

International conference on International Outreach and Coordination in National Accounts for Sustainable Growth and Development

Session 9 – Common tools

Title: A Systems Approach to National Accounts Compilation

Institution: UNSD

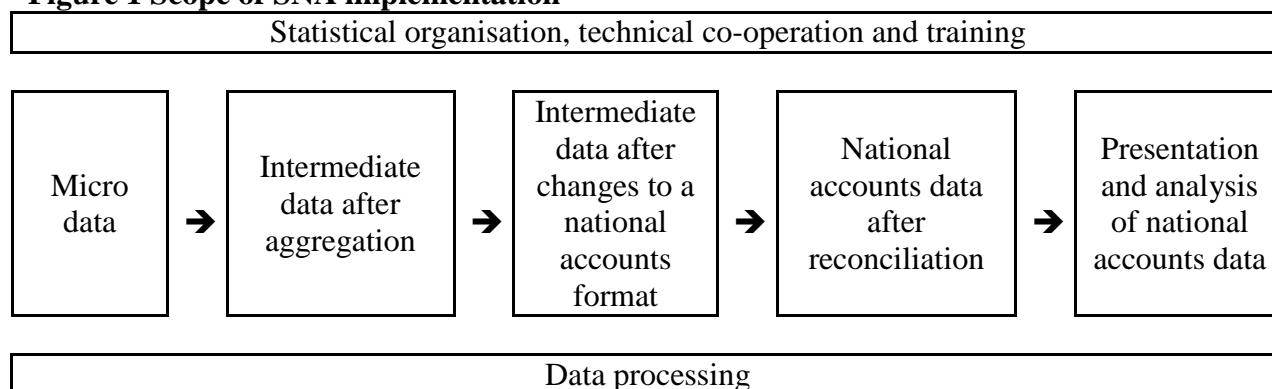
The presentation provides an overview of the compilation of national accounts as described in the United Nations handbook on national accounting, *A Systems Approach to National Accounts Compilations, A Technical Report* (United Nations, 1999). The Handbook describes the efforts to define a systematic approach to the design and the effective realization of a national accounting framework for a country. It reflects on what national accounts framework is appropriate for a country (system design) and how the resulting set of national accounts information is to be compiled (system realization). The emphasis is on the issues involved in converting aggregated intermediate basic data to the national accounts format and the subsequent reconciliation of data. Although this approach is based fully on the SNA, it is not about elaborating or interpreting the SNA, but applying the System in practice.

The formalized systems approach for compilation constitutes a process of compiling national accounts from the basic source information to the presentation of a final data set. It includes the design of a national accounting framework in which the scope, classifications and estimation methodology are formalized prior to the actual compilation of the data.

The scheme presented in the diagram below summarizes the scope of SNA implementation issues, reflecting the dimensions of the SNA compilation itself in five steps. It starts of with the collection of micro data from economic agents through censuses and surveys, and on the basis of administrative data sources. The next step comprises the aggregation of an intermediate level of data. Establishment data are combined to yield the industry data and institutional units are grouped to institutional sectors. The third step is the conversion of aggregated intermediate data on economic agents to the national accounts format. The conversion includes adjustments needed to reflect SNA imputations, adjustments for under coverage, timing, etc.. This is followed by the integration or reconciliation of SNA data to derive an internally consistent data set. The last step represents the use of the set of national accounts data to derive analytical presentations for publication and use in further analysis.

The data processing facilities are reflected in the lower box of the diagram, and the statistical organization, training and technical cooperation activities in support of the national accounts compilation are represented by the upper box of the diagram.

Figure 1 Scope of SNA implementation



Following the introduction, the presentation deals with the practical aspects of the systems approach to national accounts, such as, the design of a national accounting framework, formalizing the scope, classifications and estimation methodology; the development of a national accounts and supporting data compilation cycles; converting aggregated intermediate data into the national accounts format.; and showing the integration or reconciliation of SNA data to derive an internally consistent data set. The presentation also covers some types of statistical discrepancies that may emerge in national accounts compilation and shows how a reconciliation strategy may be defined to eliminate these discrepancies. Lastly the use of the set of national accounts data to derive analytical presentations for publication and use in further analysis is discussed.