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PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC STATISTICS FOR THE ARAB REGION¹

Summary

This paper summarises recent work at the international level in the identification of priority short-term economic indicators for the monitoring of economic performance, the implementation of SNA 2008 and the development of national capacity to compile and disseminate key input series to the accounts. The paper begins with a brief overview (Section A) of the activities of other UN Regional Commissions in recent years on SNA 2008 implementation by countries in their respective regions, in particular, focusing on capacity building. This work provides context on how a list of priority short-term economic statistics may be used and issues that need to be considered in the ESCWA region.

Section B describes a small number of recent frameworks that have been used to identify priority short-term economic statistics. Section C outlines a small number of existing information sources that may be used to identify the availability of short-term economic statistics in ESCWA member states. This Section concludes with a small number of issues where guidance is sought from the EGM on the identification of priority short-term economic statistics for the ESCWA region.

The paper concludes with a brief analysis (in Section D) of survey questionnaire options for collecting further information on priority short-term economic statistics in the region. This Section also seeks specific guidance from the EGM on whether or not additional information should be collected on institutional or statistical technical capacity constraints.

¹ Prepared by Wafa Aboul Hosn, Majed Sakini, and Roy Doumit at ESCWA, Economic Statistics Section with contribution from Denis Ward, Independent Statistics Consultant for ESCWA on Short Term Economic Statistics, Melbourne, Australia
Tel: +61 (0)3 9880 7620 Email: teedward@gmail.com

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A. IMPORTANCE FOR THE REGION

In 2009, and in response to the global economic crises, the Statistics Community called for coordinated national and international actions to improve availability, periodicity and timeliness and to disseminate high frequency statistics in accessible and analytically useful formats to allow for their use in the early detection of turning points of financial and economic trends.

Developed countries periodically produce and disseminate timely short-term indicators and their metadata to enable policymakers to construct composite economic indicators and measure and monitor various economic fluctuations and business cycles and respond scientifically and punctually with short-term policy. The short-term macroeconomic fluctuations have long-term economic consequences.

Unfortunately, the lack of quarterly and monthly economic data in most ESCWA member countries make it difficult for policymakers to measure and project the consequences of short-term economic developments.

B. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER REGIONAL COMMISSIONS ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS²

Activities of each of the UN Regional Commissions are summarised in a paper prepared by UNSD for the 2013 UNSC. Common themes, are the need to address both technical issues (such as the development of key statistical infrastructure³ and processes) and institutional factors requiring the evolution of national statistical system (NSS), not just the NSO. All of this is to be conducted within the framework of national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDSs).

Although the context and political / economic environment varies in each of the UN regions it is possible to identify a number of common elements, namely:

- Recognition that a major barrier for SNA 2008 implementation is the inadequacy of basic input series of required quality and methodological transparency, particularly short-term economic statistics (STES).
- The development of regional implementation plans both for SNA 2008 implementation and the development of required input series. These plans aim to develop the statistical capacity of their respective member countries to compile and disseminate key input series (and their metadata) to the SNA.
- The need for capacity development at the national level to be conducted in the context of a strategic planning process encompassing the entire national statistical system (NSS) and which address both institutional and technical barriers.
- Given the long time period required to develop national capacity, establishing mechanisms for the regular monitoring progress of individual countries within the region.
- Emphasised the need for stronger regional co-operation and information sharing at national level, between countries, regional and global bodies and donor agencies / countries. Related to this is the need to link regional initiatives to relevant activities being conducted at the global level by agencies such as UNSD, IMF, World Bank.

Issues in each region of particular relevance to future work in the ESCWA region are outlined below.

² Prepared by UNSD as a background document for the 44th session of the UNSC, 26 February – 1 March 2013, Provisional Agenda item 3 (c)

³ Such as classifications, registers and frames, metadata systems and the strengthening of data collection, compilation, dissemination and analysis.

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

In April 2012 ECE launched a website on 2008 SNA Implementation⁴. Have undertaken several national surveys to identify and monitor the status of SNA 2008 implementation and the development of required input series.

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

African countries recognize that the SNA provides a fundamental statistical framework for a comprehensive and integrated set of macroeconomic statistics to compile harmonized national statistics required for economic, financial, and social integration in Africa. In addition, growing globalization and foreign direct investment also require comparable and reliable statistics for adequate policy and decision making. These demands call for a common regional project for all the African countries to work together on the implementation of the 2008 SNA.

An African Implementation Plan for the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) was endorsed and adopted by the third session of the Statistical Commission of Africa (StatCom-Africa III) at the beginning of 2012.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

The SNA implementation survey recently carried out – based on a UNSD questionnaire – has shown that in Latin America countries, although substantial improvements have been made in the last few years, the road to the full implementation of the new recommendations is still long, especially considering the advances that are needed in terms of basic data availability and their overall quality.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

In 2012, the Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics in Asia-Pacific developed a comprehensive implementation plan for member States in the region to develop the capacity for producing a *Core set of Economic Statistics* in line with current international standards.

The regional goal and the contents of the Core Set were adopted by the Committee on Statistics in 2010 and subsequently endorsed by the Regional Commission in 2011 as a guide for setting the scope and prioritizing capacity-building activities for economic statistics.

While the scope for the Core Set is broader than the national accounts, implementation of the 2008 SNA is an essential component towards achieving the overall goal of the Regional Programme. The Committee on Statistics endorsed the Implementation Plan for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics in December 2012. The Regional Programme outlines a phased approach extending to 2020 for the development of the national capacity to produce and disseminate short-term-economic statistics (STES) and related metadata

C. EXISTING INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC STATISTICS (STES)

Over the last few years a number of related frameworks outlining priority short-term economic statistics have been developed by international organisations in cooperation with national statistical organisations (NSOs). The individual priority indicators listed in each of the frameworks are intended to facilitate the frequent monitoring of economic and financial developments at the national level.

The *Principal European Economic Indicators* and the *Principal Global Indicators* posted on the Eurostat and IMF websites respectively are accompanied by metadata. The *data template and analytical indicators* developed within the framework of the global implementation of SNA 2008 also facilitate the monitoring of economic activity as

⁴ Refer <http://www.unece.org/stats/2008sna.html>.

well as being inputs to the compilation of national accounts. The *Core Set of Economic Statistics* for the Asia and Pacific region has been developed in the context of the Regional Programme for the Development of Economic Statistics, which aims to develop the national capacity of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to produce a range of economic statistics. The Core Set determines the scope of the programme and provides guidance on the minimum set of economic statistics to be produced.

One of the issues highlighted in the development of each of these four frameworks was the need to strike a balance between being overly prescriptive in the specification of the indicators in the list and the need to allow sufficient flexibility for countries to develop indicators that meet the specific needs of national users in accordance with national economic and political circumstance.

Principal European Economic Indicators⁵

The Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs) are a set of monthly and quarterly economic indicators for the European Union (EU) and its Member States which also are also used for monitoring the euro area. In 2002, Eurostat produced an initial list of 19 principal indicators, which has since been expanded to 26 (of which 22 are currently available) – refer Table 1 below. The indicators are published regularly and posted on a specific PEEI page on the Eurostat website⁶.

Since 2002, PEEIs have been regularly monitored and improved, in terms of coverage as well as timeliness. The list of indicators includes gross domestic product (GDP), private final consumption, external trade balance and three-month interest rates.

Table 1: Short-term economic indicators included in Principal European Economic Indicators and the Principal Global Indicators datasets

Indicator	Principal European Economic Indicators		Principal Global Indicators	
	Included	Frequency*	Included	Frequency*
GDP - volume	Y	Q	Y	Q
GDP deflator	N	-	Y	Q
Household consumption expenditure, including NPISHs	N	-	Y	Q
Government consumption expenditure	N	-	Y	Q
Gross fixed capital formation	N	-	Y	Q
Exports of goods and services	N	-	Y	Q
Goods: Exports f.o.b.	N	-	Y	Q
Imports of goods and services	N	-	Y	Q
Goods: Imports c.i.f	Y	-	Y	Q
Private final consumption - volume	Y	Q	N	-
Investment volume	Y	Q	N	-
International trade balance	Y	M	N	-
Current account - total	Y	M	Y	Q
International investment position (IIP) - net	N	-	Y	Q
IIP assets	N	-	Y	Q
IIP liabilities	N	-	Y	Q
Portfolio investment	N	-	Y	A
Debt securities	N	-	Y	A

⁵ Source: Eurostat, Statistics Explained – Glossary, reference for Principal European Economic Indicators - refer [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Principal_European_economic_indicators_\(PEEI\)](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Principal_European_economic_indicators_(PEEI))

⁶ Refer <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/euroindicators/peeis/>

Indicator	Principal European Economic Indicators		Principal Global Indicators	
	Included	Frequency*	Included	Frequency*
Equity securities	N	-	Y	A
Inflation – HICP all items	Y	M	N	-
Consumer price index	N	-	Y	Q/M
Unemployment rate - total	Y	M	Y	Q/M
Unemployment rate, 15-24 years	Y	M	N	-
Unemployment rate, above 24 years	Y	M	N	-
Labour cost index	Y	Q	N	-
Employment	Y	Q	N	-
Industrial producer prices	Y	M	Y	Q/M
Industrial production	Y	M	Y	M
Construction production	Y	M	N	-
Retail trade deflated turnover	Y	M	N	-
Retail turnover	N	-	Y	M
Government finance statistics for general government	N	-	Y	Q
Government deficit/surplus - percentage	Y	A	N	-
General government gross debt - percentage	Y	A	N	-
External debt	N	-	Y	Q
Short term external debt	N	-	Y	Q
Gross official reserves	N	-	Y	Q
Domestic credit (consolidated balance sheet of the banking sector)	N	-	Y	M
Base money	N	-	Y	M
Broad money	N	-	Y	M
Central bank assets	N	-	Y	M
Other depository corporations assets	N	-	Y	M
Economic sentiment indicator	Y	M	N	-
Consumer confidence	N	-	Y	M
Business confidence	N	-	Y	M
3 months interest rate	Y	M	Y	M
Long term government bond yields	Y	M	Y	M
Share prices	N	-	Y	M
Oil price - world	N	-	Y	M
Euro – dollar exchange rate	Y	M	N	-
Exchange rates - \$US	N	-	Y	M
Effective exchange rates: nominal	N	-	Y	M
Effective exchange rates: real	N	-	Y	M

*Frequency - A: Annual; Q: quarterly; M: monthly

Principal Global Indictors⁷

The Principal Global Indicators (PGI) comprise around 40 monthly and quarterly indicators for the Group of 20 countries (G-20), aimed at facilitating the monitoring of economic and financial developments for these systemically important economies – refer Table 1 above.

Launched in response to the on-going financial and economic crisis, the PGI is hosted by the IMF, and is a joint undertaking of the Inter-Agency Group on Economic and Financial Statistics (Inter-Agency Group): Bank for International Settlements (BIS), European Central Bank (EC), Eurostat, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the

⁷ Source: IMF, IMF.Stat, Principal Global Indicators (PGI) Dataset, Introduction - refer <http://imfstatext.imf.org/WBOS-query/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=PGI>

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations (UN), and the World Bank (WB).

Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA and Supporting Statistics

Work on short-term economic statistics for global 2008 SNA implementation is being carried out under a joint initiative by UNSD and Eurostat in collaboration with Statistics Canada, Statistics Netherlands, and Russian Federal State Statistics Service based on recommendations of three international seminars. The initiative comprises four related themes:

- compilation of rapid estimates;
- development of Business Cycle Composite Indicators;
- development of tendency surveys;
- formulation of a data template and analytical indicators

The data template outlined below in Table 2 contains 12 major STES categories and is an extension and rearrangement of existing dissemination standards developed by Eurostat through its Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEI) and by the IMF through its Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and General Data Dissemination Standard (GDDS). The 50 to 70 high frequency statistics in the template are a good point of departure to analyse the turning points of global and national business cycles and to identify sectoral and market exposures and vulnerabilities of the global economy⁸.

Table 2: Data Template for Short-term Economic Statistics⁹

Sets	Indicator description	Detail
1. National accounts	1.1 QNA: Flash GDP estimate	
	1.2 QNA: GDP full release	1.2.1 By expenditure
		1.2.2 By production
		1.2.3 By income
	1.3 Quarterly sector accounts	
2. Production and turnover	2.1 Production index for industry, by major division (mining, manufacturing, electricity, water, etc)	
	2.2 Production index for construction	
	2.3 Turnover index for retail trade by major division	
	2.4 Turnover index for industry by major division	
	2.5 Turnover index for other services by major division (excluding financial services and non-commercial services)	
	2.6 New orders index for industry by major ISIC division (for those that work on order)	
	2.7 New orders index for construction (building permits or housing starts)	
	2.8 Commodity production (as relevant at country level data on commodity productions and other indicators of economic activity)	Agricultural products, minerals, new car registrations/sales, new commercial vehicle registrations/sales, tourist arrivals
3. Price indicators	3.1 Consumer price index	
	3.2 Producer price index	
	3.3 Import price index	

⁸ Refer Report of the International Seminar on Timeliness, Methodology and Comparability of Rapid Estimates of Economic Trends 27 – 29 May 2009, Ottawa, Canada, para. 5

⁹ [insert source]

Sets	Indicator description	Detail
	3.4 Export price index	
4. Labour market indicators	4.1 Unemployment	
	4.2 Unemployment rate	
	4.3 Employment total by economic activity	
	4.4 Hourly wage rate	
	4.5 Hours of work	
5. External sector indicators	5.1 Exports and imports (of goods and services)	
	5.2 International investment position (IIP), specify balances and components	
	5.3 Official reserve assets	
	5.4 External debt (by sector, maturity and foreign currency)	
6. Financial sector indicators	6.1 Central bank net foreign assets	
	6.2 Central bank domestic lending	
	6.3 Central bank reserve money	
	6.4 Depository corporations net foreign assets	
	6.5 Depository corporations domestic lending	
	6.6 Depository corporations broad money liabilities	
	6.7 Other financial corporations balance sheet, assets and liabilities by sector	
	6.8 Financial corporate profit	
	6.9 Financial corporate debt	
	6.10 Others as relevant	Nonperforming loans of depository corporations, capital adequacy ratios, other financial stability indicators, etc
7. General government sector indicators	7.1 Revenue	
	7.2 Expense	
	7.3 Net operating balance	(= Revenue – Expense)
	7.4 Net acquisition of non-financial assets	
	7.5 Expenditure	
	7.6 Net lending/net borrowing	(= Revenue - Expenditure)
	7.7 Gross debt	
8. Household sector indicators	8.1 Household disposable income	
	8.2 Household saving	
	8.3 Household debt	
	8.4 Others as relevant	Disposable income, debt service and principal payments, household debt, etc.
9. Non-financial corporations sector indicators	9.1 Non-financial corporate profits	
	9.2 Non-financial corporate debt	
	9.3 Others as relevant	
10. Financial market indicators	10.1 Interest rates, as relevant short and long term money and bond market rates	
	10.2 Exchange rates, as relevant spot and forward markets	
	10.3 Nominal and real effective exchange rates	
	10.4 Stock market indicators	
	10.5 Others as relevant	Spreads between lending and deposit rates, highest-lowest interbank rate; etc.
11. Real estate market indicators	11.1 Residential property price index	

Sets	Indicator description	Detail
	11.2 New house sales	
	11.3 Existing house sales	
12. Economic sentiment	12.1 Consumer confidence	
	12.2 Business confidence	
	12.3 Composite business cycle indicators	12.3.1 Leading indicator
		12.3.2 Coincident indicator
		12.3.3 Lagging indicator

ESCAP’s Core Set of Economic Statistics

The Core Set of Economic Statistics¹⁰ developed for the Regional Programme for the Development of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific is provided in Table 3 below. Although 75% of the 35 indicators in the Core Set are short-term economic indicators the set also includes a number of annual, 5-yearly and ad hoc series. Furthermore, most of the STES covered are included in the IMF’s SDDS / GDDS. The Core Set recognises the role of the SNA as the common conceptual framework underlying the integration of economic statistics and is consistent with SNA data needs. However, it is not intended as a list of all of the source data needed to compile national accounts, though all key statistics in the Core Set will satisfy many of the source data needs of national accounts compilers.

The Core Set of Economic Statistics is defined as follows:

- (a) priority economic statistic category or domain and key statistics within each domain;
- (b) their frequency;
- (c) existing international standards / guidelines for each statistical domain.

Although there is considerable overlap between the Core Set and the indicators included in the SNA Global Implementation Programme’s data template much of the context for the former is relevant for the development of a core set for the ESCWA region, namely:

- The purpose of the UNESCAP Regional Programme, of which the Core Set is a key element, is to develop the national capacity of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to produce a range of economic statistics or, in other words, remove the constraints preventing their production. Within the framework of the programme, the Core Set fulfils dual roles of (a) determining the scope of the programme and (b) providing guidance on the minimum set of economic statistics to be produced.
- The core set will inform short and long-term economic analyses and decision-making by both government and non-government agencies and organizations. It will provide an information dataset intended to satisfy a set of uses that includes:
 - (a) the conduct of monetary policy;
 - (b) establishing and monitoring the government’s fiscal position;
 - (c) assessing the long-term capability of the economy, with a focus on sustainable growth;
 - (d) developing policies designed to achieve generally agreed economic goals, such as increased economic welfare and greater equity;
 - (e) measuring the economic, social and environmental impact of internal and external shocks;
 - (f) providing the information necessary for the efficient functioning of markets;
 - (g) general monitoring and forecasting of the economy;
 - (h) informing economic, social and environmental analyses;

¹⁰ Refer <http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/2/CST2-4E.pdf>

(i) meeting international obligations to provide information about the performance of the economy and the well-being of the nation.

- The Core Set is indicative and not prescriptive. It sets out what are considered to be the minimum set of statistics needed for effective economic analysis and monitoring. The Core Set has a short-term and longer-term element through the inclusion of short-term and structural economic statistics. The set does not focus on economic statistics required to measure the impact of the global financial crisis but at the same allows monitoring of such global developments.
- It is not envisaged that the Regional Programme will attempt to improve national capacities of all core economic statistics in all economies in the Asia-Pacific region. Priorities as to which specific basic economic statistic within each of the broad categories of statistics listed in Table 3 below should be compiled by the NSS, and for which capacity development is required, is largely dependent on the identified needs of key users in government and non-government agencies/organizations. The Core Set also facilitates identification of economic statistics that are particularly relevant and of importance to individual economies.
- The Core Set describes a minimum information set that each ESCAP member and associate member is encouraged to produce, regardless of stage of economic development, the degree of sophistication of markets and/or the extent of government intervention in the economic process. However, the size and structure of the economy of members and associate members vary largely and parts of the Core Set may not be relevant to all. Furthermore, these considerations, along with internal user demand, will determine the specific characteristics of each of the key statistics in the Core.

The document outlining the Core Set endorsed by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics and the Regional Commission describes each indicator in considerable detail and should be referred to for a more detailed understanding. The document also lists the relevant international guideline / recommendation for each indicator.

Table 3: Core Set of Economic Statistics for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

Category	Component	Frequency	In GDDS/ SDDS
Prices and costs	Consumer price index (CPI)	Q	Y
	Producer price index (PPI)	Q	Y
	Commodity price index	M	N
	External merchandise trade price indexes	M	Y
	Wages / earnings data	Q	Y
	Labour costs index / wage index	Q	Y
Exchange rates		D	Y
Purchasing power parities (PPP)		Ad hoc	N
Demand and output	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (production) (P) nominal and real	Q	Y
	GDP (expenditure) (E) nominal and real (including implicit price indexes for GDP(E) and components)	Q	Y
	External trade - merchandise	M	Y
	External trade - services	Q	Y
	Short term indicator (STI) - industry output	Q	Y
	STI – Consumer demand	Q	N
	STI – Fixed investment	Q	N
	STI - Inventories	Q	N

Category	Component	Frequency	In GDDS/ SDDS
Economy structure statistics		5 yearly or at regular intervals	N
Productivity		A	N
Income and wealth	Integrated national accounts for the total economy	A	N
	Institutional sector accounts	A	N
Balance of payments (BoP)		Q	Y
International Investment Position (IIP)		A	Y
External debt		Q	Y
Income distribution		5 yearly	N
Money and banking	Assets/liabilities of depository corporations	M	Y
	Broad money and credit aggregates	M	Y
	Interest rate statistics	M	Y
Government	General government operations	Q	Y
	General government debt	Q	Y
Labour market	Labour supply and demand	A / Q	Y (part)
	Hours worked	Q	N
Natural resources and the environment		A	N

Issues for guidance from EGM

Would the EGM's prefer to:

- use of one of the existing four frameworks outlined above in its entirety;
- use a modified version of one of the existing frameworks – by adding and / or deleting specific short-term economic indicators. If so, using one of the four frameworks described above as a starting point, which indicators should be added / deleted.

D. INFORMATION SOURCES ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC STATISTICS IN THE ESCWA REGION

A key issue following the formulation by the EGM of a priority list of short-term economic statistics for the ESCWA region is the identification of information sources that can be used for an initial assessment on the availability of each indicator in individual member countries. These comprise information:

- collected in surveys conducted by ESCWA over the last 10 years – e.g. 2001 and 2012 (the 2008 SNA Questionnaire);

- provided by member states to other international organisations such as the IMF (for GDDS, SDDs and Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs)), and Paris21 on the development of NSDSs;
- available on NSO websites and the websites of other national agencies within the NSS.

The availability of information from these sources for individual ESCWA countries is summarised in the table in the Annex to this note. These will be utilised before further information is sought directly from national statistical agencies at some time in the future.

E. OPTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION OF FURTHER INFORMATION ON STES AVAILABILITY IN THE ESCWA REGION

Options for monitoring future progress on the availability of the core set of priority short-term economic statistics in ESCWA member countries entail either the use of an existing survey instrument such as the 2008 SNA questionnaire (perhaps in a modified form) or the development of a new information collection vehicle.

Use of existing survey instruments

The 2008 SNA questionnaire made extensive use of tick-boxes to obtain information on the compilation of national accounts. The questionnaire also collected summary information on a limited number of institutional and statistical infrastructure issues such as existence of national plan (NSDS) for the improvement of national accounts and supporting statistics, further development of business registers, classifications, etc. Section D of the questionnaire sought information on the availability and frequency of around 70 economic statistics¹¹. The questionnaire did not seek information that would give an indication of the quality of the series or detail on specific barriers to the development of national capacity for their improvement.

Issues for guidance from EGM

a. Should future surveys merely repeat the use of the 2008 SNA questionnaire?

b. If “yes”, is the 2008 SNA questionnaire appropriate in its current form with its focus on SNA implementation issues or should it be scaled down to only collect information on the availability and frequency of priority short-term economic statistics identified by the EGM, i.e. in the format of Section D of the existing questionnaire?

c. How often should such information be collected in the future – every year, every two years or less often?

Development of a new survey instrument / questionnaire

Past experience on the use of questionnaires to collect information from national sources on the availability and frequency of statistical series has shown that, at best, the tick-box approach provides very little detail about the quality of series currently available or information on any underlying capacity constraints. Efforts to collect this information via write-in items in questionnaires very often results in low response rates from countries or the provision of very summary details. Information collected via questionnaires merely flag issues for further direct discussion with national agencies across the NSS, e.g. during missions to the countries concerned.

This is the approach adopted by UNESCAP in designing an instrument used at the beginning of 2013 to collect information to monitor national capacity constraints / barriers to the availability of the Core Set of Economic

¹¹ Within the following broad groupings: production and turnover (17); price indicators (4); labour market indicators (6); external sector indicators (7); financial sector indicators (9); general government sector indicators (7); household sector indicators (1); non-financial sector indicators (2); financial market indicators (8); real estate market indicators (3); economic sentiment (6).

Statistics in the in the 53 member states of the Asia and Pacific region. The resulting Excel format *Capacity Screening Tool*¹² has been kept to a minimum length and is merely intended to identify / flag issues for subsequent more intensive follow-up by the ESCAP Secretariat, e.g. on mission to the countries concerned. These missions are being co-ordinated with other global, regional and sub-regional agencies active in Asia and the Pacific.

Issues for guidance from EGM

Therefore, before proceeding with the development of a new survey instrument to collect information in future on the availability and frequency of the core set of short-term economic statistics, guidance from the EGM is sought in the following areas:

- a. Should the survey instrument only collect information on the availability and frequency of priority short-term economic statistics in the ESCWA region?
- b. If “no” which of the following additional issues be included?
 - Institutional issues such as the need to improve: co-ordination across the NSS; statistical law, statistical advocacy within the government (i.e. raising awareness of and use of statistics); the effectiveness of statistical strategic planning (NSDS) processes; etc.
 - Issues related to the adequacy of information technology available and / or the human resource skill development.
 - Need to development key statistical infrastructures such as: quality assessment frameworks; metadata repositories; business registers; data editing.
 - Other issue(s) which should be included.

¹² Refer <http://www.unescap.org/stat/econ/assessment/index.asp> - follow link under “Capacity Assessments”.

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ON STES FOR
UNESCWA COUNTRIES

Country (1)	2001 ESCWA questionnaire (2)	2012 UNSD 2008 SNA implementation questionnaire (3)	IMF			PARIS21 NSDS status	
			SDDS (date metadata posted) (4)	GDDS (5)	ROSC (6)	at April 2006 (7)	at March 2013 (8)
Bahrain		Arabic		Yes			
Egypt			Jan 2005			Intention	Planned
Iraq				Yes		No info.	Not yet planned
Jordan		Arabic	Jan 2010		Oct 2002	Prelim. steps	Being designed
Kuwait				Yes			
Lebanon				Yes		Prelim. steps	
Libya				Yes		Intention	Being designed
Morocco		French	Dec 2005		April 2003	Prelim. steps	Being designed
Oman		English		Yes		Completed strat.	
Palestine		English	April 2012*			Prelim. steps	Not yet planned
Qatar				Yes			
Saudi Arabia		English		Yes			
Sudan				Yes		Completed strat.	Being designed
Syria				Yes		Designing	Planned
Tunisia			June 2001		Jan 2001	Designing	
United Arab Emirates		Arabic		Yes			
Yemen		English		Yes		Completed strat.	Planned

* West Bank and Gaza