



ISIC Rev.4

History, scope and purpose

United Nations Statistics Division



Purpose

- ❑ Established in first version of ISIC in 1948:
 - provide a set of activity categories that can be utilized for the collection and reporting of statistics according to such activities



Purpose

- This set of activity categories was supposed to:
 - provide a tool for international comparability of data
 - provide guidance to countries in developing their own national classifications



Use

- ISIC is used in many statistical programmes
 - Essentially, all that make reference to “industries” and group data accordingly
 - Obvious applications for all kinds of economic statistics
 - Also used in social and other statistics
 - E.g. Accidents by industry
 - Common classification allows for comparability of data



Use

- ☐ ISIC is increasingly used also for non-statistical purposes
 - Administrative and legal applications may add requirements to ISIC revisions
 - How much can be accommodated?
 - ☐ Do specific application rules make sense outside of statistics?



History

- ❑ ISIC was originally released in 1948
- ❑ Revisions have been undertaken in 1958, 1968, 1989, 2002 (update) and 2008



History

- Revisions of ISIC have shown increasing detail in the classification
 - Reflection of growing need for detailed information (e.g. for services)
 - Reflected in number of categories as well as “depth” (levels) of the classification
- Concepts and criteria for delineating categories have been mostly maintained throughout this process
 - Only few new top-level concepts have been introduced



History

	Levels	
ISIC	3	Divisions, Major groups, Groups
ISIC Rev.1	3	Divisions, Major Groups, Groups
ISIC Rev.2	4	Major Divisions, Divisions, Major Groups, Groups
ISIC Rev.3	4	Sections (Tabulation categories), Division, Groups, Classes
ISIC Rev.3.1	4	Sections, Division, Groups, Classes
ISIC Rev.4	4	Sections, Division, Groups, Classes



History

□ Number of categories in ISIC versions:

	Level1	Level2	Level3	Level4
ISIC	9	44	113	
ISIC Rev.1	10*	44	124	
ISIC Rev.2	10*	34	72	160
ISIC Rev.3	17	60	159	292
ISIC Rev.3.1	17	62	161	298
ISIC Rev.4	21	88	238	419



Scope

- ❑ The scope of ISIC has not changed substantially in these different versions. *
- ❑ ISIC is a classification according to kind of economic activity
- ❑ Therefore its scope is restricted to the classification of units engaged in economic production as defined by SNA
 - “Economic production is an activity, carried out under the responsibility, control and management of an institutional unit, that uses inputs of labour, capital, and goods and services to produce outputs of goods and services”



Scope

- Scope has not changed, except:
 - Understanding of production boundary may change
 - E.g. Trusts and funds
 - In ISIC Rev.3.1 and Rev.4 we also have a category for (Undifferentiated services-producing activities of private households for own use)
 - Created for special purposes
 - Not used in business surveys



Structure

- Changes in the structure reflect:
 - Changing importance of existing categories and groupings
 - Changing understanding of industry groupings
 - Need for new information
 - Changing analytical needs



Structure

- ☐ Example for new detail:
 - ISIC Rev.2 has one class for Retail sale
 - ISIC Rev.4 has 25 classes for retail sale
 - Same overall scope, but recognizing different forms of retail
 - ☐ Mode of sale
 - ☐ Type of product