



**Concept note**  
**High-Level meeting and Regional Seminar on the Implementation 2008**  
**SNA and Supporting Statistics in the Arab Region**  
**24-27 June 2013**  
**Geneva Hotel, Amman Jordan**

**Background**

1. The Implementation Programme for the System of National Accounts 2008 (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.

2. With the 2008 SNA being flexible to accommodate all countries and economies, regardless of their level of statistical development, each country has to review with its users the relevant changes that are applicable to the country and consider its adoption for the change over to the 2008 SNA. 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.

3. Three distinct stages are identified for the changeover to the 2008 SNA through a multi-year programme, irrespective of the level of statistical development namely:

- (a) Stage I. Review of a 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.

4. When preparing a national implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics it is necessary to take into consideration the national and regional policy needs to determine the scope and detail of the national accounts required to inform policy makers. These goals are also guided by the requirements set by the Statistical Commission for assessing the scope and detail of the national accounts. The chosen scope and detail of the national accounts also determine the data sources needed for timely and accurate estimates of the national accounts aggregates. By mapping the statistical requirements – where you want to go, and the outcome of an assessment of the statistical system – where you are, it is possible to determine the required actions – how to get there. These required actions are translated into an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, providing key features and deliverables that are specific, measurable, relevant and can be

carried out within a specific time frame. Countries are encouraged to develop their implementation programmes for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics within the framework of national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS).

5. A global assessment of the 2008 SNA was undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in 2012. Only 3 ESCWA member countries replied to the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be sent again and we invite countries to complete it as an exercise for the implementation plan.

### **Purpose**

6. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and UNSD are cooperating to initiate the formulation of a national strategy and implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting system-wide socio-economic statistics, in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), and the Statistics Department of the league of Arab States (LAS). The main objective of the initiative is strengthening the national statistical system (NSS) for improved policy making with the support of high policy-making in the Arab region. It is expected that this initiative would lead to a multi-year statistical programme to move countries over to the 2008 SNA and to establish a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics with quality “fit for purpose”.

### **Organisation of work**

7. The initiative is expected to review the adequacy of the national statistical production process and institutional arrangements supporting national accounts compilation through consultations with stakeholders of the NSS. This system wide assessment should lead to a shared strategic vision for the development of the statistics for monitoring and evaluating policy programmes with clear country and government ownership and leadership and which is integrated with the national planning and budget processes.

8. It is understood that for the development of an effective strategic vision for the development of statistics, a broad participation of the ministries and agencies being part of the NSS, including users and producers of statistics, is good practice. In addition, donor community will be involved in the assessment, particularly those that are already active in supporting statistical capacity building in the region, to ensure donor coordination for technical and financial support at an early stage.

9. A national seminar for Jordan as a leading country will be organized on 23 June 2013 focusing on policy needs and priorities of Jordan. The lead country will present its experience in the 2008 SNA in the regional seminar 24-27 June 2013 in Amman. Consultations will be held with senior staff of the Jordan Department of Statistics, the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and other relevant ministries. In addition, consultations will be held with representatives from international and regional organizations and donor countries.

10. A 4-days regional seminar will follow, the first day of the regional seminar 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 will be a high-level meeting for senior officials from Ministries of Planning and NSOs and Central Banks to support strengthening national statistical system and develop

shared strategic vision with clear country and government ownership and leadership and which is integrated with the national planning and budget processes.

11. For the regional seminar, national accounts experts and senior managers of economic statistics department from NSO, the Central Bank, and the Ministry of Planning of all Arab countries will be invited to present and discuss their experience. Senior staff of the Jordan Department of Statistics, the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and other relevant ministries will make presentations on specific institutional arrangements and components of the statistical production and share experience in preparing a strategic vision for the changeover to the 2008 SNA, ISIC revision 4 and adopted data template for short term statistics with participants

12. As a follow-up later during the year, a national workshop for leading country from the GCC and two sub-regional workshops for the GCC and for the Mashreq and North African countries will be organized focusing on priorities of those countries.

### **Expected outcome**

13. The National Statistical Offices in collaboration with national partners and in consultation with ESCWA and AITRS will prepare an outcome document which will contain:

- (a) an initial assessment of the current capacity of the NSS to produce and disseminate a core data set of annual and high frequency statistics consisting of economic statistics and national accounts in support of national policy programmes;
- (b) a consolidation of the statistical requirements, assessment and actions for preparing a national implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics; and
- (c) a proposed institutional arrangement to coordinate activities in the formulation of the statistical implementation programme for economic statistics and national accounts

### **Supporting documents**

14. UNSD has developed a number of tools to support the development of a programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. These include:

- (a) The note: *Developing a global programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics*;
- (b) Statistical System Information fact sheet;
- (c) Diagnostic Framework for National Accounts and Supporting Economic Statistics (DF-NA&ES); and
- (d) Status of National Accounts and Supporting Economic Statistics Parliamentary documentation to the Statistical Committee on its ninth session in 2010, "Strategy of Implementation of the System of National Accounts in the Western Asia Region".<sup>1</sup>
- (e) Progress achieved in the field of statistics since the ninth session of the statistical committee economic statistics, including energy and environment statistics.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCWA 2010. Strategic Issues Related to Official Statistics in the Western Asia Region. Strategy of Implementation of the System of National Accounts. E/ESCA/SD/2010/Ig.1/4(Part II).

<sup>2</sup> UNESCWA 2012. Progress achieved in the field of statistics since the ninth session of the statistical committee economic statistics, including energy and environment statistics. E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/5(Part III).

15. At its forty-second session in 2011 the UNSC adopted an update of the milestone and data set measures to assess the scope and compliance with the 2008 SNA<sup>3</sup> and initiated a review to accommodate a broader scope of economic statistics and short term economic statistics, including quarterly national accounts, for early warning of exposures and risks<sup>4</sup>. Other generally accepted frameworks in performing or facilitating data quality assessments for national accounts and supporting data sets include the IMF's GDDS and SDDS metadata, information gleaned in the discovery process during quality assessment reviews, including self assessments, peer reviews, and periodic international surveys.

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<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for monitoring the 2008 SNA implementation available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/docs/guidelines.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Report on Short term Economic Indicators to the 2011 UNSC available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc11/2011-11-Short-termEcoIndicators-E.pdf>