

On Chapter 29: Satellite accounts and other extensions

SNA's new Chapter 29 keeps broad definitions for satellite accounts, intending – it seems – to allow for a wide variety of them. On the one hand, this approach allows for these accounts to be structured in a way that fits specific country data demands. But, on the other hand, it leads to loss of international comparability.

As examples of satellite accounts, the chapter proposes specific satellite accounts tables that could be taken as standard indication. Table 29.4, for example, adopts the System of Health Account's functional classification for a supply and use table that could be used in a health satellite account.

This could lead to some problems. SHA's functional classification bears little resemblance to CPC health products. It would be almost impossible – starting with CPC-compatible data – to arrive at a table similar to the one displayed in SHA's functional classification.

Many countries already have health data based on SHA's classification. But, many other use sources based on CPC and ISIC classifications.

The latter – even if used as starting points for further disaggregation – are the international standard for data collection, and would favor more direct comparisons with National Accounts aggregates.

So, in this specific table (and other tables and satellite accounts), it would probably be better to use – and recommend – ISIC-compatible and CPC-compatible classifications. Besides, SHA's manual is currently under revision, and a change in its functional classification is very likely to occur.