



International Family of Classifications

Work on classifications



Overview

- ❑ Programme on Statistical Classifications
- ❑ Bodies of International Classifications
 - Statistical Commission
 - Expert Group / Technical Subgroup
- ❑ International Family of Classifications
 - Types of Classifications
 - History of Economic/Trade Classifications
 - Relationships between Classifications
- ❑ Role of Custodians



Programme on Statistical Classifications

- ❑ To **develop and maintain** economic and social classifications approved as guidelines by the United Nations Statistical Commission
- ❑ To provide **technical support** for development, implementation, interpretation, maintenance, updating and revision of these classifications
- ❑ To prepare and **disseminate** classifications methods and materials, i.e., statements of best practice, explanatory notes, indexes, correspondence tables, coding strategies and methods
- ❑ To **coordinate** international **cooperation** in the area of statistical classifications through the Statistical Commission and through activities of the United Nations Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications.



Statistical Commission

- ❑ Established: 16th February 1946
- ❑ 24 members, according to geographical distribution pattern:
 - 5 members from Africa
 - 4 members from Asia
 - 4 members from Eastern Europe
 - 4 members from Latin America & Caribbean
 - 7 members from Western European and other States
- ❑ 4 years membership
- ❑ 1 meeting per year (since 1999)



Statistical Commission

Commission shall assist the Economic & Social Council:

- "In promoting the **development of national statistics** and the improvement of their comparability;
- In the **coordination** of the statistical work of specialized agencies;
- In the development of the **central statistical services** of the Secretariat;
- In **advising the organs** of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information;
- In promoting the **improvement of statistics** and statistical methods generally."



Expert Group on Statistical Classifications

- Central **coordinating** body for classification matters
- Ensures harmonization and **convergence** among classifications in the family
- Recommends, **examines** changes/updates
- Adopts schedules for updates
- Can install **subgroups**



Technical Subgroup (TSG)

- ☐ carries out technical, analytical or exploratory tasks
- ☐ reports back to Expert Group
- ☐ currently there are two TSGs, concerned with revisions of ISIC and COICOP

UN Economic and Social
Council
(ECOSOC)

UN Statistical
Commission

Expert Group on
....

Expert Group on
Statistical
Classifications

Expert Group on
....

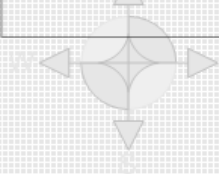
Technical Subgroup
on

Technical Subgroup
on

Technical Subgroup
on ISIC/CPC

Technical Subgroup
on

Technical Subgroup
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Statistical Classifications

- ❑ A statistical classification is a set of categories which may be assigned to one or more variables registered in statistical surveys or administrative files, and used in the production and dissemination of statistics.
- ❑ The categories are defined in terms of one or more characteristics of a particular population of units of observation.
- ❑ A statistical classification may have a flat, linear structure or may be hierarchically structured, such that all categories at lower levels are sub-categories of a category at the next level up.
- ❑ The categories at each level of the classification structure must be mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive of all objects in the population of interest.



Statistical Classifications

- ❑ Not intended to provide an exact description of a characteristic or an object
- ❑ Provide categories into which the characteristics can be grouped
 - May be broad or narrow – e.g. for different levels in the classification



Family of Classifications

☐ What is the Family of International Classifications?

- Classification, whose custodians follow the “best practices”

☐ What's the purpose?

- Enforce cooperation, coordination and improve quality

☐ Which Classifications belong to the Family?

- Subject matter areas:

- ☐ Activities Products Expenditures
- ☐ Trade Health Education
- ☐ Employment Environment

- International & (multi-)national



Types of Classifications

- Within each area there are:
 - Reference Classifications
 - Derived Classifications
 - Related Classifications



Example: Activity classifications

□ Reference classification

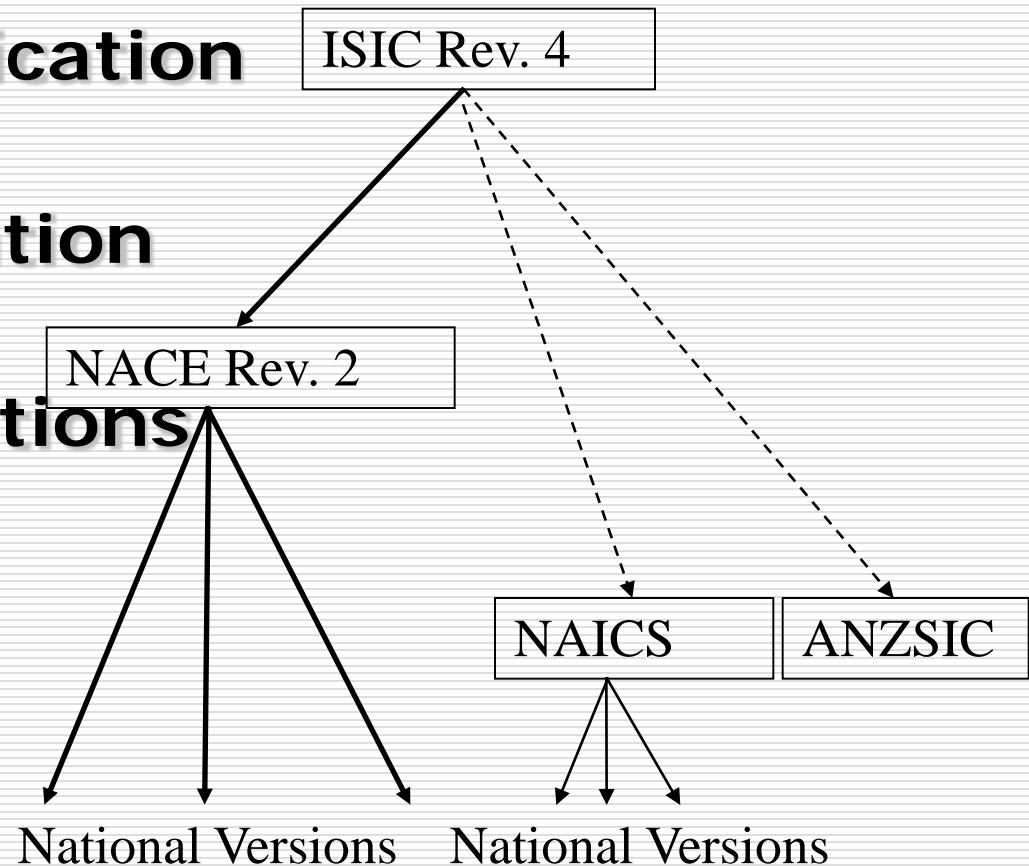
- ISIC Rev.4

□ Derived classification

- NACE Rev.2

□ Related classifications

- NAICS, ANZSIC





Reference Classifications

- ❑ Product of **international agreement**
- ❑ Approved by UN Statistical Commission (or other international board) and recommended as “model classification”
- ❑ Means of **harmonization** of international statistics
- ❑ **Guidelines** for the preparation of (multi-)/national classifications
- ❑ Used for data collection and **comparison** at the international level
- ❑ **Define** structure and building blocks



Requirements for Reference Classifications

- Have to be general enough to
 - be applicable to all countries
 - provide room for national adaptation and specifications
- Have to be specific enough to
 - allow for useful data collection
 - provide reasonable guidelines for creation of national classifications



Requirements for Reference Classifications

- ❑ orchestrated updates within the family
- ❑ Long-term schedule of updates
 - Example: activity and product classification recommended to be reviewed in 5 year intervals (2002, 2007, etc.)



Derived Classifications

- ☐ Based on the Reference Classification
- ☐ Adopt structure
 - consistency of aggregates
- ☐ Respect building blocks
 - additional detail where necessary
- ☐ Tailored for use at national or multinational level



Related Classifications

- ❑ Only partial concordance
- ❑ Differ in structure and/or building blocks from reference classifications
- ❑ Linked mainly through correspondence tables
 - many links will refer to partial correspondences

Economic activity classification	
Reference	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev.1, Rev.2, Rev.3, Rev.3.1, Rev.4)
Derived	Standard Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE Rev.1, Rev.2)
Related	The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS-Canada 1997, 2002, 2007; NAICS-Mexico 1997, 2002, 2007; NAICS-US 1997, 2002, 2007)
	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC 1993, 2006)
Product Classification	
Reference	Central Product Classification (CPC Provisional, Ver.1, Ver.1.1, Ver.2)
	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS 1988, 1996, 2002, 2007)
Derived	Standard International Trade Classification (SITC, Rev.1, Rev.2, Rev.3, Rev.4)
Expenditure According to Purpose Classification	
Reference	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)
Employment, occupation or education classification	
Reference	International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93)
	International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88, 08)
	International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997)
Social or Health Classification	
Reference	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10)
	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH)
	International Classification of Functioning and Disability (ICIDH-2)
	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)
Country and Area Classification	
Reference	Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use (M49, Rev.4)
Other Classifications	
Reference	Balance of Payments Manual (BPM5)
	Government Finance Statistics (GFS)
	Classification of Environmental Protection Activities and Expenditure (CEPA)
Other	Trial International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS)



Family of International Statistical Classifications

- In 2013 Expert Group meeting:
 - Broadening of the concept of the Family
 - No longer restricted to small set of formally approved classifications
 - Include also those that are de-facto standards in some areas (e.g. environment)
 - Subject classifications to a review against “Principles for international classifications”



Statistical Classifications

- Why do we need so many classifications?
 - Categorize different characteristics, even for the same object
 - E.g. for enterprises:
 - Activity
 - Size
 - Ownership type

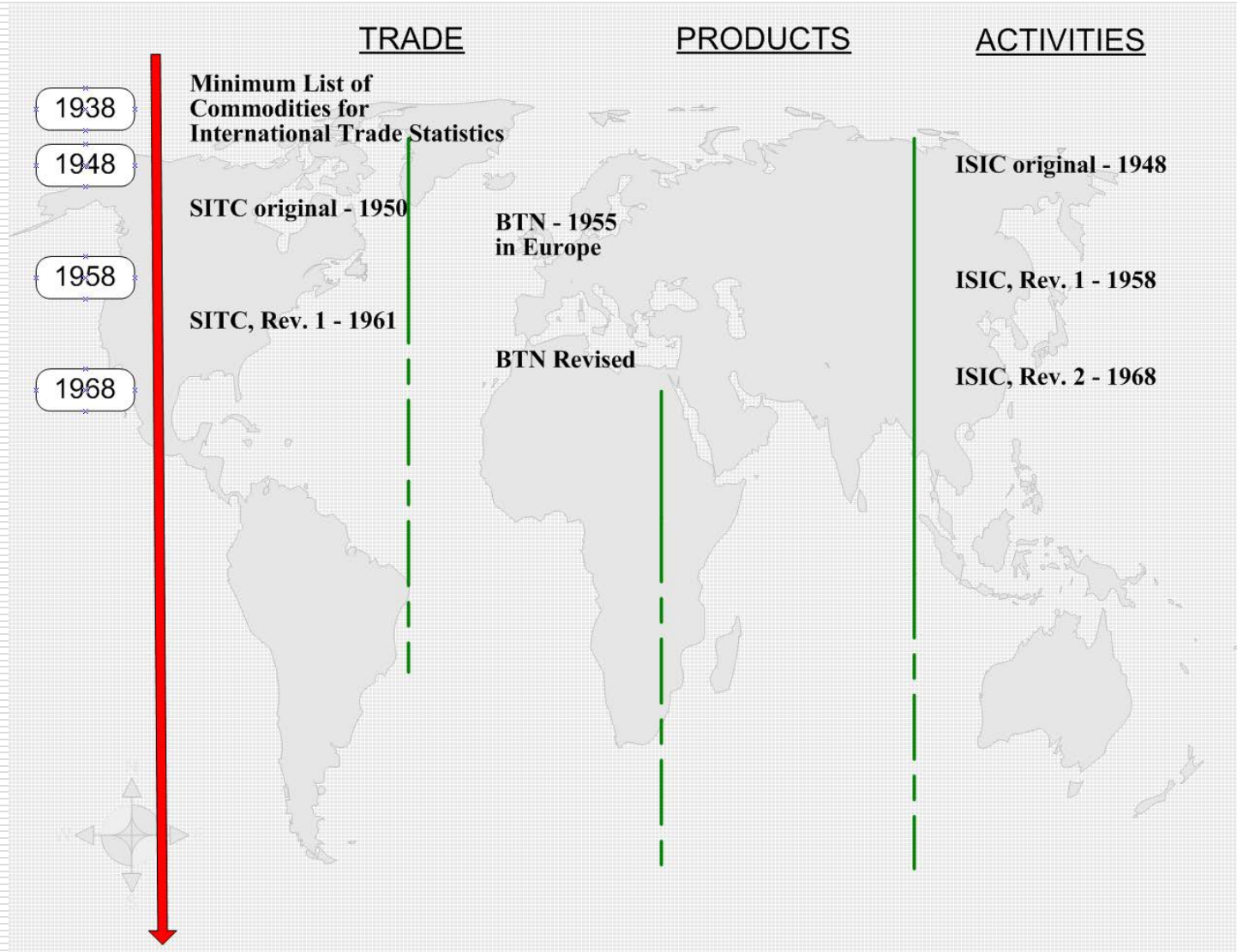


Some examples



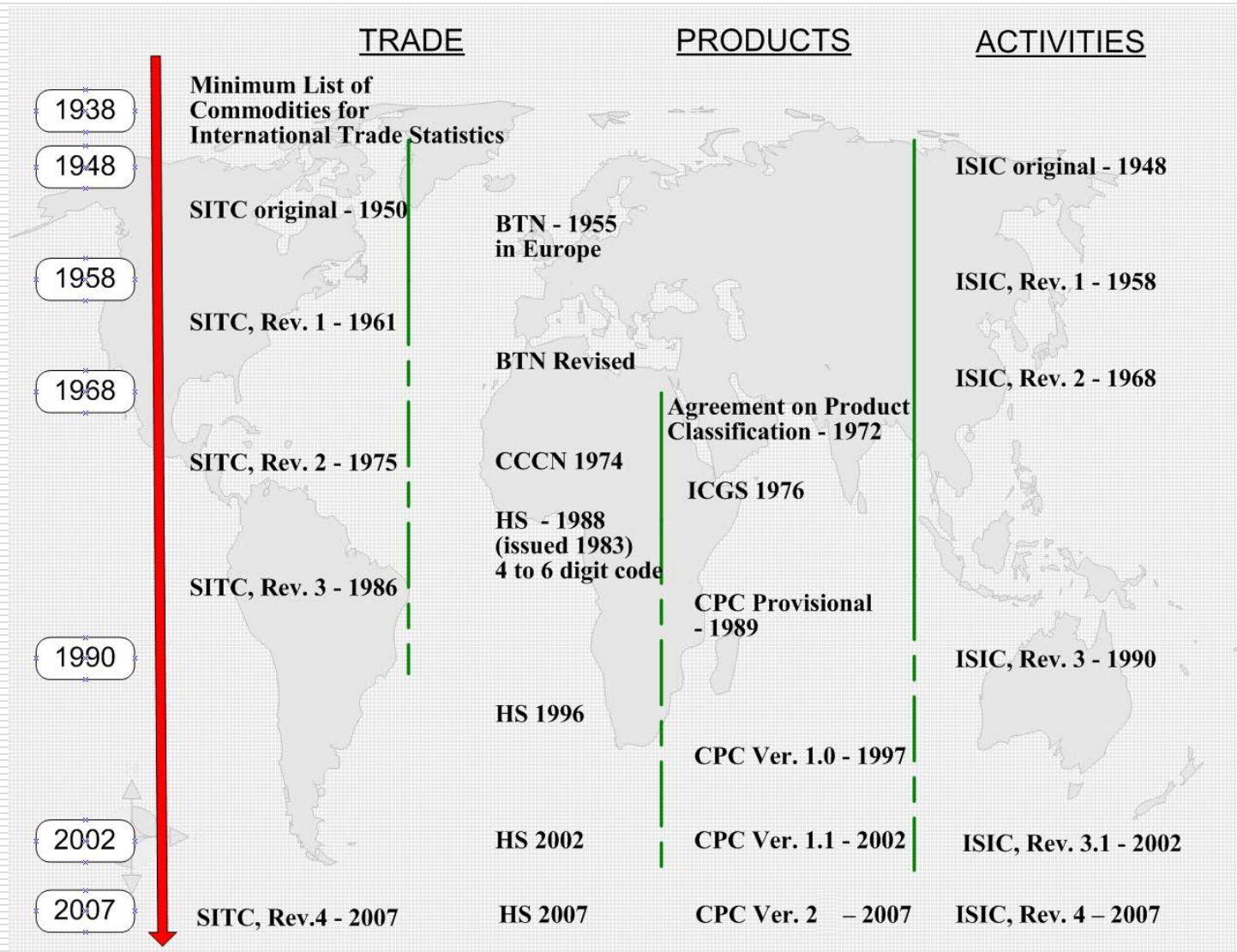
Economic Classifications

United Nations Statistics Division





Economic Classifications





Links between classifications

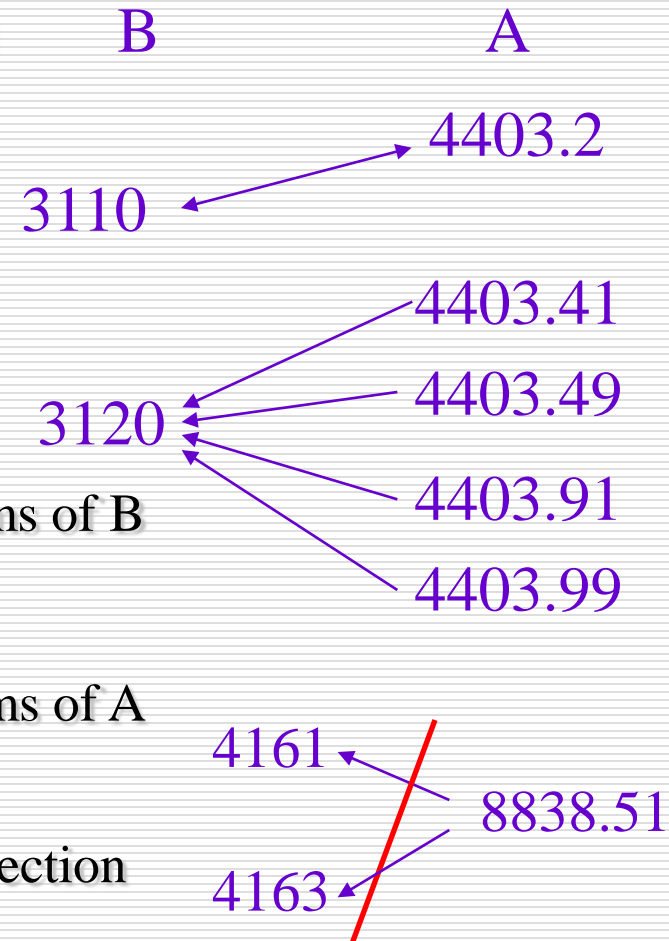
- ❑ Within subject matter areas (e.g. Products)
 - e.g. CPC ↔ HS
- ❑ Between subject matter areas (e.g. Products, Activities)
 - e.g. ISIC ↔ HS ; ISIC ↔ CPC
- ❑ Between types of classifications only (e.g. Activities)
 - e.g. ISIC ↔ NACE ↔ NAICS
- ❑ Between types of classifications and subject matter areas (e.g. Activities, Products)
 - e.g. ISIC ↔ SITC



Links between classifications

Can generally be of the form
(from A to B):

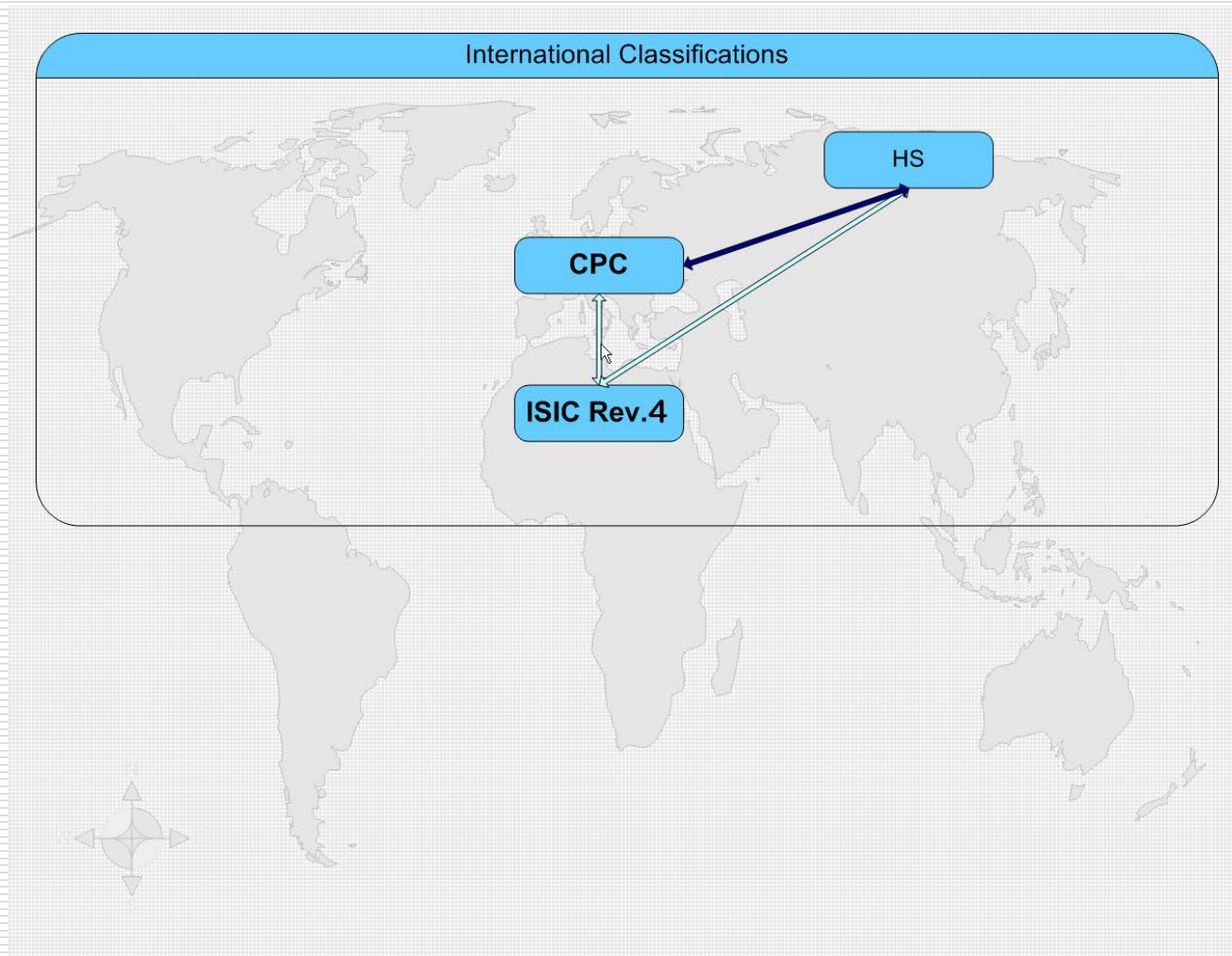
- One-to-one
 - Results can be transformed in both ways
- Many-to-one
 - Results of A can be compared in terms of B
- One-to-many
 - Results of B can be compared in terms of A
- Many-to-many
 - Results can't be compared in any direction





More links

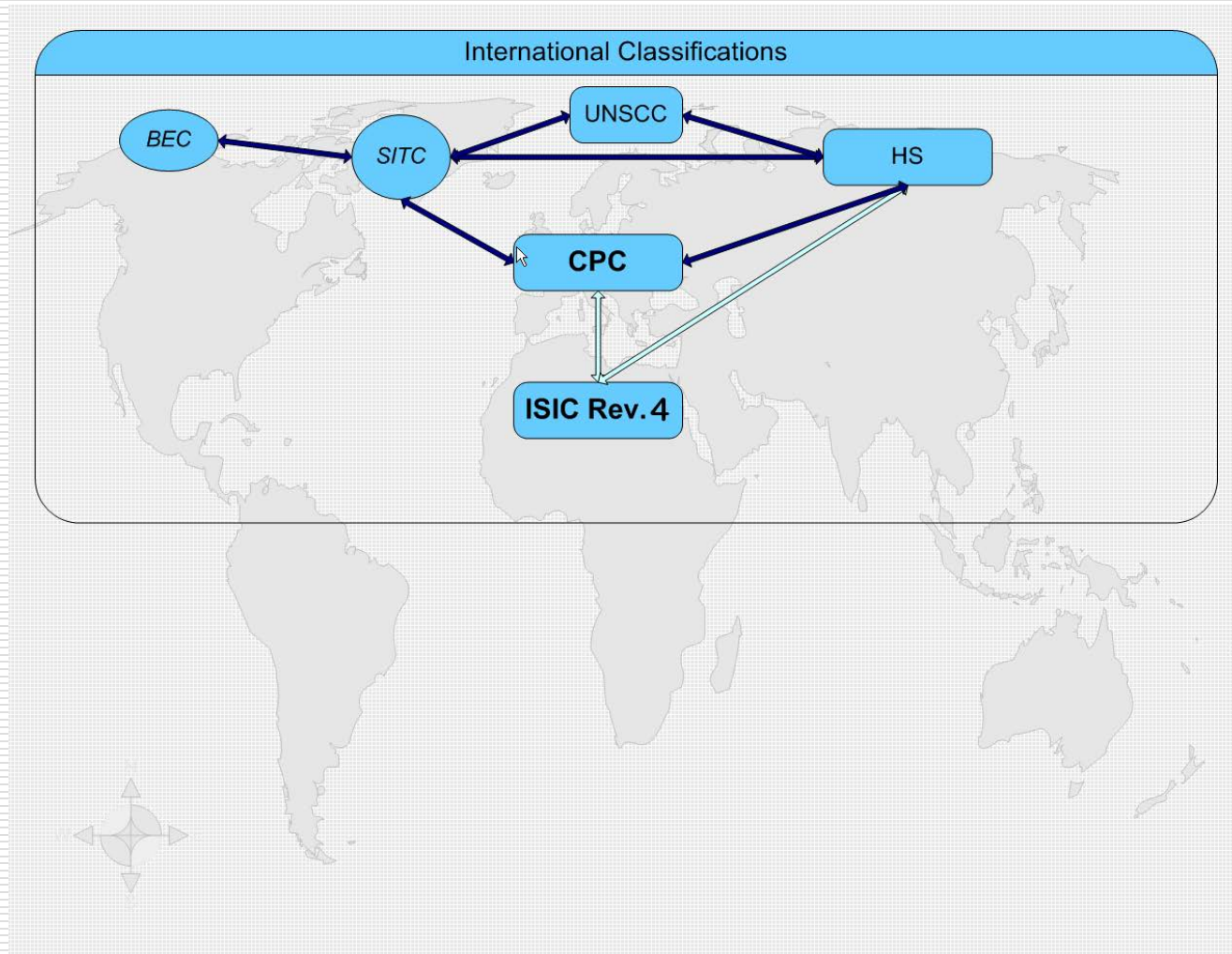
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More links

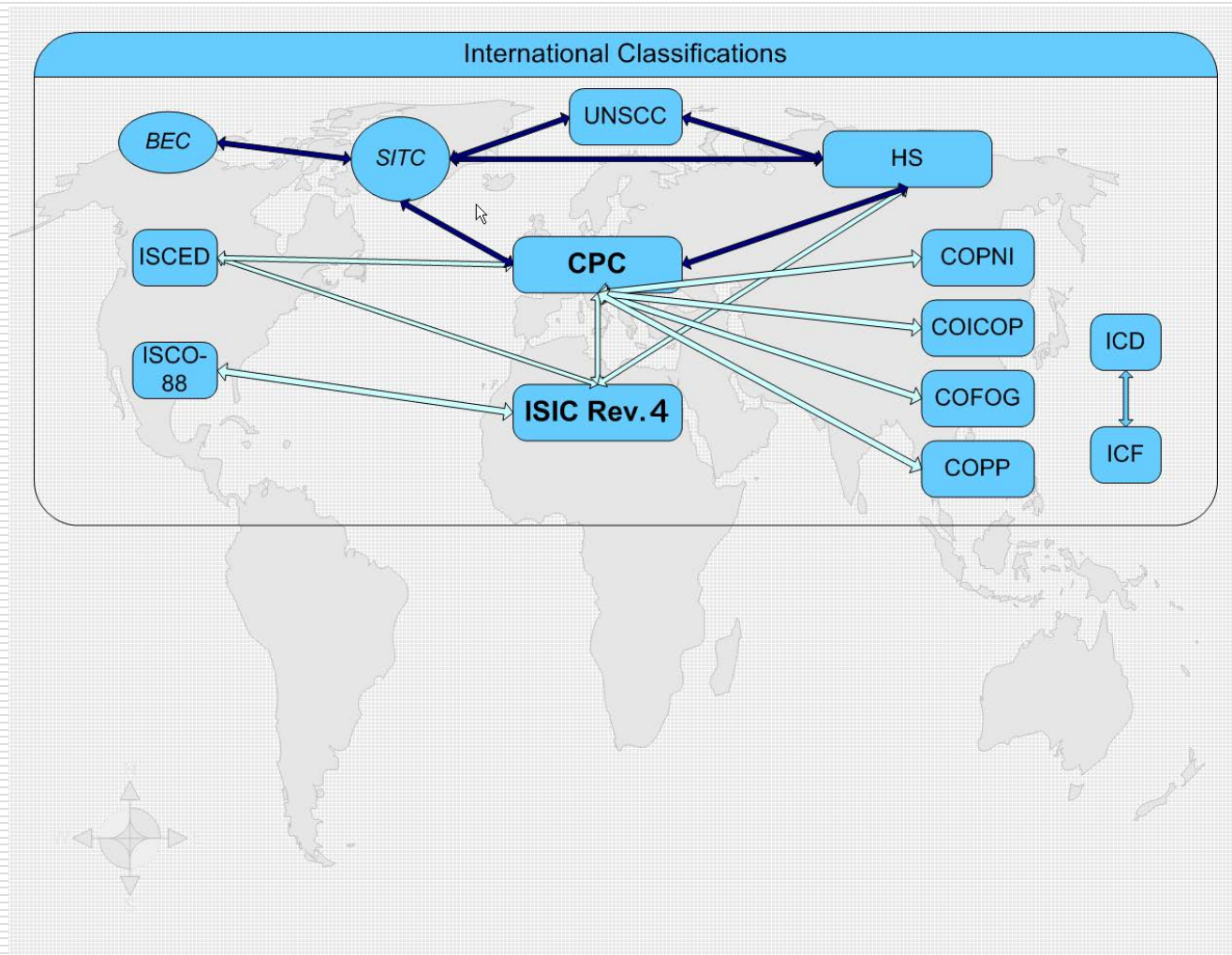
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More links

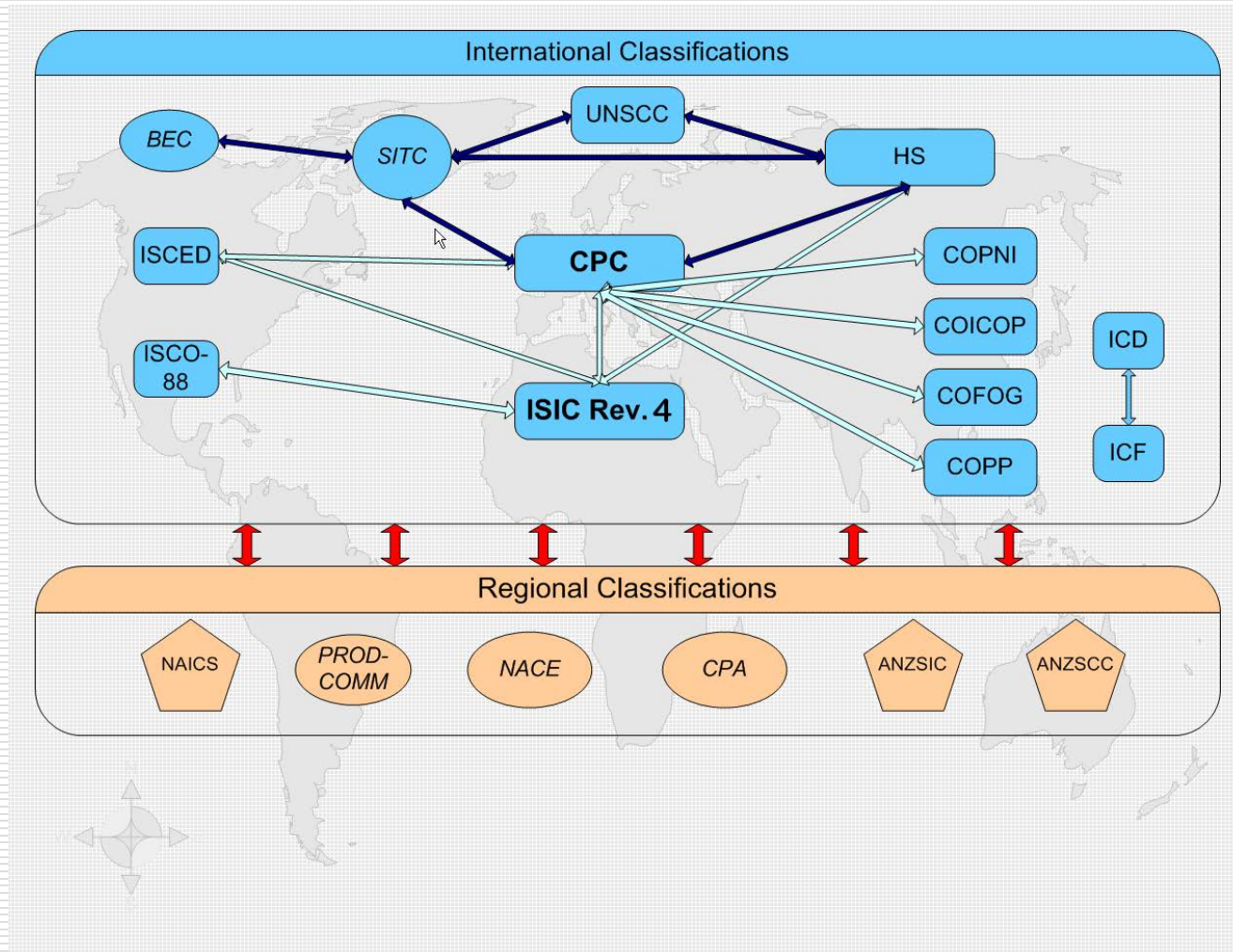
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More links

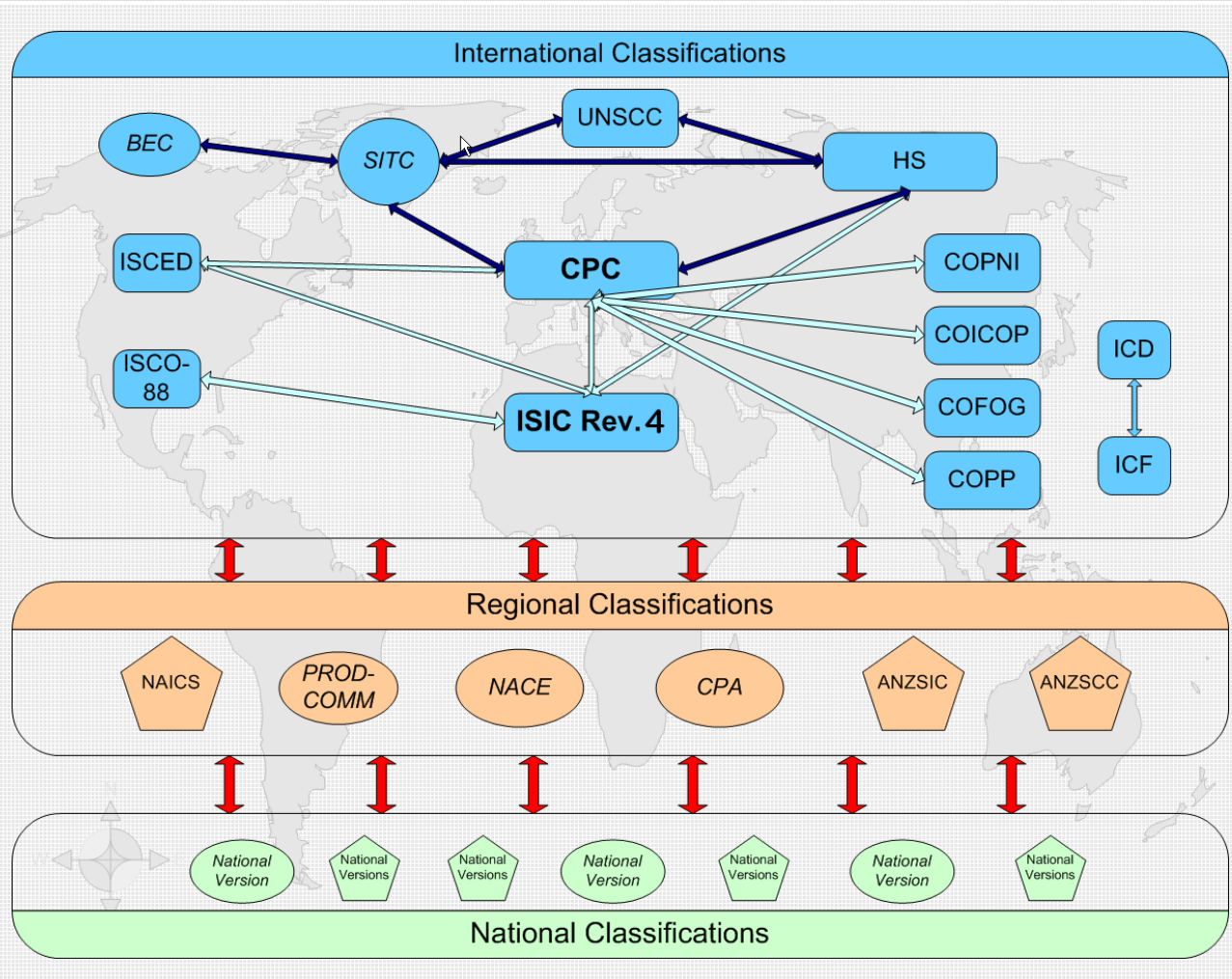
United Nations Statistics Division





More links

United Nations Statistics Division





Roles of Custodians

- ❑ Maintenance, update and revision of “their” classification
- ❑ Follow family obligations
 - Collaborate with other custodians
 - Willing to exchange information and work transparently
 - Contribute their experience for advancement of Reference Classification (guidelines, definitions, interpretations,...)
 - Coordinate timing of changes/updates
 - Develop guidance and training materials



Contacts and resources

□ Classifications Hotline

■ Email: CHL@un.org

■ Website:
unstats.un.org/unsd/class



Thank you for your attention!