

CARIBBEAN

COMMUNITY

SECRETARIAT

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

SCCS/2013/38/9

**Frigate Bay, St. Kitts and Nevis
28-30 October 2013**

1 October 2013

**PROPOSED INTEGRATED QUESTIONNAIRE TO SUPPORT THE HARMONISATION
OF ECONOMIC STATISTICS ACROSS THE REGION**

1. BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat executed the Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP) funded by the European Community under the Ninth European Development Fund (Ninth EDF). Included in the programme was a statistical component aimed at '*Improved and Harmonised Economic Statistics Developed and Disseminated*' given the central role of statistics in the process of implementing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

In support of achieving this objective, the CARICOM Secretariat adopted a developmental strategy that included strategising and assessment meetings, and the formation of working groups to address the technical aspects involved. The first meeting was held in Barbados in 2008, which produced the Barbados Action Plan which determined critical areas to be addressed in the short, medium and long term under the 9th EDF. The second meeting, held in Guyana in 2009, brought together Economic Statistics Experts from throughout the Region to assess the impact of developmental work in Economic Statistics, resulting in the formulation of CARICOM Economic

Statistics Action Plans (CESAP), based on the core areas identified in the Barbados Action Plan.

Additionally, the Secretariat convened a Technical Working Group (TWG) – National Accounts and Trade in Services, comprising of technical experts from the Region to lead discussions on the technical issues that surrounded the priority areas identified by the meetings and contained within the relevant CESAP.

2. PRELIMINARY INTEGRATED QUESTIONNAIRE

One objective encompassed under the 9th EDF was the harmonisation of statistical systems across the Region. As such, both the Barbados and Guyana meetings discussed and prioritized developmental needs in economic statistics as agenda items.

Specifically, during the second meeting in Guyana, the discussions focused on potential instruments and processes for the harmonisation of economic statistics. The Meeting reviewed the benefits of developing integrated survey instruments and approaches, which was considered a major step towards the overall objective of statistical harmonisation in the Region. The meeting reviewed a preliminary integrated questionnaire designed by the consultant recruited under the project and determined that the questionnaire should be placed on the agenda of the TWG for further consideration.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWG

The TWG proposed several structural adjustments, and made recommendations following the convening of two (2) meetings:

- (i) Members of the TWG would further review the questionnaire and provide feedback to the CARICOM Secretariat, including the explanatory notes;

- (ii) The Secretariat would be responsible for merging the explanatory notes into the questionnaire;
- (iii) Ten (10) industry-specific questionnaires would be prepared by TWG members, in the same structure as the initial questionnaire compiled;
- (iv) The Secretariat would design and dispatch a letter to Member States, along with the questionnaires, informing of the objective of the review exercise to be undertaken.

4. CURRENT STATUS OF THE INTEGRATED QUESTIONNAIRE AND INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC QUESTIONNAIRES

Following the conclusion of the TWG meetings, the integrated questionnaire and sectoral (or industry-specific) questionnaires were all dispatched to Member States and Associate Members for feedback and comments. To date, eight (8) countries provided feedback on the integrated questionnaire.

The Regional Statistics Programme reviewed the changes proposed by the TWG as well as the feedback provided by Member States, and revisions were then made to the preliminary integrated questionnaire and industry-specific questionnaires based on the adjustments proposed. Copies of some of the adjusted questionnaires are at **Attachment I** to this paper.

5. FEEDBACK OBTAINED FROM MEMBER STATES

The Statistics Institute of Belize stated their intention to adapt the integrated questionnaire for use in collecting information for the compilation of National Accounts estimates. As a starting point, the office has compared their current instruments against the integrated questionnaire for consistency. It is our understanding that, once resources become available, the office will pilot the integrated questionnaire with some specific entities to evaluate its effectiveness.

ACTION REQUIRED

The Meeting is **invited** to:

- (i) **consider** the Integrated Questionnaires relative to achieving the harmonization of data collection for National Accounts;
- (ii) **consider** the selected industry-specific questionnaires.
