Statistical units in the SNA:

GROUP OF EXPERTS ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Discussant: nadim.ahmad@oecd.org
PRE-AMBLE
DRIVERS AND BACKGROUND
Homogeneity?
More from less.

• The backdrop
  – Minimised burdens on businesses
  – Restricted budgetary environment on NSOs
  – Desire for more granularity
  – And improved quality
    • More on globalisation
    • More on profit shifting
    • More on regional
    • More longitudinal
    • More timely........
THE ISSUE
With the change of emphasis from the physical view of input-output to an economic view, and from product-by-product matrices to industry-by-industry ones, it is less clear that it is essential to retain the concept of establishment in the SNA.
Presentations reveal

• .... a mixed bag, with countries using a variety of units based on the target....

Not always consistent
Region

- Clear that *(if all information exists)* the more detailed (smaller) the unit the better...

- But
  - need to recognise that for regional statistics this is more a practical issue rather than conceptual – if for example the SNA chose to give preference to the enterprise for the statistical unit this would apply to the economic territory and in practice for regions, the establishment is much closer to enterprise.
  
- And of course not all data is available (intra-firm, assets)
Arguments for the enterprise?

- Greater coherence between capital and production
  - (e.g. R&D........ & looking ahead, organisational capital, brands...)
- Joined-up view of trade, investment & production (GVCs)
  - & extended SUTs (linking production with institutional accounts)
- But also links to other datasets – business demography (births, deaths – for longitudinal micro data sets)

Of course linking can be made with different units, in particular via profiling but this is more complicated
QUESTIONS
Back to Homogeneity…

• Are we looking in the wrong place? Should homogeneity be tackled looking at different characteristics?
  – *Part of an MNE, Factoryless producer, processor*

• Do we need more?
  – GVC mantra not ‘*what you sell*’ but ‘*what you do*’ ….  
  • Should we request information on business functions? E.g. using ISCO