

**THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS**

SCCS/2010/35/5

**Roseau, Dominica
8-9 November 2010**

29 October 2010

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS 2008 IN THE
CARICOM REGION**

A Seminar on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008 was convened from 14-16 June 2010 in Antigua and Barbuda. The Meeting was organised by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat. This Meeting was funded by the European Union (EU) under the Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP) and participants attending were funded by both the UNSD and the EU. The purpose of the Seminar was to initiate the formulation of an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics with the objective of developing comparable economic statistics for Member States in the CARICOM Region as a whole to monitor the integration of their economies.

After the Seminar, a review meeting was held by the organisers on 17 June 2010. The Executive Summary of the Seminar including the main conclusions can be found in **Attachment I** to this paper while the Minutes from the CARICOM Secretariat/UNSD Meeting on the implementation of the SNA 2008 which immediately followed the Seminar are presented in **Attachment II**.

During the Seminar, it was agreed that the Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS), at its July 2010 meeting, should consider decisions listed under Items 3, 5 and 10 of the Main Conclusions which were summarised under Item 12, namely, (a) the appropriateness of

high frequency indicators, as reflected by the Ottawa data template, in the context of the CARICOM minimum dataset; and (b) the modalities of how the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, as adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2010, could be incorporated into the framework of the Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) for CARICOM countries, including guidance on the proposed timeline to complete the vision document by the end of 2011.

The Main Decisions of the Sixth Meeting of the AGS as it relates to the Conclusions of the Seminar can be found at **Attachment III** to this paper.

ACTION REQUIRED:

The **Meeting** is **invited** to:

- **consider** the approach to be taken to move from the SNA 1993 to the SNA 2008 and its implications.

Seminar on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 for Caribbean countries

14-16 June 2010, Antigua, Antigua and Barbuda

Executive summary

The seminar was organised by the United Nations Statistics Division/Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNSD), in collaboration with the CARICOM secretariat. The seminar was hosted by the National Statistical Office of Antigua and Barbuda.

The purpose of the seminar was to initiate the formulation of an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics with the objective of developing comparable economic statistics for Caribbean countries to monitor the integration of their economies. It is expected that this initiative would lead to a multi-year programme to help move these countries over to the 2008 SNA and to establish a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics.

The expected outcome for the seminar was to reach consensus among participants on a regional programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA for Caribbean countries, which include:

- a comprehensive, region-wide assessment of countries' current capacity and needs to produce basic economic statistics and national accounts for policy and decision making;
- a region-wide roadmap to enhance the scope and quality of basic economic statistics and national accounts for improved policy and decision making;
- a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics; and
- a mechanism to coordinate activities and to build capacity in economic statistics and national accounts.

The seminar discussed five topics, namely, i) Main changes in the 2008 SNA; ii) The need for high frequency statistics; iii) An assessment of the scope, detail and quality of the national accounts in the CARICOM region; iv) The implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics; and v) Assessment of the national statistical production process to support the implementation of the 2008 SNA. In each session the presentations were followed by discussions. In each session the presentations were followed by discussions. There was also an opportunity for in-depth discussions on the issues raised in a breakout session. The seminar resulted in concrete proposals for an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics for Caribbean countries.

The main conclusions of the seminar are presented below.

Participants of the Seminar:

1. Agreed to use the *Implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics*, adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission, as the framework for formulating their national and regional implementation programmes for the 2008 SNA.
2. Recognised the existing governance structure and the activities of the various technical working groups for statistics that exist within Latin America and the Caribbean to support, advise and direct the development and monitoring the progress of statistical capacity building in the region. These include the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS), the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), the Caribbean Community Council of Ministers (Council), the technical working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) and CARICOM and the statistical units of the secretariat of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).
3. Agreed that the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics fits well within the framework of the Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) for CARICOM countries (particularly the initiatives already undertaken to develop economic statistics in the region) and that the AGS could support, advise and guide the development and monitoring of progress on the regional implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.
4. Agreed with the importance of high frequency indicators, as reflected in the Ottawa data template, for the early detection of changes in economic trends and will review the appropriateness of high frequency indicators in the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.
5. Agreed to put the Ottawa data template on the agenda of the July 2010 meeting of the AGS to be considered in their deliberation of a minimum common dataset for the region, including high frequency indicators.
6. Welcomed the proposed implementation tools, the *Statistical System Information* sheet and the *Self Assessment Diagnostic Tool*, and agreed to provide comments on the *Self Assessment Diagnostic Tool* by 15 July 2010 and to update the information in the *Statistical System Information* sheet by 31 July 2010.
7. Welcomed the initiative by the UNSD to establish a dedicated website to track and support the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.
8. Welcomed the Knowledge Base for economic statistics and macro economic standards established by the UNSD and agreed to provide material on country practises to be housed in this Knowledge Base.
9. Agreed that a vision document at the country level is an important step to establish a road map for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. Apart from a vision statement and a future roadmap, the vision document should report on the statistical and institutional needs and changes to the statistical agenda; while adhering to the

principles of being cost effective, fit for purpose and informing about the present economic situation instead of writing economic history.

10. Agreed to request the AGS to consider, at their meeting in July 2010, the modalities of how the proposed implementation tools, the *Statistical System Information* sheet and the *Self Assessment Diagnostic Tool*, could be incorporated into the framework of the RSWP for CARICOM countries with the aim to prepare their vision documents preferably by the end of 2011.
11. Recognised the different levels of statistical development in countries of the region and the ensuing challenges to implement the 2008 SNA and proposed that the UNSD continue to support the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics for Caribbean countries through technical assistance for which services of regional experts may be used.
12. Agreed on the following indicators of progress for the formulation of the national and regional implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics:
 - i) Provide comments on the *Self Assessment Diagnostic Tool* by 15 July 2010.
 - ii) Update the Country *Statistical System Information* sheet and submit it to UNSD by 31 July 2010 together with information on:
 - a focal point in the country that can be contacted regarding the 2008 SNA implementation programme;
 - the kind of technical assistance needed, if any, for formulating the vision document.
 - iii) Consideration by the AGS, at their meeting in July 2010 of a) the appropriateness of high frequency indicators, as reflected by the Ottawa data template, in the context of the CARICOM minimum data set; and b) the modalities of how the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, as adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2010, could be incorporated into the framework of the RSWP for CARICOM countries, including guidance on the proposed timeline to complete the vision document by the end of 2011;
 - iv) The UNSD will revise the *Self Assessment Diagnostic Tool* in light of comments received from participants and then provide it, with space for comments on each item, to participants by the end of August 2010 who then need to complete the assessment by end October 2010; and
 - v) The CARICOM Secretariat, the AGS and the UNSD would report on the regional programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics to the SCCS in October 2010.

Meeting of the Organisers of the Seminar on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 for Caribbean Countries

17 June 2010, Antigua, Antigua and Barbuda

Minutes

1. The main conclusions of the seminar on the Implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics

The main conclusions of the seminar were reviewed and it was confirmed that the objectives of the seminar were successfully met.

2. Statistical agenda of CARICOM countries

The *Implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics* need to be brought to the attention of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) for their guidance on how to proceed. However, countries need to take ownership of the implementation process. The Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) for CARICOM countries is the overarching framework for statistical development in the region and it is important to ensure that countries streamline their statistical activities to accommodate the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics.

The importance of statistics to inform on the progress of economic policy was recognised as an important tool to support the advocacy for statistical development. The CARICOM Secretariat confirmed that they have already developed a core set of indicators to monitor statistical development and to inform on the developments of economic policy. The CARICOM Secretariat agreed to share these with UNSD.

The RSWP already contains all the main elements that support the improvement of the statistical production process. However, it was recognised that the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, as adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2010, will further enhance this process. For this purpose there is a need to review the recent assessment of the statistical systems in the region which is in progress and to prepare a vision document for the improvement of the statistical system that includes the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics. Countries need to be sensitised on what priorities are to be set for reaching a particular SNA milestone, in particular how the development of resource intensive programmes, such as, Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA), Supply and Use Tables (SUT) and the 2011 ICP programme fit into their programme.

Emphasised the existing governance structure and the activities of the various technical working groups for statistics that exist within Latin America and the Caribbean to support, advise and direct the development and monitoring the progress of statistical capacity building in the region. These include: i) the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS); ii) the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS); iii) the Caribbean Community Council of Ministers (Council); iv) the technical working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) and CARICOM, such as the CARICOM Technical Working Group (TWG) on

National Accounts/Short Term Indicators and International Trade in Services/Investment Statistics; and v) the statistical units of the secretariat of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).

3. Actions

The CARICOM Secretariat will request the AGS to consider, at their meeting in July 2010:

- i) The appropriateness of high frequency indicators, as reflected by the Ottawa data template, in the context of the CARICOM minimum data set; and
- ii) The modalities of how the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics, as adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2010 could be incorporated into the framework of the RSWP for CARICOM countries, including guidance on the proposed timeline to complete the vision document by the end of 2011.
- iii) The proposal made by UNSD for all CARICOM countries to complete the DF-NS&ES Questionnaire to support the 2008 SNA implementation in the Region. The timelines for the submission of the DF-NA & ES Questionnaire and formulation of the vision document were discussed as follows:
 - a) Countries will provide comments on the DF-NS&ES Questionnaire by 15 July 2010;
 - b) The UNSD will review and adjust the DF – NA&ES Questionnaire taking into consideration the recommendations made at the 2008SNA Seminar, including any additional comments by countries and resubmit this Questionnaire to the CARICOM Secretariat by August 2010;
 - c) Countries will complete and submit the revised DF – NA&ES Questionnaire to the UNSD by October 2010, subject to the changes to be made;
- a) With respect to the formulation of the vision document, countries will update the Statistical Information Sheet provided by UNSD at the 2008SNA Seminar by 31 July 2010;
- iv) It was envisaged that the visioning exercise will lead to the development of a road map that will be followed with respect to the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the Region;
- v) The visioning exercise will be supported by a Background document to inform the process. It was agreed that UNSD and CARICOM will prepare the background document incorporating the main decisions and timelines as agreed at the Seminar.
- vi) The CARICOM Secretariat requested UNSD to support them in with the presentation to the AGS on the implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics;
- vii) The CARICOM Secretariat, the AGS and the UNSD would report on the regional programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics to the

Standing Committee of CARICOM Statisticians (SCCS) in November 2010’

viii) UNSD requested a copy of the following documents, which were sent by CARICOM:

- a) The Terms of Reference (TORs) of the Basic Data Consultancy Project;
- b) The TOR of the Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS);
- c) The Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) Document;
- d) The statistics pages of the Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP), Ninth European Development Fund (9th EDF) Document;
- e) The contact information for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) -Sean Curtis Mathurin
- f) An invitation for the UNSD to attend the AGS and the provisional agenda of the AGS meeting;
- g) The documents relating to the IADB project on the implementation of the Regional Public Good programme such as the:
 - h) RSWP Questionnaire developed under this project.
 - i) The Legislative framework and institutional arrangements.

Extract from the Main Decisions of the Sixth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics, 19-21 July 2010, Christ Church, Barbados

MAIN DECISIONS – ITEM 12: CONSIDERATION OF CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (SNA) 2008:

12.1 HIGH FREQUENCY INDICATORS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CARICOM MINIMUM DATA SET

12.2 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SNA 2008 AND SUPPORTING STATISTICS – PROCESS AND TIMELINES

THE MEETING:

Considered the following issues based on the conclusions of the Seminar on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008: (2008 SNA):

- (i) The High Frequency Indicators Ottawa Data Template in the context of the Minimum Data Set;
- (ii) The implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics - timelines and processes.

Recommended the following actions based on the ensuing discussions on the High Frequency Indicators and Implementation Programme of the the 2008 SNA:

- (i) An inventory be executed by the CARICOM Secretariat to determine the availability by countries of the High Frequency Indicators. In this context countries were urged to submit their information to the CARICOM Secretariat expeditiously;

(ii) , The CARICOM Secretariat can incorporate the available indicators in the Minimum Data Set which were developed to monitor the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) based on the availability of these High Frequency Indicators at the country level;

(iii) Relative to the issue of further comparison of the Minimum Data Set and the High Frequency Indicators, Barbados will undertake to compare both lists to determine the common indicators;

(iv) The visioning exercise of the 2008 SNA should be incorporated into the overall strategic planning process of countries;

(v) Support for countries with respect to the execution of the visioning exercise and the strategic planning process should be explored;

(vi) The timelines for the SNA2008 visioning exercise would be **2011**;

(vii) A Regional Classification/ harmonisation of classifications be developed/instituted and it be in the context of the work of the Technical Working Group/Sub-group on Classifications;

(viii) The building capacity to harness data sources for National Accounts should target the High Frequency Indicators . The work currently being executed at both the National and Regional level relative to administrative data sources, Trade in Services and Merchandise Trade, were also highlighted as providing a basis for making available over time these indicators;

(ix) The CARICOM Secretariat would distribute to all AGS Members the presentations that were made on changes between the 1993 SNA and the 2008 SNA by the United National Statistics Division (UNSD) at the System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA2008) Seminar in Antigua and Barbuda.

Noted the following recommendations of UNECLAC:

(x) On the issue of the Self-assessment tool proposed by UNSD, ECLAC has drawn the attention to the need of better coordinating the existing assessment surveys at the global, regional and subregional levels, with the aim of reducing the burden on responding countries.

(xi) In this regard, ECLAC has proposed to the UNSD and CARICOM the development of a general metadata query system, based on a modular approach that would incorporate UNSD's self-assessment tool as one of its modules. This system could then be supplemented with other (non-overlapping) modules according to the various information needs of different statistical organizations and programmes. For instance, an additional module ICP would be on methodological and data-availability information needed for assessing countries' preparedness to participate in the ICP.

(xii) The proposed metadata query system would be based on an electronic (on-line) platform, so as to significantly reduce response burden and improve efficiency of data processing and reporting.

(xiii) The demo version of the electronic platform,(which ECLAC is currently in the process of finalizing a proposal) should be presented to UNSD and CARICOM, as well as to the coordinator of the Working Group in National Accounts of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, by mid August.