open” for special users who need special information.

Providing guidance to users may even imply an explicit link to standard software on economic modelling, e.g. for conducting simple input-output or institutional sectors analyses.

National accounts statistics could be considered as a product of public service. Being a monopolistic product, it seems that it is not always, and in all countries, well-promoted by presenting its benefits. However, the trend towards more market-oriented government reinforces a drastic improvement in the marketing of the national accounts. This marketing can take various forms: improving the presentation of the national accounts statistics, linking the national accounts statistics better to specific data users and current popular issues, giving courses for users of national accounts statistics and ensuring all kinds of publicity.

The efforts to promote national accounts should stress their central purpose (to provide an overview of the national economy and its major components), and to make the national accounts an attractive resource by presenting concrete cases and pointing out the value added offered to efficient and democratic decision making. In recent years, the availability of national accounts statistics which present economic phenomena in more detail has increased substantially based on the efforts of statistical offices to follow the new methodology. However, no new ways to make use of this relative abundance of data have been developed.

To increase the use of national accounts demands a substantial investment in education. The general knowledge of data users and compilers should be enriched and much easier ways to acquire more knowledge and information (e.g. about the concepts and data sources used) should be developed in order to increase the uses of national accounts. Various methods can be applied, such as international and national courses for different groups of data users (researchers, policy makers, journalists, etc) and at various levels. The investment in education will increase interaction between data compilers and data users and can substantially improve the role of national accounts as a tool for analysis and policy in economy.

2. Towards the 2008 SNA

An accounting framework should reflect the actual economic reality and users' data needs. Given that the economic situation around the world is constantly changing and developing, there is a clear

need for a more comprehensive model of national accounting.

Over the years, the SNA has been constantly updated by international organizations making recommendations and concepts suitable for new aspects of production, consumption and accumulation – characteristics of the changing economy.

Box I.2: Evolution of the SNA's purview

1953 SNA - Simple set of tables and accounts in current prices;

1968 SNA - Extended accounting system, including input-output tables, general principles on prices and volumes and financial accounts;

1993 SNA - Inclusion of balance sheets, employment and purchasing power parities, more detailed accounting structure (more accounts, more sub-sectors and detailed supply and use tables); separate chapters on satellite accounts and flexible adjustments for national circumstances; detailed discussion of general principles on prices and volumes (e.g. chaining and index formulae);

2008 SNA - More detailed presentation of several topics, e.g. government accounts, the informal sector and capital services (important for productivity measurement).

Source: Uses of national accounts; History, international standardization, and applications in the Netherlands, Bos Fritz, Eagle Economic & Statistics, Working Paper, 2008-1.

The new economic phenomena that the world has witnessed over the last decade, such as the increasing role of information and communication technologies in production processes, the growing role of intangible assets and service activities, the expansion of financial services, the globalization of national economic systems and the reforms in social security systems require changes to be made to the method of compiling economic statistics.

Under these conditions, the need to update the System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA) became evident in order to adapt it to the new economic environment and the advances in methodological research and user needs.

The updating process has been organized and coordinated by international organizations and supported by experts from all over the world.

The fruits of this process, the 2008 SNA, contains changes in economic structures and improvements in methodologies for measuring economic activities. In order to do so, the fourth generation of official guidelines on national accounting required other sets of international recommendations and standards to be updated:

- The International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payments Manual and International Investment Position, sixth edition (BPM6);
- The International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev.4) and the Central Product Classification (CPC Ver.2);
- The Government Finance Statistics Manual (GFSM2001): note has been taken of any discrepancies between the Manual and the 2008 SNA which will serve as input for a future revision of the Manual. In addition, the Monetary and Finance Statistics Compilation Guide, published in 2007, was improved on the basis of the 2008 SNA.

The 2008 SNA introduces changes and new content to nearly all sections, especially those dealing with non-financial assets, financial services and financial instruments, the rest of the world (balance of payments), government and the public sector. The majority of the recommendations relate to the unit and transaction characteristics of an increasingly globalized economy, innovation in financial instruments and a stronger interest in the sources of private and the public sector wealth and debt. Some recommendations affect major SNA aggregates, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and savings, as would be expected from an update intended to capture the evolving aspects of production, consumption and accumulation. Other recommendations involve instead a range of other elements, including the drafting and clarification of definitions and classifications.

With respect to the previous version (SNA 1993), the major changes affect the following areas: pension schemes, cost of capital services, research and development, military expenditure, goods for processing, etc. These changes concern:

- Statistical units and revisions of institutional sectoring;
- Scope of transactions, including the production boundary;
- Concepts of assets, capital formation and consumption of fixed capital;
- Treatment and definition of financial instruments and assets;
- Scope of government and public sector transactions;
- Harmonization with the concepts and classifications in the SNA and the BPM, sixth edition.

Some of these changes have an impact on the level of GDP, others on the collection of data or the method used for the estimation of indicators.

Further, some changes of the 2008 SNA are presented more in detail. These concern:

- statistical units and issues of classification and sectoring
- production boundary and intermediate consumption
- assets and capital formation
- other changes.

Box I.3: SNA2008 compared to SNA 93

<i>Differences</i>	<i>Where in SNA2008?</i>	<i>Impact on GDP?</i>
A. Further specifications of statistical units and revisions in institutional sectoring		Not directly
1. Producer unit undertaking ancillary activities to be recognized as a separate establishment in certain cases	<i>Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.41 to 5.42</i>	
2. Artificial subsidiaries not regarded as institutional units unless resident in an economy different from that of their parents	<i>Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.62 to 4.64</i>	
3. Branch of a non-resident unit recognized as an institutional unit	<i>Chapter 4, paragraph 4.47</i>	
4. Residence of multi-territory enterprises clarified	<i>Chapter 4, paragraph 4.13</i>	
5. Special purpose entities recognized	<i>Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.55 to 4.58; Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.51 to 22.54</i>	
6. Holding company allocated to the financial corporations sector	<i>Chapter 4, paragraph 4.54</i>	
7. Head office to be allocated to the institutional sector of the majority of its subsidiaries	<i>Chapter 4, paragraph 4.53</i>	
8. Sub-sector for non-profit institutions introduced	<i>Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.35, 4.94, 4.103 and 4.128</i>	
9. Definition of financial services enlarged	<i>Chapter 4, paragraph 4.98 and Chapter 6, paragraph 6.158</i>	
10. Sub sectoring of the financial corporation sector revised to reflect new developments in financial services, markets and Instruments	<i>Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.98 to 4.116.</i>	
B. Further specifications of the scope of transactions including the production boundary		
1. Research and development is not an ancillary activity	<i>Chapter 6, paragraph 6.207</i>	Yes
2. Method for calculating financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM) refined	<i>Chapter 6, paragraphs 6.163 to 6.165</i>	Not directly
3. Output of central bank clarified	<i>Chapter 6, paragraphs 6.151 to 6.156; Chapter 7, paragraphs 7.122 to 7.126</i>	No
4. Recording of the output of non-life insurance services improved	<i>Chapter 6, paragraphs 6.184 to 6.190 and 6.199; Chapter 17, paragraphs 17.13 to 17.42</i>	Not directly
5. Reinsurance similarly treated as direct insurance	<i>Chapter 6, paragraph 6.200; Chapter 17, paragraphs 17.56 to 17.65</i>	Not directly
6. Valuation of output for own final use by households and corporations to include a return to capital	<i>Chapter 6, paragraph 6.125</i>	Yes
C. Extension and further specification of the concepts of assets, capital formation and consumption of fixed capital		
1. Change of economic ownership introduced	<i>Chapter 3, paragraphs 3.21, 3.26, 3.169; Chapter 10, paragraph 10.5</i>	Not directly
2. Asset boundary extended to include research and development	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.103 to 10.105</i>	Yes

<i>Differences</i>	<i>Where in SNA2008?</i>	<i>Impact on GDP?</i>
3. Revised classification of assets introduced	<i>Chapter 3, paragraphs 3.5, 3.30 to 3.31, 3.37 to 3.39; Chapter 10, paragraph 10.8</i>	Yes, linked to extension
4. Extension of the assets boundary and government gross capital formation to include expenditure on weapons systems	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.87 and 10.144</i>	Yes
5. The asset category “computer software” modified to include databases	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.110 to 10.114</i>	Yes
6. Originals and copies recognized as distinct products	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.100 to 10.101</i>	No
7. The concept of capital services introduced	<i>Chapter 20</i>	Not directly
8. Treatment of costs of ownership transfer elaborated	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.48 to 10.52, paragraph 10.97 and paragraphs 10.158 to 10.162</i>	No
9. Mineral exploration and evaluation	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.106 to 10.108</i>	No
10. Land improvements	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.79 to 10.81</i>	No
11. Goodwill and marketing assets	<i>Chapter 10, paragraphs 10.196 to 10.199</i>	No
12. Water resources treated as an asset in some cases	<i>Chapter 10, paragraph 10.184</i>	Yes
13. Consumption of fixed capital to be measured at the average prices of the period with respect to a constant-quality price index of the asset concerned	<i>Chapter 10, paragraph 10.156</i>	Not directly
14. Definition of cultivated biological resources made symmetric to uncultivated resources	<i>Chapter 10, paragraph 10.88</i>	No
15. Intellectual property products introduced	<i>Chapter 10, paragraph 10.98</i>	No
16. Concept of resource lease for natural resources introduced	<i>Chapter 7, paragraph 7.109</i>	No
17. Changes in the items appearing in the other changes in the volume of assets account introduced	<i>Chapter 12</i>	No
D. Further refinement of the treatment and definition of financial instruments and assets		No
1. Treatment of securities repurchase agreement clarified	<i>Chapter 11, paragraphs 11.74 to 11.77</i>	
2. Treatment of employee stock options described	<i>Chapter 11, paragraph 11.124; Chapter 17, paragraphs 17.384 to 17.398</i>	
3. Treatment of non-performing loans elaborated	<i>Chapter 11, paragraph 11.129; Chapter 13, paragraphs 13.66 to 13.68</i>	
4. Treatment of guarantees elaborated	<i>Chapter 17, paragraphs 17.207 to 17.224</i>	
5. Treatment of index-linked debt securities elaborated	<i>Chapter 17, paragraph 17.274 to 17.282</i>	
6. Treatment of debt instruments indexed to a foreign currency revised	<i>Chapter 17, paragraph 17.281</i>	
7. Flexibility on valuation of unlisted equity	<i>Chapter 13, paragraphs 13.69 to 13.70</i>	
8. Unallocated gold accounts treated as financial assets and liabilities	<i>Chapter 11, paragraph 11.45</i>	
9. Definition of monetary gold and gold bullion revised	<i>Chapter 11, paragraph 11.45 and 11.46</i>	

<i>Differences</i>	<i>Where in SNA2008?</i>	<i>Impact on GDP?</i>
10. Liability in special drawing rights recognized	<i>Chapter 11, paragraphs 11.47 to 11.49</i>	
11. Distinction made between deposits and loans	<i>Chapter 11, paragraph 11.56</i>	
12. Fees payable on securities lending and gold loans	<i>Chapter 17, paragraph 17.254</i>	
13. Financial asset classification	<i>Chapter 11</i>	
14. Distinction between financial leasing and operating leasing based on economic ownership	<i>Chapter 17, paragraphs 17.301 to 17.309</i>	
15. Changes in recommendations for recording pension entitlements	<i>Chapter 17, paragraphs 17.116 to 17.206</i>	
<i>E. Further specifications of the scope of transactions concerning government and public sector</i>		Not directly
1. The boundary between private/public/government sectors clarified	<i>Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.25 and 4.77 to 4.80, Chapter 22</i>	
2. Treatment of restructuring agencies elaborated	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.47 to 22.50</i>	
3. Treatment of government issued permits clarified	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.88 to 22.90</i>	
4. Exceptional payments from public corporations should be recorded as withdrawals from equity	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.135</i>	
5. Exceptional payments from government to public quasi-corporations should be treated as capital transfers	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.138</i>	
6. Accrual recording of taxes	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.91 to 22.94</i>	
7. Tax credits	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.95 to 22.98</i>	
8. Treatment of ownership of fixed assets created through public-private partnerships clarified	<i>Chapter 22, paragraphs 22.154 to 22.163</i>	
9. Taxes on holding gains continue to be shown as current taxes on income and wealth	<i>Chapter 8, paragraph 8.61</i>	
<i>F. Harmonization between concepts and classifications of the SNA and the sixth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual</i>		No
1. Centre of predominant economic interest as the basic criterion for determining the residence of the unit	<i>Chapter 4, paragraph 4.10</i>	
2. Individuals changing residence	<i>Chapter 26, paragraphs 26.37 to 26.39</i>	
3. Goods sent abroad for processing are recorded on change of ownership basis	<i>Chapter 6, paragraphs 6.85 to 6.86 and Chapter 14, paragraphs 14.37 to 14.42</i>	
4. Merchandised goods	<i>Chapter 14, paragraphs 14.73.</i>	

The Box I.4 offers an example of the compilation of own-account production in the absence of reliable market prices. One should know that, by convention, no net return to capital is included when own-account production is undertaken by non-market producers.

Box I.4: Own-account output compilation according to SNA2008

	Non-financial corporations	General Government	Non-profit institutions	Households	Total
Output for own final use, made of:	181	35	20	67	303
a. Intermediate consumption	100	15	8	1	124
b. Compensation of employees	45	17	9	26	97
c. Consumption of fixed capital	15	3	2		20
d. A net return to fixed capital*	20				20
e. Other taxes (less subsidies) on production	1		1		2
f. Mixed income (only for Households)				40	40

* By convention, no net return to capital is included when own-account production is undertaken by non-market producers

Besides the methodological work on national accounts, one of the important objectives of international organizations in this period is to ensure suitable conditions for countries to implement the recommendations of the SNA. The implementation of the 2008 SNA represents a global statistical initiative with the objective to assist countries in developing their statistical and institutional capacity to:

- make the conceptual change over from the 1993 SNA to the 2008 SNA;
- improve the scope, detail and quality of the national accounts and supporting economic statistics.

The principles of the implementation strategy are based on four elements:

1. Use of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), or similar national plans setting out priorities, as the strategic planning framework.
2. The programme information structure built around the statistical production process, scope and compliance of the national accounts, and supporting economic statistics, which facilitates the coordination, monitoring and reporting on the SNA implementation in a multi-stakeholder environment.
3. The modalities of statistical capacity building through training and technical cooperation, publication of manuals and handbooks, research, and advocacy. Statistical capacity building comprises four modalities:
 - training and technical cooperation, which emphasize institutional capacity building and the development of data sources;
 - manuals and handbooks, which provide methodological guidance and consideration for the fundamental issues of data sources and quality;
 - applied research to development of new concepts for meeting new measurement challenges;

- advocacy, which aims to support ongoing dialogue among statistical producers, the various levels of government, the business sector, the academic community, and the general public about user needs for official statistics and the progress in meeting those needs.
4. The stages of implementation leading to the change over to the 2008 SNA which represent:
 - a review of strategic frameworks and detailing of national and regional implementation programmes;
 - the adaptation of classification frameworks, business registers and frames, surveys, administrative data sources and information technology infrastructure;
 - the application of adapted frameworks and source data, backcasting and changeover to 2008 SNA.

Each country determines its own duration of the stages leading to the change over to the 2008 SNA. However, it is expected that from 2014 onwards, most of the countries would change over to the 2008 SNA following a gradual two- to three-year transition for each change-over stage.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Annex 3: The changes from the 1993 System of National Accounts

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/SNA2008.pdf>

3. Recommended reading

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009; Chapter 1: Introduction; annex 3: Changes from the 1993 System of National Accounts;
- *National Accounts: A practical introduction*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.85, UN 2003; Chapter VIII: SNA framework for the total economy;
- *A system approach to national accounts compilation*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.77, UN 1999; Introduction;
- *System of National Accounts 1993*, Training manual, SADC, 1999; Chapter I: National accounts and the 1993 SNA;
- *Uses of Macro Accounts in Policy Analysis*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.81, UN 2002; Chapter II: The role of macroeconomic and social accounting in policy analysis; Chapter III: Uses of National Accounts in economic analysis;
- *Uses of national accounts; History, international standardization and applications in the Netherlands*, Fritz B., MPRA, Eagle Economic & Statistics, Working paper 2008-1; Chapter II: The early estimates (1660-1930); Chapter III: Revolutionary decades (1930-1950); Chapter IV: The era of the international guidelines (1950-..);
- *Policy uses of National Accounts: an OECD perspective*, paper presented to the joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on national accounts, 2002;
- *Understanding National Accounts*, Lequiller F., Blades D., OECD 2006;
- *Guide méthodologique pour l'élaboration des comptes nationaux dans les états membre d'Afristat*, Afristat, Serie Méthodes No.4, 2001;
- *Use, misuse and proper use of national accounts statistics*, Boss F., MPRA paper no.2576, 2007.

Building the SNA

2



The chapter in brief

The SNA has an important function insofar as it is the framework for statistical coordination. In this respect, the implementation and development of the SNA represent major strategic decisions that impact on the entire statistical system. The National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and the main phases of their elaboration are presented in the first section of the chapter. The second section presents the national accounts implementation strategy and the main actions undertaken to achieve it.

1. National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

Statistics are important since they are used to support policy-making aimed at economic growth, the allocation of resources, monitoring national progress and making government activities more transparent.

In many developing countries, the statistical system is fragile and under increasing pressure, mainly due to growing requests from national and international users and the limited technical and human resources available, often devaluing the reliability and integrity of the data provided. Furthermore, as part of government administration, the national statistical office has to work on tight budgets while still ensuring efficiency and productivity.

A crucial condition for ensuring that statistical activities are managed efficiently under these circumstances is to have a clear picture of further development and integrate this into **Strategic planning**.

A **number of initiatives and systems** that promote best statistical practices and serve as a framework for strategic planning have been developed over the past few years by international organizations. They are meant to help countries to build a realistic statistical strategy. Among these, it is important to highlight:

- *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*, adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission, setting out guidelines on the fundamental values and principles to be followed for producing useful, high-quality statistics deemed reliable by data users;
- Drafting and promoting by the International Monetary Fund of the *Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)*, which provides a more detailed structure for assessing the quality of statistics, from the institutional framework to the dissemination of data;
- *The PARIS21 Statistical Capacity Building Indicators (SCBI)*, based on the DQAF, help countries to identify strengths and weaknesses in their national statistical systems and facilitate communication and coordination among development partners by providing common

yardsticks for countries' statistical capacity needs (see Box III.3);

- Other international, regional, and sectoral frameworks contribute to the building capacity and output of the National Statistical System, including the Multi-annual Integrated Statistical Programme (MISP) developed by the statistical office of the European Union, Eurostat, in cooperation with Eastern European countries and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Box II.1: What is Paris 21?

The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) was founded in November 1999 by the United Nations, the European Commission, the OECD, the IMF and the World Bank, in response to the UN Economic and Social Council resolution on the goals of the UN Conference on Development. PARIS21's goal is to develop a culture of evidence-based policy making and implementation which serves to improve governance and government effectiveness in reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. PARIS21 pursues this goal by encouraging and assisting low-income, least developed countries to design, implement, and monitor a **National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)**. An NSDS is expected to provide a country with a strategy for strengthening statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system (NSS).

Source: Paris 21, <http://www.paris21.org>

1.1 Elaborating an NSDS

The **National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)** approach has been adopted as a new benchmark for planning the strengthening of statistical capacity in response to evolving user needs and priorities. An NSDS is expected to provide a country with a strategy for strengthening its statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system (including national accounts). The NSDS *provides a vision for where the NSS should be in five years and sets milestones for getting there*, offering a comprehensive and unified framework for user needs and statistical capacity assessment and for priorities decision.

Except for the few countries that are not in the midst of an NSDS process (most of them being countries in special situations, such as fragile states or small island economies), the main concern countries have for the immediate future is how to implement an NSDS, through a continuous, flexible and well-managed strategic planning process that will both build statistical capacity and generate the data needed to support their progress.

Before putting in place an NSDS, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the national statistical system has to be carried out. The analysis is focused on:

- Institutional framework and decision-making processes regarding official statistics (including producer coordination instruments and confidentiality protection);
- Statistical infrastructure (dissemination, networks with users and respondents, statistical registers, analytical capacity, etc.);
- Capacity to carry out household and business surveys such as regular data collection;
- Access to administrative data;
- Capacity to integrate different data sources (e.g. for national accounts or the Millennium Development Goals indicators);
- Staff and their skill level;
- Capacity to develop IT tools for statistics;
- Capacity to participate in international activities and to integrate activities funded by international donors into national programmes;
- User confidence in the integrity of the national statistical office (NSO) (and in other producers), and in the quality of the results produced.

Box II.2: Summary table of NSDS status for the International Development Association (IDA) countries (situation at November 2011)

	Countries currently implementing a strategy		Countries currently designing a strategy or awaiting adoption		Countries with strategy expired or without strategy and currently planning an NSDS		Countries without a strategy or with strategy expired and not planning one		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
AFRICA	24	60.0%	13	32.5%	2	5.0%	1	2.5%	40
ASIA and PACIFIC	9	33.3%	11	40.7%	6	22.2%	1	3.7%	27
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN	2	22.2%	2	22.2%	1	11.1%	4	44.4%	9
EUROPE	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3
TOTAL	38	48.1%	26	32.9%	9	11.4%	6	7.6%	79

Source: National Strategies for Development of Statistics, Progress Report, November 2011, http://paris21.org/sites/default/files/NSDS_report_nov2011.pdf

The main phases for the drafting of the NSDS are:

Phase I: Launching the process (NSDS Design Road Map)

This first phase is crucial for the drafting of the NSDS. In some countries, the decision to implement the NSDS has to be taken formally by the government, for example, through a decision of the cabinet or the minister with responsibility for statistics. Once the decision has been taken, the agencies leading the preparation of the NSDS will have to draw up a programme, or road map, that will set out in detail what needs to be done, by whom, and when and how it will be financed.

Phase II: Assessment of the Current Status of the National Statistical System

Once the legal framework has been set, several domains of the NSS have to be assessed. The main areas to be analyzed are: user needs, the legal and institutional framework, cooperation, coordination arrangements, existing gaps (methodological or in data quality) in statistical data compilation, and finally the statistical capacity to implement new activities.

Phase III: Developing the vision and identifying strategic options

Based on the statistical assessment, the desired results are agreed and priorities set out.

Phase IV: Preparing the implementation plan

This phase defines the resources to be allocated for the implementation and the main actions that will be undertaken by the statistical office.

Phase V: Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The most important consideration is that the NSDS be seen as a continuously evolving process. To be effective, the statistical system must remain flexible and respond to new demands for data and changing environments. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress, reviewing the strategy and making modifications (if needed) must be developed to ensure the success of the NSDS over time.

Box II.3: Tools offered by PARIS21 to prepare an NSDS

The main tools put in place by PARIS21 to help countries to implement an NSDS are:

- The **mobilization and leveraging** of resources (both national and international) for implementing NSDSs;
- The establishment of **country-level statistical sub-groups** to co-ordinate statistical system support;
- **Partnership** initiatives (e.g.: Partner Report on Support to Statistics - PRESS) to coordinate donor support to statistics;
- The **coordination of all stakeholders** within the National Statistical System (statistical units in sector line ministries, central bank, central statistical office, etc.);
- The production of **statistical advocacy materials** promoting the increased use of statistics in decision-making and the need for a well-financed NSDS integrated into wider development policy frameworks;
- **Peer reviews** focused on strategic planning and National Statistical System governance;
- Production of **guidance and documentation** on strategic statistical planning;
- Provision of **technical assistance** to address issues such as statistical legislation, national statistics councils, training, human resources, etc.;
- Support for special situations in **fragile/crisis** states and **small island developing states**.

Source: Paris 21, <http://www.paris21.org>

1.2 Advocacy for statistics

The success of an NSDS in developing countries is influenced by the advocacy work of managers of the statistical offices.

A well-designed, well implemented and well-financed NSDS will lead to better use of statistics, better decision-making and better development outcomes. NSDS is a great opportunity for statistical advocacy, in particular at its design stage. It is during this phase that very important questions (ownership, actors involved, political support, technical and financial assistance) arise and that need for advocacy action is at its highest. The level of engagement of political leaders will vary upon the political set-up and decision-making process. However, the sooner the political leaders are involved in the process, the better.

The statistical advocacy is a means of convincing policy-makers, media, civil society, and representatives of multi-lateral and bilateral agencies of the importance of statistics in the wider context of development and, in particular, of the necessity for developing countries to have a NSDS as tool for improving NSS.

The main steps to elaborate the advocacy strategies for statistics are:

1. Deciding the goals for which the advocacy is needed

There could be a number of changes and improvements needed in the statistical office, but the approach will be most effective if it focuses on a few (maybe five or six) of the most desirable for the implementation of the NSDS. These outputs represent the basis for the advocacy strategy.

Some examples of possible goals:

- Elaborate an NSDS;
- Implement the action plan developed in the frame of NSDS;
- Obtain funds for the development of social statistics as presented in the NSDS;
- Produce good quality, timely statistics across NSS;
- Develop skills and capacity of staff across NSS;
- Develop NSS work plans and financing strategy;
- Improve uses of statistics, etc.

2. Identifying the social, political, economic and institutional factors to achieve the goals proposed

The analysis of the current situation in the statistical office and in the country offers the possibility to identify the positive and negative factors that may have an impact on reaching the objectives. Table II.1 presents some possible factors.

Table II.1: Factors impacting the proposed objectives

Positive factors	Negative factors
MDGs and PRSPs have increased demand for monitoring information	Limited resources available to government
Donors becoming more interested in statistics to demonstrate effectiveness of aid; and to monitor budget support	Most donors not supporting statistics
Minister of Finance needs to demonstrate that development (and aid) is working	
High profile statistics (e.g. Consumer Price Index) have raised media and public interest in statistics	Demand for statistics generally low
etc	etc

Source: *Advocating for the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, Paris 21*, OECD, May 2010

3. Identifying the organizations and individuals (internal and external) that can help the change or the improvement

In many cases, putting in place of the desired changes or improvements requires additional staff or funds. The NSO can apply directly to the Minister of Finance and donors to obtain additional funds and/or indirectly through the media and civil society groups interested in statistical improvement.

4. Deciding the messages for the organizations' and individuals' sensitization

The type of organization to which the request for funds is being made influences the content of the messages that the NSO should elaborate and transmit. There are a wide variety of messages that could be put across - Table II.2 presents a selection of them.

Table II.2: Messages for the advocacy

Who can influence the change?	Messages
Minister of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Investment in statistics will pay for itself many times over by improving the efficiency of resource allocation – Statistics are needed to manage the way that results of government policy are presented and analyzed – Statistics are useful for the social policy of the government – Statistics are important for development planning at the local levels (villages, traditional areas)
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Better statistics will improve allocation and monitoring of aid – Statistics are needed to present, measure and analyze the results of policies
Media (and civil society)	Better statistics will improve means to hold government accountable for its policies

Source: *Advocating for the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, Paris 21, OECD, 2010*

5. Defining the ways to deliver the messages

The best ways of getting these messages across to their audiences are decided by taking into account the particular profile of each audience and the ways in which they can support the objectives of the statistical office. Possibilities for the best approaches in each case are displayed in Table II.3.

Table II.3: Ways to transmit the messages

To:	The messages are delivered	
	Directly	Indirectly
Minister of Finance	Demonstrate impact of good statistics (good and bad examples) Deliver quality statistics, subject to budget limitations	Regular media coverage Donor interest in statistics
Donor group	Meeting with DAC donor group Individual donor meetings Make sure donor representatives see statistics that are produced	Regular media coverage
Media (and civil society)	Press releases Interviews with journalists Press briefing/ training sessions Posters, leaflets User-friendly publications	

Source: *Advocating for the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, Paris 21, OECD, May 2010*

The strategic approach provides a way of thinking and acting which is useful for the managers when developing the statistics advocacy necessary to elaborate and implement a successful NSDS.

Within the NSDS, the implementation or the development of national accounts represents the core objective. As part of the general strategy, the SNA strategy is based on existing conditions; however, it has a decisive impact on the development of the entire statistical system. Its main role within the SNA is to serve as the coordinating framework for statistics because:

- It ensures consistency of definitions and classifications used in different fields of statistics;
- The methodological demands of national accounts require statistics to be developed (for example, in response to the need for estimating the growth rate of the economy based on GDP at constant prices, a price system is implemented and developed in the statistical system);
- It provides an accounting framework and ensures the numerical consistency of data from different sources (statistical and administrative); thus errors in the statistical indicator calculations can be detected.
- Requests to harmonize the SNA will determine the nature of the revisions and improvements made to all related statistical systems, such as financial statistics or balance of payments statistics.

To find out more...

Guide to statistics in EC development co-operation, Eurostat, 2009.

For more information concerning the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics see <http://www.paris21.org>

counts. The ways of implementing the system vary greatly and depend on the general strategy adopted for the statistical system.

A strategy for implementing the SNA comprises the following phases:

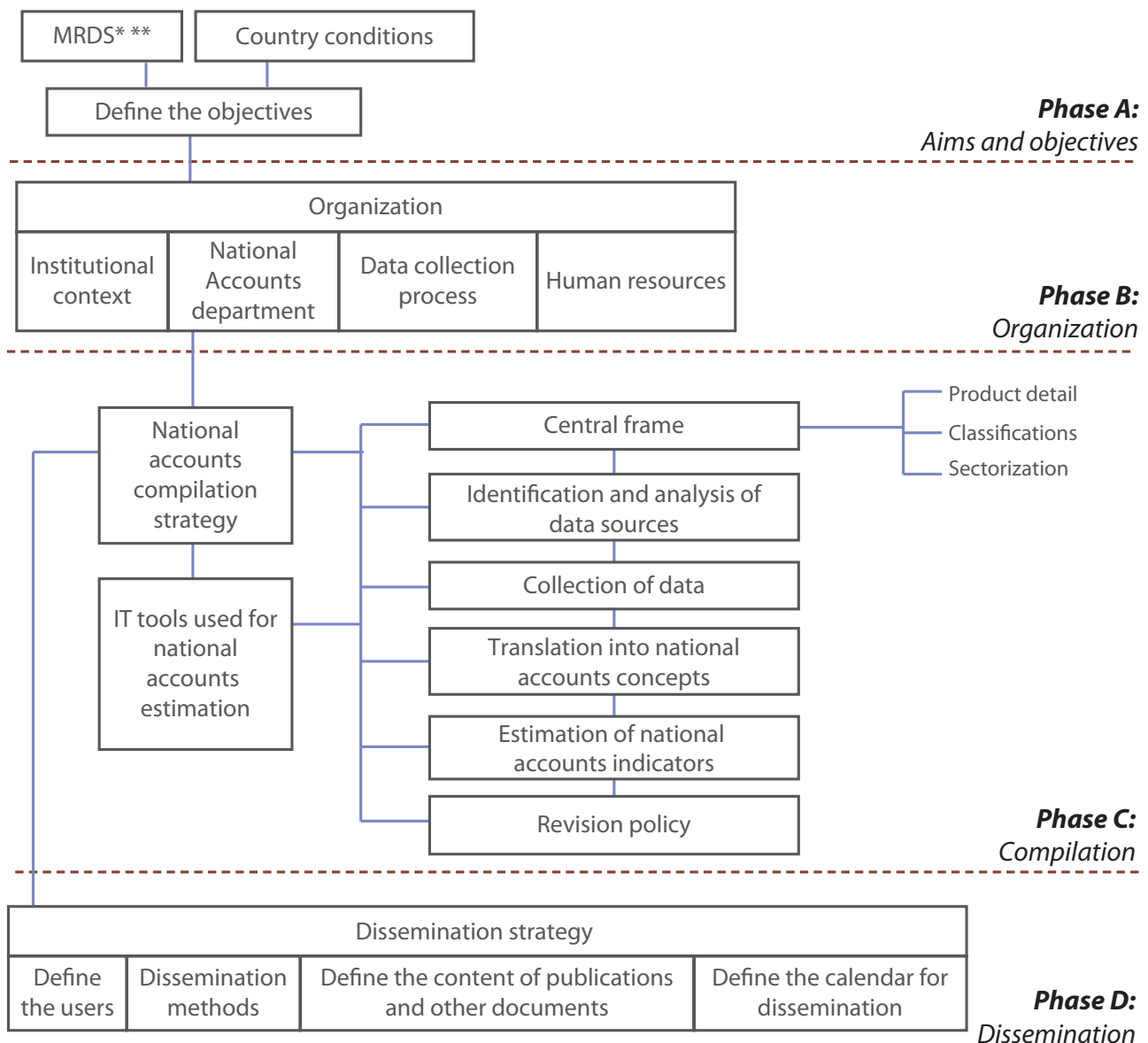
- Phase A: Aims and objectives
- Phase B: Organization
- Phase C: Compilation
- Phase D: Dissemination

The phases are presented in Figure III.1

2. The 2008 SNA implementation strategy

The 2008 System of National Accounts serves as the general conceptual framework for the compilation of national ac-

Figure III.1 The SNA implementation strategy



*MRDS= Minimum Requirement Data Set. See Table II.4.

2.1 Phase A: Aims and objectives

The first stage of the strategy entails the definition of the aims and objectives for implementing the 2008 SNA. The general aim is the implementation of SNA while the objectives refer to the specific results to be achieved during a defined period (3-5 years).

The decision about which objectives a country wants to achieve should be based on an in-depth analysis of the local situation. It is helpful to present some important factors to be taken into consideration when deciding which objectives to achieve:

- The country's statistical capacity for providing the data sources required for compiling national accounts;
- The human resources (number and level of knowledge) capable of implementing and developing national accounts;
- The possibility of using financial data (i.e. business accounts) from the formal sector and the ability to translate this information into national accounts indicators by activity or institutional sector;
- The structure of the economy, especially the extent of the informal sector and the ability to cover it with existing data sources.

Generally, implementation of SNA starts with the compilation of GDP by production and expenditure, because some of the data sources needed exist in almost all countries, and the result, the GDP, represents the most important national accounts indicator.

The decision on whether to implement the SNA is based on:

- Availability of data sources supporting its implementation. The first estimates of national accounts indicators will refer to a period in the past for which data has to be taken as it is, because the sources cannot be improved or new ones introduced. Only after 2-3 years, when the needs for national accounts have been clarified, based on the experience obtained, can improvements to data sources be made. Data sources and users' needs will also determine the breakdown of national accounts indicators by industry, institutional sectors, or by geographical region;
- Institutional capacity of the unit in charge of implementing the SNA;
- Needs of national and international users for national accounts indicators.

For many countries, full implementation of the SNA is not feasible due to the unavailability of some (or many) of the elements just described. Furthermore, implementation of the SNA involves data collection and processing, which may not coincide with a country's policy priorities at a given moment. For all of these reasons, countries implementing the

SNA for the first time will have to decide what targets they want to achieve; to facilitate this task, they can refer to the six 'milestones' adopted by the UN Statistical Commission (see Annex I).

The milestones represent the six phases for full implementation of the SNA. A country has reached a particular milestone when it is able to produce a combination of key tables, defined for each milestone. The specific results of SNA implementation reflect the country's ability to produce national accounts data. The first data set contains the annual accounts deemed to be the '**The Minimum Requirement Data Set (MRDS)**' that a country must have before it can claim it has implemented the 1993 SNA. The second data set refers to the annual accounts '**recommended**' for the compilation of national accounts. The third and last data set (Desirable data sets - DDS) refers to the data items that **would be taken into account in assessing the degree of SNA implementation.**

Table II.4 Minimum requirement data sets

Minimum Requirement Data Sets (MRDS)	
Table Number in NAQ	Annual Accounts
T-101	GDP expenditure at current prices
T-102	GDP expenditure at constant prices
T-201	Value added and GDP by industry at current prices
T-202	Value added and GDP by industry at constant prices
T-203	Value-added components by industry at current prices and employment by industry
T-401	Accounts for the total economy
T-402	Accounts of the Rest of the world (up to net lending)
Recommended Data Sets (RDS)	
Classification of expenditure by purpose, Annual Accounts	
Institutional Sector, Annual Accounts	
Integrated Accounts and Tables, Annual Accounts	
Supply and use table, Annual Accounts	
Value Added, GDP and Employment, Quarterly Accounts	
Institutional Sector, Quarterly Accounts	
Integrated Accounts and Tables, Quarterly Accounts	
Desirable Data Sets (DDS)	
Tourism accounts, Environmental accounts, SAM and other socio-economic accounts	
Purpose classification of expenditure at constant prices	
Financial and capital stock accounts	
Supply and use table, Quarterly Accounts	

Source: Report of the Task Force on National Accounts, UN Economic and Social Council, March 2001 (E/CN.3/2001/7).

Implementation of the 2008 SNA has different objectives depending on the milestone that a country wants to achieve.

Possible objectives for a country that is starting to compile national accounts could be:

- a) Estimating Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by expenditure and production approaches, by industry;

The main results of this objective are:

- The value in current and constant prices of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its elements, as estimated by production and expenditure;
- Production, intermediate consumption and Gross Value Added (GVA) by industry.

This objective corresponds to milestone 1 and allows the country to meet part of the MRDS (Tables 101, 102, 201, 202) (see Table II.4)

The main national accounts aggregates, including GVA and GDP are outlined in Chapter III: *Basic concepts*, section 2: *Accounts and main aggregates*.

- b) Estimating the rest of the world accounts which means fulfilling Table T402;
- c) Estimating Gross National Income (GNI), and other primary indicators such as: compensation of employees, mixed income, taxes on production;
- d) Employment by industry;

These objectives (b, c and d) correspond to milestone 2 and enable the country to achieve the bulk of the minimum requirement data set.

Further development of national accounts involves new objectives, such as:

- e) Estimating Supply and Uses Tables (SUTs) and production account and generation of income account by institutional sector;
- f) Estimating the full sequence of accounts for institutional sectors; estimating accounts for the rest of the world;
- g) Estimating the financial accounts for institutional sectors;
- h) Estimating balance sheets.

The objectives presented are in order of increasing complexity: the first requires the least amount of data, incorporating a small number of identities (total GDP by production is equal to GDP by expenditure; GDP by production and expenditure is equal to GDP by income) and revealing a limited number of statistical discrepancies (if any) (by way of example, the difference between the value of GDP by production and by expenditure). The more complex the objectives become, the more data is required to compile them. But, complex objectives give a realistic description of the socio-economic structure and development of a country, and they are more suitable for policy and analytical purposes. In particular, they differ in their ability to integrate production analyses with income, financial, fiscal and monetary as well as with social

and environmental analyses and policies based thereon.

The decision about which objectives a country wants to achieve should be based on an in-depth analysis of the local situation. It is helpful to present some important factors to be taken into consideration when deciding which objectives to achieve:

- The country's statistical capacity for providing the data sources required for compiling national accounts;
- The human resources (number and level of knowledge) capable of implementing and developing national accounts;
- The possibility of using financial data (i.e. business accounts) from the formal sector and the ability to translate this information into national accounts indicators by activity or institutional sector;
- The structure of the economy, especially the extent of the informal sector and the ability to cover it with existing data sources.

Generally, implementation of SNA starts with the compilation of GDP by production and expenditure, because some of the data sources needed exist in almost all countries, and the result, the GDP, represents the most important national accounts indicator.

2.2 Phase B: Organization

Building national accounts for the first time is a demanding task that requires important and constant resources.

The national accounts implementation strategy should not only take into consideration institutional conditions, but also the capacity to provide the financial and human resources as explained below.

2.2.1 Institutional context

The strategy for implementing national accounts is mainly based on a country's political will. Consequently a guarantee of long-term support from the government is essential.

After the legal groundwork has been laid, it is necessary to establish which institution will be in charge of implementing and developing national accounts. There are countries where national accounts are compiled by the national statistical office, others by the Central Bank or by other administrative agencies.

The situation in each country and its institutional history are decisive for entrusting an institution with the responsibility of implementing national accounts. In a large percentage of countries, **the national accounts are the responsibility of the national statistical office**. The main explanation for this is its proximity to the statistical data sources and the coordinating role generally assigned to the statistical office, by statistical legislation.

2.2.2 Organizational aspects

Regardless of which institution is in charge of compiling national accounts, the crucial issue is the organization of the activity. It is obvious that such a task requires that the entire national accounts process be properly organized, starting with data gathering, data analysis, translation to national accounts concepts and compilation of the main indicators. 'Efficient' organization for ensuring the right conditions for SNA implementation refers to:

- The organization of the national accounts department and deciding the main tasks to be performed for the compilation of national accounts that the statistical office and other administrative institutions are involved (for example, the preparation of government accounts by the Ministry of Finance or the financial accounts drawn up by the Central Bank);
- Mobilizing and developing human resources;
- Organizing and establishing cooperation within the statistical office and with other administrative institutions for data collection or exchange.

2.2.2.1 Organizing the national accounts department

In a small statistical office, it may be advisable to place the national accounts at the heart of its economic statistics. The basic data needed for national accounting are wide ranging, such as the output of different activities, labour market statistics, household statistics, company business accounts, etc. Implementation of national accounts involves:

- The existence of basic conditions: the Statistical Business Register, and classifications;
- The elaborating of important statistics, such as economic statistics, household statistics, prices, etc.;
- The establishment of proper coordination and cooperation between different departments in the statistical office. Cooperation should be directed not only at ensuring the data sources needed for compiling national accounts, but also for laying the groundwork for developing statistics in the office. Thus, the national accounts department may be quite small, relying on the participation of specialists from other departments where necessary;
- The establishment of cooperation with other administrative institutions in order to access the data required for compiling national accounts.

Countries in phase zero of implementing the SNA should pay special attention to making sure the department is organized so as to make efficient use of human resources. The organization will take into consideration the main objectives, primarily focusing on reaching the next phase, phase 1, the capacity to compile GDP data by production and expenditure.

The typical tasks of a national accounts department are:

- Collecting statistical and administrative data sources;
- Translating the statistical and administrative data sources into concepts of national accounts. This task may be done by the national accounts department in cooperation with other departments of the statistical office and with experts from other institutions such as the Central Bank (for the financial sector and rest of the world) and the Ministry of Finance (for government statistics). It is important to note that very often the members of staff of the national accounts department are the most important and knowledgeable users of statistical and administrative data;
- Elaborating national accounts indicators;
- Preparing publications and other documents for the dissemination of national accounts;
- Making proposals and taking actions to improve data sources and compilation methods to meet SNA requirements as far as possible.

Implementation of the SNA is quite complex; to ensure efficient and coordinated coverage of methodological issues, a certain level of specialization among staff members is necessary.

Staff specialization is determined by the main tasks of the national accounts department. Depending on the objectives set, the tasks may refer to: elaboration of GDP by production and expenditure approaches, at current and constant prices; compilation of GDP by income approach; elaboration of the SUTs, estimation of institutional sectors accounts, etc.

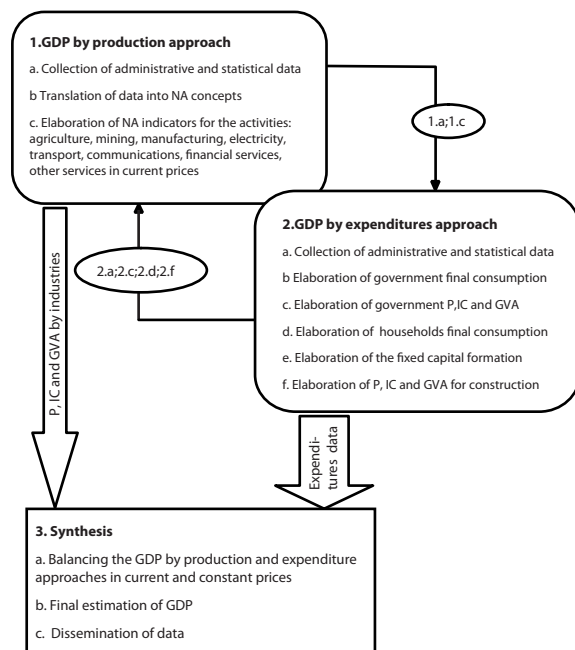
Proper integration of the SUTs and the sector accounts undoubtedly demands a certain level of knowledge of SNA methodological requirements, compilation practice, economic characteristics, etc. from those in charge. In this context, national accountants should be very well-acquainted with the theoretical and practical problems involved in the compilation process. Sometimes, a person can combine specialization in the compilation of a transaction (for example estimating production and intermediate consumption of public administration with the estimation of the final consumption of government). For other difficult tasks, such as balancing, reconciliation and final estimation of national accounts indicators, it is advisable to assign experts with experience and wide-ranging knowledge of methodological requirements and the characteristics of the economy. A list of possible expert specializations is shown in Table II.5.

The list is based on the typical tasks of the national accounts department. The number of persons depends on the objectives set for the implementation and development of the SNA, the capacity of the statistical office (including staff expertise) and the current situation of a country (population size, capacity of the administrative units to provide data, etc.).

Table II.5: Possible specializations and staff numbers in a national accounts department

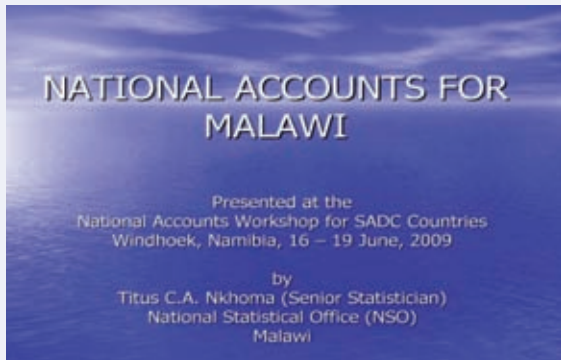
Tasks	Requirements	Envisaged number of staff
Production, intermediate consumption and gross value added by main activity at current and constant prices (agriculture, mining, manufacturing industry, electricity, construction, transport, communication services, financial services, other services)	The experts may be responsible for one (such as agriculture, or manufacturing industry, or construction, etc.) or several related branches (such as construction and raw materials, construction industry, or agriculture and food industry, etc.)	3-5
Government indicators	The expert may be responsible for drawing up production, intermediate consumption, GVA of public administration and final consumption of government statistics	1
Household Final Consumption	Specialization relating to household budget surveys and unincorporated enterprises	1
Gross Fixed Capital	The person in charge of the construction sector may also be responsible for the drawing up the GFC; the person in charge of drafting agricultural and industry indicators may also be responsible for estimating change in inventory.	1
Balancing the system and final estimations	Coordinating the activity, experience and good knowledge of national accounts	2

The organization of the work inside the national accounts department is based on staff number and tasks regarded as having an important impact on the results. An example of the work flow is presented in Figure II.2.

Figure II.2: Example of a work flow inside the national accounts department


Due to a lack of human and/or financial resources, it is possible that the necessary staff cannot be mobilized in developing countries wishing to meet the MRDS. Under such conditions, it is important to adapt compilation of national accounts to available staff. One example is presented in Box II.4.

Box II.4: National accounts for Malawi



National Accounts Section

- NA is compiled by the National Accounts Section of the Economic Statistics Division of NSO.
- Based at the Regional Office (Centre) in Lilongwe
- There are currently only 5 professionals
 - Chief Statistician (Head of NA-BOP, Regional Officer)
 - Principal Statistician (Head of NA)
 - Senior Statistician and
 - Statisticians (2)
- No support staff

New National Accounts Estimates

- United Nations' SNA 1993 implemented
- Compiled using Supply and Use Tables (SUT)
- Compiled in current and previous year's prices
- Covering a period of four years from 2002 to 2005 (published)
- 2006 currently in final stages awaiting release
- Preliminary estimates for 2007 and 2008 are also available

Data Sources

- Annual Economic Surveys (AES)
- Medium Business Economic Survey (MBES 1998)
- Integrated Household Survey (IHS-2, 2004)
- Crop Estimate Surveys by Ministry of Agriculture
- Government Accounts from Ministry of Finance and the Accountant General
- Foreign Trade Statistics
- National Census of Agricultural and Livestock (NACAL 2007)
- Malawi Revenue Authority
- Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM)
- Tobacco Control Commission (TCC)

Source: National Accounts Workshop for SADC countries, 16-19 June 2009, Windhoek, Namibia

2.2.2.2 Human resources

The compilation of national accounts requires that the staff involved possess special abilities in different domains: statistics, national accounts methodology, economics, etc. For these reasons, the persons in charge should have the following profile:

- A university education, wherever possible, in economics or statistics;
- Work experience in different economic domains;
- Ability to understand and apply the SNA methodology;
- Good knowledge of economic legislation and economic phenomena in the country;
- Good knowledge of the economic and social indicators existing in the statistical and administrative system.

To obtain this high level of professional capability the staff should be permanently trained and supported by the institution management.

Participation in training programmes organized by international or regional organizations, and training seminars and workshops on the organization and management of national accounts and basic statistics (including economic, environment and financial statistics) as well as their application for evidence-based policy making is necessary for building statistical capability in the field of national accounts.

One fundamental principle of official statistics states that *'To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data'* (see the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, <http://www.unstats.un.org>).

In line with this principle and the need to develop a system of national accounts, the professional independence of national accountants must be ensured. This independence refers to:

- The definition of the system and its adaptation to the country;
- The methods used for estimating national accounts;
- Access to information, especially when it is protected (fiscal sources, defence information, etc.);
- The treatment and measurement of 'special' aspects of the economy, such as illegal activity (illegal labour, drug production, etc.) that are in fact the weak points of political power;
- Responsibility for the main indicators, such as GDP, economic growth rate or revenue distribution, especially when the values are different from government forecasts or expectations.

2.2.2.3 Organizing data collection

Once the SNA implementation strategy objective has been set and the national accounts department organized, the next step is to establish formal relationships for ensuring availability of the data required for compiling national accounts. Data collection for national accounts requires internal and external cooperation with the statistical office.

Statistical data sources are usually provided by different departments within the statistical office (responsible for industrial statistics, foreign trade, agriculture, demographics, education, health, prices, etc.) or even by other institutions. An efficient flow of information from them to the national accounts department has a decisive impact on the quality and timeliness of national accounts estimations. On the other hand, the methodological requests for the compilation of national accounts are the starting point for developing the overall statistical system.

Collection from administrative data sources depends on the capacity of the statistical office and its relations with other institutions: data may be collected by a different department (if resources allow for a special department) or by national accountants themselves (it being for them an additional task to their usual workload). Special formal relations based on agreements, protocols or memorandums with administrative institutions ensure access to their data. Even in the event of statistical legislation explicitly stipulating that the statistical office must have access to administrative data, it is necessary to have protocols or memorandums that establish the specific conditions under which data may be collected.

For example, the Ministry of Finance, is one of the most important providers of administrative data, and it can supply data on VAT (monthly, for each economic agent, by main activity, etc.), on capital gains tax, income tax, business account data, income and expenditure of local and central government, etc. Thus it is of the utmost importance that the statistical office should agree on a cooperation protocol outline, in principle:

- The data to be delivered;
- The level of detail of the data (individual, aggregated, by region, etc.) and the frequency (monthly, yearly, etc.);
- The data collection method (access to database, electronic format, paper, etc.).

In this kind of cooperation protocol not only should administrative data be included, but also delivery of statistical indicators by the statistical office. It may be possible that the Ministry of Finance is also interested in having detailed statistical information (such as, for example, household expenditure in order to formulate its policy on subsidies). Thus, the protocol would include data exchange between the two institutions. Cooperation is important for the statistical office because it allows access to administrative data and at the same time strengthens its position in the economy as the main provider of economic and social indicators.

Box II.5: General structure of a cooperation protocol

INSTITUTION 1

INSTITUTION 2

Cooperation protocol

INSTITUTION 1, address, represented by <name of leadership institute>, <function of leadership institute>

INSTITUTION 2, address, represented by <name of leadership institute>, <function of leadership institute>

Conclude the Protocol, aimed at cooperation in the field of official national accounts statistics with international standards *here will be mentioned the general considerations regarding the importance of the protocols for each of party*

Legal framework: *law / regulation on the organization and functioning of the each institution party in the protocol* <Institution1> and <Institution2> agreed to the following:

The objective of the Protocol
main goal of the protocol

Duration Protocol
mentioned the duration, in connection with the activities that has to be done

Obligations of parties
mentioned each activity, with precisely results that have to be done by each party

Notifications/Communication
Mentioned type of communication (written, by telephone, fax, email)

Annexes
mentioned all the annexes like components of the protocol

Type of annexes:

- *description and structure of data files which are changed between partners*
- *working group responsibilities*
- *nomenclatures for data transmission*

deadlines for data transmission

2.3 Phase C: Compilation

The compilation process should take into account resources (e.g. resources for compiling good economic and social statistics, price statistics, for maintaining a reliable business register or for compiling national accounts), policy (continuity and stability in the compilation process, priorities for some parts of national accounts, professional independence), professional skills of the staff (e.g. skills in analyzing data and making plausible economic assumptions) and access to statistical and administrative data sources.

The compilation process is based on three elements:

- i. Accounting identities* which means exploiting as far as possible the multitude of accounting identities existing in the system, such as: supply is equal to demand (both at current and constant prices); paid taxes should be equal to received taxes, etc. Accounting identities ensure consistency and can act as a plausibility check and permit residual estimates.
- ii. Assumptions* essential for combining and completing the basic data set. Many types of assumptions are used, such as: fixed ratios, transition schemes, specific conventions, expert opinions, historical trends and ratios, analogies, etc. Plausible assumptions can remedy to a great extent the absence of data and are preferable to implausible data.

iii. Plausibility checks, which are very important for the reliability of national accounts statistics. Types of plausibility checks are:

- Comparison of different data sources and different estimates;
- Investigation of all ‘abnormal’ developments and ratios (numerical, conceptual, institutional, economic) by seeking a plausible explanation.

The national accounts compilation strategy is based on:

1. Definition and organization of the different phases;
2. Development of the necessary IT tools.

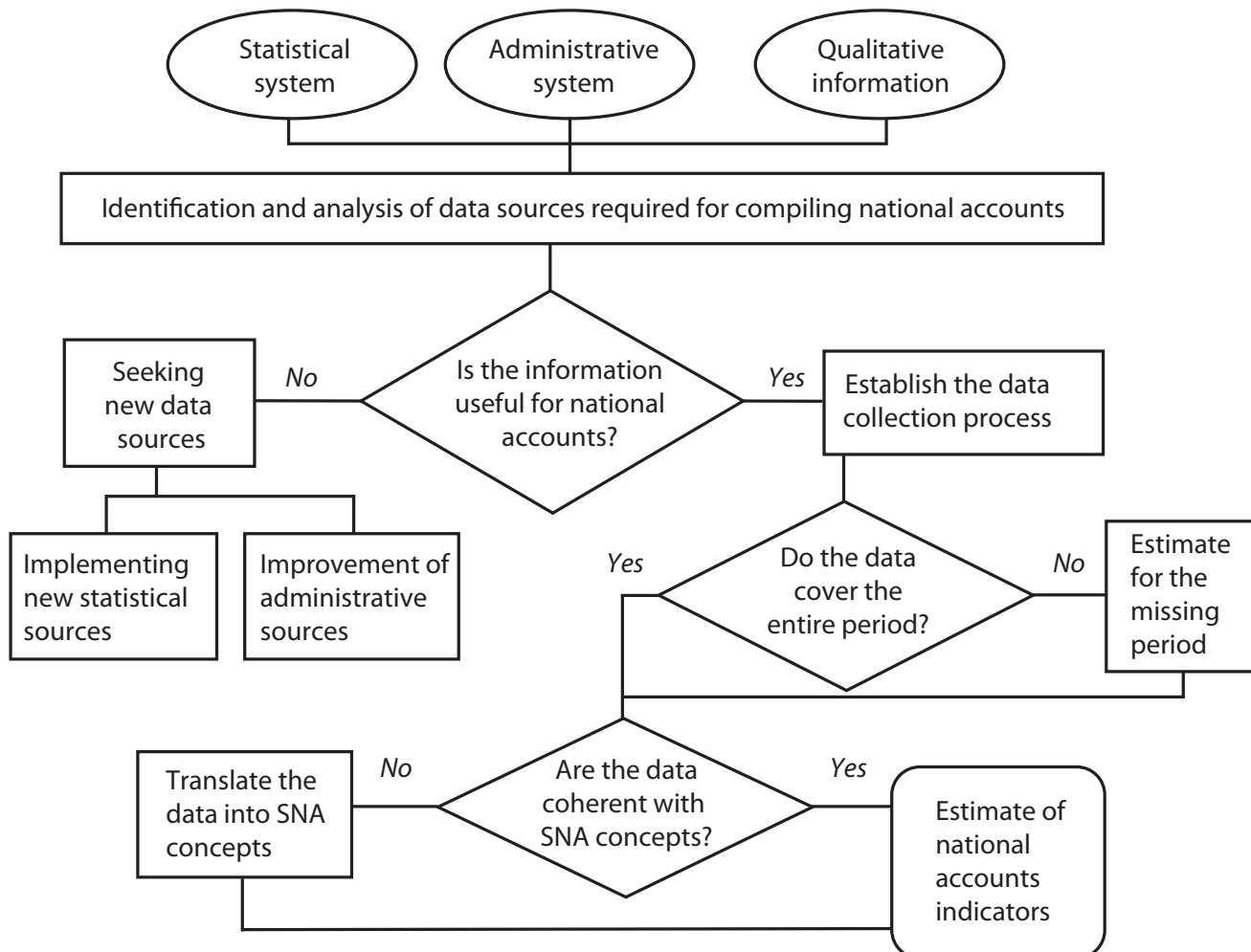
2.3.1 Definition and organization of the different phases

The compilation process has its own scope, detail and methods used and working methods, reflected in the design of the phases to be followed. Briefly, the main phases are:

- Designing the central framework;
- Identifying data sources;
- Collecting data;
- Translating data into national accounts concepts;
- Elaborating estimates;
- Data revision.

The schematic presentation of the decisional tree to establish the compilation routine for national accounts shown in Figure II.3 helps to address the definition and organization of general compilation phases.

Figure II.3 Decisional tree for national accounts compilation



2.3.1.1 Designing the central framework

The central framework for compiling national accounts refers to the determination of the four classifications used in the system:

- Product detail;
- Economic activities;
- Transactions, other flows and stocks;
- Sectorization of the economy.

Classification details are based on the strategy aims and objectives set and the country's current situation. The central framework is established according to the development level

of the statistical system (including the human resources capability) and the specific needs of the country. The availability of statistical and administrative data reduces or increases the detail of the classifications adopted.

The strategy for implementing classifications and the characteristics of the main classifications are outlined in Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*, section 1.2: *Classifications*.

One important activity in this phase is the identification of the key sectors of the economy. If in a country, agriculture, the oil industry or tourism is the main activity, it should be reflected in detail in the estimates made and in the breakdown by industry or institutional sector.

2.3.1.2. Identifying data sources

The data sources used for compiling national accounts may be specific statistics (statistics on producer sales and production costs, on investment, on employment, wages and salaries, on household expenditures, on consumer prices, on producer prices and interest rates, on imports and exports, etc.) or administrative records (government revenue and expenditure, financial statements of non-financial and financial units, balance of payments, etc.).

The main data sources used for compiling national accounts are set out in Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*, section 2: *Statistical data sources*, and Chapter V: *Administrative data*, Section 1: *Content*

In order to identify available information, the existing data sources have to be analyzed with respect to national accounts requirements. If the data sources identified are useful for the implementation objectives of the national accounts, the process of collecting data can start.

Data sources may not include all the information needed for implementing the national accounts strategy. For example, statistical information concerning construction and investments may not be available. In this case, depending on the type of information required and the objectives established, two options exist:

- To carry out a rough estimate of the national accounts indicators using poor data sources and indirect information, or

An example is given in Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*, section 2: *Statistical data sources*.

- To halt implementation of SNA until the necessary data sources become available.

It is recommended that countries in phase zero of the SNA implementation define their future actions based on the following:

- Start estimating GDP by production and expenditure (corresponding to the requirements of phase 1), even if the lack of information may affect the quality of the initial results.
- They must ensure at the same time that the necessary data sources are developed. To do so national accountants must propose and promote:

- Improvement of the existing statistical data sources to obtain the required information;
- Implementation of new statistical surveys that will provide the missing information;
- Development of collaboration with administrative institutions to improve or develop their data sources.

In the process of compiling national accounts, qualitative information is also relevant. For example, articles in newspapers or specialized magazines may provide qualitative information on developments in the economy (e.g. sales of furniture or software) or specific events (e.g. a large direct investment project or the reorganization of a national insurance system). This information can be used to complete existing data and to check the consistency of different data.

2.3.1.3. Collecting data

Data collection requires structured and organized activity, which directly affects the quality of estimates.

The main activities that should be organized and carried out are:

- Agreements on data delivery: what data will be delivered, in what detail and with what frequency, when and in what format, etc.;
- Checks on the data delivered: timeliness, detail and completeness;
- Data storage in automated systems (spreadsheets or databases) for compiling national accounts;
- Searches for other relevant quantitative and qualitative information, e.g. by reading specialized journals, newspaper articles and annual reports of various large companies, organizations, foundations, or by asking corporations, institutions and experts directly.

As part of the compilation strategy, an efficient circuit of data collection internal and external to the statistical office must be established. The main steps in this process are:

- Decide what data is to be used for compiling national accounts;
- Decide the level of detail of this data;
- How the data will be delivered to the national accounts department: on paper, in electronic format (CD-ROM, by email, etc.) or direct access to the databases of other departments;
- Establish the deadline for receiving data. It is very important for national accountants to respect their own dissemination calendar. For this reason, some of the statistical and administrative data may be provided to national accounts department before being published. It is the case, for example (as statistical source), of the Structural

Business Survey: after validating data and achieving final results, the detailed information (with the agreed content and format) may be sent to the national accounts department to be included in the compilation process. At the same time, the department in charge of the Structural Business Survey carries on with the task of disseminating the results of the survey.

Good cooperation between different departments of the statistical office and administrative institutions on the one hand, and the national account department, on the other, will ensure the right conditions for implementation of the SNA.

2.3.1.4 Translating data into the concepts of national accounts

Statistical and administrative data sources, in the majority of cases, are not consistent with national accounts concepts.

The translation of administrative data into national accounts concepts is outlined in detail in Chapter V: *Administrative data*.

Statistical indicators generally convert administrative information into indicators with content not very different from that used in national accounts. However a major difference between economic statistical indicators and national accounts is often product breakdown. Box II.6 provides an example.

Box II.6: Conversion tables from COICOP to ISIC – an example

In household budget surveys, product breakdown can be very limited or rather different from national accounts requirements. Household consumption is collected through various household surveys using the COICOP classification. In order to be used in national accounts, a reclassification to ISIC rev.4 should be carried out. It should be noted that for some COICOP products and groups of products, more than one ISIC activity is needed. Value estimation for each activity is made using other indirect sources or expert knowledge. For example, household 'meat' consumption should be classified under ISIC codes 01 'Agriculture, hunting and related services activities' and 15 'Manufacture of food products and beverages' based on population consumption habits.

COICOP		ISIC REV 4	
Code	Description	Code	Description
0.1.1	FOOD		
0.1.1.1	Bread and cereals	1	Agriculture, hunting and related service activities
		15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.2	Meat	1	Agriculture, hunting and related service activities
		15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.3	Fish and seafood	05	Fishing, operation of fish hatcheries and fish farms
		15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.4	Milk, cheese and eggs	1	Agriculture, hunting and related service activities
		15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.5	Oils and fats	15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.6	Fruit	1	Agriculture, hunting and related service activities
		15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.7	Vegetables	1	Agriculture, hunting and related service activities
		15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.8	Sugar, jam, honey, chocolate and confectionery	15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.1.9	Food products n.e.c.	15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.2	NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES		
0.1.2.1	Coffee, tea and cocoa	15	Manufacture of food products and beverages
0.1.2.2	Mineral waters, soft drinks, fruit and vegetable juices	15	Manufacture of food products and beverages

More information concerning correspondence tables of classifications are available to the UN website at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/default.asp>

For the most part, translating administrative concepts to national accounts concepts is to be performed by national accountants themselves. This applies especially to business accounts, VAT data, personal income tax data, financial statements of financial institutions, revenues and expenditures of general government, and BoP indicators, to name a few.

This translation is based on a system of bridge tables at macro-economic levels, and specific adjustments called the intermediate system.

2.3.1.5. Elaborating estimates

The important phase of the compilation process is estimating national accounts indicators. Several activities are carried out during this complex phase:

- Checking data sources, with respect to:
 - The evolution of the variables over time;
 - Consistency of the values and trends of the ratios between different variables in a single data source;
 - Plausibility of values and volumes;
 - Conceptual differences with national accounts indicators;
 - Weightings used for grossing up survey results.
- Elaboration of the first estimates of national accounts indicators. If the chosen target is to reach the first milestone (see Annex I), estimates will focus on GDP and its components at current and constant prices.
- Inclusion of additional or more complete data and second estimate of indicators. Assumptions play an important role at this stage: they are used to fill gaps and imperfections in the basic data set according to the analysis of economic relationships.
- Balancing procedures and reconciling data to identify data deficiencies and assist in making the appropriate adjustments to ensure consistency of results. Balancing involves checking the economic consistency of the estimates. This depends on the available accounting framework and national accountants' experience and ability to perform plausibility checks in combination with timeliness for data dissemination.
- Elaboration of the final estimates of national accounts indicators.

To find out more...

A system approach to national accounts compilation, Studies in Methods, series F, No.77, UN 1999;

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009. Chapter 16: Summarizing and integrating the accounts.

If statistical discrepancies have been identified during the balancing process and their causes determined, adjustments can be made to the intermediate data or estimation methods. The adjusted data will then be integrated again, leading to a revised set of statistical discrepancies. This data will then be reconciled and reintegrated and so on until all the discrepancies are eliminated.

The core of balancing and reconciling data will always depend on the availability and quality of information used and the expertise of the accounting team.

2.3.1.6 Data revision

In the process of compiling national accounts three important revisions can be made: (i) routine revisions, (ii) benchmark revisions and (iii) methodological revisions.

- Routine revisions (or current revisions)* encompass all changes in national accounts estimates for a particular period from the first to the final estimate. These revisions are in principle based on the availability of new information from data sources used to achieve full comparability in volume and prices changes with the previous year and for all indicators.
- Benchmark revisions (or major regular revisions)* are revisions of data sources or methods used for estimation of national accounts indicators. These can affect GDP and can cause discontinuity in time series. It is recommended that, as standard practice, benchmark revisions be carried out every five years.
- Methodological revisions (or major occasional revisions)* are normally due to changes in principles of national accounting.

These revisions have several implications for the dissemination of national accounts data as detailed explanations about major changes have to be presented with the data. An example is presented in Box II.7.

Box II.7: Example of the methodological revisions impact on GDP

Methodological revisions 1995-2004 in Slovenia

In the period since 2000 three methodological revisions have been conducted in Slovenian national accounts and they covered the period back to 1995. Their main purpose was to improve the compilation of GDP according to ESA95 methodology and criteria on exhaustiveness. The main revision points were improvements of data sources and methods.

The main points in methodological or benchmark revisions of March 2003 and April 2004 were: delimitation of market and non-market units together with improvement of institutional sectorization; introduction of new methodology for the estimation of housing services of owner-occupiers; estimation of the consumption of fixed capital (including for public roads, bridges, etc.) by the perpetual inventory method for the general government sector; and improvements of GDP exhaustiveness adjustments and other improvements of methods. With these methodological revisions, all data for the period since 1995 were revised and published.

The last methodological revision was published in September 2005; its main reason was the change in the bookkeeping of financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM), which were allocated to the final users of these services. At the same time, measurement of volume changes at constant previous year prices was introduced.

Also the results of this methodological revision were published for the whole 1995-2004 period.

Table shows the effects of three methodological revisions on nominal GDP level and on the estimate of GDP volume growth rate for 1999, 2000 and 2001. The effects on data for years which are shown in the table are not the same for all years, mostly due to overestimated GDP level for 2000 and 2001 before the revision.

Table with GDP revisions, 1999-2001

	n.c. = national currency SIT		
	1999	2000	2001
1. Quarterly accounts, mio SIT	3 637 437	4 045 469	14 566 191
Volume growth rates (%)	4.9	4.8	3.0
2. Annual accounts, April 2002, mio n.c.	3 648 401	4 035 518	4 566 191
Volume growth rates (%)	5.2	4.6	3.0
2.1 First methodological revision, March 2003, mio n.c.	3 839 852	4 222 404	4 740 122
Change to the previous GDP nominal level (%)	+5.2	+4.6	+3.8
2.2 Second methodological revision, April 2004, mio n.c.	3 874 720	4 252 315	4 761 815
Change to the previous GDP nominal level (%)	+0.9	+0.7	+0.5
2.3 Third methodological revision, September 2005, mio n.c.	3 918 974	4 300 350	4 799 552
Change to the previous GDP nominal level (%)	+1.1	+1.1	+0.8
Volume growth rates (%)	5.4	4.1	2.7

Source: *Gross National Income Inventory*, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2008

2.3.1.7 Conclusions

Implementing and developing the compilation of national accounts should take into consideration the following:

- It is not a strict chronological sequence of given steps. In practice, the steps are intertwined, interact strongly, can occur in somewhat different chronological sequences and have recursive loops.
- The compilation process is adapted and adjusted according to data sources, new economic, social and/or political conditions existing in a country and new international requirements in the field of statistics.

2.3.2 Developing IT tools for compiling national accounts

The computer systems used in the framework for compiling national accounts should be flexible and able to:

- a) Store detailed data used for compiling national accounts, relating to groups of economic agents, i.e. industries and sectors in electronic worksheets in their original format;
- b) Use the worksheets to convert the intermediate data obtained from different sources (censuses, surveys, administrative data sources, and intermediate statistical data) from their specific format to the format of the national accounts and record all adjustments made to the data, thus creating a complete compilation history;

- c) After conversion to the national accounts format, calculate appropriate national accounts aggregates. Faithful to the principle of the industry and sector orientation, the information for the total economy should be obtained only through aggregation of the resident sectors and industries;
- d) Check data compatibility across industries and sectors by identifying statistical discrepancies in national accounts identities;
- e) Provide helpful tools for the final data reconciliation process, e.g. by including data links between worksheets and the central framework tables, so that the impact of adjustments to the data in the worksheets is reflected immediately in the central SNA tables, where remaining statistical discrepancies can be checked;
- f) Generate working tables that are helpful during the reconciliation process, e.g. transaction matrices in which, for each transaction, other flow or stock, the resources and the uses (or assets and liabilities) of different sectors may be confronted;
- g) Store final estimates of national accounts and disseminated versions. This enables national accountants to set up a systematic analysis of the reliability of published data.

The need for common tools for implementing the SNA worldwide has led to the development of specialized software in national accounts among international organizations and developed countries. Advanced countries have developed tailor-made computer systems based on relational database packages such as: Access, Oracle, SAS, dBase, etc.

Other known IT tools for compiling national accounts are:

- ERETES (Equilibres ressources emplois, Tableaux entrées-sorties) is database software developed by a French consultancy firm at the University of Lyon, in cooperation with the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE) and Eurostat. This software is installed or being installed in approximately 27 countries⁽¹⁾ becoming very popular among Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries. The system is offered free of charge to users by the co-owners (EUROSTAT and the French Cooperation).
- IAS (Integrated Accounts System) is a software program developed by a group associated with the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Netherlands and used in Caribbean countries like Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles.
- SNAPC (System of National Accounts on a Personal Computer) is the product of Statistics Sweden and is used in Southern Africa countries and others (e.g.: Belize, Namibia, Laos, Lesotho, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Jamaica and Kenya).

(1) Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic (RCA), Colombia, Ivory Coast (RCI), Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Guadeloupe, Guiana, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Martinique, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Reunion, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia.

To find out more...

www.ERETES.net

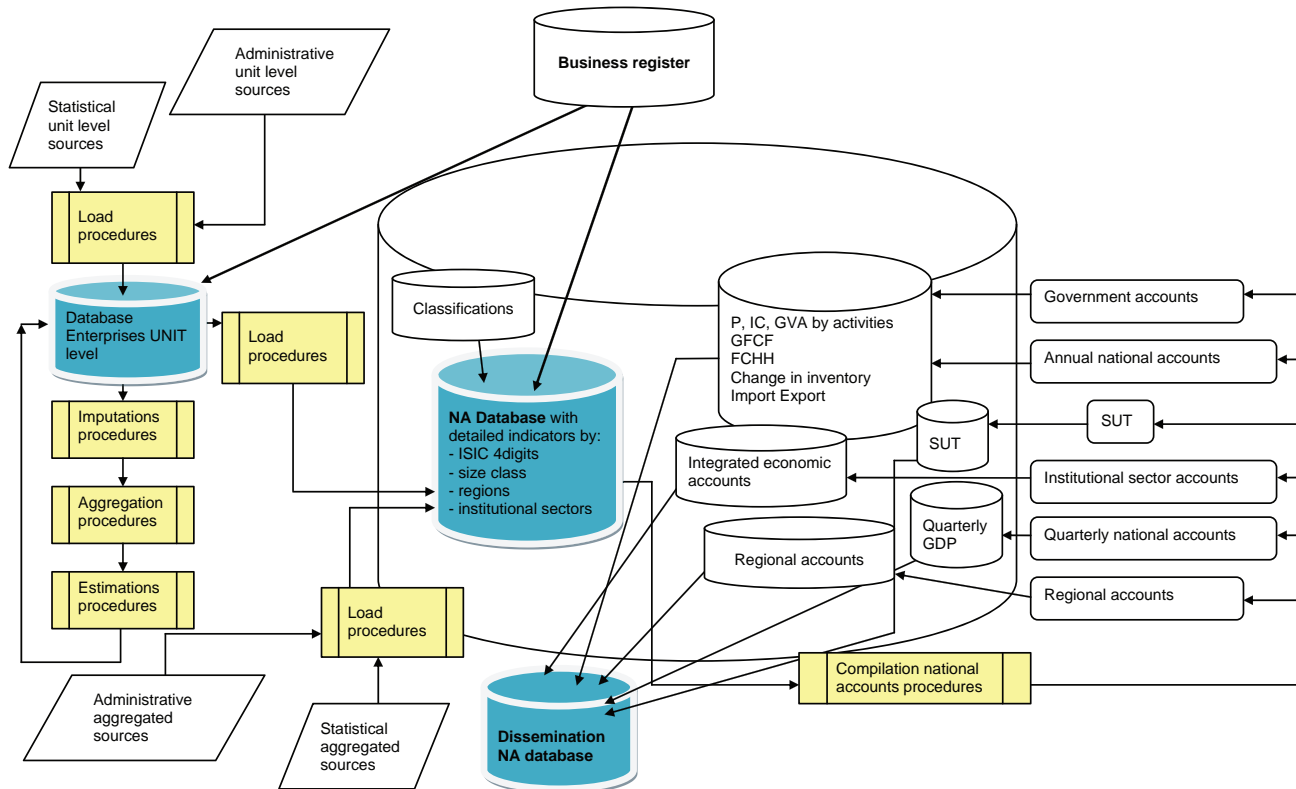
For ERETES refer to the biannual newsletter of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts 'SNA News and Notes' issue 5 (January 1997); available from: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna/sna5-en.asp>

For IAS refer to the biannual newsletter of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts 'SNA News and Notes' issue 6 (July 1997), available from: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna/sna6-en.asp>

ERETES and IAS include three elements:

- The use of database software (SYBASE, ORACLE and PROGRESS);
- Selection of SNA and compilation attributes (transaction categories, sector and industry categories, identification of current or constant prices, data source, etc.);
- Worksheets and tables where data conversion and reconciliation takes place.

Selection of attributes and the design of tables determine how national accounts are compiled. Conditions in each country, statistical capability and available resources determine the strategic decision of whether to use IT tools for compiling national accounts.

Figure II.4: Organization scheme of IT activity for national accounts compilation


2.4 Phase D: Dissemination

The main objective of compiling the SNA is to provide comprehensive knowledge of an economy and its structure. The dissemination of national accounts results is an activity as important as the compilation of indicators. Presenting national accounts indicators to the public, adding an analysis, providing useful economic interpretations and understanding the methodology used are an important part of national accountants' tasks.

Box II.8: Principles of a statistical dissemination strategy

A dissemination strategy is based on good practices in official statistics adopted by the EU and the UN. The main principles of a statistical dissemination strategy are:

- Statistics must be relevant for users, comprehensive and as detailed as possible in statistical terms, while complying with requirements regarding legislation, confidentiality and quality, and produced in a cost-effective way;
- Statistics must be accurate, reliable, consistent and comparable in space and time;
- Statistics must be up-to-date and disseminated in a timely and punctual manner;
- Statistical information must be released according to a pre-announced schedule and presented in a clear and understandable form to all users;
- The confidentiality of disseminated statistical data must be ensured;
- Data must be made available on an impartial and objective basis to all users.

Source: *Dissemination Policy*, INE, Portugal, 2008

The main steps involved in defining the dissemination strategy are summarized in the following sections: user identification, providing quality data that meets users expectation and establishing a calendar for dissemination.

2.4.1 User identification

Five major user categories stand out by area of activity:

- All levels of government;
- International agencies;
- The private sector;
- Research institutions;
- The public, including the media.

They can be grouped into two categories with respect to the intensity of statistical use:

- General Data Users: journalists, students, teachers, small businesses who have simple data requirements but from a great range of information;
- Analysis Users: government departments, local authorities, researchers, international organizations with complex data requirements on detailed variables, time series and regional breakdowns.

The demand for national accounts data is different for each category of user. The value of GDP and the growth rate of the economy is the information most utilized by general users. Policy makers, government, researchers, international organizations are interested in the details of national accounts indicators, by activity and institutional sector.

To meet these different demands, dissemination of national accounts is made using different channels:

- Press releases, used in general by the media and the general public with the presentation of the main national accounts indicators, such GDP, its main components and growth rate.
- Detailed information on national accounts by industry or institutional sector is usually presented in the Annual Yearbook of each country. This information can be used by researchers, students or international organizations.
- A special publication with time series of national accounts indicators, with detailed data, accompanied by metadata and sometimes by a short economic analysis based on these indicators. This publication is used for different purposes by government, researchers, academic media or international organizations.
- Electronic dissemination that offers the opportunity to reduce the costs of dissemination and make information more usable and accessible. However, to move to an environment in which documents are disseminated in electronic format, a number of challenges would have to be

overcome (such as ensuring that these documents are authentic, permanently maintained, and equally accessible to all individuals).

2.4.2 Providing quality data that meet users expectations

Users expect quality information. If this cannot be provided the user will stop asking for data and try to find it elsewhere. Quality is normally defined in terms of **accuracy, relevance, timeliness, consistency and availability** in no specific order.

To find out more...

Quality framework and guidelines for OECD statistical activities,
http://www.oecd.org/document/43/0,3343,en_2649_33715_21571947_1_1_1_1,00.html

The dissemination of national accounts should be integrated into the general statistical dissemination strategy, having as its main objective to provide data of the expected quality for users. This should take into consideration:

- The details of information disseminated according to target audience;
- Presentation of results in a comprehensive structure;
- Provision of all necessary methodological explanations, to help users understand national accounts concepts;
- National accounts represent a special overview of the economy and the dissemination of data without economic analysis and interpretation of the results is not advised, even if this imposes additional work on national accountants. The analysis will help users not familiar with these indicators to understand national accounts better and their possibilities to reflect the economic phenomena.

Box II.9: Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) and Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes

The IMF uses the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) in its data modules of the Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes (data ROSCs) as a tool to evaluate the quality of country practices in producing macroeconomic statistics. The DQAF comprises six dimensions:

- Prerequisites of quality includes organizational aspects;
- Assurances of integrity covers objectivity in collecting, processing and disseminating statistics;
- Methodological soundness analyses the standards adopted in the compilation process;
- Accuracy and reliability covers the data sources and statistical methods used in compiling the statistics;
- Serviceability deals with fitness for use criteria, such as periodicity and timeliness, temporal and internal consistency;
- Accessibility presents how effectively data and information about data are disseminated to users.

Source: IMF, <http://dsbb.imf.org>

2.4.3 Establishing a calendar for dissemination

For data to be useful, it is widely recognized that it should be available in a reasonable and timely manner. Such an expectation, especially in the field of national accounts is not easy to fulfill. Compilation is not simply computer processing: national accounts compilers need very diverse raw data from statistical and administrative systems available at different periodicity; after data is collected, this information needs to be converted into national accounts and the consistency of the entire system to be verified. This process has a large impact on the timeliness of dissemination.

Box II.10: Example of the dissemination calendar

Timetable for revising and finalizing the accounts in Slovenia

National accounts data for year t are revised and finalized in four steps and final data for year t are usually published in September of year $t + 3$ or 33 months after the end of the year.

The four steps and the time in which GDP estimates and main national accounts aggregates for year t are first published, routinely revised and finalized are:

- $t + 70$ days: first complete GDP estimate and main national accounts aggregates on the basis of quarterly accounts;
- $t + 9$ months: first complete annual accounts estimate of GDP and main national accounts aggregates;
- $t + 21$ months: first revision of annual accounts estimate of GDP and main national accounts aggregates;
- $t + 33$ months: final revision of annual accounts estimate of GDP and main national accounts aggregates.

As the national accounts estimates start with quarterly accounts it is important that after the introduction of the expenditure approach at current and constant prices on quarterly basis in 2000 the quality and reliability of quarterly accounts have significantly improved. The main basis for the first complete annual accounts estimate of GDP in $t + 9$ months are complete and exhaustive data sources of GDP by the production approach as data sources for all institutional sectors are available in May each year.

Already in the first routine revision of annual accounts ($t + 21$ months) the majority of data from supply and use tables is already incorporated and this is particularly important for the product structure of gross fixed capital formation. It is also important that in this revision all statistical and other data sources for the expenditure approach are available and used in the compilation. Because of this changes between the first routine revision and the last step of finalizing annual accounts estimate in $t + 33$ are usually small.

Source: *Gross National Income Inventory*, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2008

As general framework for their dissemination strategy, countries intending to implement the SNA are recommended to adopt the International Monetary Fund's 'Special Data Dissemination Standards' (SDDS) and 'General Data Dissemination Standards' (GDDS).

The main purpose of the SDDS, established and promoted by the IMF in 1996 is to monitor the standards used to guide countries in the dissemination of economic and financial data. Several dimensions are monitored in the SDDS: a 'data' dimension (relating to coverage, frequency and timeliness of data), an 'access' dimension, an 'integrity' dimension and a 'quality' dimension (see Box II.11). The SDDS prescribes that countries disseminate key macroeconomic data covering the real, fiscal, financial, and external sectors.

Box II.11: Dimensions and Elements of the Special Data Dissemination Standard

Data Dimension (coverage, periodicity, and timeliness)

- Dissemination of 18 data categories, including component detail, covering the four main macroeconomic statistical sectors, with prescribed periodicity and timeliness.

Access Dimension

- Dissemination of advance release calendars providing notice at least one quarter ahead of approximate release dates, and notice at least one week ahead of the precise release dates;
- Simultaneous release of data to all users.

Integrity Dimension

- Dissemination of the terms and conditions under which official statistics are produced and disseminated;
- Identification of internal government access to data before release;
- Identification of ministerial commentary on the occasion of statistical release;
- Provision of information about revision and advance notice of major changes in methodology.

Quality Dimension

- Dissemination of documentation on statistical methodology and sources used in preparing statistics;
- Dissemination of component detail and/or additional data series that make possible cross-checks and checks of reasonableness.

Source: *The IMF's Data Dissemination Initiative After 10 Years*, IMF 2008

The GDDS followed the SDDS and was developed in 1997 to assist those IMF's member countries that are not in a position to subscribe to the SDDS, to develop nevertheless a sound statistical system as the basis for timely dissemination of data to the public. The purposes of the GDDS are to encourage member countries:

- To improve data quality;
- To provide a framework for evaluating needs for data improvement and setting priorities in this respect;
- To guide member countries in disseminating comprehensive, timely, accessible, and reliable economic, financial, and socio-demographic statistics to the public.

Together, these three priority areas constitute a solid basis on which to formulate long-run policies for statistical development.

To find out more...

SDDS and GDDS at www.imf.org

The IMF's Data Dissemination Initiative After 10 Years, IMF 2008.

3. Recommended reading

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009;
- *National Accounts: A practical introduction*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.85, UN 2003; Chapter XIV: Data collection, compilation and estimation methods: a summary;
- *Guide to statistics in EC development co-operation*, Eurostat, 2009;
- *A system approach to national accounts compilation*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.77, UN 1999; chapter I: The compilation approach;
- *Uses of Macro Accounts in Policy Analysis*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.81, UN 2002; Chapter IV: Policy analysis beyond the economic core; Chapter V: Administrative and other policy uses of national accounts by international organizations and countries;
- *Use, misuse and proper use of national accounts in statistics*, Fritz B., MPRA, 2007; Chapter IV: Tool for communication and decision making;
- *Advocating for the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics*, Paris 21, OECD, May, 2010;
- *Compiling the national accounts demystified*, Fritz B., MPRA, 2007; Chapter III: The compilation process; chapter V: How to improve compiling national accounts;
- *Quality framework and guidelines for OECD statistical activities*, OECD, 2003;
- *A Guide to Designing a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)*, Paris 21 Secretariat, 2004 (<http://www.paris21.org/documents/1401.pdf>);
- *Fundamental principles for the official statistics*, UN <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>;
- *General Data Dissemination System*, IMF <http://dsbb.imf.org/Pages/GDDS/home.aspx>;
- *Special Data Dissemination Standard*, IMF <http://dsbb.imf.org/Pages/SDDS/Home.aspx>;
- *The IMF's Data Dissemination Initiative After 10 years*, IMF 2008; Chapter I: International data dissemination standards; chapter III: The general data dissemination system: what has been accomplished after 10 years and where do we go from here;
- *The future dissemination of OECD statistics: a policy proposal*, OECD, 2006;
- *Global assessment of the availability, periodicity, timeliness and dissemination of high- frequency indicators*, UNSD paper presented at the Workshop on International Eco-

- conomic and Social Classifications, Mali, January 2010;
- *Communicating with the Media - A guide for statistical organizations*, UNECE, UN 2004; Chapter I: Principles, objectives and management issues in data dissemination; Chapter II: Organizational aspects of dissemination;
 - *Making Data Meaningful- Part I- A guide to writing stories about numbers*, UNECE UN, 2009;
 - *Making Data Meaningful- Part II- A guide to presenting statistics*, UNECE, UN 2009;
 - *Making Data Meaningful- Part III- A guide to communicating with the media*, UNECE, 2011;
 - *Best practices in designing websites for dissemination of statistics*, United Nations Statistical Commission and Economic Commission for Europe, UN 2001;
 - *Construire les comptes de la nation*, Michel Seruzier, *Economica* 1993; Chapter XVII: Environnement nécessaire à la construction des comptes de la nation;
 - *Manual de la comptabilité nationale, Comptabilité de la production: Sources et méthodes*, *Etudes méthodologiques*, Séries F, No, 39, UN 1987.

Basic Concepts

3



The chapter in brief

The basic concepts of the 2008 SNA presented in the first section of the chapter offer a broad view of the fundamental requirements that should be envisaged in the strategic development of national accounts. They centre on the main categories that form the skeleton of the system: stakeholders in the economy, the economic activities they perform, and the scope of their actions, and the rules applied to evaluating national accounts indicators. A separate section provides evidence relating to the main aggregates obtained from national accounts and used to characterize the economy.

1. Fundamentals for national accounting

SNA should be able to describe economies which, over time, are becoming increasingly complex, whilst envisaging at the same time descriptive simplicity. They cover a wide variety of situations, from developed countries to developing countries, least developed countries and countries in transition. Irrespective of the stage of development, in order to ‘measure

the economy’, commensuration limits need to be properly defined.

The 2008 SNA is a **system of macroeconomic accounts** based on a set of concepts, definitions, classifications and registration rules. It provides a framework within which economic data can be collected and analyzed to assist decision-makers and provide guidance on economic policies.

National accounts aim to describe the economic activity (measurable in monetary terms) of every unit of a national economy. The basic concepts of the SNA are used to analyze and aggregate the numerous aspects of the elementary actions in the economy, and are capable of answering important questions:

- Who takes action in the economy?
- What do they do?
- Why do they take action?
- How are the actions known?

The definitions, classifications and accounting rules in the SNA give answers to these questions (see Table III.1).

Table III.1: Main concepts of the 2008 SNA

QUESTION	EXPLANATION	THE 2008 SNA CONCEPTS
Who?	Refers to the economic agents (institutions, firms, individuals) that perform activities in the economy.	Institutional units Institutional sectors Total economy and the rest of the world
What?	Refers to the transactions and other flows and stocks, which are the objects of the economy.	Transactions and other flows Assets and liabilities Products and producing units
Why?	Refers to the reason why an economic agent takes an action	Classifications by purposes of expenditure
How?	Refers to the recording of who, what and why.	Accounting rules: – recording – time of recording – valuation – consolidation and netting

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 2: Overview, Chapter 3: Stocks, flows and accounting rules, Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors, and Chapter 5: Enterprises, establishments and industries.

1.1 WHO? Institutional units and sectors

1.1.1 Institutional sectors

The SNA is designed to represent the economy in a simplified way. However, given the complexity of an entire economy, a difficult task of aggregation is required which uses specific classifications:

- Classification by industry, called ‘functional classification’ because it represents the production process and the flows experienced by goods and services produced in the economy, in other words, it shows the balance between supply and demand. In this case, units are defined according to their technical-productive profile, so they are units of production in the strict sense of the term.
- Classification by institutional sector is another approach to the production process where the units are defined according to their economic behaviour, economic function and economic objectives. This classification highlights how income is obtained and distributed in an economy, how share capital is generated and how this is financed.

Classification by industry is linked to SUTs while institutional classification is associated with integrated economic accounts (IEA).

Definition

An institutional unit is an economic entity that is capable, in its own right, of owning assets, incurring in liabilities and engaging in economic activities and in transactions with other entities.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors, point 4.2

An institutional unit has the following characteristics:

- It is entitled to own goods or assets in its own right; it is therefore able to exchange ownership of goods or assets in transactions with other institutional units;
- It is able to take economic decisions and engage in economic activities for which it is itself held directly responsible and accountable at law;
- It is able to incur liabilities on its own behalf, to take on other obligations or future commitments and to enter into contracts;
- It has a complete set of accounts, including a balance sheet of assets and liabilities, or it would be possible and meaningful, from an economic viewpoint, to compile a complete set of accounts if required.

Essentially two types of institutional units exist in an economy:

a) Persons or a household

Definition

A household is defined as a group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors, point 4.4.

In the same category are included groups of persons staying in hospitals, retirement homes, prisons for long periods of time.

b) Legal or social entities

Definition

A legal or social entity is one whose existence is recognized by law or society independently of the persons or other entities that may own or control it.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors, point 4.6.

In respect of legal units, the 2008 SNA distinguishes three main categories:

- i) Corporations (financial and non-financial) are entities capable of generating profit or other financial gain for their owners, are recognized by law as separate legal entities from their owners who enjoy limited liability and are set up for purposes of engaging in market production. Under this category legally constituted corporations (such as incorporated enterprises, public limited companies, public corporations, private companies, joint-stock companies, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, etc.), national resident units (non-resident units which have a centre of predominant economic interest in the economic territory of a country other than their prior resident country), and quasi-corporations (an unincorporated enterprise owned by a resident institutional unit that has a complete set of accounts and is operated as if it were a separate corporation and whose de facto relationship to its owner is that of a corporation to its shareholders) are all included.
- ii) Non-profit institutions (NPIs) that are created for the purpose of producing goods and/or services but whose status does not permit them to be a source of income, profit or other financial gain for the units that establish, control or finance them.
- iii) Government units are legal entities established by political processes. They have legislative, judicial or executive authority over other institutional units within a given area. The principal functions of government units are to assume responsibility for the provision of goods and services to the community or to individual households and to finance their provision out of taxation or other incomes, to redistribute income and wealth by means of transfers, and to engage in non-market production.

Institutional units are grouped together into **institutional sectors** on the basis of their principal functions, behavior and objectives.

The 2008 SNA includes five main institutional sectors:

1. Non-financial corporations;
2. Financial corporations;
3. General government;
4. Households;
5. Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs).

For the SNA to provide information concerning relations between a national economy and the *rest of the world*, transactions between residents and non-residents, such as claims by residents on non-residents, and vice versa are recorded in the rest of the world. It is not a sector for which complete sets of accounts have to be compiled, although it is often convenient to describe the rest of the world as if it were a sector. The rest of the world includes certain institutional units that may be physically located within the geographical boundary of a country, for example, foreign enclaves such as embassies, consulates or military bases, and also international organizations.

The allocation of a unit to an institutional sector is based on the following questions:

- Is the unit resident?
- Is it a household, institutional household (ex. a hospital) or a legal unit?
- Is the unit a non-market or market producer?
- Is the unit controlled by the government?
- Does the unit provide financial services?
- Is the unit foreign-controlled?

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009 Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors.

A distinction is made between public, national private and foreign-controlled corporations. National private and foreign-controlled corporations belong to the private sector. General government belongs to the public sector in its entirety. Households and NPISHs belong to the private sector. Corporations are classified as public if the government, normally through ownership of more than half of the voting shares, controls them through government units or other public corporation(s). Control by government may also be due to special legislation. The criterion of owning more than half of the voting shares also applies to the classification of corporations into national private or foreign-controlled.

Institutional units can also be grouped according to owner-

Table III.2: Institutional units cross-classified by sector and ownership

Sector Ownership	Non-financial corporations sector	Financial corporations sector	General government sector	Households sector	NPIs serving households sector
Public sector	Public non-financial corporations	Public financial corporations	All government units and government NPIs		
National private sector	National private non-financial corporations	National private financial corporations		All households	All NPIs serving households
Foreign-controlled sector	Foreign-controlled non-financial corporations	Foreign-controlled financial corporations			

Source: *System of National Accounts 1993 Training manual*, SADC, 1999.

1.1.2 The total economy and the concept of Residence

The **total economy** is defined in terms of institutional units.

Definition

Total economy is defined as the entire set of resident institutional units.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors, point 4.23.

The **economic territory** of a country does not coincide exactly with its geographical territory. The term 'economic territory' means the geographical territory administered by a government within which persons, goods, services and capital move freely. It also includes international waters declared as an exclusive economic zone where the country enjoys exclusive fishing, fuel and mineral exploitation rights. Finally, certain enclaves in foreign countries, such as embassies,

consulates and military bases, are included in an economic territory. On the other hand, enclaves in a country used by foreign governments and international organizations are excluded from the economic territory of that country.

The concept of economic territory in the 2008 SNA coincides with that of the Balance of Payments and Investment Position Manual, sixth edition.

Residence:

Definition

The residence of each institutional unit is the economic territory with which it has the strongest connection, in other words, its centre of predominant economic interest.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors, point 4.10.

The concept of residence is not based on citizenship or legal criteria. Having a **centre of predominant economic interest** in a territory implies being engaged for an extended period (usually one year or more) in economic activities in this territory (e.g. to have ownership of land or ownership of structures or to engage in production in a territory).

Some clarifications on residence:

a. A **household** is resident when it maintains a dwelling that the members of the household treat and use as their principal residence. All individuals who belong to the household are also residents. There are several special cases for considering households still resident:

- Students continue to be resident in the territory in which they were resident prior to studying abroad;
- Patients going abroad for the purpose of medical treatment, even if the treatment takes a year or more;
- Crews of ships, aircraft, oil rigs, space stations etc. that operate outside a territory or across several territories;
- Diplomats, military personnel and other civil servants employed abroad in government enclaves;
- Cross-border workers, who maintain their principal dwelling in the national territory;
- Refugees, when they do not change their home territory regardless of their legal status or intention to return.

b. A **corporation or quasi-corporation** is considered as resident if it maintains at least one establishment where it plans to operate over a long period of time, e.g. at least one year. Practical considerations must often be made regarding construction by foreign enterprises, as they usually are borderline cases.

1.1.3 Enterprises, Establishments and Industries

Units engaged in production are recognized by the 2008 SNA as **enterprises**.

Definition

An enterprise is the view of an institutional unit as a producer of goods and services.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 5: Enterprises, establishments and industries, point 5.1.

An enterprise may be a corporation, a quasi-corporation, a non-profit institution or an unincorporated enterprise.

An institutional unit such as a corporation may be engaged in different kinds of production activities in different locations, producing various kinds of goods and services. This implies that some institutional units must be divided into smaller and more homogeneous units. Homogeneous activity is one criterion for dividing an enterprise into **kind of activity unit** (KAU).

Definition

A kind-of-activity unit is an enterprise, or a part of an enterprise, that engages in only one kind of productive activity or in which the principal productive activity accounts for most of the value added.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 5: Enterprises, establishments and industries, point 5.12.

An enterprise engaged in different activities has one or more locations and for the purposes of differential analysis it is useful to divide it accordingly into local units.

Definition

A local unit is an enterprise, or a part of an enterprise, that engages in productive activity at or from one location.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 5: Enterprises, establishments and industries, point 5.13.

The combination of location and kind of activity of an enterprise results in what is called an **'establishment'**.

Definition

An establishment is an enterprise or part of an enterprise that is situated in a single location and in which only a single productive activity is carried out or in which the principal productive activity accounts for most of the value added.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 5: Enterprises, establishments and industries, point 5.14.

Establishments are also called *local kind-of-activity units* (LKAU).

Establishments allow for the possibility of carrying out one or more secondary activities, although they should be on a small scale compared to the principal activity. The main activity of an enterprise may also involve ancillary activities that facilitate the efficient running of the enterprise but do not normally result in goods and services that can be marketed (for example keeping records, purchases of material and equipment, repair and maintenance of machinery and equipment, cleaning and maintenance of buildings and premises, sales promotion, etc.) but which could not be separately identified.

An enterprise may have one or more establishments. On the other hand, an establishment can belong to one and only one enterprise. In practice, an establishment may usually be identified with an individual workplace in which a particular kind of productive activity is carried out: an individual farm, mine, quarry, factory, plant, shop, store, construction site, transport depot, airport, garage, bank, office, clinic, etc.

A complete set of accounts, including balance sheets, cannot be compiled for an establishment because it cannot have own assets, incur liabilities or engage in transactions with other entities in its own right. The only data that can be meaningfully compiled for an establishment are:

- The items included in the production and generation of income accounts;
- Gross fixed capital formation and changes in inventories;
- Stock of fixed capital and land;
- Number of employees, types of employees, hours worked.

A SNA distinguishes, as an essential feature of its structure, between establishments that are **market producers, producers for own final use and non-market producers**. Market establishments produce goods and services mostly for sale at prices that are economically significant. Producers for own final use produce goods and services mostly for final consumption or fixed capital formation by the owners of the enterprises in which they are produced. Non-market establishments supply most of the goods and services they produce without charge or at prices that are not economically significant.

A group of establishments engaged in the same, or similar, kinds of activity are classified into one **industry** according to ISIC, Rev. 4.

Definition

An industry consists of a group of establishments engaged in the same, or similar, kinds of activity.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 5; Enterprises, establishments and industries, point 5.46.

The classification refers to the principal activity of the establishment as defined above. Certain activities produce more than one product simultaneously, while the same product may sometimes be produced by using different production techniques. The most important criterion used for classifying industries is the type of goods and services produced.

The enterprise is the main unit for national accounts because it represents the institutional unit for which production accounts are prepared and value added is estimated. Aggregating value added over activities is the one of the main activity of national accountants since this will directly yield GDP. Activities are grouped into “industries” which are classified according to ISIC 4. In the same time, the main activity is one of the important variables of the SBR and base for defining the economic survey samples.

For more information concerning statistical business register and classifications see Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*.

The principal activity determines the activity class in ISIC to which the enterprise belongs. It is important to realize that once this assignment has been made, the whole enterprise – including output for other activities – will belong to this class, even if some of the other output belongs to a different class. This other output is called secondary output. What distinguishes main from secondary output is determined by its relative importance. Typically, value added is taken, but output, sales, wages and salaries and employment are also possible. If the value added for determining the inclusion criterion is selected, the main activity is the one with the highest value added of the unit. So there is only one main activity, but there can be more than one secondary activity. Value added of a secondary activity is usually less than that of the main activity, although this is not always necessarily the case. Usually, there is some minimum value that a share can take as well, e.g. 10%. Activities below this threshold are then ignored. It is quite normal for enterprises to have at least some secondary activities, although this is less likely for smaller enterprises than for larger.

It is important to realize that it is not necessary that the main activity account for 50 per cent or more of the total value added of a unit. When there are three activities A, B and C, with value added shares of 40%, 30% and 30% respectively, activity A will be main and activities B and C secondary. It should also be noted that in order for activities to be either main or secondary, their output should be suitable for delivery outside the producer unit.

Establishing the principal activity of one enterprise engaged in two or more activities for which the output serves a market is based on the so called “top-down” method. The method operates according to the following rules:

- In case one activity accounts for more than 50% of value added, this activity determines the classification
- Activity is determined according to the ISIC class with the largest share of value added from top to bottom:
 - First determine the highest classification level (1-digit)
 - Then the lower (2- and 3-digit) levels
 - Finally the class (4-digit level)

In Box III.1 is presented one example how to determine the main activity of the enterprise.

Box III.1: Determining the main activity of enterprise

The enterprise A has 5 activities A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, classified (fictitiously) as:

A1: ISIC4 code = 310 (manufacture of furniture), value added = 1450

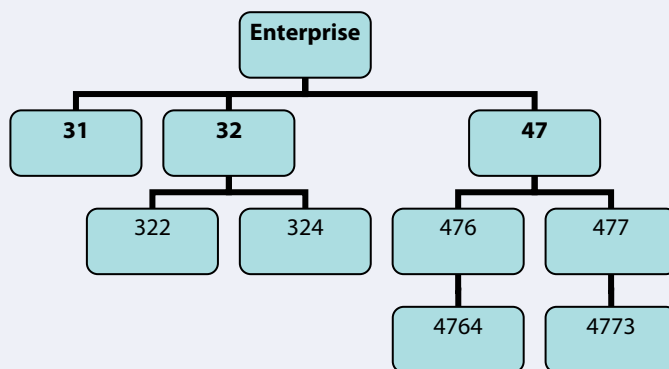
A2: ISIC4 code = 322 (manufacture of musical instruments), value added = 1200

A3: ISIC4 code = 324 (manufacture of game and toys), value added = 1330

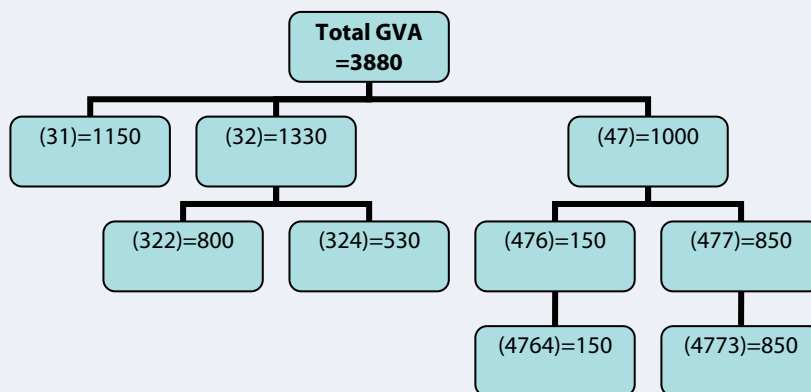
A4: ISIC4 code = 476 (retail sale of cultural and recreation goods in specialized stores), value added = 350

A5: ISIC4 code = 477 (retail sale of other goods in specialized stores), value added = 750

There are 5 activities at 3-digit ISIC4 level, which can be grouped into three activities at the 2-digit level according to the following tree structure:



Given the above data on value added at 3-digit level, we can calculate the totals at 2-digit levels and for the enterprise as a whole. The value added totals are presented in the same tree structure:



Following the top-down method, one obtains:

- the largest share in the total GVA has activity 32;
- of the total value added for 32, activity 322 has the largest share (800).

In these conditions, the activity 322 is the main activity and the whole enterprise is classified as 322 at 3-digit level, as 32 at 2-digit level and as 3 at 1-digit level.

Note that the activity 477 (value added = 850) has higher value added than this principal activity, but according to this methodology, it is still classified as a secondary activity.

1.2 WHAT? Flows and Stocks

The aim of SNA accounts, tables and balance sheets is to register in monetary terms the economic actions or events that take place within a given period of time and the effect of these events on the stocks of assets and liabilities at the beginning and end of that period.

In the economy, institutional units have various economic functions: they produce, consume, save, invest, etc. When they produce, they can be engaged in various type of production (agricultural, industrial, trade, etc.) as entrepreneurs, providers of labour or suppliers of capital. The actions they undertake are aimed at creating, transforming, exchanging, transferring economic value, or changing the volume, composition or value of assets and liabilities. All these actions are **economic flows**.

The 2008 SNA distinguishes two broad categories of economic flows: transactions and other economic flows.

i. Transactions

Transactions are economic flows that result from interaction between institutional units by mutual agreement and can take place within institutional units or between establishments belonging to the same enterprise. The main types of transactions are:

- Transactions in goods and services (products) describe the supply of products (domestic output or imports) and the use of products (intermediate consumption, final consumption, capital formation or exports). An example would be the output of shirts produced by an enterprise, the intermediate consumption of textiles and buttons used in the production of the shirts, investments in a new sewing machine, etc.
- Distributive transactions comprise:
 - Transactions by which the income generated in production (value added) is distributed as compensation of employees, or as taxes on production and imports (less subsidies), or as property income to different institutional sectors and the rest of the world (for instance gross salaries paid by the enterprise manufacturing shirts to its employees);
 - Transactions by which the generated income is redistributed as transfers between institutional sectors and/or the rest of the world (e.g. a general insurance premium paid by the enterprise for the building where the shirts are produced).
- Transactions in financial instruments include acquisitions and disposals of financial assets and incurrence, net of liabilities (e.g. the manufacturing enterprise pays for the raw material by cheque, with money from the deposit in national currency constituted in a bank).
- Other accumulation entries, as results of the transactions

defined above which enable the change in the net worth of an institutional unit or sector between the beginning and end of the accounting period (e.g. the consumption of fixed capital registered for the machinery used in the production of bread in a bread factory).

Transactions in goods and services are also classified according to type of product. The 2008 SNA recommends the use of the Central Product Classification (CPC) Version 2 for the classification of goods and services. Besides products that, by definition, must be the output of productive activities, the CPC also accommodates some non-produced assets, such as land, patents, licences, trademarks and copyrights.

There are other schemes of classification of goods, mainly used in foreign trade statistics, namely the Harmonized System (HS 2007), which is very detailed, and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) Rev.4. Both HS and SITC are also used in industrial statistics. These have a different dimension for classification of products compared to that used by CPC, namely the classification of products as market, own-account or other non-market products.

Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*, section 1.2: *Classifications* presents the main classifications used in the statistical system and the SNA.

Transactions may be categorized as monetary (e.g. a good is purchased or sold at a given number of units of currency) or non-monetary (e.g. barter and consumption of fixed capital).

They can both be either of two kinds:

- Transactions with counterparts ('something for something'). There is an exchange between two parties in the transactions in products, labour, and/or assets.
- Transactions without counterparts ('something for nothing'). Only one party to the transaction gets something. Examples are taxes, social assistance and gifts in kind. Such transactions are called transfers.

ii. Other economic flows

Other economic flows arise from non-economic phenomena, recorded only in accumulation accounts. They include consumption of fixed capital, revaluation of assets and liabilities, economic appearance and disappearance of assets, natural growth of non-cultivated biological assets, uncompensated seizure and catastrophic losses of assets. Other accumulation entries cover transactions and other economic flows not previously taken into account, that change the quantity or value of assets and liabilities. They include:

- Acquisitions less disposals of non-produced non-financial assets;
- Other economic flows of non-produced assets, such as discovery or depletion of subsoil resources or transfers of

other natural resources to economic activities;

- The effects of non-economic phenomena such as natural disasters and political events (for example, wars) and finally, they include holding gains or losses, due to changes in prices (e.g. the holding gain of the enterprise due to price increases over a year of the value of the stock of the produced shirts), and some minor items.

Stocks are a position in, or holdings of, non-financial (produced or non-produced) assets and the financial assets and liabilities at a point in time. They must be subject to ownership rights (economic ownership prevailing over legal ownership) and must also be used in some kind of economic activity. Consumer durables are excluded, as are natural resources that are not owned.

Flows and stocks are recorded on both sides of accounts and balance sheets. A **balancing** item is derived as the difference between the sums of the entries on both sides of an account or balance sheet. Balancing items have analytical significance of great importance. As a matter of fact, many important variables in national accounts are calculated as balancing items, e.g. value added.

More information concerning balancing items is presented in Chapter III: *Basic concepts*, section 2: *Accounts and main aggregates*.

1.3 WHY? Purposes

From the SNA point of view, purpose means the function relating to the type of need a transaction or group of transactions aims to satisfy. Transactions are first analyzed in the SNA according to their nature. For certain sectors or type of transactions, they are analyzed by purpose, in answer to the question ‘for what purpose?’

In this case, the SNA recommends using the following classifications for functional analysis:

- **COICOP - Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose** (and of household final consumption expenditure);
- **COFOG - Classification of the Functions of Government** (used to classify consumption expenditure, other current expenditure, capital expenditure and other government outlays);
- **COPNI - Classification of the Purposes of Non-profit Institutions serving households** (used to classify the same type of transactions as for governments);
- **Classification of Outlays of Producers by Purpose** (COPP) can provide information on the ‘outsourcing’ of business services.

More information concerning the classifications is provided in Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*, section 1.2: *Classifications*.

1.4 HOW? Accounting Rules

Transactions of economic agents (who), of their actions (what) undertaken for different purposes (why) are recorded in the SNA according to clear rules (how). These Rules are related to the content of institutional units resources and uses, the valuation of transactions, the way and the time of recording them in a defined structure.

1.4.1 The accounting model

National accounts are built according to the accounting model used in business accounting (see Chapter V: Administrative data). The two accounting systems have the following similarities:

1. Two-side presentation

- The left side of a ‘T’ business account is called debit and the right side credit;
- In national accounts, the following terms are used:
 - **Resources** for transactions which add to the amount of economic value of a unit or a sector are presented on the right side of the account;
 - **Uses** for transactions that reduce the amount of economic value of a unit or sector are shown on the left side of the current account.

2. Double-entry principle

- Business accounting is based on the principle of double-entry, whereby one transaction requires two entries, in principle one credit and one debit;
- National accounts reflect mutual economic relationships between different institutional units based on ‘horizontal’ double entry. This means that if an institutional unit provides something to another institutions unit, the accounts of both units will show the transaction: as a resource in the accounts of one unit and as a use in the accounts of the other. As for example, the compensation of employees paid by different economic units should be equal to the sum received by employees.
- In the accounts of an institutional unit, each transaction must be recorded twice, as a resource (or a change in liabilities) and as a use (or a change in assets). This is the so-called ‘vertical’ double-entry. Thus, the total of the transactions recorded as resources (or changes in liabilities) and the total of the transactions recorded as uses (or changes in assets) are equal, enabling consistency checking. The simultaneous application of both the vertical and horizontal double-entry bookkeeping results in quadru-

ple-entry bookkeeping, that is the accounting system underlying the recording in the SNA (financial accounts must be compiled to take full practical advantage of the quadruple-entry principle).

As an example of a relevant transaction in national accounts, the “Output” (P1) which measures the amount of goods and services produced during the accounting period is considered. In order to generate this output by a particular production process, inputs are required, such as raw materials, energy, transport, etc. The costs of these inputs are measured by the transaction, “Intermediate consumption” (P2). Between them, there exists an identity from the accounting point of view. For each institutional unit the resources (representing incoming money flows) and uses (representing outgoing money flows) are collected and presented in a T-account, with transactions involving resources on the right side and those involving uses on the left side.

Uses		Resources	
P2 Intermediate consumption	2800	P1 Output	4500
B1g Gross value added	1700		

For example, a social benefit in cash paid by a government unit to a household is recorded in the accounts of government as a use under the relevant type of transfers and a negative acquisition of assets under currency and deposits; in the accounts of the household sector, it is recorded as a resource under transfers and an acquisition of assets under currency and deposit.

1.4.2 Time of recording

The time of recording in SNA is different for flows and stocks:

- Flows are recorded over a certain period of time;
- Stocks are recorded at a certain point in time, namely at the beginning (opening balance) and at the end (closing balance) of the accounting period.

The accounting period in national accounts usually corresponds to the calendar year or a quarter of a year.

The time of recording must be the same for the entries in the different accounts of the all the stakeholders involved. There are three moments when flows can take place, each of them defining a basis for the timing:

- ‘Cash basis’ records cash flows at the time these payments occur;
- ‘Due for payment basis’ records flows at the time they are due to be paid;
- ‘Accrual basis’ records flows at the time economic value is created, transformed, exchanged, transferred or extinguished.

As a general principle, transactions between institutional units in the SNA have to be recorded when claims and ob-

ligations arise, are transformed, or are cancelled; this time represents the ‘accrual basis’. For example, in May a company delivers computers to a customer who will pay for it 30 days later. Under the cash method, the revenue from this sale will be recorded in June, when the money will be received; however the accrual method requires recording the income in May, in the month when the transaction took place.

The SNA favours accrual accounting because:

- The timing of accrual accounting is in full agreement with the way economic activities and other flows are defined in the SNA. This agreement allows the profitability of productive activities to be evaluated correctly (that is, without the disturbing influence of leads and lags in cash flows) and a sector’s net worth to be calculated correctly at any point in time;
- Accrual accounting can be applied to non-monetary flows.

One of the problems for national accounts is that activities of institutional units often extend over periods in which several important moments can be distinguished. For example, many commercial sales start with the signing of a contract between a seller and a buyer, which includes the date of delivery, and a date or dates on which payments become due and are only completed as of the date the last payment is received by the seller. Each of these distinct moments is, to some extent, economically relevant.

With regard to taxes, for example, important moments are the day or the period in which the liability arises, the moment the tax liability is definitively assessed, the day that it becomes due for payment without penalty, and the day the tax is actually paid or refunds are made.

Some issues of the time of recording for the main transactions:

- The time of recording of the acquisition of goods is the moment when the economic ownership of those goods changes hands. When change of ownership is not obvious, the moment of entering in the books of the transaction partners may be a good indication and, failing that, the moment when physical possession and control is acquired.
- Imports and exports of goods are recorded when change of ownership occurs. In the absence of sources specifying the date on which ownership changes, there is a strong presumption that the goods will cross the frontiers of the countries concerned either shortly before or soon after the change of ownership takes place.
- Services are recorded in the SNA when they are provided. Some services are special in the sense that they are characteristically supplied on a continuous basis. Examples are operating leasing, insurance and housing services (including those of owner-occupied dwellings). These

services are recorded as provided continuously over the whole period the contract lasts or the dwelling is available.

- The output is recorded over the period in which the process of production takes place. Thus, additions to work-in-progress are recorded continuously as work proceeds. When the production process is terminated, the whole of the work-in-progress accumulated up to that point is effectively transformed into a stock of finished product ready for delivery or sale.
- The intermediate consumption of a good or service is recorded at the time when the good or service enters the process of production, as distinct from the time it was acquired by the producer.
- Inventories may be materials and supplies held as inputs by producers, output as yet unsold, or products held by wholesale and retail traders. In all cases, additions to inventories are recorded when products are purchased, produced or otherwise acquired. Deductions from inventories are recorded when products are sold, used up as intermediate consumption or otherwise relinquished.
- The distributive transactions, as for example, compensation of employees, interest, rent on land, social contributions and benefits are all registered in the period during which the amounts payable are built up.
- Entries for taxes are made at the moment on which the underlying transactions or other flows occur that give rise to the liability to pay. This implies that taxes on products and imports are recorded at the times the products in question are produced, imported or sold, depending on the basis for taxation.
- Current taxes on income are recorded when the income to which they pertain is earned although taxes deducted at source may have to be recorded when they are deducted.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009 Chapter 3: Stocks, flows and accounting rules.

1.4.3 Valuation

Under SNA a transaction must be recorded at the same value throughout all the accounts of all the sectors involved.

Transactions are valued at the actual price agreed upon by the economic agents. The basic reference for valuation in the SNA is **current market prices**. In the absence of market transactions, valuation is made according to costs incurred (for example, non-market services produced by the government) or by reference to the market prices for analogous goods or services (for example, services of owner-occupied dwellings).

Transaction valuation methods used in the SNA are based on more than one set of prices depending upon how taxes and subsidies on products, and also transport charges, are recorded.

The measurement of output in SNA is taken using two kinds of prices, namely, basic prices and producers' prices.

Definition

The *basic price* is the amount receivable by the producer from the purchaser for a unit of a good or service produced as output minus any tax payable, and plus any subsidy receivable, by the producer as a consequence of its production or sale. It excludes any transport charges invoiced separately by the producer.

The *producer's price* is the amount receivable by the producer from the purchaser for a unit of a good or service produced as output minus any value added tax (VAT), or similar deductible tax, invoiced to the purchaser. It excludes any transport charges invoiced separately by the producer.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 6: The production account, point 6.51.

Basic price measures the amount retained by the producer and is, therefore, the price most relevant to the producer's decision taking. It excludes any taxes on products the producer receives from the purchaser and passes on to government, but includes any subsidies the producer receives from government and uses to further lower the prices charged to purchasers.

The producer's price includes taxes on products (taxes payable per unit of output) and excludes subsidies on products (subsidies receivable per unit of output). It is the price, excluding VAT, that the producer invoices to the purchaser. It is becoming increasingly common in many countries for producers to itemize taxes separately on their invoices, so the purchasers are informed about how much they are paying for the product (to the producer) and how much for the taxes (to the government).

Definition

The *Purchaser's price* is the amount paid by the purchaser, excluding any VAT or similar tax deductible by the purchaser, in order to take delivery of a unit of a good or service at the time and place required by the purchaser. The purchaser's price of a good includes any transport charges paid separately by the purchaser to take delivery at the required time and place.

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 6: The production account, point 6.64.

A purchaser has two options to buy:

- Directly from the producer. In this case, the purchaser's price may exceed the producer's price by (i) the value of any non-deductible VAT, payable by the purchaser and

- (ii) the value of any transport charges on a good paid separately by the purchaser.
- From a wholesaler or retailer. In this case, it is necessary to consider also the trade margins that the retailer will apply.

Figure III.1 presents the relationships between prices.

Figure III.1 Relationships between prices

BASIC PRICE
+ Taxes on products excluding invoiced VAT
- Subsidies on products
= PRODUCER'S PRICE
+ VAT not deductible by the purchaser
+ Separately invoiced transport charges
+ Wholesalers' and retailers' margins
= PURCHASER'S PRICES

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009

Example

Imagine the following situation:

An enterprise produces cigarettes. The value of the total production costs and the enterprise profit for a packet of cigarettes is 200 units. The enterprise must pay an excise duty, which is 20% applied to the value of each packet. The packet of cigarettes is sold to a retail trader. The transport cost is valued at 10 units and the trade margin is 20 units. In the country, the value added tax (VAT) is 20%.

The final consumer of the packet of cigarettes pays 324 units.

Evaluation at **basic price** = 200 units.

Evaluation at **producer's price** = production at basic price + taxes on products = $200 + (20\% \times 200) = 200 + 40 = 240$ units.

Evaluation at **purchaser's price** = production at producer's price + transport cost + trade margin + VAT = $240 + 10 + 20 + [(240 + 10 + 20) \times 20\%] = 324$ units.

2. Accounts and main aggregates

2.1 Accounts

The immense number of individual transactions and other flows and assets has to be aggregated in a manageable number of analytically useful groups, representing the accounts according to standard SNA classifications.

The sequence of accounts describes how income is generated, distributed, redistributed and used for consumption or the acquisition of assets and when assets are disposed of, or a liability is incurred, in order to acquire other assets or undertake more consumption than current income permits. The accounts of the economy presented in the SNA are described below.

- Current accounts consist of a production account and accounts showing the primary distribution of income, the secondary distribution of income and the use of income. In addition to these accounts the entries from the rest of the world account (imports and exports of goods and services) show the value of goods and services that reach the national economy from the rest of the world and those that are produced in the national economy but are provided to the rest of the world. In detail, the accounts are: (i) a production account; (ii) a generation of income account; (iii) an allocation of primary income account (including an entrepreneurial income account and an allocation of other primary income account); (iv) a secondary distribution of income account; (v) a use of income accounts (including a use of disposable income account and a use of adjusted disposable income account).
- Accumulation accounts are represented by four accounts dealing with changes in the values of assets held by institutional units, recording transactions in non-financial and financial assets and the other changes in the volume of assets: (i) capital account; (ii) financial account; (iii) other changes in assets account; (iv) revaluation account. The effects of price changes are recorded in the revaluation account. These four accounts enable the change in the net worth of an institutional unit or sector between the beginning and end of the accounting period to be broken down into its constituent elements by recording all changes in the prices and volumes of assets, whether resulting from transactions or not. The impact of all four accounts is brought together in balance sheets.
- Balance sheets present, with respect to a particular point in time, the values of assets owned and the liabilities owed by an institutional unit or group of units. A balance sheet may be drawn up for institutional units, institutional sectors and the total economy. It includes: (i) an opening balance sheet; (ii) total changes in assets; (iii) a closing balance sheet.
- Goods and services account (see below).

- e) The accounts for the rest of the world. The entries in the integrated accounts for the rest of the world correspond to the entries in the balance of payments, as set out in BPM sixth edition.

An alternative view of the economy focuses less on income and more on the processes of production and consumption and is presented in a goods and services account.

Definition

The goods and services account shows the balance between the total goods and services supplied as resources to the economy as output and imports (including the value of taxes less subsidies on products not already included in the valuation of output) and the use of the same goods and services as intermediate consumption, final consumption, capital formation and exports.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 16: Summarizing and integrating the accounts, point 16.27.

The goods and services account is the basic identity in the SNA. It captures the idea that all output plus imports must be accounted for in one of the two basic activities of the SNA (consumption of goods and services or accumulation of goods and services). The whole sequence of accounts is built around the goods and services account by adding transactions relating to the generation, distribution and redistribution of income and saving.

The total amount of goods and services supplied to the economy must be equal to the total use made of those goods and services. The identity is the following:

**Output + imports + taxes less subsidies on products
= Intermediate consumption + final consumption + exports + capital formation**

Based on this equation, it reflects the fact that goods and services produced in the current period are used:

- To generate more goods and services in the current period (intermediate consumption);
- To generate more goods and services in future periods (capital formation);
- To satisfy human needs immediately (final consumption).

Due to the fact that no economy is entirely closed, it is necessary to add those goods and services supplied from outside the economy (imports) and those goods and services used by other economies (exports).

2.2 Main aggregates

Aggregates in national accounts are composite values that measure one aspect of the activity of the entire economy. They are summary indicators and key magnitudes for the purposes of macroeconomic analysis and comparisons over space and time. For user needs, the aggregates of the SNA provide a simplified but complete and detailed picture of an economy.

Some aggregates can be obtained directly as totals of particular transactions in the SNA, such as total production, final consumption, gross fixed capital formation, etc. Others result from aggregating balancing items of institutional sectors accounts: value added, balance of primary incomes, disposable income and savings, etc.

Definition

A balancing item is an accounting construct obtained by subtracting the total value of the entries on one side of an account (resources or changes in liabilities) from the total value of the entries on the other side (uses or changes in assets). It cannot be measured independently of the entries in the accounts; as a derived entry, it reflects the application of the general account in rules to the specific entries on the two sides of the account.

Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 3: Stocks, flows and accounting rules, point 3.9.

Balancing items reflect the application of general accounting rules to specific entries on both sides of an account. They do not relate to any specific set of transactions, or any set of assets, and so they cannot be expressed in terms of their own price or quantity units. Balancing items are often used as key macroeconomic indicators to assess economic performance. Balancing items in sector accounts are presented in Table III.3.

Table III.3 List of balancing and net worth items

Account	Balancing items	
	Cod	Name
Production account	B1	Value Added/ Domestic Product
	B11	External balance of goods and services
Generation of income account	B2	Operating Surplus
	B3	Mixed Income
Allocation of primary income account	B5	Balance of primary incomes/ National Income
Entrepreneurial income account	B4	Entrepreneurial income
Allocation of other primary income account	B5	Balance of primary incomes/ National Income
Secondary distribution of income account	B6	Disposable Income
Redistribution of income in kind account	B7	Adjusted disposable Income
Use of disposable income account	B8	Saving
	B12	Current external balance
Capital account		
Changes in assets	B9	Net lending (+) / net borrowing (-)
Change in liabilities and net worth	B101	Change in net worth due to saving and capital transfers
Financial account	B9	Net lending (+) / net borrowing (-)
Other change in the volume of assets account	B102	Changes in net worth due to other changes in volume of assets
Revaluation account	B103	Changes in net worth due to nominal holding gains/losses
Balance sheets	B10	Changes in net worth, total Net worth
	B90	Net worth

Source: *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009

Based on balancing items, the main aggregates of the 2008 SNA used as key indicators for assessing economic performance are:

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- Gross National Income (GNI) and Net National Income (NNI);
- Gross National Disposable Income (GNDI) and Net National Disposable Income (NNDI).

The concept 'domestic product' is basically a production concept: it measures the total value created in the production of goods and services. On the other hand, national income and national disposable income are income concepts designed to measure different aspects of the total incomes receivable in the economy.

The ways of calculating the main aggregates using different approaches are presented in Table III.4.

Table III.4: Main aggregates in SNA

Production Approach (1)	Expenditure Approach (2)	Income Approach (3)
+ Sum of values added at basic prices of all producers + Taxes on products - Subsidies on products	+ Final consumption expenditure + Gross fixed capital formation + Changes in inventories + Exports of goods & services - Imports of goods & services	+ Compensation of employees + Taxes on production and imports - Subsidies on production + Operating surplus / mixed income
= Gross domestic product (GDP) at market prices (I)		
- Consumption of fixed capital = Net domestic product		
(I) + Primary incomes receivable from the rest of the world - Primary incomes payable to the rest of the world		
= Gross national income (GNI) at market prices (II)		Can also be calculated as the sum of the balance of primary incomes of all institutional sectors
- Consumption of fixed capital = Net national income at market prices		
(II) + Current transfers receivable from the rest of the world - Current transfers payable to the rest of the world		
= Gross national disposable income (GNDI) at market prices (III)		Can also be calculated as the sum of the disposable incomes of all institutional sectors
- Consumption of fixed capital = Net national disposable income at market prices		

Source: System of National Accounts 1993, Training manual, SADC, 1999

The most well-known and well-used aggregate is GDP. The objective of the first phase of implementation of national accounts is to estimate it by production and expenditure.

The three methods of GDP estimation define the needs and the limits for the generation of statistics in support of national accounts which differ from country to country. In these conditions, there are several national accounts compilation practices, from the very simple GDP compilation by industry and type of expenditures to more comprehensive systems of national accounts, including supply and use tables, institutional sector accounts, flow of funds analysis, balance sheets, and, recently, satellite extensions such as environmental accounts or human resources accounts, based on milestones (see Chapter II: Building the SNA, point 3.1. Phase A: Aims and objectives).

(1) The production approach

GDP using the production approach is obtained in the framework of the production account. Producers engaged in production can be either institutional units classified by institutional units or establishments classified by industry. The latter is the most common in practice.

The compilation formula is:

$$\text{GDP at market prices} = \text{gross value added (GVA) at basic prices} \\ + \text{taxes on products} \\ - \text{subsidies on products}$$

Value added represents a measure of the additional value created in the process of production and it is equal to:

$$\text{Gross value added} = \text{production} - \text{intermediate consumption}$$

To find out more...

For additional information concerning the content and evaluation of production and intermediate consumption:

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 6: The production account;
- *National Accounts: A practical introduction*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.85, UN 2003, Chapter III: Production account and goods and services account.

(2) The expenditure approach

GDP using the expenditure approach is estimated in the framework of the goods and services account. The extended compilation formula is:

GDP at market prices = Final consumption expenditure (of Households, of NPISHs, of Government)
 + Gross capital formation (Gross fixed capital formation and Change in inventories)
 + Exports of goods and services
 - Imports of goods and services

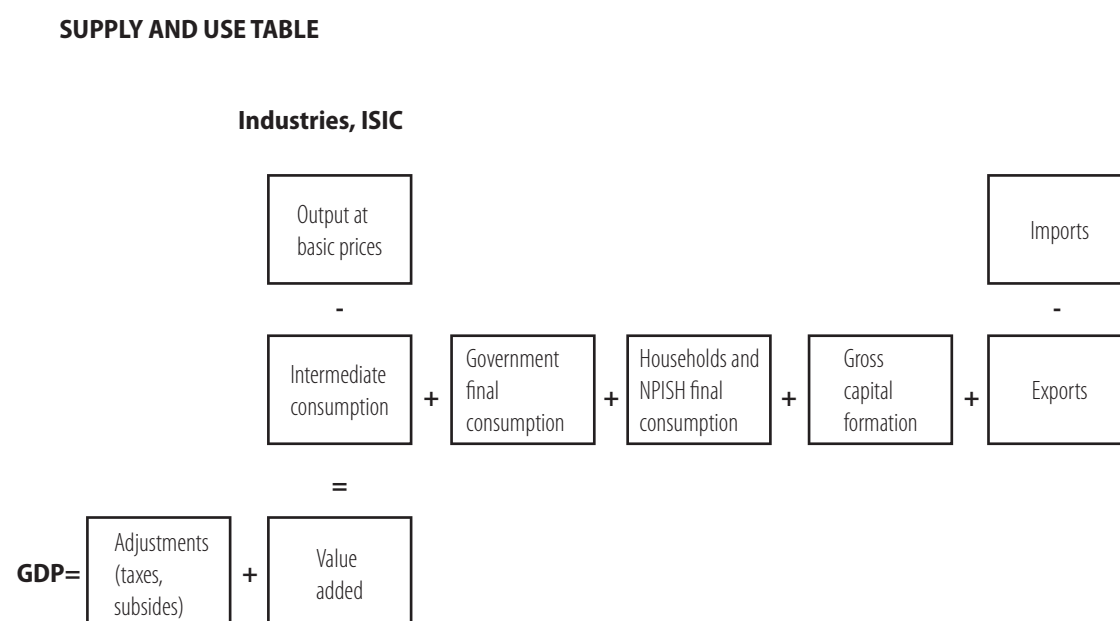
(3) The income approach

GDP estimated using the income approach is derived from the generation of income account for producers classified by industry or by institutional sector. The produced value added components are entered into the formula (see Table III.4). For this reason, this procedure is sometimes used as an alternative to the production approach for calculating values added.

Table III.4 shows that **net aggregates** can be obtained by deducting consumption of fixed capital from gross aggregates. Consumption of fixed capital is not a value created in the production process; it is a production cost. Therefore, values added, domestic product and income measures should be preferably measured net. However, it is very difficult to measure consumption of fixed capital properly and many countries do not measure it at all. Gross aggregates are more often available and more widely used.

The production-expenditure-income approaches constitute the basic ways of compiling national accounts and correspond to the objectives of milestones 1 and 2. These simplest approaches to national accounting aim at estimating GDP and its alternative breakdowns by economic activity or industry, by expenditures, and by income (which represents the cost components of value added). The scope of this approach is represented in Figure III.2.

Figure III.2: Production, expenditure, income approaches to national accounts compilation



Source: *A system approach to national accounts compilation*, Studies in methods, Series F, No 77, UN 1999

There are countries where often the GDP estimation follows one or two approaches; in most of the cases the income approach is missing as it is generally regarded to be the most difficult one to compile. Most often, GDP is estimated by the production approach. The basic statistical units used may be establishments, which group production activities with similar characteristics in terms of output, inputs and technology used; alternatively, in less refined approaches, institutional units may be used. Total output and intermediate consumption are compiled and hence value added is obtained as the difference between the two. The statistical sources that are used range from specific surveys and censuses (agriculture, industry, etc.) to business accounts of public and private

enterprises from financial and non-financial sectors as well as administrative records concerning government revenues and expenditures. Initial estimates may be further adjusted for output of households for own consumption, imputations for the output of financial intermediaries (FISIM) and insurance, and so on.

Statistical and administrative data sources used for national accounts compilation are presented in Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for national accounts*, Section 2: *Statistical data sources* and Chapter V: *Administrative data sources*, Section 1: *What are administrative sources*.

When using the expenditure approach, the different elements are estimated in the following way:

- Government final consumption expenditure is estimated based on data obtained from government records concerning its expenditures and revenues;
- Household final consumption expenditure is estimated based on retail sales statistics or, where available, household expenditure surveys and other appropriate sources;
- Data on fixed capital formation is obtained from specialized surveys or from general production surveys and, in the case of government and public corporations, directly from the accounts;
- Changes in inventories are more difficult to estimate, especially because of the related problems of stock valuation.
- Import and export estimates are based on foreign trade and balance of payments statistics, which are in general readily available.

The income approach is used by relatively few countries because of statistical measurement problems. If applied, however, independent estimates are most frequently made for compensation of employees which are based on labour statistics and wage rates, and taxes on production and imports which are estimated based on government data. Estimates of consumption of fixed capital are often not included because they can only be made if produced capital stock data are available. The operating surplus can be estimated using as a basis profit and loss accounts and similar statements of enterprises.

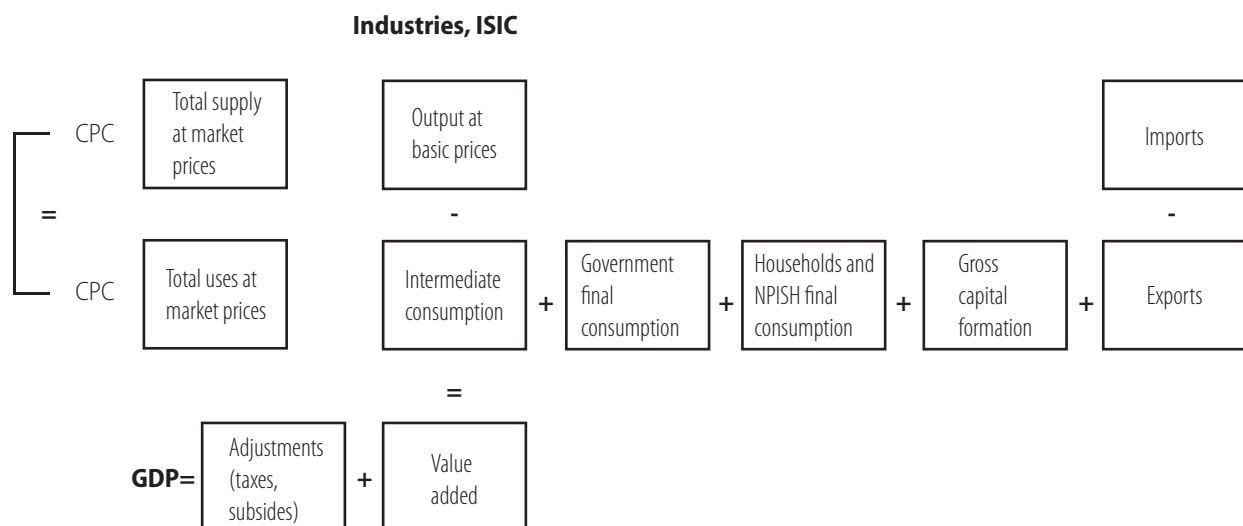
Normally, the three approaches described above should be used simultaneously and independently from each other. If that is the case, the data resulting from each approach can be used as checks to evaluate and analysis the data obtained from the other two approaches and to determine the final data.

The Chapter II: *Building the SNA*, point 3.3: Phase C: *Compilation* presents the estimation process for national ac-counts.

The reconciliation of GDP obtained based on the three approaches independently should be realized at a detailed level, by cross-checking, for example, “final expenditures by products” and “industries producing those products”.

The previous practices could be characterized as the more simple approach to implementing milestone 1. The next degree of complexity is reached by including, in addition to the data elements of Box III.2, output and intermediate consumption for all industries and by introducing a systematic breakdown of the supply and use rows by products or CPC categories, as well as by including data on labour inputs per industry. This could be considered as the more complete approach to milestone 1; the result is shown in Figure III.3, which represents a genuine supply and use framework. The compilation methods that utilize the product detail, as represented in the box, are generally characterized as the “commodity flow” approach to national accounts compilation. The inclusion of additional detail on output, intermediate consumption and labour inputs serves for more comprehensive analyses based on production functions.

Figure III.3: Commodity flow approaches to national accounts compilation



Source: *A system approach to national accounts compilation, Studies in methods, Series F/No77, UN 1999*

The basic principle of the methods described is that, on the level of the total economy, the identity for total resources and total uses must hold for each individual product category.

Concerning the statistical sources for the commodity flow method, they are similar to the sources mentioned above, with the additional requirement of a detailed product (i.e. goods and services) breakdown. Where detailed annual information is not available, structural parameters such as input/output coefficients or intermediate/final consumption proportions are used to distribute the supply of products over the uses.

The commodity flow method provides a very detailed set of data reconciliation checks at the level of product or commodity groups, and improves the reliability of the GDP data as compared to the estimates resulting from the production-expenditure-income approaches which often only reconcile data at the aggregate GDP level.

The compilation approaches mentioned so far are strongly production-oriented and yield results which correspond to what was defined as milestone 1. When the coverage of national accounts is extended to describe not only the production process, but also the ensuing income distribution and redistribution processes, and the linkages to capital and financial flows and stocks, the country passes to milestone 2. The extension of the previous compilation approach to this more comprehensive approach requires that data not only be compiled on the basis of establishments that are grouped together by industries, but also for institutional units – corporations, households, government units – that together define the institutional sectors of the 1993 SNA. The introduction of institutional units in the collection of statistical data often required costly changes in the content of surveys and survey procedures. This represents one of the objectives of the SNA implementation strategy and its advocacy should be developed.

For more information see Chapter II: *Building the SNA*, section 2: *The 2008 SNA implementation strategy*.

3. Recommended reading

- *National Accounts: A practical introduction*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.85, UN 2003; chapter I: Overview; Chapter III: Production account and goods and services account; Chapter V: Enterprises, establishments and industries;
- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009; Chapter 2: Overview; Chapter 3: Stocks, flows and accounting rules; Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors; Chapter 5: Enterprises, establishments and industries;
- *Understanding National Accounts*, Lequiller F., Blades D., OECD 2006; Chapter IV: Production: what it Includes and Excludes; Chapter V: Defining Final Uses of GDP;
- *Guide méthodologique pour l'élaboration des comptes nationaux dans les états membre d'Afristat*, Afristat, Serie Méthodes No.4, 2001; Chapter I: Introduction au system de comptabilité nationale;
- *System of National Accounts 1993*, Training manual, SADC, 1999; Chapter II: Categories in the 1993 SNA; Chapter IV: Main aggregates;
- *Balance of Payments and Investment Position*, Sixth Edition, (BPM6), IMF, 2009;

Statistical Infrastructure for National Accounts

4



The chapter in brief

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the fact that the status and quality of the statistical infrastructure make a decisive contribution to the compilation and quality of national accounts. The main pillars of statistical infrastructure are identified and described in separate sections: the statistical business register, classifications and statistical data sources. While a good-quality statistical business register should offer a realistic view of a country's businesses, the classifications implemented by countries should envisage comparability in space and time. Statistical data sources may directly provide the information required for compiling national accounts.

1. The basis: business register and statistical classifications

1.1 Business Register

The Statistical Business Register (SBR) plays an essential role in the construction and maintenance of an integrated economic information system, serving multiple purposes. One of these objectives is to provide quality data needed for the compilation of national accounts indicators.

Definition

Business registers for statistical purposes are the main source for business demography, as they keep track of business creations and closures as well as the structural changes in the economy by concentration or de-concentration, brought about by operations such as mergers, takeovers, break-ups, split-offs and restructuring.

Source: Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 February 2008 establishing a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes and repealing Council regulation (EEC) no. 2186/93

In other words, it is a list of businesses which includes those engaged in the production of goods and services.

For statistical purposes the business register is a tool used for preparing and coordinating surveys as well as an information source used in the statistical analysis of the business population and its demography. It is also used for administrative data as well as for identifying and constructing statistical units.

The register comprises:

- All enterprises carrying on economic activities contributing to the GDP and their local units;
- The legal units of which those enterprises consist;
- Truncated enterprise groups and multinational enterprise groups;
- All resident enterprise groups.

1.1.1 Objective

The SBR exists primarily for the purpose of supplying a framework for all economic surveys. Therefore it is designed to provide a means of coordinating the coverage of business surveys and of achieving consistency in classifying statistical reporting units. It also serves as a data source for compiling demographic information about businesses.

1.1.2 Variables

The typical units in an SBR are legal units and local units, whereas for statistical purposes, these must be transformed into units such as enterprises and establishments.

Legal units include:

- Legal persons whose existence is recognized by law irrespective of the individuals or institutions which may own them or are members of them;
- Natural persons engaged in an economic activity in their own right.

A legal unit always forms, either by itself or sometimes in combination with other legal units, the legal basis for a statistical unit known as the 'enterprise'.

A **local unit** is an enterprise or part thereof (e. g. a workshop, factory, warehouse, office, mine or depot) situated in a geographically identified place. At or from this place, an economic activity is carried out for which – save for certain exceptions – one or more persons work (even if only part-time) for one and the same enterprise.

Chapter III: *Basic concepts*, Section 1: *Fundamentals for national accounting* outlines the relations between enterprises, local unit and establishment.

The units listed in a register should be described according to type of statistical unit (legal unit, local unit and enterprise) using three categories of variables:

- **Identification variables** (identity number, name of enterprise, name of the owner, address, legal status);
- **Stratification variables** (economic activity, number of employees, sales turnover, geographical location);
- **Demographic variables** (births, date of changes in economic activity, deaths).

It is important to ensure the utmost accuracy of data, particularly those used as stratification variables in the sampling process (for example, variables relating to size and activity classification), together with identification data thus enabling contact with firms. The main variables included in an SBR are presented in Boxes IV.1, IV.2 and IV.3.

The use of standardized statistical units in an SBR guarantees time-consistency in surveys, avoids duplications and omissions in data collection and improves the final quality of results by allowing greater coordination between surveys. The existence of a unique identification number, usually a legal code attributed by the tax administration, can greatly enhance the capacity for coordination between the various sources, including administrative ones.

To find out more...

Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics, OECD, Eurostat, 2007, available from: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/8/39974460.pdf>

Box IV.1: Main variables collected for a Legal Unit

Identification Characteristics	1.1.		Identity number
	1.2a.		Name
	1.2b.		Address (including postcode) at the most detailed level
	1.2c.	Optional	Telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address, and information to permit electronic collection of data
	1.3.		Value Added Tax (VAT) registration number or, failing that, other administrative identity number
Demographic Characteristics	1.4.		Date of incorporation for legal persons or date of official recognition as an economic operator for natural persons
	1.5.		Date on which the legal unit ceased to be part of an enterprise (as identified in 3.3)
Economic/ Stratification Characteristics	1.6.		Legal form
	1.7.	Optional	Reference to balance sheet data (for units required for publication of accounts), and Reference to the balance of payments register or foreign direct investment register, and Reference to the farm register
Link with Enterprise Group	1.8.		Identity number of the all-resident/truncated enterprise group, to which the unit belongs
	1.9.		Date of association to the all-resident/truncated group
	1.10.		Date of separation from the all-resident/truncated group
	1.11a.		Identity number(s) of resident legal unit(s), which are controlled by the legal unit
	1.11b.		Identity number of the resident legal unit, which controls the legal unit
	1.12a.		Country(ies) of registration, and identity number(s) or name(s) and address(es) of the non-resident legal unit(s), which are controlled by the legal unit
	1.12b.	Conditional	VAT number(s) of non-resident legal which are controlled by the legal unit
	1.13a.		Country of registration, and identity number or name and address of the non-resident legal unit, which controls the legal unit
	1.13b.	Conditional	VAT number of the non-resident legal unit, which controls the legal unit
	1.14a.	Conditional	(a) Identity number(s), and (b) shares (%) of resident legal unit(s) owned by the legal unit
	1.14b.	Conditional	(a) Identity number(s), and (b) shares (%) of resident legal unit(s), which own(s) the legal unit
	1.15.	Conditional	(a) Country(ies) of registration, and (b) identity number(s) or, name(s), address(es), and VAT number(s), and (c) shares (%) of non-resident legal unit(s) owned by the legal unit
1.16.	Conditional	(a) Country(ies) of registration, and (b) identity number(s) or, name(s), address(es), and VAT number(s), and (c) shares (%) of non-resident legal unit(s), which own(s) the legal unit	

Source: Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 of 20 February 2008 on establishing a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 2186/93

Box IV.2: Main variables collected for a Local Unit

Identification Characteristics	2.1.		Identity number
	2.2a.		Name
	2.2b.		Address (including postcode) at the most detailed level
	2.2c.	Optional	Telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address, and information to permit electronic collection of data
	2.3.		Identity number of the enterprise (3.1), to which the local unit belongs
Demographic Characteristics	2.4.		Date of commencement of activities
	2.5.		Date of final cessation of activities
Economic/ Stratification Characteristics	2.6.		Principal activity code at 4-digit level
	2.7.	Conditional	Secondary activities, if any, at 4-digit level; this point concerns only local units which are the subject of surveys
	2.8.	Optional	Activity carried out in the local unit constituting an ancillary activity of the enterprise to which it belongs (Yes/No)
	2.9.		Number of persons employed
	2.10a.		Number of employees
	2.10b.	Optional	Number of employees in full-time equivalents
2.11.		Geographical location code	
Links with Other Registers	2.12.	Conditional	Reference to associated registers, in which the local unit appears and which contain information which can be used for statistical purposes (if such associated registers exist)

Source: Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 of 20 February 2008 on establishing a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 2186/93

Box IV.3: Main variables collected for an Enterprise

Identification Characteristics	3.1.		Identity number
	3.2a.		Name
	3.2b.	Optional	Postal, e-mail and website addresses
	3.3.		Identity number(s) of the legal unit(s) of which the enterprise consist(s)
Demographic Characteristics	3.4.		Date of commencement of activities
	3.5.		Date of final cessation of activities
Economic/ Stratification Characteristics	3.6.		Principal activity code at 4-digit level
	3.7.	Conditional	Secondary activities, if any, at 4-digit level; this point concerns only enterprises which are the subject of surveys
	3.8.		Number of persons employed
	3.9a.		Number of employees
	3.9b.	Optional	Number of employees in full-time equivalents
	3.10a.		Turnover save as provided in 3.10b
	3.10b.	Optional	Turnover for agriculture, hunting and forestry, fishing, and public administration and defense, compulsory social security, private households with employed persons and extra-territorial organizations
3.11.		Institutional sector and sub-sector according European System of Accounts	
Links with Other Registers	3.12.		Identity number of the all-resident/truncated enterprise group, to which the enterprise belongs

Source: Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 of 20 February 2008 on establishing a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 2186/93

1.1.3 Implementing and developing an SBR

The starting point for the construction of an SBR is invariably the use of administrative records showing the enterprises created and maintained for supporting administrative regulations. In order to answer statistical needs, information from administrative registers is adapted and included in an SBR.

The main issue in managing an SBR is its maintenance and update, given the pace of change in the business world. Registers must be updated at least once a year.

The most effective method of updating an SBR combines using information from administrative sources⁽¹⁾, business surveys and register maintenance surveys.

- a) *Administrative sources* have the advantage of covering the entire enterprise universe. It is essential for statistical and administrative bodies to employ a standardized activity classification system. Failure to do so may seriously compromise the final quality of the results of surveys based on a register. The use of conversion tables to adapt the data to the classification employed by the statistical body is not recommended, because this process results in major quality losses, since it is common to find situations where the transfer is not direct or one-to-one. To avoid this problem, statistical offices should attempt to persuade the bodies that produce the main administrative records to use a single activity classification table.
- b) *Economic Surveys* offer more complete information, albeit for a more restricted population.
- c) *Register Maintenance Surveys* are specifically undertaken to update an SBR. Some statistical agencies undertake the survey in cooperation with the primary registration authority. For small enterprises, including informal sector operators, Register Maintenance Surveys are crucial.

Box IV.4: An example of Business Register implementation

H. Berby and Y. Bergström (1997), Development of a Demonstration Data Base for Business Register Management. An Example of a Statistical Business Register According to the Regulation and Recommendations of the European Union, Statistics Norway.

Source: http://www.ssb.no/histstat/doc/doc_199709.pdf

(1) Authorities responsible for the primary registration of private sector businesses, tax offices, social security offices, government departments for information about public sector establishments (schools, hospitals, public utilities etc.), organizations of professionals (physicians, lawyers, etc.) and the ministry of agriculture for agricultural establishments.

Box IV.5: Implementation of the Brazilian statistical business register

The Central Business Register (CEMPRE) is a comprehensive database maintained by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics or IBGE, which contains data about the universe of units enrolled in the tax office, companies and their local units in the Brazilian economy.

The Business Register has adopted the same definition of legal units as that used by the administrative records, that is, enterprises are the legal units registered in the Internal Revenue Service and each of their different addresses is treated as an establishment. This means that the smallest unit in the statistical register is a mix of the theoretical definition of a local unit and an establishment: one location, one or more activities, and one legal identification (usually one for each local unit, but in a few cases more than one legal identification for the same location may be found).

CEMPRE checks the existence of enterprises, their different local units (addresses), identifying them by name (legal situation), location, unique legal identification number, activity code, size (based on the variable number of employees, salaries paid, income) and other elements needed for administering the register, these constitute the reference base for the sampling design of business surveys.

All major administrative registers, as well as CEMPRE, use a single identification number for legal units. This 14-digit key-number enables perfect linkage between administrative and statistical business registers, and also links enterprises to their local units. The first 8 digits are assigned to an enterprise, the following 4 digits are a serial number for identifying its local units, and the 2 last digits are check codes. The existence of a single identification code and the adoption of the same basic unit of investigation by administrative registers and the statistical institute facilitate update procedures and prevent duplicate entries for an enterprise in the register.

The maintenance and update of the Business Register is based on previous sample surveys and complemented by data from the administrative record with the widest coverage available.

Source: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) – Estadísticas del Censo Central de Empresas (CEMBRE), IBGE. <http://www.ibge.gov.br/>

1.1.4 Questions for practitioners

An important issue relating to the construction of statistics and the national accounts system of a country is the existence and the quality of its business register.

The main issues concerning business registers relevant for statistics and national accounts are:

- Does an SBR exist in the statistical office or does it need to be constructed? What other administrative records and registers exist in the country?
- If an SBR exists, how good is the quality of its information? Is it based on the most suitable administrative

sources? Is it updated regularly? In countries where administrative records are insufficient or unavailable for frequently feeding and updating their business registers, an economic census becomes a crucial tool for providing information about active enterprises and establishments required for compiling national accounts.

- To what extent does the quality of an *SBR* affect the quality of statistical surveys used for compiling national accounts?
- Is the classification of industries used in an *SBR* in line with *SNA* requirements?
- Is the *SBR* used as a sample for statistical surveys?

1.2 Classifications

Classifications are a key element in the compilation of statistical indicators. The *SNA* uses several classifications; some of them are specific to the compiling of national accounts, such as classifying units into institutional sectors, goods and services, or transactions. Others are common to national accounts and other statistical domains.

The premise used for compiling national accounts is that data sources should be adapted and collected in accordance with international classifications.

The implementation of a classification and the main classifications used in *SNA* are presented below.

1.2.1 Importance of adopting international classifications

Definition

Classifications are an exhaustive and structured set of mutually exclusive and well-described categories, often presented in a hierarchy that is reflected by the numeric or alphabetical codes assigned to them, used to standardize concepts and compile data.

Source: Standard Statistical Classifications: Basic Principles, E. Hoffmann, M. Chamie, paper presented to the 30th UN Statistical Commission, 1999

Classifications organize units such as persons, enterprises, activities, etc. into groups according to a standard format defined according to the principles and criteria that have been used to construct them.

A *standard statistical classification (SSC)* is a set of discrete categories that may be assigned to a specific variable registered in a statistical survey or in an administrative file, and used in the production or presentation of statistics. National statistical authorities are responsible for the implementation, development, use and updating and/or revision of the national standard statistical classifications (*NSSCs*).

International standard statistical classifications (ISSCs) are developed and adopted by international institutions to ensure correct implementation of international agreements and

to standardize national and international communication, promoting comparability of international statistics. *ISSCs* are products of agreements between national authorities responsible for statistics in the respective areas, and may serve as models for developing corresponding national, multinational and regional statistical instruments.

One of the advantages of *ISSCs* is that they can be adopted as national classifications by countries that do not have the experience or resources to develop them; in addition they can be used as a guide for adapting national classifications to international standards.

1.2.2 Implementing a classification

Four types of methodological issues must be considered when adapting *ISSCs* for national use: (i) issues relating to the identification of user requirements; (ii) issues relating to the conceptual basis for the *SSCs* and their structure; (iii) issues relating to the collection of the information required for developing the classification and (iv) maintenance and update of classifications.

- i. User requirements:* It should be determined who the users are, and how they will use the classification and the statistics produced with its help, to accommodate the adaptation of *ISSCs* to national needs.
- ii. Conceptual tasks:* Primary statistical units⁽²⁾ should be identified, as well as the possible *ISSC* categories to be assigned to them. How statistical units are linked to the classification's primary unit needs to be determined. The structure of the classification needs to be defined in order to arrange content in such way that the aggregations of the most detailed categories in the set are based upon similar criteria and which will be meaningful for descriptive and analytic comparisons. Rules should be drawn up to identify when statistical units should be classified into the same most detailed classification category, and when they should be classified differently. Similarity criteria are required to define higher-level categories (aggregated groups of categories) in hierarchical classifications⁽³⁾.
- iii. Collecting and presenting information:* in order to develop a classification, information needs to be collected and explanatory notes prepared which explain the boundaries between each of the classification categories using definitional descriptions and/or listing what is included or excluded. It is also important to present correspondence tables which enable systematic comparisons between classifications to be made and which present a classification structure map, listing levels, codes, hierarchies, etc. Correspondence tables indicate how, where and to what extent, concepts and categories in one classification may

(2) The observable units that can be assigned to one unique category of the classification without reference to any other observable unit.

(3) A tree-like structure consists of different levels into which a response can be classified depending on its detail. The most detailed level is always the lowest level of the classification.

be found in other classifications, or in earlier versions of the same classification.

- iv. *Maintenance of a classification* includes the activities undertaken to ensure classification errors, or ones in the explanatory notes or associated coding tools are corrected. Updating is an important process for presenting all the news in the field, for modifying descriptive category definitions, as well as introducing new categories into the existing structure and new coding tools.

Box IV.6: Cases of conceptual tasks for implementing a classification

Defining the primary variable(s) of a classification:

In the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), the primary variable is “occupation” which is defined as “the main tasks and duties of work performed”. In ISIC, the primary variable is “activity” defined as the main productive economic activity of a unit (establishment, enterprise or household), as indicated by the principal production process of that economic activity.

Defining rules for linking different statistical units to the classification’s primary unit:

In the case of classifying persons by ‘industry’, e.g. according to ISIC, a link has to be established between each person and a job, e.g. the ‘main job’ held during the reference period, which can then be linked to an establishment, as this is one of the main statistical units for ISIC.

Formulating rules for classifying units into the same detailed categories:

In ISCO, the rule is that when the main tasks and duties of a set of jobs are characterized by a high degree of similarity, then these jobs should be classified into the same detailed category. The main tasks and duties define an occupation, which is the designation for the most detailed element in the set of categories of this classification. For ISIC, the rule is that when the economic activity of two establishments is characterized by a common production process resulting in the same homogeneous set of products, then the two units should be classified into the same detailed category.

Formulating similarity criteria for defining higher level categories:

In ISCO, the main similarity criteria are the skill level and skill specializations needed to carry out the tasks and duties of the jobs, where skill level is the main criterion used to delineate the most aggregate categories, while skill specialization is used to delineate the more detailed categories within the aggregate categories.

Source: Standard statistical classification- Basic Principles, E. Hoffmann, M. Chamie, paper presented at the 30th UN Statistical Commission, 1999.

1.2.3 Main classifications

- a) **Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities Revision 4 (ISIC, Rev.4)** is the international reference classification for productive activities. It groups activities according to homogeneous production technologies for a range of products.

The scope of ISIC is to provide a set of activity categories that can be utilized for the collection and reporting of statistics according to such activities. It provides a comprehensive framework within which economic data can be collected and reported in a format that is designed for purposes of economic analysis, decision-taking and policy-making. ISIC Rev.4 aims to present a set of activity categories in such a way that entities can be classified according to the economic activity they carry out. ISIC Rev.4 is a classification according to kind of economic activity.

To find out more...

International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities - Revision 4, Statistical papers, Series M No. 4/Rev.4, UN 2008, available from: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/seriesm_4rev4e.pdf

Box IV.7: Top Level of ISIC Rev.4

- A** - Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- B** - Mining and quarrying
- C** - Manufacturing
- D** - Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- E** - Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
- F** - Construction
- G** - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- H** - Transportation and storage
- I** - Accommodation and food service activities
- J** - Information and communication
- K** - Financial and insurance activities
- L** - Real estate activities
- M** - Professional, scientific and technical activities
- N** - Administrative and support service activities
- O** - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
- P** - Education
- Q** - Human health and social work activities
- R** - Arts, entertainment and recreation
- S** - Other service activities
- T** - Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use
- U** - Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies

The *main uses* of ISIC are:

- In the field of *national accounts*, the ISIC classification is used to develop the production account and the generation of income accounts by industry. In this sense, the following main aggregates are compiled by industry: output, intermediate consumption, value added, compensation of employees, gross operating surplus. The supply and uses tables are based on ISIC, providing the value of different products produced by and consumed in different industries.
- ISIC provides the basis for the construction of the survey framework, namely the Statistical Business Register. An SBR contains information on the enterprises detailed in different classifications: the one used for the main activity being ISIC.

More information about the Statistical Business Register (SBR) is presented in section 1.1: *Business register*.

- The observation and collection of selling prices for industrial products used to calculate the *industrial production price index (IPPI)* are carried out on a representative sample of economic operators for each ISIC activity class.
- ISIC is the basis for addressing the reports and surveys of enterprises related to their *activity performance*, thus obtaining indicators (intermediate inputs, compensation of employees, fixed assets, etc.) by industry. *Structural surveys* cover enterprises from almost all ISIC classes. The turnover/value and volume indices of turnover are obtained from ISIC. Specific industry surveys are based on samples from the business register, enterprises involved in the same activity formed by grouping ISIC classes.
- Many *social indicators* relate to ISIC classification, being compiled by industry indicators such as: number of employees, gross/net average salary, labour force cost indices, etc.

Box IV.8: Examples of national classification adaptations to ISIC

General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities (NACE) has been developed using ISIC Rev.4, categories at all levels of NACE have been defined so as to be either identical or to form subsets of single ISIC categories.

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was developed in the mid-1990s and has undergone some changes to increase comparability among the three custodians of this classification (Canada, Mexico and USA). However, definitions of individual categories have been designed in a way that statistical data collected according to NAICS can be aggregated into the two-digit divisions of ISIC, Rev.4, ensuring comparability of data.

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) was revised in 2006 and broadly aligned with ISIC at the detailed level.

More information concerning national classifications is available from United Nations Statistics Division, at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/ctryreg/default.asp?Lg=1>

- b) Central Product Classification Version 2 (CPC Ver.2)** is a classification based on the physical characteristics of goods or on the nature of services rendered. It includes products that are an output of an economic activity, including transportable goods, non-transportable goods and services. CPC presents categories for all products that can be the object of domestic or international transactions or that can be stocked.

CPC Ver. 2, finalized in 2008, was imposed by the revision of the Harmonized System in 2007, by the fourth revision of ISIC and by the changes in the world economy.

To find out more...

Central Product Classification (CPC) – Version 2, available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/cpc-2.asp>

The **main purpose** of the CPC is to provide a framework for comparing international product statistics and to serve as a guide for developing or revising existing product classification schemes to make them compatible with international standards.

The **main uses** of CPC are:

- The SNA uses the CPC to *balance the supply and uses tables*. In this sense, all main component aggregates are balanced by product;
- The CPC is used as an instrument for assembling and tabulating all kinds of *statistics requiring product detail*;
- For the calculation of *industrial production indices*, quantitative data regarding achieved production of goods are registered using the CPC;
- The *industrial production price index* is based on selling prices for industrial products identified by CPC, for selected industries classified using ISIC.

Box IV.9: Top Level of CPC Ver.2

- 1 - Agriculture, forestry and fishery products;
- 2 - Food products, beverages and tobacco; textiles, apparel and leather products;
- 3 - Other transportable goods, except metal products, machinery and equipment;
- 4 - Metal products, machinery and equipment;
- 5 - Constructions and construction services;
- 6 - Distributive trade services; accommodation, food and beverage serving services; transport services; and electricity, gas and water distribution services;
- 7 - Financial and related services; real estate services; and rental and leasing services;
- 8 - Business and production services;
- 9 - Community, social and personal services.

Box IV.10: Example of national classification adaptations to CPC

The Classification of Products by Activity (CPA) is the European version of the CPC, and the purposes it serves are in line with those of the CPC. Whilst the CPC is merely a recommended classification, however, the CPA is legally binding in the European Community. Since the elements of the CPA are based on those of the CPC, links between the CPA and the *Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System* (HS) exist in the same way as those between the CPC and the HS which have been referred to above. According to the desegregation level of the CPA, it can be broken into 21 sections identified by an alphabetical code, 88 divisions identified by a two-digit numerical code, 261 groups identified by a three-digit numerical code, 575 classes identified by a four-digit numerical code, 1342 categories identified by a five-digit numerical codes, and 3142 sub-categories identified by a six-digit numerical code.

Source: RAMON, Eurostat's Metadata Server, at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/index.cfm?TargetUrl=DSP_PUB_WELC

c) **Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4)** classifies commodities into different categories according to the nature of the merchandise and the materials used in their production as well as according to their stage of production, in turn suitable for economic analysis. The origin of SITC is the *Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS07)*. SITC is the aggregated classification of transportable goods both for international trade statistics and for analytical purposes.

The **scope** of SITC is to cover all goods *classifiable in HS except for monetary gold, gold coin and current coin*. All basic headings in SITC Rev.4, (except for 911.0- Postal packages not classified according to kind and 931.0- Special transactions and commodities not classified according to kind) are defined in terms of HS07 subheadings.

To find out more...

Standard International Trade Classification - Revision 4, Statistical papers, Series M No. 34/Rev. 4. UN 2006, available from: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_34rev4E.pdf

The SITC **is used**:

- In SNA, as a *classification of imports and exports*. This classification identifies details of commodities for a variety of purposes, including customs, statistical and analytical purposes, particularly for the presentation of external trade statistics with detailed commodity specifications.
- *To present and disseminate* the huge amount of data in respect of import and export of goods.

These three classifications (*ISIC*, *CPC* and *SITC*) are closely interrelated. *ISIC* represents the activity side of the system, *CPC* is the central instrument for classifying goods and services and *SITC* is, for analytical purposes, the aggregated classification of goods for international trade statistics. Both *CPC* and *SITC* use the headings and subheadings of the *HS* as building blocks for their categories. Subsequently, relationships with other classifications that may require a degree of comparability with *ISIC* have been added to these considerations. By rearranging the *CPC* categories according to their industrial origin and using the link between *CPC*, *SITC* and *HS*, a detailed correspondence table between *SITC*, *CPC* and *ISIC* has been established.

Box IV.11: Classification hierarchy

	<i>ISIC</i> , Rev.4	<i>CPC</i> , Ver.2	<i>SITC</i> Rev.4
Sections	21	10	10
Divisions	88	71	67
Groups	238	305	262
Classes	419	1 167	1 023
Sub-classes or basic headings	N/A	2 096	2 970

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regct.asp?Lg=1>.

d) The Classification by Broad Economic Categories (BEC)

Rev.3 was initially developed by *UNSD* for internal purposes in order to reclassify merchandise imports (reported in terms of *SITC*) into the product categories relevant to the *SNA*. Over time, many countries have started to use *BEC* for a variety of purposes including economic analysis and setting tariffs. In addition, it was designed to serve as a means of converting external trade data compiled using *SITC* into end-use categories that are meaningful within the framework of the *SNA*, namely categories approximating the three basic classes of goods in the *SNA* (capital goods, intermediate goods and consumption goods). Specifically, the subcategories of the *BEC* can be aggregated to approximate these three classes of goods. This aggregation enables external trade statistics to be considered jointly with other sets of general economic statistics, such as national accounts and industrial statistics, for national, regional or worldwide economic analysis. The *BEC* consists, at level 1, of 7 main categories identified by one-digit numerical codes, at level 2, of 14 categories identified by two-digit numerical codes, at level 3, of 8 sub-categories identified by three-digit numerical codes.

Box IV.12: Top Level of BEC

- 1 - Food and beverages;
- 2 - Industrial supplies not elsewhere specified;
- 3 - Fuels and lubricants;
- 4 - Capital goods (except transport equipment), and parts and accessories thereof;
- 5 - Transport equipment and parts and accessories thereof;
- 6 - Consumer goods not elsewhere specified;
- 7 - Goods not elsewhere specified.

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regct.asp?Cl=10&Lg=1>

e) Classifications of Expenditure According to Purpose

The *SNA* uses special classifications to analyze consumption, or more generally outlays, by different sectors depending on the purpose for which the expenditure is undertaken. Such classifications are referred to as functional classifications or as Classifications of Expenditure According to Purpose. They are: *Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)*, *Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG)*, *Classification of the Purposes of Non-Profit Institutions, Serving Households (COPNI)*, *Classification of the Outlays of Producers, According to Purpose (COPP)*.

To find out more...

Classifications of Expenditure According to Purpose: Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) - Classification of Individual Consumption - According to Purpose (COICOP) - Classification of the Purposes of Non-Profit Institutions - Serving Households (COPNI) - Classification of the Outlays of Producers - According to Purpose (COPP), Statistical paper, SERIES M No. 84. UN 2000, available from: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_84E.pdf

- *Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)* includes categories such as: food, health, education services, etc. *COICOP* has 14 main categories, the first 12 refer to individual consumption expenditure of households and the last two identify those parts of consumption expenditure by Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households (*NPISHs*) and general government that are treated as social transfers in kind.

Once the consumption expenditures of *NPISHs* and general government have been classified according to *COPNI* and *COFOG* (see following page), individual consumption expenditures in these two classifications can be transferred directly into Divisions 13 and 14 of *COICOP*. In *COICOP*, classes are divided into services, non-durables, semi-durables and durables.

Box IV. 13: COICOP main categories

- 1-12 Individual consumption expenditure of households
1. Food and non-alcoholic beverages;
2. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics;
3. Clothing and footwear;
4. Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels;
5. Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance;
6. Health;
7. Transport;
8. Communication;
9. Recreation and culture;
10. Education;
11. Restaurants and hotels;
12. Miscellaneous goods and services;
13. Individual consumption expenditure of NPISHs;
14. Individual consumption expenditure of general government.

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regct.asp?Lg=1>

- The **Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG)** is consistent with that proposed in the *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001 (GFSM 2001)*⁽⁴⁾, e.g.: government expenditure. The units of classification are, in principle, individual transactions. This means that a COFOG code should be assigned to each purchase, wage payment, transfer, loan disbursement or other outlay according to the function the transaction serves.

A major use of COFOG is to identify consumption expenditures that benefit individual households and which are transferred to Division 14 of COICOP to derive the 2008 SNA aggregate of actual final consumption of households. COFOG is also used to distinguish between individual and collective services provided by general government. Expenditures on individual services are treated as social transfers in kind. They are deducted from total final government consumption expenditure to obtain actual final government consumption and added to the final consumption expenditures of households and NPISHs to obtain actual final consumption of households.

(4) IMF (1998), *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001*, International Monetary Fund, Washington D.C., available from: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfs/manual/pdf/all.pdf>

Box IV.14: COFOG main categories

1. General public services;
2. Defence;
3. Public order and safety;
4. Economic affairs;
5. Environmental protection;
6. Housing and community amenities;
7. Health;
8. Recreation, culture and religion;
9. Education;
10. Social protection.

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regct.asp?Lg=1>.

- The **Classification of the Purposes of Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households (COPNI)** classifies individual outlays of NPISHs according to the purpose they serve. These outlays could be from health, education services, religious associations, etc. The same outlays as for COFOG can, in principle, be classified according to COPNI. The main emphasis should be on the classification of final consumption expenditure since this is to be transferred to COICOP Division 13 to obtain actual final consumption of households. NPISHs produce goods and services, but typically services, which are provided to individual households, so the consumption expenditures are treated as individual consumption.

Box IV.15: COPNI main categories

1. Housing;
2. Health;
3. Recreation and culture;
4. Education;
5. Social protection;
6. Religion;
7. Political parties, labour and professional organizations.
8. Environmental protection;
9. Services n.e.c

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regct.asp?Lg=1>

- The **Classification of Outlays of Producers According to Purpose (COPP)** applies to all producers, whether market or non-market, although in practice, market transactions are the most interesting. COPP may provide information on 'outsourcing' business services, that is, on the extent to which producers buy catering, cleaning, transport,

auditing and other services that were previously carried out as ancillary activities within the enterprise. It has to be borne in mind that this classification is mainly used to classify production cost, capital formation and other production-related data that are identified by establishments. The *COPP* categories can be easily identified with *ISIC*, and *CPC* categories.

Box IV.16: *COPP* main categories

1. Outlays on infrastructure;
2. Outlays on research and development;
3. Outlays on environmental protection;
4. Outlays on marketing;
5. Outlays on human resource development;
6. Outlays on current production programmes, administration and management.

Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=7&Lg=1>

1.2.4 Questions for practitioners

Within a business register, classifications represent the essential elements for building the statistical system, including national accounts. As part of the central framework of the national accounts compilation strategy, the main classifications used in the statistical system are adopted and/or developed according to the answers to the following questions addressed in a systematic way:

- Are international classifications implemented in the statistical system and are they used for the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistical data sources?
- What are the classifications used in the administrative system? Are they in line with the statistical classifications and can they be used for national accounts purposes?
- Are there correspondence tables between the different classifications to ensure system consistency?

If these issues are respected then this will contribute significantly to ensuring compatibility and comparability of statistics and national accounts indicators.

2. Statistical data sources

Statistical indicators estimating is based on information collected from two main sources: statistical sources (censuses and surveys) and administrative registers. The following section describes the characteristics and the collection of data from censuses and surveys; administrative data are presented in chapter V of the handbook.

2.1 Censuses

Definition

A census is a survey conducted on the full set of observation objects belonging to a given population or universe.

Source: *Glossary of Statistical Terms*, OECD, 2005, <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=2620>

Data obtained through the census is used for estimating some specific national accounts indicators and as a basis for further developments. The three principal types of censuses are:

- a) **Agricultural census:** the observation unit is the agricultural holding, which is the techno-economic unit of agricultural production (i.e. crop-producing and livestock establishments). Agricultural censuses provide detailed statistical information, such as location, areas cultivated, uncultivated, under crop, types of crop obtained, irrigated/rain-fed, number and type of animals, animal production obtained, expenditures, number of persons engaged, etc.
- b) **Economic census** for non-agricultural units: the observation unit is the non-agricultural establishment with a fixed structure (size) and location characterized by a unique economic activity. Economics censuses produce specific information on individual establishments, such as location, name, address, type of economic activity, legal and ownership status, turnover, expenditure, number of employees, etc.
- c) **Population census:** the observation unit is the household and the person. Generally it is carried out together with the housing census. The population census provides an inventory of the nation's human resources in great geographical, demographic and socio-economic detail.

In respect of the housing census, the units of enumeration are buildings, living quarters, households and occupants. The main topics included in the housing census refer to the type of ownership of the housing, type of building, construction materials, access to water and electricity, location, number of rooms, etc.

The disadvantages of a census are:

- It is very costly to enumerate (collect) the data and to process it;
- Timeliness is not high because data is available for use only many months after it is collected;
- The census is carried out after a long period, normally every five or ten years.

To find out more...

– Conducting Agricultural Censuses and Surveys, Rome, Statistical Development Series No. 6 FAO 1996, available from: <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/world-census-of-agriculture/conducting-of-agricultural-censuses-and-surveys/en/>;

– Handbook on design and implementation of business surveys, Willeboordse A., 1998, available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/statmanuals/files/Handbook%20on%20surveys.pdf>;

– Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2, Statistical papers, Series M No. 67/Rev.2, UN, 2008, available from: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/docs/P&R_Rev2.pdf

2.2 Surveys

Definition

A **survey** is an investigation about the characteristics of a given population by means of collecting data from a sample of that population and estimating their characteristics through the systematic use of statistical methodology.

Source: Glossary of Statistical Terms, OECD, 2005, <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=2620>

Surveys elicit responses about specific phenomena from a few representative units scientifically selected from a population. Population data is obtained by expanding the sample data and by extrapolating the sample size to the population size.

Surveys provide more up-to-date statistics and are less costly than a census. They are normally carried out monthly, quarterly or annually. Timeliness requires prompt data processing, thus less information is gathered.

Statistical surveys may be classified into the following categories:

- **Agricultural surveys**, to obtain data concerning crop, livestock, prices, etc;
- **Enterprise surveys**, having as main goal to obtain detailed information about the output, intermediate consumptions, investments, labor force, etc;
- **Household surveys**, are an important source of socio-economic data, providing important indicators about the revenues and expenditures of the households and the use of labour force. In developing countries, they have become a dominant form of data collection, supplementing or sometimes even replacing other data collection programmes and civil registration systems;
- **Mixed household-enterprise surveys**: The sampling units comprise a household that is asked whether any of its members own and operate an unincorporated enterprise, so it can provide coverage of small enterprises that are not included in list-based enterprise surveys, thus facilitating the measurement of the non-observed economy;
- **Price surveys**: used to obtain data on prices, which may involve collection from enterprises or households, or direct observation of prices in the market;
- **Indirect enterprise surveys**: are those in which the enterprises managing city markets are asked for data about the holders of their market stalls. This sort of survey provides only limited data about the observation units and often only in aggregate form.

The SNA requires the use of extensive information from different data sources. The information obtained is used directly, or is translated into national accounts concepts. Some information can be used indirectly, to check the plausibility of estimates and to verify some assumptions made in the process of compiling national accounts.

Box IV.17: Main statistical data sources used in SNA

Survey	Periodicity	Data items used
Manufacture industry	Monthly, Quarterly	Turnover by industry, number of employees
Statistics of energy, gas and water	Quarterly, Annual	Production of electricity, turnover, prices of energy and gas, natural gas distribution, water distribution
Statistics on oil	Monthly, Quarterly	Oil production,
Retail sales	Monthly, Quarterly	Turnover, number of employees
Building and engineering construction	Monthly, Quarterly	Value of construction, number of employees
Housing construction	Annual	Number of finished households constructions, and in different stages of execution; surface, number of rooms, etc.
Services for population	Monthly, Quarterly	Turnover, number of employees
Transport	Monthly, Quarterly	Number of passengers, number of km. made by kind of transports
Tourism	Monthly, Quarterly	Activity of tourism agency, number of hotels, number of beds, visitors
Post and telecommunication	Monthly, Quarterly	Postal, telecommunications, telephone activity
Employment, earnings	Monthly, Quarterly	Number of employees, wages and salaries
Labour force	Quarterly, Annual	Employment, number of hours worked, by industry
Households budget	Monthly, Quarterly, Annual	Household income and expenditure, by kind
Imports and exports of goods	Monthly, Quarterly, Annual	
Consumer price index	Monthly, Quarterly	
Producer price index	Monthly, Quarterly	
Construction price index	Monthly, Quarterly	
Unit value index	Monthly, Quarterly	
Agriculture production	Annual	
Structural Business Survey (cover industry, construction, transport, other services)	Annual	Enterprise income and expenditures. The main items: turnover, changes in inventories, investment, expenditures for intermediate consumption, wages and salaries, number of employees

Source: *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy – A handbook*, OECD 2002

2.2.1 Agricultural Statistics

The main sources of data for agricultural activity include censuses of agriculture and livestock, crop estimation surveys, studies on farm management and cost of cultivation studies, agricultural household surveys and various returns collected by administrative agencies concerned with prices and production relating to agriculture.

Indirect data can also be obtained from a population census, some statistics relating to industrial production, balance of payments statistics, wholesale and retail prices, quantum and prices of imports and exports, government budget expenditure and reports available from specialized agencies or boards dealing with other agricultural activities (marketing of specific crops, fertilizer or pesticides, veterinary activity, agricultural activity finances etc.), cooperative (agricultural), societies, etc.

To find out more...

Guide méthodologique pour l'élaboration des comptes nationaux dans les états membres d'Afristat, Afristat Série Méthodes No.4, 2001.

2.2.2 Structural Business Statistics

Structural Business Statistics (SBS) describes the structure, coordination and performance of economic activities, down to the most detailed activity level (several hundred sectors). The SBS collects detailed information about an enterprise's economic activity and represents the most important data source for the compilation of national accounts indicators, using a breakdown by industry. At the same time, the SBS analyses business structure and evolution, production factors used, as well as other elements.

The SBS describes the economy by observing units engaged in an economic activity, generally the enterprise. An enterprise carries out one or more activities at one or more locations and may comprise one or more legal units. Enterprises active in more than one economic area are classified under the ISIC Rev. 4 heading corresponding to their principal activity, normally the one that generates the largest amount of value added.

Box IV.18: SBS: main variables

- Demographic variables (e.g. date of the creation of the enterprise, temporary interruption, permanent closure, changes in the capital structure, etc.);
- Input-related variables: labour input (e.g. employment, personnel costs) and capital input (e.g. investment, research and development);
- Output-related variables (e.g. turnover, own account assets production, expenditures, taxes, changes in inventories, value of the direct export).

Source: Eurostat, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/euro-pean_business/introduction

The SBS covers the “business economy”, which includes industry, construction and services. In many countries, financial services are kept separate because of their specific nature and the limited availability of most types of standard business statistics in this area, but there are also countries that conduct this survey for financial institutions. SBS does not cover agriculture, forestry and fishing, nor public administration and (largely) non-market services such as education and health.

A subset of the SBS variables is available with a breakdown according to size of enterprise (for instance small and medium-sized enterprises) and with a regional breakdown (as in the regional structural business statistics).

Box IV.19: The SBS questionnaires used by the Trinidad and Tobago Statistical Office

Every year Trinidad and Tobago Statistical Office conducts an annual survey of business establishments encompassing every industry and is in charge of maintaining the Business Register. The survey is conducted in accordance with the Statistics Act, Chapter 19:02 of the Revised Laws of Trinidad & Tobago (1981) and its information is used to calculate Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

See the Business Surveys form:

<http://cso.gov.tt/files/cms/Form%20A%20-%20Survey%20of%20Establishments%20-%20General%20Long%20Form.pdf>

Implementation of the SBS in the statistical system is a strategic decision impacting on economic indicator compilation quality, and especially that of national accounts. There are many countries where, for various reasons (financial restrictions, lack of personnel, etc.) the SBS has not been yet implemented. As presented in Chapter II: Building the SNA, national accountants should start compiling indicators based on available data sources and at the same time promote the implementation of the SBS in the statistical system.

2.2.3 Construction Statistics

The construction industry generally represents a significant share of the total economic activity of a country and changes in construction tend to amplify and lead changes in the economy as a whole. Construction statistics not only give information about capital formation by the sectors served by the industry but also on the organization, structure and productivity of the industry itself. Construction statistics are captured by business surveys or household surveys depending on the type of unit that carries out the construction activity.

Countries in Phase zero or even in the first stage of SNA implementation may not have developed construction statistics and direct information on the activity of this sector may be difficult to gather. Should this be the case, national accountants should investigate the possibility of using other available information and developing their own methods of estimation, following the phases presented in Chapter II.

In the absence of direct statistical information, one method that can be developed uses production estimates as the sum of its components: intermediate consumption and gross value added (GVA). Data on domestic production, import and export of raw materials used in the construction process is the basis for estimating intermediate consumption; information concerning the number of employees, the average wage of the sector and assumptions about the gross profit of the construction enterprises can be used to estimate GVA. The number of employees in the construction sector may also be provided by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or in its absence, administrative information can be used.

To find out more...

International Recommendations for Construction Statistics, Statistical papers, Series M No. 47/Rev.1 United Nations, 1997, available from: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/EconStatKB/Attachment218.aspx>

2.2.4 Price Statistics

Major price indices are clearly related to national accounts aggregates, as these aggregates represent the major flows of goods and services and levels of tangible and intangible stocks in the economy. A precise relationship emerges between the well-known headline price indicators – the Producer Price Index (*PPI*), Consumer Price Index (*CPI*), Unit Value Index (*UVI*) – and the closely-watched national accounts aggregates. Major price indices should, in principle, cover those value aggregates in national accounts.

Consumer Price Index (*CPI*)

The consumer price index measures change over time in the general level of prices of goods and services that a reference population acquires, uses, or pays, for consumption.

A consumer price index is estimated as a series of summary measures of the period-to-period proportional change in the prices of a fixed set of consumer goods and services of constant quantity and characteristics, acquired, used or paid for by the reference population.

Each summary measure is constructed as a weighted average of a large number of elementary aggregate indices. Each of the elementary aggregate indices is estimated using a sample of prices for a defined set of goods and services obtained in or by residents of a specific region from a given set of outlets or other sources of consumption goods and services.

CPI is used in national accounts estimates to deflate expenditures at current prices or money incomes to derive measures of real consumption and real income. However, it should be noted that, in practice, price indices and expenditure series are often compiled independently of each other by different departments of a statistical agency or even by different agencies, so the coverage of a *CPI* may differ from that of total household consumption expenditure in the national account. Obviously this could lead to inconsistencies.

The price index used to deflate expenditures in national accounts should cover additional goods and services, not included in the *CPI*. However, this may not be easy to achieve in practice because the relevant price data may not be easily available, especially if the price collection procedures are geared to the *CPI*. Moreover, even if all the basic price data are available, the price index needed for deflation purposes is likely to be calculated using a different type or formula from that of the *CPI* itself.

Producer Price Index (*PPI*)

The producer price index is the measure of the change in price of goods and services either as they leave their place of production or as they enter the production process; but it is also a measure of change in price received by domestic producers for their outputs or of the change in price paid by domestic producers for their intermediate inputs.

In general terms, *PPI* can be described as an index designed to measure either the average change in price of goods and services as they leave the place of production or as they enter the production process. Thus, production price indices fall into two clear categories: input prices (i.e. purchase prices) and output prices (i.e. basic prices).

Although *PPI* is an important economic indicator, **the main use** of the *PPI* is as an output or sales data deflator when compiling production volumes and deflating capital expenditure and inventory data in national accounts. As a result, the concepts underlying the *PPI* are often conditioned by those underlying the national accounts. This can lead to various conflicts: for example, for contract escalation⁽⁵⁾, users would like weightings to be fixed for a long period. However, for deflating national accounts, current-weighted indices and fine

(5) Adjustment obligations that may be affected by changes in the prices.

aggregations are required, since, in theory, deflation is best done at the lowest level of disaggregation.

Unit Value Indices (UVI)

The unit value index is a composite cost index designed to express, in a single index, price (value) changes involving a range of internationally traded commodities. UVI provides an overall measure of price changes in imported/exported goods, although they not only reflect changes in price but also changes in quantity.

Unit value is calculated as the ratio of commodity value (\$) to net commodity mass (kg), derived from administrative customs documents: $UVI = \text{\$/Kg}$. *Export Price Index (XPI)* and *Import Price Index (MPI)* are based on unit value indices and price survey indices. These indices are used in national accounts as export and import value deflators to obtain these figures in quantity terms.

In many countries, where no XPI and MPI exist, UVI is used as a proxy for pure price or survey-based price index. Unit value indices were suggested by the United Nations⁽⁶⁾ for countries with a tight or medium budget, while well-endowed countries were advised to base their external trade price indices on data from establishment surveys. It should be noted that unit value indices may lead to error mainly due to changes in the mix of heterogeneous information collected in customs documents, but sometimes also due to the often poor quality of data on quantities.

Construction Price Index

The construction price index provides measures of price change in either inputs to, or outputs of construction activity. It is used to track changes/trends in the cost (or price) of construction. However, it does not provide information on the current market value of construction work, earning capacity or rental values.

The best-known types of construction price index are the following:

- a) **Input price index:** measures price change in inputs to the construction process by separately monitoring the cost of each factor. This generally entails compiling a weighted index of wages and materials costs
- b) **Output price index:** measures price change in what is produced by entities engaged in a construction activity. It covers most of the items that are normally included in the price paid by purchasers or clients to constructors. These items generally include materials, labour, equipment hire, land preparation costs, bathroom/kitchen fittings, overheads, profits, and trade margins
- c) **Seller's price index:** measures price change in construction output paid by the purchaser or final owner of the construction activity output. The term 'seller's price' is

used to distinguish it from 'purchasers' price' as used in the SNA, since the latter excludes the land component of ownership transfer.

Box IV.20: Examples of Construction Price Index

An example of an input index is the building costs index compiled in Finland which monitors price change in 95 cost items using price information obtained from construction enterprises and price lists.

The Austrian residential and non-residential building output price index records price change in residential buildings by monitoring changes in 82 representative construction operations involved in their construction.

Source: Main economic indicators – sources and methods: construction price indices, page 49 and page 84, Statistics Directorate, OECD (2001), Paris.

The Construction Price Index is also used to deflate national accounts construction output estimates, and gross fixed capital formation in residential construction to assess real changes in the output of these activities.

To find out more...

Producer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice 2004, ILO, IMF, OECD, United Nations, and the World Bank, 2004, available from: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/teggpi/index.htm>;

Export and Import Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice, ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, UNECE, World Bank, 2009, available from: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/xipim/pdf/xipim.pdf>;

Practical Guide to Producing Consumer Price Indices, UNECE, ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, World Bank, Office for National Statistics, UK, United Nations, 2009;

Main economic indicators - Sources and methods: construction price indices, OECD, and Eurostat, 2001, available from: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/4/2372435.pdf>

2.2.5 Household Statistics

Household statistics describe family and household composition and offer a cross-sectional picture of families and their patterns, yielding comprehensive data not only on their economic activities but also on demographic and social aspects, as well as on overall living conditions. Household statistics are gathered from household surveys, among which the Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and the Household Budget Survey (HBS) are the most common and useful ones.

The *Labour Force Survey (LFS)* is a survey that provides data on working-age persons living in private households. Its main emphasis is on employment, unemployment and inactivity.

The LFS divides the population of working age (15 years and above)⁽⁷⁾ into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups

(6) Strategies for Price and Quantity Measurement in External Trade, United Nations 1981.

(7) Recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

- persons in employment, unemployed persons and inactive persons - and it provides descriptive and explanatory data on each of these categories. The information is detailed by industry, using the ISIC classification.

The LFS is usually conducted on a quarterly basis, but there are countries where this survey is carried out once a year.

The **main use** of LFS in national accounts is for estimating the Non Observed Economy (NOE), although it is also used to refine the measurement of wages and employment by sector.

To find out more...

Measuring the Non-Observed Economy – a Handbook, OECD 2002;

The European Union labour force survey - Methods and definitions – Eurostat, 2001, available from: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/EconStatKB/Attachment269.aspx>

Box IV.21: The Labour Force Survey in the Cayman Islands

The Cayman Islands Government Statistics Office has initiated a *Continuous Household Survey Programme (CHSP)* to collect socio-economic information to be used for programme planning and policy making. One of the key tools used for collecting such information is the *Labour Force Survey (LFS)*.

'2009 Labour Force Survey And Pilot Census - Interviewer Field Manual', available from: <http://www.eso.ky/file.php?path=docum354.pdf>

'Cayman Islands 2009 LFS Questionnaire' is available from: <http://www.eso.ky/file.php?path=docum353.pdf>

The **Household Budget Survey (HBS)** is intended to give a picture of living conditions of private households in a defined area and time, by providing the total consumption expenditure of private households and groups of private households, broken down by household characteristics such as income, size and composition, socio-economic characteristics, degree of urbanization, region and so on.

The basic unit in the HBS is the household. It is important to identify the reference person (often the head of the household) whose personal characteristics (the socio-economic group, occupation and employment status, income, sex, age, etc.) are used in the classification and analysis of information on the whole household.

HBS data is used to collect detailed information on household consumption expenditures (expenditures are recorded at the price actually paid, which includes indirect taxes – VAT and excise duties) borne by the purchaser. The data is used for measuring consumption expenditure elements in national accounts and updating the 'weightings' for the bas-

ket of goods used in Consumption Price Indices.

Box IV.22: Household Budget Survey (HBS) in the Cayman Islands

The HBS aims to gather data on household expenditures and income-based on a questionnaire and a diary of expenses. These are used to estimate the cost of living in the Cayman Islands and determine the poverty line and the number of households living below the poverty line.

'The 2007 Survey of Living Conditions and Household Budgets - Interviewer Manual', available from: <http://www.eso.ky/file.php?path=docum178.pdf>

The three questionnaires used can be found at:

- Household Questionnaire, available from: <http://www.eso.ky/file.php?path=docum174.pdf>
- Household Expenditure Diary Questionnaire, available from: <http://www.eso.ky/file.php?path=docum176.pdf>
- Individual Questionnaire, available from: <http://www.eso.ky/file.php?path=docum175.pdf>

To find out more...

More information concerning the household questionnaires from all the countries are presented by the International Survey Network, http://www.ihsn.org/home/index.php?q=country_questionnaires;

- *Household Budget Surveys in the EU: Methodology and Recommendations for Harmonization*, Eurostat, 2003, available from: http://secgen.comunidadandina.org/andestad/adm/upload/file/eurostat_hsb.pdf.

2.3 Concluding remarks

One important phase of the SNA implementation strategy is the identification and analysis of data sources needed for compiling national accounts.

For more information see Chapter II: *Building the SNA*, section 2: *The 2008 SNA implementation strategy*.

In this context, the statistical office, in charge of building the bases for meeting the national accounts minimal requirements, must implement and develop some essential statistical surveys. From the perspective of SNA implementation, the most important data requirements are those associated with compiling Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by production and expenditure approaches, at current and constant prices. Table IV.1 presents an example of how the basic data requirements may be obtained through surveys that need to be carried out in the statistical system.

Table IV.1. Minimum surveys required for implementing the SNA

Statistical survey	Used for the estimation of:
Surveys of enterprises on performance	Production, intermediate consumption by industry; investment and inventory
Survey of enterprises on trade turnover and sales of services	Production, intermediate consumption of specific industries; investment and inventory; household final consumption
Household budget survey (HBS)	Production, intermediate consumption for agriculture; inventory in agriculture; household final consumption
Consumer Price Index survey	Indicators in constant price

2.3.1 Questions for practitioners

Following the main SNA implementation guidelines, the process of compiling national accounts using statistical data sources should be established by addressing some specific issues, such as:

- What statistical surveys are conducted by the statistical office?
- Are the concepts, content and classifications used in these surveys in line with the requirements of the 2008 SNA?
- Are the needs for national accounts compilation covered in a sufficient way by the existing statistical surveys? If not, is there a strategy for development?
- What statistical survey needs to be implemented in order to guarantee national accounts compilation requirements?

3. Recommended reading

Section 1.1: Business register

- *Business register Recommendations manual*, Eurostat, 2010; Chapter III: ‘Objectives and uses of the business registers for statistical purposes’; Chapter IV: ‘Maintenance of the register’;
- *Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics*, OECD, Eurostat, 2007;
- *Statistical business registers based on administrative records*, paper presented to the Second meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean, June 2003; Chapter II: ‘Objectives and uses of the statistical business register’;
- *A motivational model for running a statistical business register*, by Sturm R., Paper presented to the European Establishment Statistics Workshop – EESW09, Stockholm, 2009.
- *Statistical Business Register in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: 2008 Questionnaire Survey results*, paper presented to the Conference of European Statisticians, 2009;

Section 1.2: Classifications

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 5: ‘Enterprises, establishments and industries’; Chapter 29: ‘Satellite accounts and other extensions’ International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev.4, Statistical papers, Serie M, No.4/Rev.4, UN 2008 http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/seriesm_4rev4e.pdf;
- Central Product Classification Version 2 (CPC2) http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_77ver1_1E.pdf;
- Classifications of Expenditure According to Purpose http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_84E.pdf;
- Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS07) <http://www.imf.org/external/np/leg/tlaw/2007/eng/ith.pdf>
- http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_52rev2E.pdf;
- Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4) http://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_34rev4E.pdf.

Section 2: Statistical data sources

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009;

- *Measuring the Non – Observed Economy – A Handbook*, OECD, 2002; Chapter VI: ‘Assessment and improvement of data collection programme’;
- *Use of the System of National Accounts in Economies in Transition*, Studies in methods, Series F, no.66; Chapter VI: ‘Reorientation of data sources’;
- *A system approach to national accounts compilation*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.77, UN 1999; Chapter III: ‘Cycles of national accounts and supporting compilation of micro(economic) statistics’;
- *International Recommendation for Distributive Trade Statistics 2008*, Statistical papers, Series M, No.89, UN 2009;
- *International Recommendation for Industrial Statistics, 2008*, Statistical papers, Series M, No.90, UN 2009;
- *Export and Import Price Index Manual-Theory and Practice*, ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, UNECE, World Bank, IMF,2009;
- *Practical Guide to Producing Consumer Price Indices*, UNECE, ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, World Bank, Office for National Statistics, UK, United Nations, 2009;
- *Producer Price Index Manual Theory and Practice*, ILO, IMF, OECD, UNECE, World Bank, 2004;
- *Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics*, OECD, Eurostat, 2007;
- *Main economic indicators, comparative methodological analysis: Consumer and Producer Price Indices*, OECD, 2002;
- *Main economic indicators-Sources and methods: construction price indices*, OECD, Eurostat, 2001.

Administrative data sources

5



The chapter in brief

The aim of this chapter is to present the administrative data sources used for national accounts compilation. The arguments favouring the use of these sources for statistical purposes highlight their importance. In general, the transition from administrative concepts to SNA aggregates is based on “bridge tables”, developed by each country according to its particular profile. Several simplified examples of transition to national accounts are provided for financial statements of non-financial and financial corporations, government statements, and balance of payments.

1. What are administrative sources

The term ‘*administrative record*’ encompasses any record resulting from fiscal, taxation or other authority requirements, created to facilitate the administration or operation of government programmes, or to supervise and oversee compliance with legal obligations by certain segments of society.

Definition

The administrative source is the register of units and data associated with an administrative regulation (or group of regulations), viewed as a source of statistical data.

Source: *Glossary of Statistical Terms*, OECD, 2007 <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/20/1963116.pdf>

Administrative processes are set up in response to legislation and regulations. Each regulation (or related group of regulations) results in registering institutional units – enterprises, persons, etc. – bound by that regulation and in a data set. The register and data are referred to collectively by the statistical office as an *administrative source*.

Administrative sources contain information that is not primarily collected for statistical purposes, but is used by statistical offices. Some examples of administrative sources include the following:

- Value Added Tax (VAT) data;
- Personal income tax data;
- Business (including corporate) taxation data;
- Social security data;
- Business registration and administration records;
- Business accounts of corporations;
- Records held by Central Banks;
- Records (other than VAT) held by Customs and Excise Authorities;
- Records of government (central and local);

- Records held by associations of employers, of employees and of businesses and professions;
- Records held by other private sector bodies, e.g. credit-rating agencies, non-profit units, etc.

The use for statistical purposes of administrative sources requires a careful evaluation of their conceptual base, classification and time reference.

The use of administrative data sources offers several *advantages*:

- They are ‘*cheaper*’ than other sources and often even free.
- They provide *complete*, or *almost complete*, coverage of the population to which the administrative process applies. Generally they have very high response rates, no survey errors, providing more accurate and detailed estimates of sub-populations.
- The *timeliness* of the statistical variables derived from administrative sources is improved. This is particular the case for annual ad-hoc surveys, which are based on administrative sources via the business register (however this does not apply to short-term indicators).
- They *reduce the response burden* on businesses.
- They *may increase business register quality*, which is why statistical surveys are carried out.

Although there are many good reasons for using administrative sources, there are also a number of *problems*:

- The most important problem for a statistical office, and implicitly for national accountants, is *obtaining access* to administrative sources. This may be because there is no legal framework in place between the statistical office and the authority gathering the data. Sometimes, it may respond to practical issues relating to data transfer (formats, details, responsibilities, ways of collection, etc.). This problem can be easily avoided if agreements and memoranda of understanding (clearly establishing frequency, data format and any relevant information for data transfer) are signed between the statistical office and the administrative authority.

For more detailed information concerning the access to administrative data sources see Chapter II: *Building the SNA*.

- The information used in administrative sources *does not directly correspond to the statistical indicator definitions*. The process of converting concepts used in administrative units (which may often be equivalent to legal units) to national accounts will be presented later.
- The *classification systems* used within administrative sources may be different from those used in the statis-

tical world, or may be applied differently, depending on the purpose of the administrative source. Where possible, it is preferable to rely on several administrative data sources.

- Another common problem relates to timeliness. Data may either not be available in time to meet statistical needs or may refer to a period that does not coincide with that required for statistical purposes, e.g. a tax year may not coincide with the calendar year required for structural business statistics.
- Administrative sources are generally set up for the purpose of collecting taxes or monitoring government policies. For this reason, they are susceptible to **political change**. If a policy changes, administrative sources may be affected in terms of coverage, definitions, thresholds etc., or possibly even abolished completely.

Despite these problems, administrative data is an important data source. The use of these sources for compiling national accounts has an important effect on the quality of results.

2. Transition to national accounts

One important phase in the national accounts compilation process is the translation of information from the administrative source into national accounts concepts.

The compilation process of national accounts is presented in Chapter II: *Building the SNA*, section 2: *The 2008 SNA implementation strategy*.

The main administrative sources used for compiling national accounts are the financial statements of the stakeholders involved in different economic actions.

National accounts are virtually standardized worldwide, while business accounting (financial statements) is still in the process of international harmonization.

The International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) was created in 1973 to establish basic accounting standards referred to as IAS (International Accounting Standards) and then International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Since its creation, IASC has issued and implemented accounting standards which were then changed, or abolished, or replaced by new ones, in line with the economic environment at the time.

Data quality increases in pace with the degree of standardization of private accounts. However, even when business accounts are not compiled using a strictly standardized basis, they may be used for compiling national accounts, especially for sectors of the economy dominated by a small number of very large enterprises.

To find out more...

Links between business accounting and national accounting, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.76, UN 2000

In general, the main rules and methods for business accounting (IAS/IFRS) are consistent with those of the SNA. Examples are: recording transactions in accounts using the accrual principle, double-entry principle and use of balances, monetary valuation, and internal consistency of the accounts system.

Depending on the specificity of each country's business accounting, national accountants may apply certain '**bridge tables**' that serve to convert business accounting indicators (obtained at mezzo-economic level like, for example, sectors of activity) into national accounts aggregates, albeit in a rough format. Due to the fact that micro-indicators do not exactly fit the requirements of the SNA aggregates, the transition is completed by applying certain **adjustments**, such as: conceptual adjustments, adjustment to achieve accounting consistency with other sectors and adjustments for exhaustiveness.

Preparation of 'bridge tables', as part of compiling a national accounts strategy, follows the phases outlined below:

- a) Identification of administrative data sources;
- b) Analysis of content in respect of national accounting methodological requirements;
- c) Collection of data source indicators;
- d) Translation of each indicator from administrative data sources into national accounts concepts;
- e) Application of adjustments to meet national accounting requirements;
- f) Estimation of the national accounts indicators.

'Bridge tables' are used for non-financial and financial corporations, for government and for the rest of the world using the existing administrative data source format.

2.1 Financial statements of non-financial corporations

IAS 1 is the reference standard for the 'Presentation of the financial statement', whose proposed structure is applied as such for non-financial corporations (or enterprises). Various other standards regulate specific accounting issues pertaining to the activities of an enterprise.

Enterprises disclose their accounting information by using at least two accounting statements:

1. The *income statement*, covering income and costs transactions during the financial year, considered as flow accounts;
2. The *balance sheet*, showing the value of assets and liabilities

at the end of the financial year, covering stock accounts.

International standards also require information on:

- *Cash flow statement*, which specifies an enterprise's sources and uses of cash from operating, investing and financing activities, during the financial year; its aim is to present real cash flows and it is similar to the SNA in the sense that internal transactions for depreciation and reservation are not taken into account.
- *Accounting policies and explanatory notes*, offering valuable details about how the information already disclosed was completed.

Compilation of national accounts using data from non-financial business accounting is easier if the income statement is presented *by nature* (origin of the expenditures such as: depreciation, purchase of materials, transport costs, employee benefits, and advertising costs) instead of *by function* (destination of expenditures such as: costs of sales, selling and administrative expenses).

The income statement is mostly used for drawing up the production account of non-financial enterprises. Output and intermediate consumption can be roughly calculated as follows (assuming the availability of an income statement presented mostly by nature):

Output = Output sold + Output held as inventory + Capitalized output + Sales of goods bought for resale – Purchases of goods bought for resale + Changes in stocks of finished and semi-finished products + Changes in stocks of goods bought for resale + Other operating income

Intermediate consumption = Purchases of raw materials and supplies – Changes in stocks of raw materials and supplies + Other purchases and external charges + Other operating costs

Compensation of employees corresponds to the expenses incurred by an enterprise in relation to its employees, a definition which is also used in private accounting, so that there are relatively few adjustments to be made to convert data from business accounting to national accounting.

Other indicators may be estimated using information from the financial statements:

- **Taxes and subsidies** are recorded in an enterprise's financial statement. Business accounts are generally operated exclusive of deductible VAT so that the information on input VAT and output VAT often only appears in the notes to the accounts. Other production taxes and other production subsidies appear in the income statement. The tax on profit paid during the course of the financial year may be found either in the income statement of the previous financial year, or in the sources and uses of funds statement for the financial year or in the appended tables.

- **Property income** includes interests, dividends, rents on non-produced assets and equity earning. Interest received and paid appears in the income statement, and must be adjusted for financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM). Income received from investment must also be increased by commission deducted at source. Dividends received appear on the credit side of the income statement. Conversely, dividends paid by an enterprise appear neither on the income statement, nor on the balance sheet, and it is therefore necessary to consult another document such as the sources and uses of funds statement. Reinvested earnings on direct foreign investment cannot be gleaned directly from either the balance sheet or the income statement, and can only be estimated on the basis of supplementary information about company shareholders. Property income allocated to policyholders is deducted from insurance premiums paid by an enterprise by applying a ratio calculated from the accounts of insurance companies.
- **Other current transfers** are rarely identifiable as such in business accounting as they are often grouped with other items under 'other income' or 'other expenses'.
- **Gross fixed capital formation** is defined in national accounts as the difference between acquisitions and disposals of fixed assets. These two components may be separately extracted from business accounting (especially from the balance sheet) by type of assets. However, the main impediment to directly transposing these two information items to national accounts is due to their evaluation, as national accounts requires valuing them at current market prices. The best way to value acquisitions is to use a reconciliation schedule between the opening and closing book values of fixed assets. This schedule, which has been made mandatory by the IFRS standards, provides information on acquisitions and the various elements that allow a transition from the opening value of the assets to their closing value, maintaining their fair value. On the other hand, when assets are valued on the basis of an amortization schedule, the reconciliation schedule only provides information on disposals valued at historic cost. To translate the disposal price when estimating national accounts, capital gains or capital losses made on these disposal operations need to be taken into consideration. When this information is not expressly shown in the income statement, disposal value may be reconciled with the historical cost taken from the reconciliation schedule which appears in the cash-flow statement. For all enterprises, payments must differ very little from disposals. Available accounting documents should allow for distinguishing tangible fixed assets from intangible fixed assets and financial fixed assets.
- The **balance sheet** in national accounts is very similar to that of business accounting, in particular where the latter applies the concept of fair value. Two main limitations

need to be pointed out: possible differences in classification and evaluation at historic cost of assets. Information contained in the balance sheet may be used to value fixed assets. National accountants generally use perpetual inventory methods (PIM) to value them.

Table V.1 presents a simplified 'bridge table', with no other adjustments, when very few indicators are available from accounting statements, on the hypothesis that cash-flow statements can provide information on actual flows (at current valuation).

Table V.1: Simplified 'bridge table' for non-financial corporations

No. Crt	Financial statement indicators	Financial Statement (code)	Thou. currency	SNA aggregates
1	Net turnover	IS	32 200	P.1
2	Other income (e.g. from licences)	IS	500	P.1
3	Own production of non-mobile assets	IS	80	P.1
4	Changes in stocks of finished products and work-in-progress	IS	300	P.1
5	Cost of goods bought (for resale)	IS	100	P.1
6	Cost of sales (goods & services)	IS	15 000	P.2
7	Other operating expenses (less personnel expenses)	IS	10 000	P.2
8	Increase in provisions (they should be removed, since they are not real expenses)	CFS	-300	- P.2
9	Movement of inventories	CFS	350	P52
10	Investment in tangible fixed assets	CFS	4 600	P.51
11	Disinvestment in tangible fixed assets	CFS	-200	P.51
12	Personnel expenses	IS	6 800	D.1
13	Interest (net)	IS	400	D.4
14	Dividends Paid	CFS	1 500	D.4
15	Profit taxes current year	IS	800	D.5
16	Profit taxes previous year	IS	700	D.5

IS = income statement

CFS = cash-flow statement

Note: SNA transactions are presented in Annex II

From the numerical example, the main indicators can be estimated:

$$\text{Output} = 32\,200 (1) + 500 (2) + 80 (3) + 300 (4) - 100 (5) = 32\,980$$

$$\text{Intermediate consumption} = 15\,000 (6) + 10\,000 (7) - 300 (8) = 24\,700$$

$$\text{Gross value added} = \text{Output} (32\,980) - \text{Intermediate consumption} (24\,700) = 8\,280$$

After establishing the rough 'bridge table', the transition from business accounting to national accounting may be completed by making some **adjustments** to base data – mostly for compiling value added.

The main adjustments that can be made are:

a) *Conceptual adjustments*

Conceptual adjustments are required because of differences in the concepts used in country-specific private accounting and in national accounting. The nature of the adjustments applied to each indicator is diverse, but sometimes the same adjustments can be applied for consistency. They vary among countries, thus no comprehensive list can be supplied; however a few examples can be presented:

- In the case of output, adjustments are applied for the transition to basic price. The turnover of enterprises is generally net of VAT but often includes taxes on products. Contrarily, subsidies on products are rarely included in turnover. Therefore, data resulting from business accounting needs to be adjusted by deducting taxes on products and adding subsidies on products in order to obtain the basic price.
- Own-account output for research and development is part of output. In business accounting it is not valued and an adjustment must be made to the total value when translating it to national accounting.
- Adjustment for deliveries between establishments belonging to the same enterprise impacts on the value of output and intermediate consumption. Such deliveries are not usually the object of a sale and although they do not appear in the accounts system of an enterprise, they have to be recorded in the national accounts where they correspond to an output and/or intermediate consumption by one establishment delivered to another establishment belonging to the same enterprise.
- Adjustment for holding gains/losses in stock valuation. Holding gains/losses may appear whenever elements from the income statement are deducted from elements valued in the balance sheet. In business accounting, stock changes are measured by the difference between the closing stock value and the opening stock value. In national accounting, the stock changes correspond to the difference between entries into and withdrawals from stock.

For example, an intermediate consumption of raw materials generally originates not directly from a purchase, but from a withdrawal from stock. In national accounting, a withdrawal from stock must be valued at the market price at the time it took place, while business accounting values a withdrawal from stock at its historical cost (i.e. at the price of the goods item at the time they were purchased). The difference between the two prices is considered in national accounting as a holding gain or a holding loss.

- Consumption of fixed capital included in national accounts is different from the depreciation concept existing in the accounting system and adjustments are necessary.

To find out more...

Links between business accounting and national accounting, Studies in Methods, Series F, No.76, UN 2000, paragraph. 2.22

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF,OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 20: Capital service and national accounts.

b) *Adjustments for consistency* with the accounts of other sectors

This adjustment applies in particular to taxes and subsidies. Taxes and subsidies derived from the accounts of an enterprise must be equivalent to those received by or paid by general government. In practice, this is not the case. Data from business accounts has to be adjusted because usually information relating to general government is more reliable than those drawn from the statistics of enterprises.

c) *Adjustments for exhaustiveness*

They are applied to improve the coverage of national accounts aggregates. They can depend on various situations such as: absence of an enterprise from statistical files, exemption from tax and social declarations, and evasion.

An example with the main adjustments necessary to obtain national accounts indicators is presented in Table V.2.

Table V.2: Example of adjustments for transition from accounting gross value added to SNA gross value added

	Output	Intermediate consumption	Gross value added
Total accounting	32 980	24 700	8 280
Conceptual adjustments:			
~Taxes on products	-1 800		
~Subsidies on products	80		
~Holding gains	-310	400	
~FISIM allocation		150	
~Intra-unit deliveries	300	230	
Exhaustiveness adjustments:			
~Black labour	2 100	650	
~VAT fraud	900		
TOTAL National accounts indicators	34 250	26 130	8 120

2.2 Financial statements of financial corporations

There is a wide variety of financial units in the world. To describe them all is beyond the scope of this handbook, so only the financial units that best describe the three main types of financial services (financial intermediation, financial auxiliary services and insurance and pension schemes services) will be explained.

2.2.1 Banks

Banks are deposit-taking corporations whose main activity is financial intermediation. They have liabilities in the form of deposits or financial instruments (such as short-term certificates of deposit) that are close substitutes for deposits. Their accounting is internationally standardized, using the structure required by IAS 1, but also in accordance with other standards (such as IFRS 2 'Share-based payment – Vesting conditions and cancellations', IAS 23 'Borrowing costs', IFRS 7 'Financial instruments: disclosures', etc.).

Banks accept deposits from units wishing to receive interest on funds for which the unit has no immediate use and lends them to other units whose funds are insufficient to meet their needs. Each of the two parties pays a fee to the bank for the service provided, the unit lending funds by accepting a rate of interest lower than that paid by the borrower, the difference being the combined fees implicitly charged by the bank to the depositor and to the borrower. From this basic idea emerges the concept of a 'reference' rate of interest (R^*). The difference between the rate paid to banks by borrowers and the reference rate R^* plus the difference between the reference rate R^* and the rate actually paid to depositors repre-

sents the costs for Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM).

Table V.3 shows the simplified bridge table for banking institutions linking income statement transactions (as stated by IAS/IFRS and European Directives on Accounting) to SNA transactions and a fictitious numerical example (first column of the table) to show how to estimate the output and the intermediate consumption.

Table V.3: Simplified bridge table for banking institutions

No. Crt	Items from accounting statements	Thou. Currency	SNA transactions
1	Stock of loans (asset)	43 78 889	
2	Stock of deposits (liability)	5 152 500	
3	Interest receivable (on loans) and similar income	78 820	D.4
4	Dividend income	870	D.4
5	Interest payable (on deposits) and similar expenses	61 830	D.4
6	Income from fees charged	10 950	P.1
7	Expenses with fees paid	2 980	P.2
8	Personnel expenses, of which: <i>Wages and salaries</i> <i>Social security costs</i> <i>Pension costs</i> <i>Post-employment medical benefits</i>	7 740 3 110 2 500 10	D.1 D.11 D.121 D.121 D.122
9	General and administrative expenses	10 480	P.2
10	Interest receivable (on loans) and similar income	3 550	(not used for Consumption of fixed capital, because of different valuation)
11	Other operating expenses	219	(not of P.2 nature)

R^* - reference rate of interest, with no service element (usually an inter-bank borrowing and lending rate); let us assume that $R^* = 1.5\%$

Note: SNA transactions are presented in Annex II.

From the numerical example, the main indicators can be estimated:

$$\text{FISIM} = \text{FISIM loans} + \text{FISIM deposits} = [78\,820 (3) - 4\,378\,889 (1) \times R^*] + [5\,152\,200 (2) \times R^* - 61\,830 (5)] = 13\,137 + 15\,458 = 28\,595$$

$$\text{Output} = 28\,595 + 10\,950(6) = 39\,545$$

$$\text{Intermediate consumption} = 2\,980 (7) + 10\,480 (9) = 13\,460$$

$$\text{Gross value added} = 39\,545 - 13\,460 = 26\,085$$

Estimates for other SNA transactions from financial statements adopt the same approach as for non-financial corporations, bearing in mind the fact that no subsidies are usually offered to financial institutions and that classified taxes must be made consistent with the rest of the institutional sectors, as described for non-financial corporations.

2.2.2 Insurance services

Insurance services are specific financial intermediations. The accounting statements of insurance companies are regulated by international standards, such as IAS 1.

Expenses are in general disclosed by function, although classification by nature (including wages and salaries) may be found in the Notes to financial statements.

The output of insurance services in 2008 SNA is particularly important. The formula for compiling output is described separately for non-life insurance and life insurance. Within the SNA, the output of the insurance industry is determined in a manner intended to mimic the premium-setting policies of insurance corporations. Output is usually compiled using income statements, while the technical account is the main part of the income statement which relates exclusively to insurance activity.

The basic method for measuring *non-life insurance output* is the following:

Total premiums earned, plus premium supplements, less adjusted claims incurred (the 2008 SNA, Chapter 6: The production account, paragraph 6.185).

Table V.4 offers a model of a simplified bridge table for non-life insurance institutions linking income statement transactions (as set out in IAS/IFRS and European Directives on Accounting) to SNA transactions, plus a fictitious numerical example to show how the main indicators are calculated.

Table V.4.: Simplified Bridge table for Non-life-insurance business

No. Crt	Items from accounting statements	Thou. Currency	SNA transactions
1.	Earned premiums, net of reinsurance	25 700	+ P.1
2.	Allocated investment return transferred from the non-technical account ~ <i>apart from insurance activity</i>	10	D.4
3.	Other technical income, net of reinsurance	100	+P.1
4.	Claims incurred, net of reinsurance	6 500	- P.1
5.	Changes in other technical provisions, net of reinsurance, not shown under other headings (+/-)	700	+P.1
6.	Bonuses and rebates, net of reinsurance	40	- P.1
7.	Net operating expenses:	3 000	P.2
	a) acquisition costs	4 000	
	b) change in deferred acquisition costs (+/-)	200	
	c) administrative expenses	1 000	
	d) fees from reinsurance (-)	-2 200	
	e) Wages and salaries (including social security contributions)	800	D.1
	f) Depreciation	250	
8.	Change in the equalization provision (+/-)	90	-P1

Note: SNA transactions are presented in Annex II.

From the numerical example, the main indicators can be estimated:

Output = Premium earned (25 700 (1) – 40 (6)) + Premium supplements (700 (5)) + Other technical income (100 (3)) - Adjusted claims incurred (6 500 (4) + 90 (8)) = 19 870

Intermediate consumption = Net operating expenses (3 000 (7)) – Wages and salaries (800 (7e)) – Depreciation (250 (7f)) = 1950

Gross value added = Output (19 870) – Intermediate consumption (1 950) = 17 920

The output of *life insurance* is based on the following formula:

Premiums earned, *plus* premium supplements, *less* benefits due, *less* increases (*plus* decreases) in life insurance technical reserves (The 2008 SNA, Chapter 6: The production account, paragraph 6.195).

The simplified bridge table for life insurance institutions linking income statement transactions to SNA transactions is shown in Table V.5. As usual, a numerical example is also provided in the table and calculations of the main indicators below the table.

Table V.5: Simplified Bridge table for Life-insurance business

No. Crt	Items from accounting statements	Thou. currency	SNA transactions
1.	Earned premiums, net of reinsurance	13 000	+ P.1
2.	Investment income:	4 600	+ P.1 / D.4
	a) income from participating interests, with a separate indication of that derived from affiliated undertakings	2 600	
	b) income from other investments, with a separate indication of that derived from affiliated undertakings	2 000	
	aa) income from land and buildings	1 400	
	bb) income from other investments	600	
3.	Unrealized gains on investments	40	-P.1
4.	Other technical income, net of reinsurance	50	P.1
5.	Claims incurred, net of reinsurance	3 000	- P.1
6.	Changes in other technical provisions, net of reinsurance, not shown under other headings (+/-)	100	- /+P.1
7.	Bonuses and rebates, net of reinsurance	30	- P.1
8.	Net operating expenses:	5 000	P.2
	a) acquisition costs	2 100	
	b) change in deferred acquisition costs (+/-)	1 000	
	c) administrative expenses	1 900	
9.	Wages and salaries (including social security contributions)	1 250	D.1
10.	Depreciation	900	
11.	Investment charges	30	P.2
	a) investment management charges, including interest	15	
	b) value adjustments on investments	7	
	c) losses on the realization of investments	8	
12.	Unrealized losses on investments	60	P.1
13.	Other technical charges, net of reinsurance	1	P.2

Note: The SNA transactions are presented in annex II.

From the numerical example, the main indicators can be estimated:

Output = Premium earned (13 000(1) – 30(7)) + Premium supplements (4 600(2)) – Difference of gains and losses in realization of investments (40 (3) – 60 (12)) – Benefit due (3 000(5)) – Changes (+/–) in technical reserves (1 00(6)) = 14490

Intermediate consumption = Net operating expenses (5 000 (8) – 1 250 (9) – 900 (10)) + Investment charges (30 (11)) + Other technical charges, net of reinsurance (1 (13)) = 2 881

Gross value added = Output (14 490) – Intermediate consumption (2 881) = 11 609

2.3 Government financial statement

Administrative data sources for the general government sector are a central element in compiling national accounts. Statistics for government units and public corporations are often derived directly from the micro-data in the government financial accounting database and are based heavily on accounting information. The development in recent years of International Public Sector Accounting Standards by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board of the International Federation of Accountants has increased the need for clear guidance on the compilation of government finance statistics so that detailed accounting data can be transposed correctly into the framework of the SNA. Such guidance is especially important when government financial accounts are compiled on a cash basis and must be converted to an accrual basis to comply with SNA accounting methods.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 22: The general government and public sector.

Government Financial Statistics Manual, IMF 2001.

Essentially the presentation of government finance, based on the budgets of government units (state, central, local, social security, etc.) consists of **transactions** that increase net worth leading to an aggregate called 'revenue' and transactions that decrease net worth leading to an aggregate called 'expense'. In addition, there are two main balancing items: 'net operating balance' and 'net lending or net borrowing'. Additional accounts can be shown for other economic flows and balance sheets.

Revenues include all resources acquired by governments as recorded in the SNA current accounts and capital transfers receivable recorded in the capital account. Revenues comprise: taxes, social contributions including grants, other current revenue (property income, market sales of goods and

services, fines, penalties and forfeits, voluntary transfers, miscellaneous and unidentified revenue) and capital transfers receivable.

Expenses may be defined as all uses incurred by governments as recorded in the SNA current accounts and capital transfers payable as recorded in the capital account. Specifically, expenses cover: production expenses (compensation of employees, intermediate consumption and consumption of fixed capital), interest payable, grants, social benefits, other current expenses and capital transfers payable.

Net lending or net borrowing is the amount a government has available to lend or must borrow to finance its non-financial operations. Net lending or net borrowing can be calculated as the net operating balance *less* the net acquisition of non-financial assets, or as total revenue *less* total outlays. Government budgets in each country are determined by law, being first adopted, and then executed during the period (year). Data are allocated to SNA elements, according to two classifications of expenses:

- Economic classification of expenses
- Functional classification- Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG).

Table V.6 and Table V.7 offer an example (not exhaustive) of how each transaction extracted from government data contained in the budget income and expenses (here the State budget) are linked to SNA transactions. Note that each budget may contain, under the main titles, specific items according to specific necessities of the government units in each country.

Table V.6: Simplified bridge table for the State budget – income

Budget items	SNA transactions
TOTAL INCOME	
I. CURRENT INCOME	
A. FISCAL INCOME	
A.1 INCOME TAX, PROFIT AND CAPITAL EARNINGS	
A.1.1 INCOME TAX, PROFIT AND CAPITAL EARNINGS FROM LEGAL ENTITIES	
1.1.1 INCOME TAX	D51
e.g. Income tax from economic agents	D51
1.1.2 OTHER TAXES ON INCOME, PROFIT AND CAPITAL EARNINGS FROM LEGAL ENTITIES	D51
e.g. Tax on the incomes obtained by non-resident legal entities	D51
A.1.2. TAX ON INCOME, PROFIT AND CAPITAL EARNINGS FROM NATURAL PERSONS	
TAX ON INCOME	D51, D21
e.g. Tax on salary income	D51
e.g. Tax on the income from the transfer of real estate properties from own total assets	D21
BROKEN DOWN QUOTAS AND AMOUNTS FROM THE TAX ON INCOME (TO BE DEDUCTED)	D51
A.1.3. OTHER TAXES ON INCOME, PROFIT AND CAPITAL EARNINGS	D51
A2. TAX ON SALARIES	D51
A3.TAXES AND DUTIES ON OWNERSHIP	
e.g. Tax on the land located outside the city area	D59
A4.TAXES AND DUTIES ON GOODS AND SERVICES	
VALUE ADDED TAX	D21
BROKEN DOWN VAT AMOUNTS (to be deducted)	D21
e.g. Broken down VAT amounts for roads (to be deducted)	D21
OTHER TAXES AND GENERAL DUTIES ON GOODS AND SERVICES	
e.g. Tax on the crude oil from internal production and natural gases	D21
e.g. Quotas applied on the income obtained in the civil aviation field	D29
EXCISES	D21, D21
e.g. Excises collected from the sale of mineral oils	D21
e.g. Excises collected in customs from the import of mineral oils	D21
DUTIES ON SPECIFIC SERVICES	D.21
DUTIES ON THE USE OF GOODS, AUTHORIZATION OF THE USE OF GOODS OR PERFORMANCE OF ACTIVITIES	D51, D29, D21
e.g. Duties on gambling	D51
A5. TAX ON FOREIGN TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONS	
CUSTOMS DUTIES AND OTHER DUTIES ON INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONS	D21, D29
e.g. Custom duties from legal entities	D21
A6. OTHER TAXES AND FISCAL FEES	D51
B. INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS	D611
C. NON-FISCAL INCOME	
C1.OWNERSHIP INCOME	
OWNERSHIP INCOME	D42, D75, D45
INCOME FROM INTEREST	D41
C2. SALE OF GOODS AND SERVICES	P11
II. CAPITAL INCOME	
INCOME FROM CAPITALIZATION OF ASSETS	P51
III. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS	Financial transaction
COLLECTIONS FROM THE REPAYMENT OF LOANS GRANTED	

Note: The SNA transactions are presented in Annex II.

Table V.7: Simplified Bridge table for State budget – expenses

Budget items	SNA transactions
TOTAL EXPENSES	
A. CURRENT EXPENDITURES	
TITLE I. STAFF EXPENDITURES	
<i>e.g. salary expenditures in cash</i>	D11
<i>salary expenditures in kind</i>	D11
<i>Contributions</i>	D12
TITLE II. GOODS AND SERVICES	
Goods and services	D51
-office supplies	P2
-cleaning materials	P2
-heating, lighting	P2
-water, sewerage, sanitation	P2
-fuels and lubricants	P2
-transport	P2
-mail, telecommunications, radio, TV, internet	P2
-other goods and services for maintenance and operation, etc.	P2
<i>Current repairs</i>	P2/D73
<i>Food</i>	
-food for humans	D11
-animal feed	P2
<i>Medicinal products and medical materials</i>	P2
Goods as inventory items	
-uniforms and equipment	D11
-bed linen and accessories	P2
<i>Travels, secondments</i>	P2/D11
Books and publications, etc.	P2
Actions of a scientific and social and cultural nature	D75
.....	
Other expenditure, such as:	
-protocol and representation	P2
-non-life insurance premiums	D71
-rents	D45
TITLE III. INTEREST	D41, D92
TITLE IV. SUBSIDIES	
Subsidies for products	D31
Social protection in the mining sector	D62
Support for farmers, other grants, etc.	D39
TITLE VI. TRANSFERS BETWEEN THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT'S UNITS	
* Current transfers	
Transfers to public institutions	D73
Maintenance of road infrastructure, etc.	D92
* Capital transfers	
Transfers to finance investments in hospitals	D73
Programme for paving of roads and water supply of villages, etc.	D92
TITLE VII. OTHER TRANSFERS	
A. Internal transfers	
Reimbursable financing programmes	P51/D92

Budget items	SNA transactions
Community programmes	D75
Investment of economic operators with state capital	D92
Restructuring of the defence industry	D39
Current repairs relating to public railway infrastructure, etc.	P2
B. Current transfers abroad (to international organizations)	D74
TITLE VIII. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	
Social security	D62
Special pensions	D12
-social aids in kind	D63
TITLE IX. OTHER EXPENDITURE	
Scholarships	D62
Associations and foundations, etc.	D75
State orders for books and publications, etc.	P2
B. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	
TITLE X. NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS	
Fixed assets: e.g. constructions, machines, equipment and transportation means, etc.	P51
Inventories	P52
TITLE XI. FINANCIAL ASSETS	Financial transactions
TITLE XII. LOANS	Financial transactions
TITLE XIII. REPAYMENT OF LOANS	Financial transactions

Note: The SNA transactions are presented in Annex II.

From budgetary execution data, functional classification allows direct classification by activity. Thus, COFOG is more appropriate than ISIC for classifying government expenditure because the COFOG list of functions is more detailed than the ISIC list of activities, having been drawn up specifically to take into account the range and diversity of government activities.

2.4 Balance of Payments

The Balance of Payments (BoPs) is the main data source that describes the international transactions used for building accounts for the rest of the world sector of SNA.

The 2008 SNA uses the same macroeconomic framework as the 'Balance of Payments and Investment Position Manual' 6th edition (BPM6).

The Balance of Payments includes all the transactions between residents and non-residents during a specific time period.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 26: The rest of the world accounts and links to the balance of payments.

International accounts cover accounts for current transactions (current accounts), accumulation accounts and balance sheets. The three current accounts are the goods and services

account, the primary income account and the secondary income account. The primary income account corresponds to the allocation of primary income accounts in the SNA and the secondary income account corresponds to the secondary distribution of income account in the SNA. The structure of balancing items in the balance of payments is somewhat different from that in the SNA, in that each account has its own balancing item and another that carries forward to the next account.

With respect to the capital account, the transactions covered are more restricted than those covered in the SNA, including only acquisitions and disposals of non-produced non-financial assets and capital transfers.

In the description of the rest of the world accounts, exports, for example, are treated as a use by the rest of the world and imports as a resource from the rest of the world. Thus the BPM6 entries are the mirror image of the SNA entries.

Table V.8: Simplified bridge table from BoPs items to SNA transactions

Items from Balance of Payments	Credit BoPs (Uses in SNA)	Debit BoPs (Resources in SNA)
1. CURRENT ACCOUNT		
A. Goods and services (Goods and services account)	P6	P7
a. Goods (FOB exports – FOB imports)	P61	P71
b. Services	P62	P72
- transport		
- tourism		
- other services		
B. Incomes (Primary income account)		
- Compensation of employees	D1	D1
- Interest	D41	D41
- Distributed income of corporations	D42	D42
- Reinvested earnings	D43	D43
C. Current transfers (Secondary income account)		
<i>General government</i>		
- Receipts from taxes, fines, penalties, etc.	D5	D5
- Granted subsidies/ received for sustaining the current budget; governmental contributions to administrative budgets of international organizations, etc.	D74	D74
- Miscellaneous current transfers of general government, such as:	D75	D75
-payments for scholarships and other similar transfers	D75	D75
-payments for taxes of being member of non-governmental transfers and other current transfers	D75	D75
<i>Other sectors (financial corporations, non-financial corporations, NPISHs)</i>		
-Taxes on income and wealth, fines, taxes, contributions payable to foreign governments	D51	D51
-Workers remittances - cash transfers made by foreign workers to residents belonging to workers former economy	D75	D75
-Miscellaneous current transfers, as:	D75	D75
-alimonies, successions etc.	D75	D75
-contributions to religious, scientific, cultural and charity organizations; donations, aids, subsidies, etc.	D75	D75
-rewards gained by non-residents	D75	D75
-scholarship and other similar aids, reimbursements of taxes, non-contractual pensions and other benefits received from foreign governments	D75	D75
-other monetary transfers residents - non-residents	D75	D75
2. CAPITAL AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNT		
<i>of which:</i>		
a. Capital transfers	D99	
- Public administration		
- Other sectors		
b. Acquisition/sales of non-produced, non-financial assets	NP	

This example does not cover all standard items in BoPs. For full coverage of transition, see Appendix 9, page 303-304 of Balance of Payments and Investment Position Manual sixth edition (BPM6), at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/bop/2007/pdf/bpm6.pdf>

Note: SNA transactions are presented in Annex II.

3. Concluding remarks

The use of administrative data sources is an important aspect of the national accounts estimation process. Statistical offices attempting to reach the first milestone for compiling the SNA must pay special attention to the identification, collection and uses of administrative data (following the phases presented in Chapter II: *Building the SNA*).

Table V.9 shows the main administrative sources according to which national accounts indicators can be estimated. The list is not exhaustive because administrative sources depend on country organization, level of economic development and the way in which international recommendations are applied.

Table V.9 Main administrative data sources useful for SNA implementation

Administrative sources	Used for the estimation of
Financial statements of non-financial and financial corporation.	Production, intermediate consumption, gross fixed capital formation, changes in inventory.
Financial statements of government (income and expenditure).	Production and intermediate consumption of government; gross fixed capital formation; changes in inventory; final consumption of government; taxes and subsidies on products; taxes and subsidies on production.
Custom declaration for import and export.	Import and export of goods.
Balance of Payments.	Import and export of services.

- Have the procedures for transforming from business to national accounting concepts been defined and fully understood by survey and national accounts staff?
- Does there exist a strategy for improvement of the use of administrative sources?

In many developing countries and small islands, the problem of accessing the data sources needed for compiling the SNA do not only depend on the lack of basic statistical data, but also on legal and institutional arrangements: administrative data may be used for national accounts purposes if it is mandated by law and regulations. Under these conditions, the most important problem (lack of available data sources) may be resolved by creating the conditions for accessing administrative data.

3.1 Questions for practitioners

The use of administrative data sources for compiling national accounts requires the following issues to be answered:

- What is the administrative data in the country? What is its content, frequency, and deadline for dissemination? Could it be useful for national accounts purposes? Do you use them?
- What is the current situation concerning the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes?
- Is it possible to gain access to these sources? Do agreements and memorandums for collaboration need to be set up?
- Are the proper ways of collecting administrative records and using them for statistical purposes in place? Have all administrative data sources been examined to determine to what extent the data they contain can be used to support the statistical programme?
- Do “bridge tables” exist for translation from accounting indicators to NA concepts?

4. Recommended reading

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009; Chapter 1: ‘Introduction’; Chapter 22: ‘The general government and public sector’; Chapter 26: ‘The rest of the world accounts and links to the balance of payments’;
- *Guide méthodologique pour l’élaboration des comptes nationaux dans les états membre d’Afristat*, Afristat, Serie Méthodes No.4, 2001; Chapter II-III: ‘ Le comptes des administrations publiques ’; chapter II-IV: ‘ Le commerce extérieur et la balance des paiements ’; Chapters II-VII: ‘ Le traitement des données d’entreprises ’;
- *Links between business accounting and national accounting*, Studies in methods Series F, No 76, UN 2000;
- *Understanding National Accounts*, Lequiller F., Blades D., OECD 2006; Chapter VII: ‘Business accounts’;
- *Balance of Payments and Investment Position*, Sixth Edition, (BPM6) 2009, International Monetary Fund;
- *IAS Plus: Summaries of IFRSs and IASs* at <http://www.ias-plus.com/standard/standard.htm>.

The Informal Sector

6



The chapter in brief

The non-observed economy exists in all countries, while the observed and non-observed informal sector involves an important labour force in many least-developed and developing countries, which contributes to economic production. The economic impact of the informal sector is hard to measure because of the difficulty in defining and analyzing the phenomenon owing to the limited available information. This is often due to the financial restrictions faced by statistical offices and the characteristics of the informal sector in a country. This chapter looks at the informal sector vis-à-vis the non-observed and observed economies, defining and presenting the criteria used to identify the informal sector, the measurement methods to be adapted to country specificities and the most relevant statistical surveys used for estimating it.

1. The Non-Observed Economy

The main purpose of national accounts is to offer an *exhaustive description* of an economy. This means that the main aim of compiling statistics is to cover as far as possible the productive activities belonging to the SNA. It is clear that an exhaustive coverage of national accounts is an important quality aspect.

Lack of coverage in national accounts leads to inconveniencing users and national accountants themselves:

- For users, improper coverage causes problems in understanding the economy both in terms of levels and trends. Levels of GDP and other data are downward biased, giving an inaccurate view of the economy, affecting international comparability. Biases in trend estimates can be expected if the economic activities missing from GDP change at different rates from those included.
- For national accountants, lack of coverage causes imbalances in the internal consistency of accounts because some economic transactions are not measured.

The possibility that some economic activities are omitted is addressed by the media, who often suggest, using simplistic assumptions, that the GDP figures published by national statistical offices are underestimates. To avoid this situation a national statistical office should elaborate a measurement program for improving the exhaustiveness of data, with clear objectives, roles and responsibilities for national accountants and for survey statisticians, including those in regional offices. This programme should be combined with other quality management and improvement initiatives. The major data users should also be informed of and involved in this program.

Definition

The non-observed economy (NOE) refers to all productive activities that may not be captured in the basic data sources used for compiling national accounts. The following activities are included: underground, informal (including those undertaken by households for their own final use), illegal, and other activities omitted due to deficiencies in the basic data collection program. The term 'non-observed economy' encompasses all of these activities and the related statistical estimation problems.

Source: Non-Observed Economy in national accounts, Survey of Country Practices, United Nations, 2008.

It is important to note that concerns about the non-observed economy do not lead to defining a separable way of measuring it. Concern should instead be aimed more at improving the overall quality of national accounts data.

Regular data sources – as described in Chapter IV: Statistical infrastructure for national accounts – may be affected by what are called *deficiencies in the basic data collection programme (statistical underground)*, due to:

- a) *under-coverage of enterprises*: enterprises, or parts of them, are excluded from the data collection programme, though in principle they should have been included, due to several possible reasons:
 - an enterprise is new and has not yet been included in the survey frameworks;
 - an enterprise falls below the size cut-off for surveys;
 - an enterprise has been incorrectly classified by type of activity or by region and thus improperly excluded from the survey frame;
 - an enterprise has not been entered in the statistical register, regardless of its desire to be, because of the lack of efficiency of the statistical system, or due to the fact that registers are not updated, for instance.
- b) *non-response* by enterprises, depending on the sensitivity of the statistical system: enterprises are included in the sample but no data are collected from them and no imputation is made for the missing observations, because:
 - the survey questionnaire was wrongly addressed;
 - the enterprise, or part of it, did not return the questionnaire.
- c) *under-reporting by enterprises*: data is obtained from enterprises, but is misreported by the respondent, or correct data is received but is inappropriately input or weighted.

The situations above show quite clearly the need for improvements to basic data collection programmes with reference to the NOE: NOE measurements should be optimized by ensuring that basic data includes productive activities to the

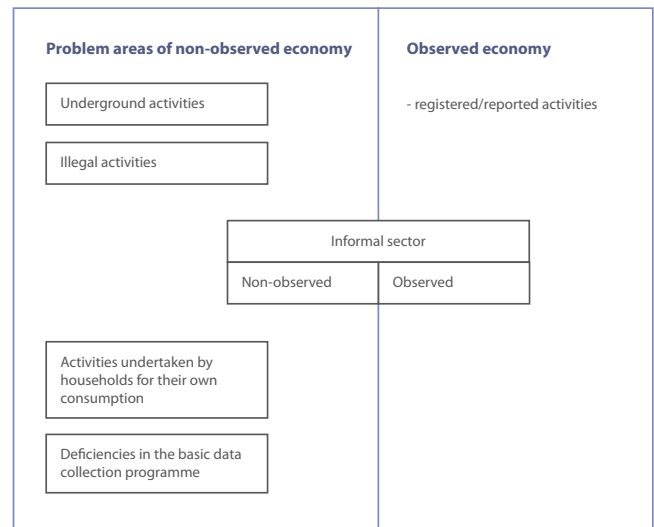
fullest extent possible.

In general, data sources are not enough to fully cover the productive process in the economy. This 'non-observed' part of the economy refers to the following activities⁽⁹⁾:

- *Underground activities*, defined as those activities that are productive and legal but are deliberately concealed from public authorities to avoid:
 - payment of income, value added or other taxes;
 - payment of social security contributions;
 - having to meet certain legal standards such as minimum wages, maximum hours, safety or health standards, etc.;
 - complying with certain administrative procedures, such as completing statistical questionnaires or other administrative forms.
- *Illegal activities*, defined as those productive activities specifically covered by SNA production boundary that:
 - generate goods and services forbidden by law (e.g. production and distribution of illegal drugs);
 - are unlawful when carried out by unauthorized producers (e.g. unlicensed practice of medicine).
- *Production of households for own final use*, defined as those productive activities that result in goods or services consumed or capitalized by the households that produced them, such as:
 - production of crops and livestock;
 - production of other goods for their own end use;
 - construction of own houses and other own-account fixed capital formation;
 - imputed rents of owner-occupiers, and services of paid domestic servants.
- *Non-observed informal activities*, being part of the informal sector also covering observed activities undertaken informally; in general, informal activities are those productive activities conducted by unincorporated enterprises in the household sector that are unregistered and/or are less than a specified size in terms of employment, and that have some market production.

These categories of non-observed activities were established to reflect a *convergence of opinion* amongst statisticians and national accounts experts. They attempt to cover all 'problem areas' encountered in achieving the most exhaustive estimates of national accounts. Various other terms are used to reflect these non-covered areas, such as the 'shadow' economy, the 'cash' economy, the 'parallel' economy, the 'underground' economy, etc. In all cases, said 'problem areas' must be *reciprocally exclusive*.

Figure VI.1: Delimiting the observed from non-observed economy in the 2008 SNA



The extent, impact and structure of the non-observed part of the economy vary considerably from country to country, depending on many aspects:

- structure and development of economy;
- legislation;
- organization of the national statistical system;
- political interest, etc.

In order to facilitate comparison across countries and to improve exhaustiveness of national accounts, Eurostat has carried out two rounds of Pilot Projects on Exhaustiveness (PPE) to address the differences in concepts, definitions, and methods and to identify the types of non-exhaustiveness. The tabular approach undertaken relates NOE areas with statistical problems encountered by national accountants (see Box VI.1).

(9) Measuring the Non-Observed Economy – a Handbook, OECD, 2002.

Box VI.1: Eurostat's tabular approach: types of non-exhaustiveness

I Not registered

N1 - Producer deliberately not registering - underground

Producer deliberately does not register to avoid tax and social security obligations. Most often this refers to small producers with turnovers that exceed threshold levels above which they should register. Producers that do not register because they are engaged in illegal activities fall under type N2. Type N1 does not include all underground activities, some of which are associated with type N6.

N2 - Producers deliberately not registering - illegal

Producer deliberately does not register as a legal entity or as an entrepreneur because it is involved in illegal activities. Type N2 excludes illegal activities by registered legal entities or entrepreneurs that report (or misreport) their activities under legal activity codes.

N3 - Producers not required to register

Producer is not required to register because it has no market output. Typically these are non-market household producers that engage in production of goods for own consumption, for own fixed capital formation, and construction of and repairs to dwellings. Or, producer has some market output but it is below the level at which the producer is obliged to register as an entrepreneur.

II Not surveyed

N4 - Legal persons not surveyed

Legal persons not surveyed due to several reasons such as: the business register is out of date or updating procedures are inadequate; the classification data (activity, size or geographic codes) are incorrect; the legal person is excluded from the survey frame because its size is below a certain threshold etc. This leads to (systematic) exclusion of the legal person from surveys when in principle they should be included.

N5 - Registered entrepreneurs not surveyed

Registered entrepreneurs may not be surveyed for a variety of reasons: the statistical office does not conduct a survey of registered entrepreneurs; the registered entrepreneur is not in the list of registered entrepreneurs available to the statistical office, or if available, is systematically excluded from it; the registered entrepreneur is not in the survey frame because the classification data (activity code, size code, geographic code) are incorrect.

III Misreporting

N6 - Producers deliberately misreporting

Gross output is under-reported and/or intermediate consumption is overstated, in order to evade income tax, value added tax (VAT), other taxes, or social security contributions. Misreporting often involves maintenance of two sets of books, payments of envelope salaries which are recorded as intermediate consumption; payments in cash without receipts, and VAT fraud.

IV. Other

N7 - Other statistical deficiencies

Type N7 is subdivided into:

N7a: data that are incomplete, not collected or not directly collectable;

N7b: data that are incorrectly handled, processed or compiled by statisticians.

The following areas should be investigated: handling of non-response; production for own final use by market producers; tips; wages and salaries in kind; and secondary activities.

Source: Non-Observed Economy in national accounts; Survey of Country Practices, UN, 2008

The main goal of the framework is to ensure that the NOE is measured systematically, potential areas are covered and no activities are double counted. Country comparison of the NOE, similarity in methods used and exchange of experience in implementation can be more easily ensured if the same frame is employed.

Measurement methods for the non-observed economy vary across countries.

Several sources are quite common, such as agricultural censuses, business statistics, household surveys, demographic data/population censuses, Labour Force Survey/labour statistics, taxation and fiscal data, police records, social security records and foreign trade statistics. Some sources are used only in one or a few countries, particularly the surveys for capturing a specific activity (e.g. tobacco smuggling). Other sources such as Labour Force Surveys and employment data, structural business surveys, household budget/expenditure surveys, and taxation data are widely used by countries.

The main methods used in estimating the NOE can be classified into two types:

- iv. Statistical methods, such as direct estimations based on direct surveys (surveys on expenditure, income, labour, time use or opinion, for instance) or indirect estimation based on available data sources.

Indirect statistical compilation methods can be classified by type into:

- *supply based* approach (including the *labour input* approach): it relies on data on the supply of inputs (number of primary raw materials, just one major raw material, labour, land, fixed capital stock, etc.) that are used for producing goods and services. Input/output and input/value added ratios are needed to calculate output and value added estimates from the input data.
- *demand based* approach: it aims to assess production by using indicator data on specific uses of goods and services that sufficiently describe their production: household final consumption expenditures of a certain commodity such as health and personal services; uses

of raw materials such as the processing of agricultural products; major export commodities; administrative data indicating demand for a product such as motor vehicle registrations and building permits, etc.

- *income-based* approach: it is based on available data from administrative sources in some categories of income, which can be used to obtain an indication of production covered by the administrative system (income taxes, social security contributions paid by self-employed persons or private entrepreneurs, etc.).
 - *commodity flow* approach: it involves balancing total supplies and uses of individual products, using accounting equations. One specific application of a commodity flow method is to calculate the output of the retail trade from supply of commodities.
- v. Methods based on modelling techniques. Macro-economic models (such as monetary models, global indicator method) provide some estimation of the NOE but should be avoided. The use of available basic data is preferred. Where model-based assumptions are unavoidable, they should be applied at the most detailed available level because it has been shown that the results are sensitive to data transformations, units of measurement and the sample used.

It should be noted that there is no unique standard method applied internationally; several methods or combinations of methods are usually applied, depending on the characteristics of each country.

The process of incorporating non-observed production into GDP estimates implies *complex procedures*, such as:

- Some procedures yield estimates of total production for a specific activity without separately identifying various types of non-observed activities;
- Ad hoc supplementary data are often required to make efficient use of existing sources (value added estimates can be derived from output estimates obtained from a commodity flow method using a value added/output ratio calculated from an ad-hoc study);
- Compilation should be based on detailed and specific adjustments using specific sources and known linkages and relationships;
- Where possible, alternative estimates should be derived, compared, and assessed for plausibility of results. Data relating to similar topics but from different sources should be compared and analyzed to identify errors or remaining gaps.
- Assumptions underlying estimation procedures should be made explicit in calculations and reviewed regularly for their plausibility.

2. The Informal Sector

2.1 Place of the informal sector in the economy

The informal sector manifests itself in different ways in different countries, different regions within the same country, and even different parts of the same city. It encompasses different kinds of activities, different types of enterprise, and different reasons for participating. Informal activities range from street vending, shoe shining, food processing and other minor activities requiring little or no capital and skills and with marginal output, to those involving a certain amount of investment in skills and capital and with higher productivity, such as manufacturing, tailoring, car repair and mechanized transport. While some informal sector activities resemble traditional activities in handicrafts, food processing or personal services, others such as car repair, recycling of waste materials or transport, are new and arise from modernization.

Reasons for participating in the informal sector range from pure survival strategies undertaken by individuals facing a lack of (adequate) jobs, unemployment insurance or other forms of income maintenance, to the desire for independence and flexible work arrangements and, in some cases, the prospect of quite profitable income-earning opportunities, or the continuation of traditional activities.

Box VI.2: Examples of informal activities

- A woman selling on street the cakes she cooked in-home. She has no license for this activity, but her cookies are bought by people from neighborhood who appreciate the taste. Sometimes she bakes cakes to order for special occasions in exchange of money.
- A man who uses his own car and carries out a taxi activity, main (or additional) source of income. He is registered and has a licence provided by the government.
- A woman who takes care of a child of another woman, more than 9 hours per day. She did not find another job in the area, and sees no prospects for an improved employment situation. She is paid for this job with less than the minimum threshold which is required by Government as a gross wage.

It should be noted that the vast majority of informal sector activities provide goods and services whose production and distribution are perfectly legal (in contrast to criminal activities or illegal production). There is also a difference between the concept of the informal sector and that of the hidden or underground economy, because informal sector activities are not necessarily performed with the deliberate intention of evading the payment of taxes or social security, but to reduce

production costs.

2.2 Defining the informal sector

The informal sector definition was adopted by the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (15th ICLS) in January 1993 and was linked to the conceptual framework of the SNA. This helps ensure compatibility with informal sector statistics and other economic and social statistics, and measurements of it are integrated in the overall economy. To be consistent with the framework of the SNA and provide separate GDP accounting for the informal sector, the definition was based on production units or enterprises rather than on employment relations. Furthermore, the informal sector was considered a sub-sector of the SNA institutional sector 'households'.

Definition

(1) The informal sector may be broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes for the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees.

(2) Production units of the informal sector have the characteristic features of household enterprises. The fixed and other assets used do not belong to the production units as such but to their owners. The units themselves cannot engage in transactions or enter into contracts with other units, nor incur liabilities, on their own behalf. The owners have to raise the necessary finance at their own risk and are personally liable, without limit, for any debts or obligations incurred in the production process. Expenditure for production is often indistinguishable from household expenditure. Similarly, capital goods such as buildings or vehicles may be used indistinguishably for business and household purposes.

Source: *The SNA 2008*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 25: Informal aspects of the economy, point 25.36.

The above definition is only an 'umbrella definition' of the informal sector, as its scope and coverage depends on national circumstances. The conditions under which these activities come into existence and the constraints under which they are undertaken confer certain characteristics on them, leading to specific criteria for determining what is meant by informal.

The criteria used to identify the informal sector in the SNA framework may be classified as follows:

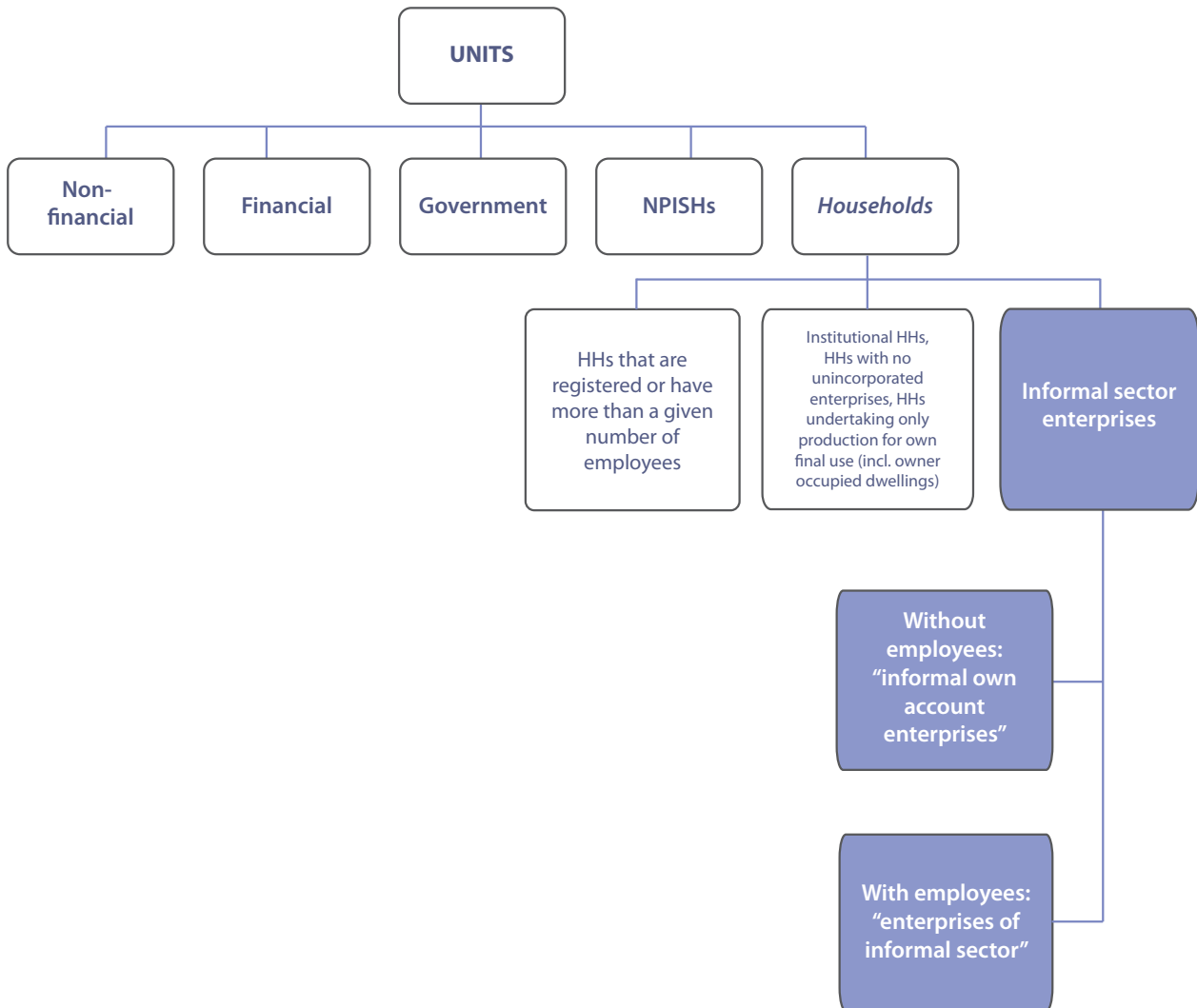
- General essential criteria:
 - legal organization of the enterprise: unincorporated enterprise;
 - ownership of the enterprise: belong to a household;
 - type of accounts: absence of separate complete accounts;
 - production destination: at least some production is destined for sale or barter, household enterprises with no market production (own-account agriculture or construction), services of paid domestic workers, and services from owner-occupied dwellings being excluded.

- Additional operational criteria:

- size limit of the enterprise: the number of employees engaged in the production is left to the country's discretion (for international reporting, countries should provide figures separately for enterprises with fewer than five employees);
- non-registration of enterprise and/or of employees in an enterprise within some arm of government;
- economic activity: non-agricultural activity including units mainly involved in agricultural sector and performing secondary non-agricultural activities;
- location of units: urban and rural areas.

Figure VI.2 shows the units of the informal sector in the economy.

Figure VI.2 Informal sector



Source: The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009.

Production units are household unincorporated enterprises. Depending on types of employment involved, they are further sub-divided:

- *Informal own-account enterprises*, which basically represent household enterprises as described above, and which may employ contributing family workers and employees on an occasional basis but not employees on a continuous basis and which have the characteristics described in the definition. Informal enterprises may comprise those who are not registered as provided by specific laws or may include all own-account enterprises.
- *Enterprises of informal employers* are household enterprises that employ one or more employees on a continuous basis. Depending on the country, enterprises of informal employers are determined based on a threshold employ-

ment size and the non-registration of the enterprise or its employees. All or at least some of the goods or services produced are meant for sale or barter. In many countries, household enterprises engaged in agricultural activities are deliberately excluded, although the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians and SNA 2008 did not recommend this exclusion.

Box VI.3: Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics recommendations

The main recommendations for defining the informal sector are:

1. All countries should use the criteria of legal organization (unincorporated enterprises), type of accounts (no complete set of accounts) and product destination (at least some market output).
2. Specification of the employment size limit of the enterprise in the national definition of the informal sector is left to the country's discretion. For international reporting, however, countries should provide figures separately for enterprises with fewer than five employees. In the case of multiple-establishment enterprises, the size limit should apply to the largest establishment.
3. Countries using the employment size criterion should provide disaggregated figures for enterprises, which are not registered, as well as for enterprises, which are registered.
4. Countries using the criterion of non-registration should provide disaggregated figures for enterprises with fewer than five employees as well as for enterprises with five or more employees.
5. Countries, which include agricultural activities, should provide figures separately for agricultural and non-agricultural activities.
6. Countries should include persons engaged in professional or technical activities if they meet the criteria of the informal sector definition.
7. Countries should include paid domestic services unless these are provided by employees.
8. Countries should follow paragraph 18 of the Resolution adopted by the 15th ICLS regarding the treatment of outworkers/home workers. Countries should provide figures separately for outworkers/home workers included in the informal sector.
9. Countries covering urban as well as rural areas should provide figures separately for both urban and rural areas.
10. Countries using household surveys or mixed surveys should make an effort to cover not only persons whose main job is in the informal sector, but also those whose main job is in another sector and who have a secondary activity in the informal sector.

Source: *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy- a Handbook*, OECD, 2002.

2.3 Informal economy

In the extended conceptual framework, the informal economy is considered as comprising informal employment (without secure contracts, worker benefits, or social protection) both inside and outside informal enterprises:

- Informal employment in informal enterprises (small unregistered or unincorporated enterprises), including: employers, employees, own-account operators, and unpaid family workers in informal enterprises;
- Informal employment outside informal enterprises (for formal enterprises, for households, or with no fixed employer), including: domestic workers, casual or day labourers, temporary or part-time workers industrial outworkers (including home-workers), and unregistered or undeclared workers.

The informal economy consists of a wide range of informal enterprises and informal jobs. Despite its heterogeneity, there are meaningful ways of classifying its component segments:

- by type of economic unit and
- by employment status.

Informal enterprises consist of micro-enterprises (with an employer plus some employees), family businesses (with an owner operator and, sometimes, unpaid family workers) and own-account operations (with an individual owner operator). Informal employment relations consist of informal enterprise employees as well as domestic workers without a regular contract, casual day labourers without a fixed employer, temporary workers obtaining work through an agency, part-time workers for a fixed employer, industrial outworkers for formal or informal firms (and their intermediaries) and unregistered or undeclared workers. Table VI.1 presents the framework of informal employment in the economy.

Table VI.1: The conceptual framework for the informal economy

Production units by type	Jobs by status in employment								
	Own-account workers		Employers		Contributing family workers	Employees		Members of producers' cooperatives	
	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal
Formal sector enterprises					1	2			
Informal sector enterprises (a)	3		4		5	6	7	8	
Households (b)	9					10			

(a) As defined by the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1993

(b) Households producing goods for their own final use and households employing domestic workers.

Source: ILO, Decent Work and the Informal Economy Report VI, International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002.

Table VI.1 should be read as following:

- Dark-coloured cells refer to jobs that by definition do not exist in the type of production unit in question.
- Light-coloured cells refer to jobs which exist in the type of production unit in question but which are not relevant for the informal sector.

Unshaded cells refer to types of jobs represented in the different segments of the informal economy:

Cells with numbers 1 and 5: Contributing family workers: no contract of employment and no legal or social protection arising from the job, in formal enterprises (cell 1) or informal enterprises (cell 5). Contributing family workers with a contract of employment, wage, social protection, etc. would be considered employees in formal employment.

Cells with numbers 2 and 6: Employees who have informal jobs whether employed by formal enterprises (cell 2) or informal enterprises (cell 6).

Cells with numbers 3 and 4: Own-account workers (cell 3) and employers (cell 4) who have their own informal enterprise. The informal nature of their jobs follows directly from the characteristics of the enterprise they own.

Cell with number 7: Employees working in informal enterprises but having formal jobs (this may occur, for example, when enterprises are defined as informal using size as the only criterion).

Cell with number 8: Members of informal producers' cooperatives.

Cell with number 9: Producers of goods for own final use by their household (e.g. subsistence farming).

Cell with number 10: Paid domestic workers employed by households in informal jobs.

To find out more...

The 2008 SNA, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 25: Informal aspects of the economy, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009;

Measuring the Non-Observed Economy – a Handbook, OECD, IMF, ILO and CIS STAT, 2002;

Non-Observed Economy in national accounts – Survey of Country Practices, UN, 2008.

2.4 How to measure the informal sector

2.4.1 Estimation methods

Several approaches may be used to estimate activity in the informal sector. The choice or combination will depend on the objectives which range from very simple such as only having information about the evolution of number and characteristics of persons involved in the informal sector, or more complex such as obtaining detailed information about the characteristics of the enterprises involved, the main activities undertaken, number of employees, income generation, capital equipment, etc. The choice of measurement method depends upon data requirements, statistical systems organization, financial and human resources capability and user needs, especially policy makers involved in economic decision taking.

The main methods used to obtain estimates of the magnitude of the informal sector can be separated into three classes:

1. Direct methods:

Direct methods are microeconomic in nature and based on surveys or the results from tax audits used to construct estimates of total economic activity and its official and

unofficial (or measured and unmeasured) components. In order to make a direct estimate of the informal sector several approaches are used:

- to conduct a special survey on the informal sector;
- to expand the coverage of the existing regular surveys, such as labour force or household surveys, with information pertaining to the informal sector;
- to carry out mixed household–enterprise surveys.

Special surveys on the informal sector, even if they are the most appropriate for data collection, are very costly and often entail sizeable financial and human resources.

2. Indirect methods:

Indirect methods are macroeconomic in nature, and combine various economic variables and a set of assumptions for producing estimates of total economic activity (that is, measured and unmeasured, official and unofficial). Hence, only the size of the informal sector may be estimated, not any other relevant information and indicators about the country, like the extent of social protection, access to education, health, credit, differences in wages and working conditions and prevalence of poverty. Indirect methods can be sub-classified as follows:

- *Discrepancy methods* that rely on differences between aggregate income and expenditure that capture the economic activity of the informal sector or between labour force and formal employment. This estimation of the informal sector based on the differences between aggregates requires having independently obtained measures of GDP using expenditure and income approaches and thus, limiting its application in practice.
- *Monetary methods* are by far the most used in the empirical literature. They are based on the assumption that hidden transactions use only cash; so, estimating the quantity of money in circulation and then taking away the incentives that induce agents into informality (usually taxes) should give a good approximation of the money used in informal activities.
- *Physical input methods* use discrepancies in electricity consumption and GDP. This method has limitations due to the assumption of a constant coefficient of use per unit of GDP which does not consider technological progress and starts its estimation from a base year in which the magnitude of the informal economy is zero or negligible (an unrealistic assumption for most countries).

3. Model approaches:

The Model approach for measuring the informal sector involves using structural equations to link unobserved variables to observed indicators and cause. The most common method is that of the Multiple Indicator–Multi-

ple Cause (MIMIC) model that imputes a level of underlying informality from a set of presumed causes of informality, on the one hand, and measurable consequences of it, on the other. Among the causes that can be included are taxation level, inflation, salaries and unemployment; the indicators refer to the currency in circulation and real GDP. The two main components of the model, the measurement equation and the structural equation, provide the size of the informal economy using the causes and indicators included in estimations.

The use of the model is not recommended for compiling national accounts. As ISWGNA⁽¹⁰⁾ presented, these methods suffer from serious problems that cast doubt on their utility for any purpose in which accuracy is important, such as the estimation of national accounts indicators.

2.4.2 Statistical data for estimating the informal sector

A major challenge for developing countries and economies in transition is the statistical measurement of the informal sector with respect to size, characteristics and contribution to GDP. There are not many countries that conduct regular surveys to measure employment in this sector and even fewer measure its contribution to GDP.

One of the main reasons for the lack of estimates is the limited resources of national statistical systems which do not allow for integrating regular data collection on the informal sector.

Depending on their objectives, countries use a variety of survey tools for measuring the informal sector, including independent *ad hoc* surveys, mixed household–enterprise surveys, labour force or other household surveys, enterprise/establishment surveys and economic censuses. For example, some statistical offices adopt a fragmented approach using different methods, questionnaires and reference periods in conducting *ad hoc* industry surveys of informal sector enterprises which reflect, for instance, the relative importance attached to a particular industry at a given point in time. Other countries limit their surveys to major urban areas only.

Bearing in mind that resources are often limited in countries with a large informal sector, national statistical offices should prioritize their strategic objectives for estimating the informal sector.

The first step, as for the general strategy for the SNA implementation offered in Chapter II: *Building the SNA*, is that the main users of the statistics are consulted. This consultation ensures that the data to be produced is relevant to the needs and priorities identified at national and international levels and builds support for developing statistical programmes.

The ILO guidelines on employment statistics in the informal sector and informal employment serve as a framework for defining the main measurement objectives and data require-

(10) See: SNA News, Number 22/ 2006

ments necessary for establishing the national data collection programme. The main data which needs to be provided with respect to the informal sector refers to:

- i. the number of persons engaged in informal sector units by employment status and kind of economic activity and
- ii. the number of informal sector enterprises by kind of economic activity and by type (i.e. informal own-account enterprises, informal employer enterprises).

To find out more...

www.ilo.org at the site: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/informal.htm>

www.worldbank.org at the site: <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/1f3aa35cab9dea4f85256a77004e4ef4/0e1cfcae7d9ef44185256a940073f4e5?OpenDocument>

The second step of the strategy refers to establishing the approach for collecting data and defining the main indicators to be estimated. The various survey approaches used are:

1. Household surveys

These surveys include labour force surveys (LFS) and household income and expenditure surveys. They are the best data collection tools if the objective is to monitor the evolution of informal sector employment and informal employment in terms of the number and characteristics of the persons involved and the conditions of their employment and work. For this purpose, questions pertaining to the definition of the informal sector can be incorporated into LFS survey questionnaires and asked in respect of all persons employed during the survey reference period, irrespective of their employment status. A household income and expenditure survey provides information about household demand for goods and services produced in the informal sector.

However this method, not being an appropriate source of information for estimating the total number of informal sector enterprises, is limited as far as disaggregation by industry, estimation of the total demand for informal production and other economic characteristics are concerned.

2. Enterprise surveys

The most suitable approach for data collection when the objective is to monitor the number and characteristics of the informal sector units is to use enterprise and establishment surveys. These types of surveys provide reliable information on different aspects, such as: the number and characteristics of the businesses involved; their production activities, income generation, and fixed capital; the conditions and constraints under which they operate; their organizations and relationships with the formal sector, etc.

However, an enterprise survey fails to capture the diversity and mobility of informal sector activities as they do not cover households.

A crucial aspect underlying the quality of the statistics produced by informal sector enterprise surveys is the framework used to select the survey sample, particularly how complete and up-to-date it is. A business register can usually be used, where one exists, although in general it does not cover informal sector enterprises. An establishment census offers an alternative, even if it represents an 'upper' frame for the informal sector, especially for 'identifiable' establishments. However, constraints in using such data sources are: high costs, possible overlaps, failure to capture enterprises such as in-home food processing, ambulant trade, construction, etc. For these reasons, countries considering the possibility of establishing a regular statistical programme for the informal sector based on this approach need to plan early on how the approach would fit within the overall data collection schedule and with the financial and human resources available.

3. Mixed household and enterprise surveys

This approach includes:

- *The modular approach: informal sector attached to household survey.* In this case, a special questionnaire for evaluating the informal sector is attached to the existing LFS or household survey and the two surveys can be conducted simultaneous or, more usefully, subsequently (first the household survey and then the informal sector survey). This approach permits monitoring of trends in the informal sector over time, if the base survey (the household survey) is conducted regularly and an informal sector module is attached at sufficiently frequent intervals.
- *The stand-alone approach: informal sector survey designed as an independent survey* represents a better option from a technical point of view because its sample can be specifically designed and selected to meet the set requirements (for example by branch of activity). The use of this approach is based on a multi-stage design involving the following steps: (i) selection of areas (census enumeration areas) as primary sampling units; (ii) listing or interviewing of all households in the sample areas; (iii) selection of sample households with owners of informal sector enterprises (household unincorporated enterprises with some market production); and (iv) interview of sample householders and enterprise owners. The advantages in the quality of the results obtained using this approach must be balanced against the complexity of the survey and operations required (sample design, estimation procedures, qualified survey staff, sound training of interviewers, etc.).

- *Integrated approach: informal sector surveys as part of a survey system designed to meet several objectives.* These are seen as special types of modular surveys. They are designed to meet several measurement objectives at the same time, such as data collection for the informal sector, labour force characteristics, household income and expenditure, etc. For this reason, this approach is especially useful for countries that do not have a regular household survey to which an informal sector survey can be attached. These surveys are based on a sample in which the number of households with informal sector enterprises is extended as much as possible in order to obtain a larger representation of the various types of informal sector.

Box VI.4: Examples of informal sector surveys - Mozambique case

In Mozambique the majority of economic units concerned with the NOE phenomena are included in the informal sector. In order to estimate the size of this part of economy, a project was conducted with the technical assistance of ISTAT (Statistical Institute of Italy). Due to the lack of other informative sources, a specific survey directly measuring IS (**INFOR04**) has been carried out in order to improve the knowledge on its characteristics. However, due to the continuous changes in the IS, the update of information proves to be a fundamental aspect; implementing a survey on a regular basis to study the IS is of course a solution, but rarely feasible, because of its high costs. Consequently, a two-step approach was experimented in Mozambique:

1. The INFOR04 survey, in which designing and implementing a specific sample survey on IS was designed and implemented in 2007 (INFOR04). The questionnaire was designed based on the socio-economic framework of the country. The starting point was not to ask the interviewer to decide whether the respondent belonged to IS but to ask him/her to propose questions to the respondent following a set of filtering rules that, step by step, would help to identify people belonging to IS; hence a questionnaire filter area was designed. In this module, questions about the recording of the activity in any register (at national and/or regional level, at the tax agency, etc.) were considered. In addition to the module, other modules of the questionnaire asked for the characteristics of the job such as the kind of activity, the plot production etc. Results were analyzed and validated by the Mozambican experts. The figure shows the importance of the informal sector that actually is the largest part of the Mozambican labor force.

2. An indirect estimation of Informal Sector: the experience of the 2008 **Household Budget Survey** using an attached ad-hoc module. Since to run an IS survey every year is not sustainable, a sub-optimal solution was found in taking advantage of some other already planned surveys to gather information on, at least, the most important variables featuring the IS. It was decided to include in the questionnaire of the Mozambican 2008 Household Budget Survey (**IOF08**) a module similar to the questionnaire filter of INFOR04 used to understand whether the unit can be included in the informal sector or not. These information associated with those of some variables of IOF08 may give some interesting results on the IS that can be used to update the results of INFOR04. Of course the quality of estimates related to the IS variables may be affected by the fact that the focus of IOF08 is on different aspects, for instance the different definitions of variables, and the different preparation of interviewers. The results show that the quality of the process should and could be improved. The estimates were only reliable at a high level of aggregation. Nevertheless, this way of proceeding is feasible and further steps towards quality can be easily done taking into account this first experience.

In particular it was noticed that an improvement of data quality can be obtained by making the interviewer more sensible to the IS questions in order to avoid measurement errors and partial non-responses that were actually one of the main problems of this experience. In our opinion, using a IS module attached to a Labor Force Survey or to a Living Standard Measurement Survey could avoid most of the problems met with the HBS because of the similarity of topics to be dealt with.

Source: *The Informal Sector in Mozambique*;

Outputs From *The First National Survey (2005)*, INE Mozambique, 2006

Box VI.5: Number of surveys on the informal sector across countries and data collection methods

Type of survey	Region				Total
	Africa	Asia & Pacific	Latin America	Economies in transition	
Mixed survey	15	2	4	1	22
Labour Force Survey	8	6	14	5	33
Households survey	11	–	5	2	18
Establishment censuses and survey	11	4	–	–	15
Total	45	12	23	8	88

Source: *Informal sector: Statistical definition and Measurement issues*, P. Gennari, paper presented to the OECD/UNESCAP/ADB workshop, 2004, Bangkok.

The different approaches presented highlight the diversity in scope and coverage of the various informal sector surveys, which complicates their comparability across countries and over time (see Box VI.5). At the same time, flexibility in criteria adaptation is an important characteristic for measuring the informal sector given its unique economic structure and policy interests in each country. Bearing in mind the need for flexibility and international comparability of the dynamics and structure of the informal sector, the best approach is the Fully Integrated Rational Survey Technique (FIRST) methodology. This approach is based on a modified mixed household-enterprise survey integrated into a comprehensive data collection programme on economic statistics. However, its application requires financial and human resources and is difficult to conduct on a regular basis.

Addressing these critical issues in data collection on the informal sector, the *Interregional Cooperation on the Measurement of Informal Sector and Informal Employment (ICMISIE)*⁽¹¹⁾ project proposed the ‘1-2’ survey, which is a specific kind of mixed household- enterprise survey.

(11) ICMISIE is a multiyear and multilateral development account project of the United Nations, with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific as lead agency, whose objectives is to increase the availability of data on the informal sector and informal employment and to improve the calculation of the informal sector contribution to employment and GDP.

To find out more...

The ‘1-2’ Survey: A data collection strategy for informal sector and informal employment statistics, Pietro Gennari, Margarita F Guerrero, Zeynep Orhun (United Nations ESCAP Statistics Division) Ivo Havinga, Gulab Singh (United Nations Statistics Division/Department of Economic and Social Affairs), April 2009;

Documents of the *Workshop on Informal Employment and Informal Sector Data Collection Strategy, Tools, and Advocacy*, organized by ESCAP in Bangkok, 2007, available at: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/isie/ws-isie1/index.asp>

The ‘1-2’ survey utilizes the LFS in the first phase as a tool for collecting information on informal employment and some of the required informal sector data items. Each individual respondent in the LFS will be asked about his/her main and second jobs so that Household Unincorporated Enterprises with at least some Market production (HUEMs) can be identified. In this way, the data collected through the LFS construct the sample frame for the second phase, which is an enterprise survey for household unincorporated enterprises with at least some market production (HUEMs) as a statistical unit. The HUEMs survey collects data on production in line with international recommendations on industry, construction trade, and services statistics.

To find out more...

A generic HUEMs survey questionnaire is presented in the ESCAP papers: *Phase 1 of ‘1-2’ survey and Phase 2 of ‘1-2’ survey*, presented to the *Workshop on Informal Employment and Informal Sector Data Collection Strategy, Tools, and Advocacy*, Bangkok, 2007.

The ‘1-2’ survey can be successfully used by developing countries with limited budgets for data collection but with a large informal sector impacting on the development of their economies. They can conduct the survey once a year; while the HUEM survey may not be conducted annually, LFS surveys will gather information on informal employment that may be used for identifying informal enterprises. In this way, the informal sector’s contribution to GDP can be fully integrated into the national accounts data compilation framework.

Box VI.6

Interregional Cooperation on the Measurement of Informal Sector and Informal Employment was an important project developed by UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The project was implemented in the period 2007-2009 in close collaboration with United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), International Labour Organization (ILO), the Delhi Group, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing).

Recognizing the importance of data on the informal sector and informal employment, and their effective use, in promoting evidence-based socioeconomic policies and achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Targets, the objectives of the project were to improve the availability and the analyses of data on the informal sector – including employment and contribution to the GDP – and informal employment in developing countries and countries with economy in transition.

The first component of the project was to raise awareness among the national statistics offices and other government agencies in the participating countries of the importance of collecting and disseminating informal sector and informal employment data, and incorporating it into employment and GDP estimates. The second component was to enhance the capacity to collect, compile, analyze and disseminate informal sector and informal employment data complying with international methodological standards. The expected outputs were published informal sector and informal employment data, and a country report covering data collection, compilation, dissemination and analysis experience throughout the project. The project also contributed to the conceptual work on the informal sector by proposing a standardized data collection strategy and producing internationally comparable data.

One of the countries participating in this project was Saint Lucia, who carried out the “1-2” survey in order to estimate the informal sector and integrate it into the country’s national accounts. The final report was published and is available on

http://www.eclac.org/deype/publicaciones/sinsigla/xml/1/39071/CE9_sala01i.pdf

Source: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/isie/index.asp>

2.5 Concluding remarks

The informal sector represents an important part of developing economies, and governments and international organizations are focusing their attention towards understanding what proportion it represents, why it exists and how it operates, so as to take adequate measures to reduce it. Measuring it is an important challenge for developing countries.

The SNA implementation strategy will take the informal sector into account, when the compilation of national accounts is well-established, by using the main phases presented in Chapter II : Building the SNA, Section 2: The 2008 SNA implementation strategy. Information about size and characteristics of the informal sector must be obtained in order to help decision-makers take pertinent measures aimed at improving a country’s welfare and reinforcing the important role of national accounts within the statistical system.

2.5.1 Questions for practitioners

To ensure the exhaustiveness of estimates represents one of the goals of national accountants. In order to build an appropriate strategy for NOE and informal sector estimation, improvement is useful to clarify the following issues:

- Which are the NOE elements in your country?
- How big and important is the informal sector in the country? What are its components?
- How concerned are the main users about any of the NOE problem areas? The bigger their concerns, the more effort NOE measurements merits.
- Is a strategy developed in the statistical office to start the NOE and informal sector estimations or to improve them? Does the statistical office have a multi-year plan and what is the NOE’s place in this plan?
- Does the statistical office recognize and attach appropriate importance to its structure in order to implement and develop an NOE and informal sector measurement strategy?
- Could the available data sources be used for estimating the NOE and informal sector? What new surveys must be implemented in the statistical system or new administrative sources used?
- Are there partnerships with administrative agencies with a view to better use of administrative sources to satisfy statistical office data needs; in particular, to address NOE coverage problems and the informal sector?
- Are methods to estimate the NOE and informal sector applied? What are the results? What is the quality of the results? Are the estimates disseminated?

3. Recommended reading

- *The 2008 SNA*, European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009, Chapter 25: Informal aspects of the economy;
- *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy, a Handbook*, OECD, 2002;
- *Non-Observed Economy in national accounts- Survey of Country Practices*, UN, 2008;
- *Women and men in the informal economy- A statistical picture*, International Labour Office (ILO) 2002;
- *Eurostat's Tabular Approach to Exhaustiveness- Guidelines*, Eurostat 2005;
- *Measuring the informal economy: from employment in the informal sector to informal employment*, Ralf Haussmanns, working paper no.53, International Labour Office (ILO) 2004;
- *Measuring the size of the informal sector*, www.worldbank.org;
- *Guide méthodologique pour l'élaboration des comptes nationaux dans les états membre d'Afristat*, Afristat, Série Méthodes no.4, 2001; Chapter II-V: La prise en compte du secteur informel dans les travaux de comptabilité nationale;
- *Household Accounting: experience in concepts and compilation*, Studies in Methods, Series F no 75/vol.1, UN 2000, Chapter II: The informal sector as part of the household sector.
- *How Can We Measure the Informal Sector?*, Dalisay S. Maligalig and Margarita F. Guerrero, paper will be presented at the Philippine Statistical Association, Inc. mid-year conference at the Ople Hall, Department of Labour and Employment, Intramuros, Manila, on 6 June 2008;
- Papers presented to the International Seminar on Informal Sector, organized by AFRISTAT, Mali, 2008 available at http://www.afristat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=204&catid=64
- *Modelling the informal economy in Mexico ; A Structural Equation Approach*, Bramhla Macis J., MPRA paper No.8504, 2008;
- *The '1-2' Survey: A data collection strategy for informal sector and informal employment statistics*, Pietro Genari, Margarita F Guerrero, Zeynep Orhun (United Nations ESCAP Statistics Division) Ivo Havinga, Gulab Singh (United Nations Statistics Division/Department of Economic and Social Affairs), April 2009, http://www.unescap.org/stat/isie/project-resources/index.asp#workshop_materials;
- *Comprehensive Measures of GDP and the Unrecorded Economy*, Adrian Bloem and Manik Shrestha, IMF Working Paper No. 00/204, December 2000;
- *Strategies for Measuring Industrial Structure and Growth*, Studies in methods, Serie F, No.65, UN 1994.
- *Measurement of Informal Sector and Informal Employment in St. Lucia*, http://www.eclac.org/deype/publicaciones/sinsigla/xml/1/39071/CE9_sala01i.pdf

Volume measures



The chapter in brief

Knowing the economy of a country means knowing its state and evolution in time and highlighting structural changes. This is based on national accounts compiled for successive periods as “time series” which lead to the compilation of figures showing “real” growth.

The 2008 SNA provides guidance about the estimations used to compile accounts in volume terms to obtain an integrated set of price and volume indices for flows of goods and services, gross and net value added, and GDP, which are consistent with general principles of national accounts.

This chapter addresses the conceptual background of price and volume measures in national accounts, the main data sources and methods used for annual estimates.

1. Price and volume in national accounts

In the system of national accounts, all flows and stocks are expressed in value, which enables the aggregation of a variety of goods and services produced in the economy. However, a major concern in economic analysis is to measure economic growth in volume terms between different periods.

Volume measures enable the analysis of real growth over time to be made: “How much higher was GDP this year in comparison to previous years?”. In order to do this, the value changes for economic aggregates need to be split between those changes arising solely from changes in price and those from volume changes.

The system of national accounts provides a framework for measuring integrated price and volume for transactions in goods and services, taxes and subsidies on products, trade margins, consumption of fixed capital, compensation of employees, inventories, and produced fixed assets.

It should be stressed that many flows or stocks presented in the SNA do not have price and quantity dimensions. In this case, the flows or stocks refer to a number of transactions relating to distribution and financial intermediation, as well as to balancing items such as value added (value added does not represent any observable flow of goods and services which can be factored into a price and a quantity component directly).

1.1 Why measure price and volume in SNA?

Analyzing the evaluation of past economic performance, establishing the targets of the economic and social policy, or making comparisons between different economies is based on key variables represented by rates of inflation and economic growth. Economic growth is determined in the frame of national accounts.

The main uses of price and volume measures (or constant price estimates) in SNA are the following:

i. Analyze the general economic growth

Volume measures of national accounts indicators serve to study the long term development of an economy. It is usual to present the growth of an economy based on aggregated indicators such as GDP, but national accounts offer a wide range of data which shows the complexity of an economy.

The relative expansion or contraction of different sectors or industries presents the same importance as the aggregated growth of the whole economy. The important changes in the structure of the economy are best analyzed in the framework offered by the accounts in constant prices. Data in constant prices are required not only to measure the way production increases, but also to estimate the growth or productive capacity of specific industries compared to the whole economy.

ii. Analyze economic cycle

Presenting the long-term movements which accompany the changes in economic growth, the accounts in constant prices serve to register and analyze the economic cycles. The fluctuations of economic activity are always important information for a market economy. Moreover, besides the registration of the economic cycle, it is necessary to analyze the causal factors, based on decomposition, as completely as possible. These causal factors are provided by national accounts in constant prices. Data and amplitude of cyclic movements of various aggregates (such as capital formation, exports, consumption, etc.) must always be systematically analyzed based on their interdependence. The compilation of quarterly accounts in constant prices along with the annual ones is more useful in analyzing the cyclical changes, especially for countries in development with large agricultural sectors.

iii. Economic projections

The national accounts in constant prices refer to past events. The forecasts and projections for the future are normally established based on these accounts, due to the fact that it is not possible to decide on realistic economic objectives without knowing the present situation of the economy and its evolution.

For example, in order to project the increase of production, recent changes in this quantity, as well as productivity, resources, capital formation and other variables, should be taken into account.

The changes in private consumption or total consumption of the population recorded in constant prices are used extensively to measure the changes in living conditions and realize the projection of future development. It is possible to decompose aggregates and to analyze the real consumption of a particular goods and services such as, for example, food, housing, education, etc., or expenses measured by household or inhabitant. This information normally serves to indicate the changes in the population welfare level.

iv. Basis for decision-taking

National accounts in current and constant prices serve to take rational economic decisions by knowing the reality of the national economy, offering decision-takers a valuable tool. Moreover, national accounts are used not only by the planning services, ministries of finances, central banks and public administration in general, but also by private institutions and enterprises. In order to analyze the flow of goods and services, the national accounts indicators in constant prices are probably more useful than the original accounts in current prices. On the other hand, accounts in current prices offer important information on other kinds of flows such as incomes, transfers, financial flows, etc., which cannot be estimated in constant prices in a convenient manner.

1.2 Conceptual background

The changes in the values of flows of goods and services can be directly factored into two components, one reflecting changes in the prices of the goods and services concerned, and the other, the changes in their volumes.

Changes in value can be broken down into price and volume components only for variables that have price and quantity elements. All transactions involving the exchange of goods and services and the levels of stocks of non-financial assets have this characteristic but income flows and financial assets and liabilities do not. Some balancing items have this characteristic but others do not and so they need to be considered individually.

Price and volume measures should be made within an integrated system of price and volume indices. An integrated system of volume measures must meet three requirements:

- The goods and services account must be balanced for two successive years both in current and constant prices;
- Each flow at the level of the total economy must be equal to the sum of the corresponding flow of the various industries;
- Every change in the value of a transaction must be associated with a change in price or a change in volume, or a combination of the two.

The value of a homogeneous product is defined by:

$$v = p \times q \quad (1)$$

where: v = value; p = price; q = quantity unit

1.2.1 Periods

An important issue in volume measure is the choice of the base year. The SNA favours the use of a moving base year. In practice, this means that t-1 will be the base year. The advantages are:

- An up-to-date weighting scheme provides better estimates of growth rates;

- Introduction of new goods or disappearance of them is simplified;
- No burdensome rebasing of time series.

A **base year** is the year for which price data at the most detailed level are collected and serve as benchmark data to weight different quantities to obtain one single volume index. The change of a base year affects real rate of growth. Consequently, the price base period is the period whose prices are used as denominators in calculating relative price P_t/P_0 (0 is the price base period). The quantity base period is the period whose quantities are used as denominators in calculating relative quantities Q_t/Q_0 (0 is the quantity base period).

A **reference year** is simply any given year selected so that a series of values with different base years can be compared. More simply, the period in an index number time series is taken to be equal to 100. A change in the reference year should not change rates of growth.

The choice of base year and the choice of reference year are, in principle, unrelated issues. For the calculation of price and volume measures, only the problem of the choice of base year is relevant.

There is the need to re-reference or chain whenever data is calculated with the previous year as the base year and data is to be expressed with respect to a fixed reference year. This system which always uses the previous year as the base year is also known as a system of “chain indices”. However, for the calculation of the year-to-year price and volume changes, no chaining is required.

Box VII.1: Example of base year and reference year

For example take the following series of index numbers:

Years:	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Data:	100	105	108	112	120

Suppose these numbers were calculated using weights from the year 1990. Hence 1990 is the base year. It is also the reference year, since 1990 = 100. The reference year can easily be changed to e.g. 1993 (divide all by 112/100 to get 1993 = 100):

Years:	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Data:	100/1.12	105/1.12	108/1.12	112/1.12	120/1.12

Such a procedure does not change the base year, since the year-to-year variations are still calculated using weights from 1990.

Instead of having a fixed base year as in the example above, one could take, each year, the weights of the previous year. This could, for example, lead to the following series of year-to-year changes:

Years:	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Data:	100	105	102	103	106

For each of these indices: $t - 1 = 100$ holds. Hence the reference year is equal to the base year, but changes each year. It is easily possible to express the series on one reference year, by "re-referencing" or "chaining". This would yield:

Years:	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Data:	100	105	107.1	110.3	116.9

where: $107.1 = 105 * 102 / 100$; $110.3 = 107.1 * 103 / 100$, etc.

Source: Handbook on price and volume measures in national accounts, Eurostat, 2001

1.2.2 Indices

The index numbers of interest within the SNA are designed to decompose changes in value aggregates into their overall change in price and overall change in volume components. A price index can be written and calculated as a weighted average of the proportionate changes in the prices of a specified set of goods and services between two periods of time, say a reference period 0 and current period t.

Similarly, a volume index can be written and calculated as a weighted average of the proportional changes in the volumes of a specified set of goods and services between two periods of time, say a reference period 0 and current period t.

There are many index number formulae differing from each other mainly in the weights which they attach to the individual relative prices or quantities and the particular form of average used, whether it is arithmetic, geometric, harmonic, etc. The most widely-used in the compilation of volume changes in national accounts are Laspeyres and Paasche indices, of which the geometric mean is the ideal Fisher index. The disadvantages of the Fisher are that it is demanding in its data requirements, its results are not easy to be interpreted

and is not additive consistent. This means that the Fisher index is not easily applicable in an accounting framework where additivity is an important issue.

The Laspeyres indices are weighted with a base period; they represent an arithmetical weighted mean over the current quantities (or prices) divided by quantities (or prices) in the base period, in which the values from base period are weighting coefficients.

Laspeyres price indices are presented by the equation (2) and the volume ones are presented by the equation (3):

$$L_P = \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{p_i^t}{p_i^0} \right) s_i^0 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{p_i^t}{p_i^0} \right) p_i^0 q_i^0}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^0 q_i^0} \equiv \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^t q_i^0}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^0 q_i^0} \quad (2)$$

$$L_Q = \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{q_i^t}{q_i^0} \right) s_i^0 \equiv \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^0 q_i^t}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^0 q_i^0} \quad (3)$$

Paasche indices are weighted with the current period; they represent an arithmetical weighted mean over the current quantities (or prices) divided by quantities (or prices) in the base period, in which the values from the current period are weighting coefficients.

The Paasche price and volume indices are represented in equation (4), irrespectively (5).

$$P_P = \left[\sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{p_i^t}{p_i^0} \right)^{-1} s_i^t \right]^{-1} \equiv \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^t q_i^t}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^0 q_i^t} \quad (4)$$

$$P_Q = \left[\sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{q_i^t}{q_i^0} \right)^{-1} s_i^t \right]^{-1} \equiv \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^t q_i^t}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^t q_i^0} \quad (5)$$

The Laspeyres and Pasche indices are symmetric: a price index of one of them multiplied with a volume index of the other one gives a value index. This is why the combination of Paasche price indices and Laspeyres volume indices is preferred in practice. It can easily be proved that this combination of indices fulfils the requirements mentioned above.

In order to obtain a system of price and volume indices to compile annual national accounts in prices of the previous year, available indices must be often processed into Laspeyres volume indices and Paasche price indices, even by national accountants.

The index of the change in monetary values between two periods, which is:

$$I_V = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n v_i^t}{\sum_{i=1}^n v_i^{t-1}} \quad (6)$$

reflects the combined effects of both price and quantity changes. When Laspeyres and Paasche indices are used, the value change will decompose exactly into a price index times a volume index only if the Laspeyres price index is matched with the Paasche volume index ($L_P \times P_Q = I_V$) or the Laspeyres quantity index is matched with the Paasche price index ($L_Q \times P_P = I_V$). For example, a price index, 1.05 representing a 5 per cent change multiplied by a volume index of 1.08, an 8 per cent change, yields a value change index of 1.134, a 13.4 per cent change.

In general, a Laspeyres index tends to register a larger increase over time than a Paasche index, that is, in general:

$$L_P > P_P \text{ and } L_Q > P_Q$$

From this relationship it can be easily noted whenever the relative prices and quantities (weighted by values) are negatively correlated, that is, as prices go up, the purchased quantities go down, or vice versa. Such negative correlation is to be expected for price takers, including consumers and firms purchasing intermediate inputs, which react to changes in relative prices by substituting goods and services that have become relatively less expensive for those that have become relatively more expensive.

A positive correlation would be expected for price setting firms that substitute output towards goods and services that have become relatively more expensive. In such circumstances the inequalities in the equation would be reversed.

1.2.3 Principles

The main principles that price and volume measurement follow are:

- 1) In the measurement of price and volume a *detailed level of aggregation of products shall be used*. This is because price and volume changes of non-homogeneous goods must generally be weighted together in statistical practice. At national accounts level, only a single consistent weighting method may be used (the weighting method is described by the three general principles). The aggregation level is defined by the assumption that the indices used are elementary indices, i.e. indices (and/or indicators) which have not been aggregated by the national accounts weighting method. This assumption is most plausible when the level of breakdown is very detailed.
- 2) *Volume measures available at the elementary level of aggregation shall be aggregated using the Laspeyres formula to obtain the volume measures of all national accounts aggregates*. Price measures available at the elementary

level of aggregation shall be aggregated using the *Paasche formula* to obtain the price measures of all national accounts aggregates.

- 3) *Volume measures derived at the elementary level of aggregation shall be aggregated using weights derived from the previous year*.

Box VII.2: A, B and C methods

The methods used for measuring volume in accordance with the output and/or expenditure approach of GDP estimation are classified in three groups:

- A methods: most appropriate methods;
- B methods: those methods which can be used in case an A method cannot be applied; and
- C methods: those methods which shall not be used.

The A/B/C classification is aimed at improvement of current practice. It sets out in what direction improvements can be made. It is therefore important that the criteria for distinguishing A, B and C methods are absolute criteria, i.e. that they do not depend on the present availability of data. In this way, it becomes clear where the biggest problems exist in terms of missing data. It also makes it clear how far current practice is away from good practice. It may well be that in some cases A methods are difficult to attain in practice.

Source: Handbook on price and volume measures in national accounts, Eurostat, 2001

1.3 How to measure price and volume in SNA

Price and volume measures are of major importance in national accounts, but the principal focus of users is on the growth rates of volume measures, rather than prices. The compilation of national accounts in volume and current value terms reflects this priority. Quantities of different products cannot, however, be aggregated without a certain weighting mechanism. For aggregate products, the **term volume** is used instead of quantity. Price and volume measures have to be constructed for each aggregate of transactions in products within the accounts. Thus, SNA offers a proper framework to construct a system of price and volume indices and to establish coherence among statistical data.

Three basic methods can be identified for deriving volume measures:

1. **Quantity revaluation** – collect quantity data and revalue it using base year prices. It is essential that homogenous products are identified and measured. In most countries this method is used for agricultural goods and for goods produced for own final use.
2. **Deflation** – divide the current price estimate by a price index to calculate the constant price estimate. Each period current price value is divided by a price index (could be PPIs, CPIs, charge-out rates, unit values, implicit price

indices, etc.). Deflation should be done at the most detailed (disaggregated) level as possible. Price indices should be adjusted to take account of quality change. Deflation using a Paasche price index will give the same result as a quantity revaluation. Implicit price deflators (IPDs) are obtained by dividing a current price by its corresponding constant price value.

3. **Volume extrapolation** – the current value in the base year is updated using a volume index (constructed based on inputs or output). True volume indices take account of both quantity and quality changes – if only quantity indices are available, indices should be used at the most disaggregated level as possible to ensure homogeneity, and to be representative for all outputs in question.

With the exception of a situation of hyperinflation, or for products showing rapid quality change (e.g. personal computers) deflation can be expected to give more accurate results than volume extrapolation or quantity revaluation, since the variance in relative prices for a product in a particular month are usually less than the variance in relative quantities.

In case no deflation can be applied, as recommended, there are several specific methods at the compiler's disposal based on volume extrapolation such as:

- a. **Output indicator method**, which relates, in general, to *direct measurement of the volume of output*. This can be the case, for example, for service areas where consumers are implicitly charged for services provided, such as in banking and insurance. In other cases, where there are very homogeneous products without large quality changes and where detailed quantity information is available, it can be equivalent to price deflation. It is not always easy to define exactly what the unit of output is. For individual goods and services it is in principle possible to define the output, since an actual delivery of that output takes place from the producer to the consumer(s). For example, for education, the output is the amount of teaching consumed by a pupil. For hospital services, the output is the amount of care received by a patient. For cultural services, the output is the number of theatre plays attended. For collective services, however, there is no transaction between producer and consumer since these are provided simultaneously to the society as a whole. It becomes therefore very difficult to define the output. It is very difficult to say for example what the unit of output is of defence or police services.

The following criteria can be formulated for the appropriate use of output indicators:

- To cover all services produced by the producer that are provided to external users;
- To be weighted by the costs of each type of output in the base year;
- To be defined with as much detail as possible;

- To be quality-adjusted.

- b. **Secondary indicators** which are indicators not directly related to the output, used as proxies in cases where there are no indicators for target variables (also called indirect indicators). Where direct measures of output are not available, it may be possible to identify a downstream or upstream activity that can be used as a basis to generate indicators. The methods applied assume ratios based on the benchmark data. Such ratios are more likely to be stable in constant price terms.

For example, the supply of building materials can be used as an indicator of construction activity. Construction is often difficult to measure because of the large number of small-scale seasonal or unofficial contractors, own-account work, and work done without permits. The supply of building materials, on the other hand, can often be obtained from a relatively small number of manufacturers and quarries (with adjustments for exports and imports, if applicable). As long as there is a stable relationship between building material inputs and outputs, this is a suitable indicator that can be obtained with relatively little cost or compilation time. This assumption deteriorates if there are changes in the mix of types of buildings, techniques of building, productivity, and inventories of building materials.

For intermediate consumption, there are usually no specific aggregated deflators, so it is necessary to build them from components of other price indices for the relevant products. Note that even when fixed input-output ratios have been used to derive volume measures for an industry, it is desirable to deflate intermediate consumption and output separately, and then to calculate value added at current prices as a residual, rather than assume fixed input-output ratios at current prices.

- c. **Input indicator methods** cover input prices and input volume indicators. In general, they are less preferred methods for volume measures. *Input prices* is a method that takes prices of inputs (e.g. the price of labour or a weighted average of prices of intermediate inputs) as an approximation for the price of the output. However, if the output has a different path from the input, e.g. due to productivity changes, this method will have a clear bias and should be avoided. *Input volume indicators* used when indicators on the volume of inputs (e.g. the number of employees or the volume change of intermediate inputs) are used to approximate the volume of output. Using this assumption makes it impossible to analyze changes in productivity, and will wrongly estimate the true output change if this is different from the change in inputs. As an example, one can take the number of employees. It is simply assumed that twice as large a public service would mean twice as much output, irrespective of how those additional personnel were deployed. The advantage of the method is the ease of implementation, and the ready availability of data. This method however ignores

all changes in productivity due to e.g. improved equipment (for example increased use of PCs) or more efficient procedures.

1.4 Main sources for price and volume measures

The deflation and extrapolation methods used for the volume measurement in national accounts request several indices at a very detailed level, elaborated within the statistical system of country.

The following price indices are the minimum required for deflation:

- a) **Producer price indices (PPIs)** which cover both goods and services. PPIs are indices of *basic prices* in SNA terminology. The most widely-compiled and widely-used is the industrial production price indices. PPIs for services are more difficult to estimate. PPIs are calculated for agriculture products, measuring the change over time of the prices received by farmers for the sale of their products.
- b) **Consumer price indices (CPIs):** the price reflects the actual payments by households. It is the SNA purchasers' price, and may also include imputed expenses, such as for owner-occupied housing. In many countries, only transactions in urban areas are considered in the calculation of CPIs, which may not be representative of price changes in rural areas. Using CPIs for output deflation must rely on knowing the weight of the final consumption in total output, and the differences of changes in the price and structure in the intermediate and final use of the output.
- c) **Construction price index** which provides measures of price changes in either inputs to, or outputs of construction activity.
- d) **Import and export price indices:** price indices measure the change over time in transaction prices (the market sale price) of goods and services exported from or imported into a country. Those prices are measured c.i.f., including duties, freight and insurance costs. Export prices are measured f.o.b. excluding duties, freight and insurance costs.

Chapter IV: *Statistical infrastructure for National Accounts*, section 2.2.4: *Price Statistics* presents the main price indices in detail.

In principle, separate prices of intermediate goods and gross capital formation at purchasers' prices can also be collected but are in fact rarely collected because of costs and also because the volume measurement of GDP can be computed by using PPIs instead.

Box VII.3: Support to price statistics in the context of cooperation

The cooperation unit within Eurostat deals with several statistical aspects to support the cooperation with developing countries and regions in the world via its Statistical Information Systems tools. One of the fields of interest where support is needed in developing countries is the production of robust price statistics.

One of the main goals in most developing countries is the achievement of their regional economic integration. Several regions target explicitly a common currency, which implies the harmonisation of price statistics. Even in the absence of this requirement, price statistics are quite important for all developing countries. Also in the framework of the ICP (International Comparison Programme), there is an important demand of reliable price statistics and analytical skills.

In this context, EUROSTAT is analysing the possibility to provide support on this matter, focusing on tools supporting the establishment, harmonisation and analysis of price statistics. Eurostat is aware of the following tools to assist the measurement and harmonisation of price statistics:

- CHAPO (Calcul Harmonisé des Prix par Ordinateur) – At the origin the software was developed by Eurostat to support UEMOA's harmonisation of price statistics;
- PHOENIX, a software developed by Afristat for UEMOA region, taking into account the experience won from CHAPO;
- a software from the Portuguese NSO (INE Portugal) used in some African Portuguese speaking countries (PALOP); this tool also takes into consideration some experience won with the CHAPO tool;
- a tool from WB/IMF, used in some African countries;
- a tool used by the African Development Bank for the International Comparison Programme;
- a tool used by South Africa.

Eurostat will take into account the experience won by different countries and organizations to develop a new price tool, based on the latest IT technology to support the national statistical offices and the sub-regional organisations of developing countries for the production of reliable and comparable price (CPI and ICP).

Other price indices frequently collected are **labour cost indices** for compensation of employees, where the unit is: labour hour by type of occupation/job and industry.

Box VII.4: Synthesis of main price indices uses

Price indices	Used to:	Comments
Consumption Price Indices (CPI)	<p>CPIs are designed to measure changes over time in average retail prices of a fixed basket of goods and services taken as representing the consumption habits of households.</p> <p>CPI is used mainly to deflate household consumption expenditure, but not the total household consumption; specific components are used to deflate the relevant sub groups of household consumption.</p>	Are normally constructed using Laspeyres formula
Producer Price Indices (PPI)	<p>PPIs provide measures of average movements of prices received by the producers of commodities. In principle, PPIs exclude transport costs and consumption taxes</p> <p>PPI is used to deflate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -domestic production (for this purpose it is weighted together with an export price index); -intermediate consumption (for this purpose it is weighted together with an import price index). 	Are normally constructed using Laspeyres formula
Construction Price Indices	<p>Construction price indices provide measures of changes in the prices of either the inputs to, or outputs of, construction activity.</p> <p>Is used to deflate the output and the intermediate consumption of construction activity.</p>	Are normally constructed using Laspeyres formula
Price indices for import/export	<p>An import price index measures changes in the prices of imports of merchandise into a country. The index numbers for each reference period relate to prices of imports landed into the country during the period.</p> <p>An export price index is an index calculated for the price(s) of one or any specified group of commodities entering into international trade using, ideally, f.o.b. export prices.</p> <p>They are used to deflate exports and imports.</p>	Are normally constructed using Paasche formula
Unit Value Indices for import and export (UVI)	<p>UVI are used to deflate imports and exports of goods. UVI for imports good can also be used to deflate the imports of capital goods, as part of GFCF.</p>	Can be constructed using Laspeyres or Paasche formula

2. GDP volume measures

2.1 Production approach

GDP represents the sum of value added, valued at market prices with taxes less subsidies on products at constant prices.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{GDP (at market prices)} &= \text{Sum of Gross value added (Output} \\ &\text{– Intermediate consumption)} \\ &\quad + \text{Sum of taxes} \\ &\quad - \text{Subsidies on products} \end{aligned}$$

Value added is therefore a balancing item in the system of national accounts. There is conceptually no price or volume component of value added, since it is essentially an income concept. However, if GDP volume growth is calculated according to the production approach, the value added of all branches is summed, meaning that it is necessary to have a measure of value added volume.

The variety of the methods used to compile the volume measures of value added are divided into two categories:

1. **Single indicator methods** use a single variable (only one time series), which is assumed to be correlated with the movement of value added. In this case, an output or input indicator is directly applied to value added. Single indicator methods are classified according to whether the indicator is from output volume indicator methods or input indicator methods, according to whether deflation or extrapolation is used and according to the variable chosen as a proxy for measuring volume changes in value added. So, there are:

a. *Single output indicator methods*, classified into two variants:

- Direct deflation of current price value added by an output price index, a consumer price index, or its relevant components;
- Direct extrapolation of base year value added using an output volume index or physical quantity output index.

b. *Single input indicator methods*, classified into:

- Direct deflation of current price value added by a price index of intermediate consumption or by a wage rate index;
- Direct extrapolation of base year value added by input related indicators such as: price index or volume index of intermediate consumption, index of deflated compensation of employees by a wage rate index, an index based on physical quantities of inputs other than labour, an index of numbers employed, an index of man-hours worked eventually adjusted for change in productivity, etc.

The volume index for output is preferred to one based on inputs, which has greater bias because the number and variety of outputs are smaller than the number of intermediate goods and services consumed in the production process and the commodity composition of inputs is more variable over time.

2. **Double indicator methods** take into account changes in both output and intermediate consumption, value added being obtained as a residual. Estimation methods encompass, besides deflation, methods that are based on volume extrapolation.

Double indicator methods are, from a theoretical standpoint, superior to single indicator methods, but the availability of source data for certain activities is limited. According to applied estimation methods, there are three possible situations:

- *Double deflation*: current price output and intermediate consumption are both deflated by price indices. In general, output is deflated by PPIs or CPIs but adjusted to the correct price base for rates of trade and transport margins, and for taxes and subsidies on products basic prices. This method is preferred, but presents the disadvantage that quality changes are not easily taken into account.
- *Double extrapolation*: base year values of output and of intermediate consumption are extrapolated using volume or physical quantity indices, and derive constant price value added by subtraction. This method presents the advantage of taking into account both elements which are used to define value added. However, it presents the disadvantage that quality changes are not easily taken into account.
- *Extrapolation/deflation*: consists in deriving constant price value added from an extrapolated series of base year estimates of output using output volume or physical quantity indices, and a deflated series of current price intermediate consumption using price indices (or vice-versa, though this is more rarely the case).

The choice to be made between the use of a single indicator method (which may yield biased results) or a double deflation method (which may yield volatile results) must be based on judgment. The same choice need not be made for all industry groups.

In general, market output is estimated in constant prices using double indicator methods. Non-market output is usually estimated in constant prices using single indicator methods because of the difficulty in isolating price changes. Table VII.1 presents a synthesis of possible methods applied to estimate volume measures of output.

Table VII.1: Overview of output volume measures methods and deflators, by industries/ products

ISIC rev4/ CPC Ver.2	Specification	Methods (not exhaustive)	Deflator (if applicable)
A	<i>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</i>	- Direct estimation based on (exhaustive) volume and price data	Unit value of products
B	<i>Mining and quarrying</i>	- Deflation with PPIs, and/or extrapolation with industrial production volume indices (IPIs)	IPPIs
C	<i>Manufacturing</i>	- Deflation with PPIs, and/or extrapolation with IPIs - Input indicator method	IPPIs CPIs detailed data adjusted to basic prices
D	<i>Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply</i>	- Deflation with PPIs, and/or extrapolation with IPIs - Extrapolation with quantity data available on products sufficiently detailed	IPPIs
E	<i>Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities</i>	- Deflation with PPIs, and/or extrapolation with IPIs - Extrapolation with quantity data available on products sufficiently detailed	IPPIs
F	<i>Construction</i>	Deflation	Constructions price index Indices of construction costs Hourly rates or quotes for 'model' jobs – for repair/maintenance
G	<i>Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles</i>	<i>Trade:</i> - Output indicator: implicit index obtained from the ratio of the value index for total output and a quantity index based on total trade margins – at detailed product breakdown <i>Maintenance and repair of motor vehicle:</i> Deflation	PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices for repairs
H	<i>Transportation and storage</i>	<i>Passenger transport</i> – by forms of travel (transport via railways, other land transport, water transport and air transport): - Deflation - Output volume indicator method (as passenger-kilometres) <i>Freight transport</i> – by mode of transport (via railways, other land transport, transport via pipelines, sea and coastal water transport, inland water transport and air transport): - Deflation - Output volume indicator methods based on tonne-kilometres transported) <i>Storage:</i> - Deflation with prices set according to time (and volume) of unit price - Output volume indicator methods (as cubic metre-days) <i>Postal services</i> - Deflation - Output volume indicator methods (as number of letters broken down by different postage rate)	PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices for services provided to households UVIs for post and courier
I	<i>Accommodation and food service activities</i>	- Deflation - Output volume indicator methods (as bed-nights/ meals sold) - Input volume indicator methods (as number of clients)	PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices

ISIC rev4/ CPC Ver.2	Specification	Methods (not exhaustive)	Deflator (if applicable)
J	<i>Information and communication</i>	- Deflation by prices reported by producers/production companies - Output volume indicator methods for full range of output (e.g. programming broken down by categories)	PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices for services provided to households UVIs for homogenous products
K	<i>Financial and insurance activities</i>	<i>Financial intermediation</i> <i>FISIM:</i> - Output indicator methods: number of banks accounts/loans and deposits etc. by business and consumer markets - Implicit deflator obtained using the "interest margin" and the quantity index given by the amounts of intermediated funds deflated with the GDP deflator <i>Financial intermediation outside FISIM</i> - Average of the consumer price and business services deflator - Output volume indicator methods (e.g. using number of transfers for transfer of funds, etc.) <i>Insurance</i> - Output volume indicator methods (e.g. using acquisition and administration of policies and claims) <i>Service auxiliary</i> - Deflation - Output volume indicators	Implicit index of output prices PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices for services provided to households
L	<i>Real estate activities</i>	- Deflation - Output volume indicators methods (e.g. number of houses sold by types of houses)	CPIs adjusted to basic prices House pricing Price index of investments in new dwellings Charge-out rates
M	<i>Professional, scientific and technical activities</i>	- Deflation - Output volume indicator methods - Input indicator methods	Indices of actual prices CPIs adjusted to basic prices Charge-out rates/hourly fees
N	<i>Administrative and support service activities</i>	- Deflation - Output volume indicator methods - Input indicator methods	Indices of actual prices CPIs adjusted to basic prices Charge-out rates/hourly fees
O	<i>Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</i>	- Output indicator method - Input indicator method	Price indices of inputs
P	<i>Education</i>	<i>Market output</i> - Deflation - Output indicator method in detail (e.g. using pupil-hours indicators) <i>Non-market output</i> - Output indicator method in detail (e.g. using pupil hours/number of pupils indicators) - Input indicators methods (e.g. teacher-hours)	PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices
Q	<i>Human health and social work activities</i>	<i>Market output</i> - Deflation - Output indicator method in detail <i>Non-market output</i> - Output indicator method in detail - Input indicators methods	PPIs CPIs adjusted to basic prices

ISIC rev4/ CPC Ver.2	Specification	Methods (not exhaustive)	Deflator (if applicable)
R	<i>Arts, entertainment and recreation</i>	<i>Market output</i> - Deflation - Output indicator method in detail <i>Non-market output</i> - Output indicator method in detail - Input indicators methods	CPIs adjusted to basic prices
S	<i>Other service activities</i>	- Deflation - Output indicator methods (as number of members by types)	CPIs adjusted to basic prices
T	<i>Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use</i>	- Deflation - Input indicator methods (e.g. number of staff)	- Deflation - Input indicator methods (e.g. number of staff)

Box VII.5: Example of volume estimates for Hotel output

The volume index and volume estimates for the **Hotels industry** are presented below. To make these estimates, it is required to know:

- value of output in year t and year t+1 (columns 1 and 2);
- “thousand bed-nights” by several types of accommodation, from specific surveys, for the years t and t+1 (columns 3 and 4)

Based on the data, the volume and price indices are calculated (columns 5, 6, 7 and 8); I_p is resultant Paasche price index, and I_q is resultant Laspeyres volume index.

Type of accommodation, specific to Country Y	“thou. currency”		“thou. bed-nights”		“currency/ bed-night”	“thou. currency”	%	%
	Turnover Year t	Turnover Year t+1	t	t+1	Unit cost year t	t+1 in prices of t	I_p t+1/t	I_q t+1/t
0	1	2	3	4	5=1/3	6=4*5	7= 2/6*100	8= 6/1*100
TOTAL	16282	16865				16118	104.6	99.0
1. Hotels	14400	14910	720	710	20	14200	105	98.6
2. Hostels	96	104	12	13	8	104	100	108.3
3. Motels	270	282	30	31	9	279	101	103.3
4. Tourists villas	624	644	48	49	13	637	101	102.1
5. Urban tourist houses	600	628	60	61	10	610	103	101.7
6. Rural tourist houses	200	200	25	24	8	192	104	96.0
7. Bungalows	32	36	8	9	4	36	100	112.5
8. Tourists houselet-type units	60	61	12	12	5	60	102	100.0

Intermediate consumption, the second element of value added includes the value of goods and services (domestically produced and imported) consumed as inputs by a production process (excluding the use of fixed assets). Deflating intermediate consumption is necessary when double deflation is used to measure value added in constant prices or when price and volume measures are estimated in a system of supply and use tables.

Intermediate consumption should be deflated product-by-product. This requires, first of all, a breakdown by product of intermediate consumption in current prices. The total volume of intermediate consumption for each individual branch is derived by adding up the volumes of inputs of all products (this of course only works in a Laspeyres volume framework because this is additive).

Ideally, genuine price data on intermediate uses, collected from the purchasers (and reflecting purchasers' prices), should be used to deflate. Such data is rarely collected, however. As an alternative, intermediate consumption of domestically produced products can be deflated using the same methods as described for the output of that product, taking into account that intermediate consumption is valued at purchasers' prices (i.e. adding back changes in taxes and subsidies on products where appropriate). Intermediate use of imported products should be deflated by import price indices or the alternative methods (unit value index).

Taxes and subsidies on products are part of the difference between the basic price of a product and its purchasers' price. They are added to the total of gross value added at basic prices to obtain GDP from the output approach.

Chapter III: *Basic concepts*, section 1: *Fundamentals for national accounting* outlines the price system in national accounts.

Taxes and subsidies on products may be of two basic forms: based on the value of products (known as *ad valorem*) or based on the quantity of products. Within the *ad valorem* category, VAT is a special case. A detailed breakdown by products and information on each type of tax/subsidy (rates) should be available in order to properly apply the volume measures of various taxes and subsidies on products at country level.

A basic distinction must be made between quantity-based and value-based taxes (and subsidies). The volume of taxes on products is measured by applying the base-year taxation prices (amount levied per unit of taxed products) to the quantities of taxed products or by applying the base-year tax rates to the value of the taxed products at the base-year prices. In every case, the tax deflators then describe changes in taxation rates, and changes in the composition of the tax base and any price changes affecting it (for value-based tax).

How the calculation is carried out in practice depends on the

type of tax and the data available. Where relevant, a distinction is made between taxation of imported and of domestically produced goods. So, taxes' volume estimation should take into account their direct link with the production or the import. Thus, the price index calculation is based on the production price index (or import price index), adjusted by an indicator that reflects the evolution of the share of the default tax in production from year to year.

The calculation for subsidies is carried out in the same manner.

2.2 Expenditure approach

2.2.1 Final consumption expenditure

a) Final consumption expenditure of households

Final consumption expenditure of households is primarily made up of goods and services purchased in the market but also includes consumption of household production for own final use, such as consumption of goods produced within households for the households' own consumption, the services of owner-occupied dwellings, and goods or services received as income in kind. It does not include social transfers in kind, intermediate consumption or gross capital formation, acquisitions of non-produced assets, payments to NPISHs, taxes other than taxes on products, or voluntary transfers.

Methods based on deflation of household expenditure using appropriately detailed CPIs (valued at purchaser prices including VAT) are recommended. PPIs adjusted for valuation differences, import/export prices, or volume indicators could also be used, where no CPIs are available.

The volume measure of some specific components of final consumption expenditure of households is estimated as follows:

- *Consumption of own-produced goods and services* is not included in the CPI calculation; the general rule here is that products produced for own-consumption should be valued at the prevailing basic price for equivalent products, or at costs of production if market prices are not available. Where output for own final use is a significant part of total consumption of a certain product, it will be necessary to separately deflate it by a suitable basic price index; otherwise use of the CPI is appropriate.
- *Goods and services received as income in kind* are valued at basic prices if they are produced by the employer, and at market prices if the employer has to purchase them from a third party. If the former types of products are significant, then deflation should be undertaken using a suitable basic price index.
- *Goods and services purchased abroad by resident households* is not included in the CPI calculation, because it covers all purchases made by resident and non-resident

households on the economic territory of a country. If purchases abroad by residents represents a significant part of total household consumption, and prices are evolving differently from domestic prices, one method that can be undertaken to deflate the prices is to use the CPI data from countries where the purchases are usually made. Adjusting for exchange rates would imply that the effects of exchange rate movements feed through into prices fully and immediately.

- *Services of owner-occupied dwellings* is a special case of the products for own consumption and represent a high proportion of final consumption of households. The recommended method for deflating this element in national accounts is by a suitable index of actual rent levels.

b) Final consumption expenditure of government and NPISHs

The principles applied in the general government sector and to NPISHs sector are similar. By convention, the final consumption expenditure of general government and NPISHs consists of:

- The value of non-market goods and services produced by government or NPISHs other than own-account capital formation and sales;
- Purchases by general government and NPISHs of goods and services produced by market producers that are supplied, without any transformation, to households as social transfers in kind.

Final consumption expenditure consists of both individual and collective consumption, whose value is measured by convention as the sum of costs. The collective consumption is characteristic only to government, and is called “actual final consumption”.

Final consumption of non-market goods and services in volume measures is usually obtained using the input indicators method (as the output is compiled as sum of costs), by deflating the value of inputs by suitable deflators. For individual services, the recommended methods are output indicator methods (such as “pupil-hours” or “patient treatments by type”).

For social transfers in kind consisting of goods or services purchased by government from the market, deflation is made by suitably detailed CPIs, adjusted for:

- Any discounts which the Government may have negotiated directly with suppliers;
- Any contributions which are payable by those receiving the transfers.

2.2.2 Gross capital formation

a) Gross fixed capital formation

Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) covers both tangible

and intangible fixed assets which represent a wide range of products. GFCF could be measured from either supply or demand side. The supply side approach is more used, because of the general availability of necessary data: domestic output less exports plus imports of capital goods, at a detailed level.

The availability of appropriate price indices for GFCF varies considerably between different types of asset.

- For *new dwellings* CPIs are used, and for new buildings and structures PPIs are used. The costs of *ownership transfer* should be deflated separately. The current value and volume estimates are usually derived from separate estimates of the constituent parts, legal fees, transport and installation costs etc.
- For standard products such as *machinery and equipment*, PPIs are likely to be available but a lot of capital formation is specific to the purchaser and appropriate indices may have to be developed using the best information available. Price indices for equipment vary considerably in their growth rates (such as, for example, the case of computers, whose prices have fallen rapidly year after year, whereas the prices of transport equipment have increased). It is necessary in such cases that the different types of equipment are deflated separately using the matching price indices (or, equivalently, an appropriately weighted Paasche price index is used to deflate the aggregate).
- *Software* included in GFCF represents, in a large proportion, own-account production; the deflation could be done by choosing between a pseudo-output price index and an input price index, obtained by weighting together price indices of the inputs. However, input volume estimates used as a proxy for output do not reflect any productivity growth and so this is not recommended. In the absence of a better alternative, the most obvious option is to use the price index for custom made software.
- *Research and experimental development* (R&D) is another activity that is often undertaken on own account. However, given the heterogeneous nature of R&D, the choice for deflation lies between deriving pseudo-output price indices and using input price indices.

The large range of different products calls for estimating GFCF volume at the detailed product level to ensure good quality estimates. The following list of products should be considered to be the minimum acceptable:

- Construction products : Dwellings; Other buildings and structures including Buildings other than dwellings, Other structures, Land improvements;
- Machinery and equipment: Transport equipment as: Aircraft, Ships, Railway trains and carriages, Other transport equipment; ICT equipment; Other machinery and equipment;
- Weapons systems

- Cultivated biological assets, e.g. trees and livestock;
- Costs of ownership transfer on non-produced assets like land, contracts, leases and licenses;
- Intellectual property products: Research and development; Mineral exploration and evaluation; Computer software and databases; Entertainment, literary and artistic originals; Other intellectual property products.

b) Changes in inventories

The calculation of changes in inventories in volume terms is particularly important due to the impact in the GDP size, but it is in the same time, a challenging task. Changes in inventories can take positive, negative or zero values; in these conditions, a chain index could not be derived directly. Chain volume estimates of changes in inventories should be derived by first deriving chain volume estimates of the opening and closing stocks of inventories and then taking the difference.

Volume measurement of changes in inventories is linked to the estimation of output and intermediate consumption. Moreover, the transaction is a difference between two phenomena: entries and withdrawals, considering also the value of any gains/recurrent losses of goods held, thus volume indices are not economically significant. The estimation methodology for change in inventories both at current and constant prices is highly dependent on the kind of information on inventories that is available. Hypothesis and assumptions should be made.

There are four types of inventories: materials and supplies; work-in-progress (includes livestock raised for slaughter); finished goods; and goods for resale. It is important to note that change in inventory represents part of the output and intermediate consumption calculations as follows:

Output = sales + changes of inventory of finished products + change in work-in-progress (7)

Intermediate consumption = purchases - changes of inventory of materials and supplies (8)

For a wholesale or retail trader:

Output = sales - purchases (of goods for resale) + changes of inventory of goods for resale (9)

Closely related to the calculation of changes in inventories are holding gains. Holding gains are the results of price changes during the period for which the inventory is held. Such gains are not part of output. Holding gains can be negative, in which case they are called holding losses. If there are no price changes during the accounting period, the holding gain is zero. Holding gains can be calculated using the following identity:

Value of inventory at end of accounting period

- value of inventory at beginning of accounting period

= change in inventory + holding gains. (10)

Ideally, information on quantities and values of stocks should be available. In general, only information on values of stocks at the beginning and the end of the year (period), by type, is available according to enterprises' bookkeeping systems. These accounting systems value inventories according to historic cost systems, *LIFO* (last in - first out), or *FIFO* (first in - first out) systems, etc.

According to information obtained from the bookkeeping systems of enterprises, or based on assumptions, the values of the levels of inventories can be deflated with:

- Available prices and quantity data are obtained. The change in quantity (between the beginning and the end of the period) has to be multiplied by the average price of the desired year to obtain volume change of the inventories.
- A price index that describes the price development of the stock according to the known or assumed bookkeeping practice and the value of changes in inventories in constant prices is obtained directly. This should then be reflatd with an average price index according to national accounts valuation rules to determine changes of inventory at current prices.

The price indices should be in accordance with the *four kinds of inventories*, by products:

- For inventories of finished products: PPIs at basic prices;
- For inventories of materials and supplies, similar indices as used for intermediate consumption (genuine intermediate consumption prices, or PPIs adjusted to purchasers' prices);
- For inventories of goods for resale: PPI (for retailers, strictly speaking, a PPI should be adjusted for wholesale trade margins);
- For works-in-progress: deflation carried out in a consistent way with the deflation of output, i.e. with output price indices at basic prices.

In case no information is available for stocks, changes in inventories are compiled based on "commodity flow method", but the residual result will reflect measurement errors in the various aggregates.

2.2.3 Imports and exports

Exports and imports consist of both goods and services, valued when change of ownership between a resident unit and a non-resident owner takes place and include or exclude transportation costs according to whether the supplier does or does not include transportation to the purchaser in the amount charged.

Foreign transport and insurance services between the importer's and the exporter's frontiers should not be included in the value of goods, but recorded as services. However, it is not

always possible to obtain f.o.b. values at the detailed product level and details of foreign trade are then shown valued at the importer's frontier. In this case, all transport and insurance services to the importer's frontier are included in the value of imports, referred to as cost, insurance and freight (CIF). This is the valuation used for imports in the supply and use tables. Where the price of exports and imports includes an element of transport or insurance service, these need to be dealt with correctly in the price and volume measures.

A correct estimation of import and export volume implies considering goods and services separately.

There are a number of methods suitable for goods volume estimation such as:

a. Actual export and import prices

Export and import price indices can be compiled based on the prices actually charged by exporters of goods (exports), or paid by consumers (imports). The main advantage is that they cope better with the problem of heterogeneous products as the price index is constructed to reflect a fixed specification that allows price effects to be isolated and quality changes to be controlled. Disadvantages are: (i) as a result, they are costly to produce and represent a burden on respondents; (ii) they can have an incomplete coverage of the actual exports and imports of products to which they are applied as deflators; (iii) price indices may also reflect inadequately the actual prices paid by purchasers. The price indices are compiled using data from surveyed establishments on the prices of representative items exported and imported. The surveyed prices will be of items that are defined according to detailed specifications so that the change in price of the same item specification can be measured over time.

b. Unit value indices (UVIs)

UVIs are readily available from trade statistics being derived as the ratio of value to volume (weight or quantity). They do not generally control for changes in the product mix within one item, leading to quality changes mistakenly included in the price component. Their coverage of products is generally complete, but even at the most detailed level of trade classification they can often include a range of different products and the homogeneity is not realistic. It may be possible to construct more homogeneous UVIs if the country of origin (or destination) is also taken into account. UVIs are clearly unsuitable for products that are unique or change quickly in specification.

It could be also a mixed approach that involves compiling establishment survey-based price indices for some product groups and customs-based unit value indices for others.

c. Adjusted PPIs

It is possible to use domestic PPIs to deflate current price estimates for exports and imports in the same way that actual export and import prices may be used. PPIs reflect prices on the domestic market and may not be a good reflection of the prices charged for exports or imports in some circumstances, where competition between domestic producers and imports exists. However, there may be little difference between domestic prices and those of imports or exports where these compete directly with each other in the market. In these conditions, the use of PPIs for exports or imports may be acceptable.

A way of improving the domestic PPIs to make them more representative of exports and imports would be to adjust them in some way to reflect better the actual export and import prices. Such an adjustment could be made in a number of ways:

- By taking account of exchange rate movements between the domestic currency and that of the countries to which the exports are going to or the imports coming from;
- By estimating an adjustment factor based on some other variable like UVIs; this represents a ratio between UVIs of a selected group of products (stable in evolution) and the PPIs of the same products applied to a PPI that represents a range of products present in the export or import estimates for which other more suitable price or volume indicators are not available.

d. Export prices of a foreign country.

The export prices from a foreign country are used to deflate imports, broken down by product group and country (a process necessary to make best use of this method). This approach is most suited to unique products of a specialized nature. Adjustments may be done:

- By accounting for exchange rate movements, on the assumption that movements in exchange rates impact directly and immediately on the price of the imports;
- By taking account of other factors that affect prices between the exporting and importing countries, such as transport margins.

Exports and imports of services consist of a large range of different *services*. The current data sources for price indices for international trade in services are less comprehensive than in other areas, and methods to estimate price and volume are less well developed.

If actual prices are available for exports and imports of services, they can be readily used to derive the required volume estimates. If they are not, methods for exports and imports of services should be guided by those recommendations for similar domestically produced or consumed services. Methods to be used for domestically produced services are, in general, the same as those used for market output of services:

charge-out rates, output indicator methods, input indicator methods. For example:

- Volume estimates of freight transport services could be derived using PPIs according to the form of transport;
- Volume estimates of accommodation services could be derived using the appropriate CPIs;
- For other imported services, price indices of the countries exporting the services, adjusted for changes in the exchange rate, may have to be used.

Actual price indices are the preferred method for deflation. For exports and imports, these prices need to reflect the actual prices charged in the case of exports and the prices paid for imports. These prices will differ from those in the domestic market because of exchange rate influences and potentially different pricing policies in the case of domestic and export sales. A further difficulty associated with the collection of export and import prices is the identification of the sampling frame necessary for the collection of prices.

3. Concluding remarks

The direct measurement of GDP can be obtained from the output and expenditure sides and is the results of the measures of its components. The income approach cannot be used to measure GDP volume, since one of its components, the operating surplus, cannot be measured directly at constant prices.

It is important to compile one unique measure of GDP volume growth. Although one may argue whether or not conceptual differences may exist between GDP volume from the output and expenditure approaches, in practice, it would be highly undesirable to publish two different GDP growth rates.

In many countries, the measurement of GDP volume growth is currently based heavily on only one of the two approaches. This can be either the output or the expenditure approach, depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the data sources, which can vary greatly between countries. As an example, in some countries, data on household consumption expenditure might be regarded as less reliable than output data, so that generally the output approach is preferred.

Table VII.2 presents an overview of the methods to compile volume measures in national accounts, and recommended deflators of these methods.

Table VII.2: Overview of methods for volume measures and deflators by SNA aggregates

<i>SNA aggregates</i>	<i>Methods (not exhaustive)</i>	<i>Deflators - recommended</i>
<i>Output, market</i>	- Deflation - Output indicator method - Secondary indicator method - Input indicator method	PPIs CPIs detailed data adjusted to basic prices Charge-out rates
<i>Output, non-market</i>	<i>Individual:</i> - Output indicator method - Input indicator method <i>Collective:</i> input indicator method	Price indices of inputs
<i>Output for own final use</i>	- Deflation, - Output indicator method - Secondary indicator method - Input indicator method	PPIs of similar products on market CPIs detailed data adjusted to basic prices Output price indices of fixed assets
<i>Intermediate consumption</i>	-Deflation product-by-product	Price indices data from purchasers Same prices applied for output of that products
<i>Value added – direct</i>	- Output indicator method - Input indicator	
<i>Final consumption expenditure by households</i>	- Deflation - Volume indicators - Secondary indicator	CPIs (detailed) PPIs adjusted for valuation differences Import/export prices
<i>Final consumption expenditure by government and NPISHs</i>	- Output indicator method, input indicator method (as for non-market output) - Deflation for social transfers in kind (purchases from the market)	CPIs suitably detailed for social transfers in kind
<i>Gross fixed capital formation</i>	- Deflation by types of assets - Deflation for related services - Input methods	Genuine investment price indices PPIs adjusted to purchasers' prices Charge-out rates Import prices
<i>Changes in inventories</i>	- Deflation - Commodity flow method - Secondary indicators	PPIs CPIs Implicit price deflators
<i>Acquisition less disposals of valuables</i>	- Deflation	PPI for an industry producing valuables
<i>Exports and imports of goods and services</i>	<i>Goods:</i> - Deflation - Input indicator methods	Actual export or import prices UVIs Suitable PPIs (adjusted, when the case) Export prices of a foreign country
	<i>Services:</i> - Deflation - Input indicator method	Actual export or import prices Suitable PPIs (adjusted, when the case) Export prices of a foreign country
	<i>Expenditure of non-residents on the domestic territory:</i> deflation <i>Expenditure of domestic residents abroad:</i> deflation	CPIs for country CPIs for visited country adjusted for exchange rates

The main recommendations for national accounts estimation in volume terms could be summarized as follows:

- Volume estimates of transactions in goods and services are best compiled in a supply and use framework, preferably in conjunction with, and at the same time as, the current value estimates;
- The estimations could be made at the most detailed level of products as data sources and resources permit; it is important to develop a comprehensible system of price statistics;
- The method recommended to measure volume in national accounts is deflation. It is better to deflate the current value with an appropriate price index, rather than constructing the volume estimates directly;
- If it is not practical to derive estimates of value added in real terms from a supply and use framework and either the volume estimates of output and intermediate consumption are not robust or the latter are not available then satisfactory estimates can often be obtained using an indicator of output, at least in the short term. An output indicator derived by deflation is generally preferred to one derived by quantity extrapolation.
- The preferred measure of year-to-year movements of GDP volume is a Fisher volume index; changes over longer periods are obtained by chaining, that is, by cumulating the year-to-year movements;
- Chain indices that use Laspeyres volume indices to measure year-to-year movements in the volume of GDP and the associated implicit Paasche price indices to measure year-to-year inflation provide acceptable alternatives to recommended Fisher indices.

3.1 Questions for practitioners

- Are estimations of price and volume made in your country?
- Which price indices (from those necessary) are available? How is the quality of the data? Which price indices should be collected in addition? Are the weight updates of price indices applied regularly?
- What methods are used for volume estimates? Are single deflators used?
- Which output activities do you consider poorly measured in your country? Are there any plans for improvements?
- Is the compilation level detailed enough to ensure the quality of estimates? If not, are there plans to improve the compilation practice to get a more disaggregated level? Are there enough resources to implement the plans?

4. Recommended reading

- *The 2008 SNA* (Chapter 15 – Price and volume measures) European Commission, IMF, OECD, UN, World Bank, 2009;
- *Handbook on price and volume measures* - Eurostat, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg 2001;
- *National Accounts: A practical introduction*, Studies in Methods, Serie F, No.85, UN 2003; chapter XV:Price and volume measurement;
- *Producer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice*, (the International Labour Organization, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe and the World Bank, 2004);
- *Sources and methods Construction Price Indices*, OECD, Eurostat, 1998;
- *Export and Import Price Index Manual*, Theory and Practice, ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, UNECE, World Bank, 2009;
- *System of National Accounts 1993 Training Manual*, SADC, 1993.

Annexes



Annex 1

Milestones for National Accounts implementation

Phase of implementation	General description	National accounts indicators	Phase of implementation	SNA related data and development
Pre-SNA phases	Basic data (production etc)		Basic data (production etc.) - Balance of Payments (BOP) of goods and services; - Monetary stock statistics - Price indices (consumer, producer, wholesale)	
Phase 1	Basic indicators of GDP at current and constant prices	- Final expenditures on GDP; - GDP by industry	- Supply and Use worksheets ; - Other BOP transactions (income transfers, capital and financial); - Government Financial Statistics (GFS) transaction accounts.	
Phase 2	GNI and other primary indicators	External account of primary income and current transfers; - Capital and financial accounts for the rest of the world	- Capital stock statistics; - BOP stock statistics; - GFS stock statistics; - Monetary and other financial flow statistics.	- Quarterly National Accounts (QNA); - Regional accounts; - Satellite accounts for environment and other country priority for satellite accounts; - Input-output analysis
Phase 3	Institutional sector accounts: first steps	- Production account for all institutional sectors; - Generation of income; - Allocation of primary income; - Secondary distribution income; - Use of incomes; - Capital accounts and financial accounts for general government	Same as for phase 2	Same as for phase 2
Phase 4	Institutional sector accounts: intermediate steps	- Generation of income; - Allocation of primary income; - Secondary distribution income; - Use of incomes; - Capital accounts for all institutional sectors other than government	Same as for phase 2	Same as for phase 2
Phase 5	Institutional sector accounts: last of the transactions	Financial accounts for all institutional sectors other than general government accounts.	Same as for phase 2	Same as for phase 2
Phase 6	Other flows, accounts and balance sheets	- Other changes in assets accounts for all institutional sectors; - Balance sheets	Same as for phase 2	Same as for phase 2

Annex 2

Classification of transactions

Transactions in products (P)

P1	Output
P11	Market output
P119	Financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM)
P12	Output for own final use
P13	Non-market output
P2	Intermediate consumption
P3	Final consumption expenditure
P31	Individual consumption expenditure
P32	Collective consumption expenditure
P4	Actual final consumption
P41	Actual individual consumption
P42	Actual collective consumption
P5	Gross capital formation / P.5n Net capital formation
P51g	Gross fixed capital formation
P51c	Consumption of fixed capital (-)
P51c1	Consumption of fixed capital on gross operating surplus (-)
P51c2	Consumption of fixed capital on gross mixed income (-)
P51n	Net fixed capital formation
P511	Acquisitions less disposals of fixed assets
P5111	<i>Acquisitions of new fixed assets</i>
P5112	<i>Acquisitions of existing fixed assets</i>
P5113	<i>Disposals of existing fixed assets</i>
P512	Costs of ownership transfer on non-produced assets
P52	Changes in inventories
P53	Acquisitions less disposals of valuables
P6	Exports of goods and services
P61	Exports of goods
P62	Exports of services
P7	Imports of goods and services
P71	Imports of goods
P72	Imports of services

Distributive transactions (D)

D1	Compensation of employees
D11	Wages and salaries
D12	Employers' social contributions
D121	Employers' actual social contributions
D1211	<i>Employers' actual pension contributions</i>
D1212	<i>Employers' actual non-pension contributions</i>
D122	Employers' imputed social contributions
D1221	<i>Employers' imputed pension contributions</i>
D1222	<i>Employers' imputed non-pension contributions</i>
D2	Taxes on production and imports
D21	Taxes on products
D211	Value added type taxes (VAT)
D212	Taxes and duties on imports excluding VAT
D2121	<i>Import duties</i>
D2122	<i>Taxes on imports excluding VAT and duties</i>
D213	Export taxes
D214	Taxes on products except VAT, import and export taxes
D29	Other taxes on production
D3	Subsidies
D31	Subsidies on products
D311	Import subsidies
D312	Export subsidies
D319	Other subsidies on products
D39	Other subsidies on production
D4	Property income
D41	Interest
D42	Distributed income of corporations
D421	Dividends
D422	Withdrawals from income of quasi-corporations
D43	Reinvested earnings on direct foreign investment
D44	Other investment income
D441	Investment income attributable to insurance policy holders
D442	Investment income payable on pension entitlements D443
D443	Investment income attributable to collective investment funds shareholders
D45	Rent

Current transfers in cash and kind (D.5-D.8)

D5	Current taxes on income, wealth, etc.
D51	Taxes on income
D59	Other current taxes
D6	Social contributions and benefits
D61	Net social contributions
D611 = D121	Employers' actual social contributions
D6111 = D1211	Employers' actual pension contributions
D6112 = D1212	Employers' actual non-pension contributions
D612 = D122	Employers' imputed social contributions
D6121 = D1221	Employers' imputed pension contributions
D6122 = D1222	Employers' imputed non-pension contributions
D613	Household actual social contributions
D6131	Household actual pension contributions
D6132	Household actual non-pension contributions
D614	Household social contribution supplements
D6141	Household pension contribution supplements
D6142	Household non-pension contribution supplements
	Social insurance scheme service charges (-)
D62	Social benefits other than social transfers in kind
D621	Social security benefits in cash
D6211	Social security pension benefits in cash
D6212	Social security non-pension benefits in cash
D622	Other social insurance benefits
D6221	Other social insurance pension benefits
D6222	Other social insurance non-pension benefits
D623	Social assistance benefits in cash
D63	Social transfers in kind
D631	Social transfers in kind - non-market production
D632	Social transfers in kind - purchased market production
D7	Other current transfers
D71	Net non-life insurance premiums
D711	Net non-life direct insurance premiums
D712	Net non-life re-insurance premiums
D72	Non-life insurance claims
D721	Non-life direct insurance claims
D722	Non-life re-insurance claims
D73	Current transfers within general government
D74	Current international cooperation
D75	Miscellaneous current transfers
D751	Current transfers to NPISHs
D752	Current transfers between resident and non-resident households
D759	Other miscellaneous current transfers
D8	Adjustment for the change in pension entitlements

D9	Capital transfers
D9r	Capital transfers, receivable
D91r	Capital taxes, receivable
D92r	Investment grants, receivable
D99r	Other capital transfers, receivable
D9p	Capital transfers, payable
D91p	Capital taxes, payable
D92p	Investment grants, payable
D99p	Other capital transfers, payable

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