

Concept Note

Workshop on the Implementation Plans for the System of National Accounts 2008

Kiev, Ukraine

29 November – 2 December 2011

Introduction

1. The System of National Accounts (SNA) is a statistical framework that provides comprehensive, consistent and flexible set of macroeconomic data for policymaking, analysis and research. The national accounts indicators (such as gross domestic product, national income, consumption, saving, etc.) are among the most important measures used by policymakers to plan and evaluate the results of their policies and by international organizations to compare economic development across countries.

2. The 2008 SNA is an update of the 1993 SNA, which was undertaken in order to bring the framework in line with the evolving needs of data users and adapt it to the new economic environment. At the same time the fundamental principles remain the same as in the previous version. This will allow countries that have not completely implemented the 1993 SNA to plan the gradual implementation of 2008 SNA recommendations in parallel to their efforts to improve the scope and quality of the existing national accounts.

Background

3. The Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics represents a global statistical initiative, which was mandated by the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session following the adoption of the 2008 SNA as the international standard for the compilation and dissemination of national accounts. It takes as a starting point the different levels of implementation of the SNA in various countries. It acknowledges the need for coordinated action, not only at the international level but also at regional and sub-regional levels and emphasizes the need for close cooperation with regional commissions and sub-regional organisations.

4. Each country is encouraged to review with its users the relevant changes from the 1993 SNA to the 2008 SNA that are applicable to the country and consider its adoption. At the same time, user consultation should revisit the scope, detail and quality of the accounts and supporting economic statistics by taking a view on which socio-economic and financial policies have to be informed by the structural and short-term economic statistics, including annual and quarterly national accounts.

5. Three distinct stages are identified for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics through a multi-year programme, irrespective of the level of statistical development, as follows:

- (a) Stage I. Review of strategic framework and detailing of national and regional implementation programmes;

- (b) Stage II. Adaptation of classification frameworks, business registers and frames, surveys, administrative data sources and information technology infrastructure; and
- (c) Stage III. Application of adapted frameworks and source data, backcasting and changeover to 2008 SNA.

Purpose

6. The purpose of the workshop is to initiate the formulation of an implementation plan for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South and East Europe (SEE) region with the objective of developing comparable economic statistics for monitoring the integration of their economies. This plan will be part of the global implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.

7. It is expected that this initiative would allow countries to set up priorities for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and improve the quality and the scope of existing economic statistics. It should also help international organizations and other donors running capacity building activities in the region to get information on the most urgent needs of countries and better coordinate their efforts.

Organization of the workshop

8. The workshop will be jointly organized by UNECE, UNSD, EFTA and other partners in the region. It will be hosted by the State Statistical Committee of Ukraine and held from 29 November to 2 December 2011 in Kiev. The workshop is organised in the framework of the UNECE Capacity Building Program on New Challenges in Economic Statistics, benefiting from the financial support of the World Bank.

Participants

9. The workshop is intended at the EECCA and SEE countries. However, other neighbouring or interested countries are also welcome to participate and contribute. The target audience are the heads of economic statistics and/or national accounts programmes in the corresponding countries, able to take decisions and express a view on the regional and national implementation programmes and representatives from international organizations.

Organization of the programme

10. The programme of the workshop will be organized around seven main themes: (i) Overview of main changes from the 1993 SNA to the 2008 SNA; (ii) The global strategy for the implementation of the 2008 SNA; (iii) The 2008 SNA implementation tools; (iv) Review of the status of SNA implementation in the region; (v) Selected methodological issues on SNA implementation; (vi) Building national and regional implementation plans; (vii) International initiatives for improving the scope, detail and quality of the national accounts and supporting economic statistics.

Expected outcome

11. Consensus among participants on the steps for further work and basic characteristics of a regional programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the region. It is expected that the workshop could reach agreement on:

- A region-wide assessment of countries' current capacity and needs to produce the national accounts statistics for policy and decision making;
 - Priority areas and roadmap for further improvement of national accounts and related basic statistics in order to improve the availability, quality and international comparability of economic statistics; and
 - Regional and country needs of capacity building and assistance in order to reach the agreed goals.
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