

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

SCCS/2014/39/2 Rev. 1

**Georgetown, Guyana
27-29 October 2014**

22 October 2014

**STATUS REPORT ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND
PROGRAMME OF WORK 2014/2015**

1. INTRODUCTION

This Paper provides an update on the status of the regional National Accounts database; the experience of the submission of data through the use of the common questionnaire with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); the data compiled and disseminated, and the challenges observed since the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) in October 2013 to the present. The paper also presents an overview of the developmental work being undertaken regionally in the area of National Accounts and the proposed regional work programme for the period 2014-2015.

2. STATUS OF REGIONAL NATIONAL ACCOUNTS DATABASE

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat despatched the United Nations National Accounts Questionnaires (NAQs) to its 15 Member States and five (5) Associate Members during November 2013 with the deadline for submission set at **31 January 2014**. The intention was to collect final data for the year **2012**, preliminary data for **2013** and any revisions/updates for the earlier years.

Table 1 below presents a status of the submissions made by countries for the period 2007-2013. **Six (6)** countries met the deadline for submission of the NAQ during the current cycle compared to **four (4)** countries in the 2012 cycle. The six countries that met the deadline, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Bermuda and Cayman Islands, should be commended for this achievement. A total of **13** countries have returned completed NAQs to the Secretariat and the UNSD. With respect to the year of the data that were submitted, all **13** countries provided data for 2012. Further, of the **13** submissions, **eight (8)** also provided estimates for 2013. **Seven (7)** countries have therefore not yet submitted the 2013 NAQ; however, the regional database has been updated with 2012 data for a total of **18** countries: 13 through the use of the NAQs and five (5) from other sources, including Excel spreadsheets in non-NAQ formats from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) or the Central Banks either directly or through their web sites.

Based on the data obtained from the other sources, the Secretariat was able to complete some NAQ tables for countries which have not submitted their questionnaires. However, these NAQs cannot be submitted to the UNSD without the countries first confirming that the data contained therein accurately represent their national accounts estimates. Compared to the 2012 cycle, there was a decline in the number of NAQs submitted.

Table 1: Status of National Accounts Data Submission: 2007-2013

NAQ SUBMISSION					No. of Outstanding NAQs	Total No. of Countries with Data (Including from other sources)
Year of Despatch	Year of Data ¹	No. of Countries submitting NAQ by Deadline	No. of NAQs Received After Deadline	Total NAQs Submitted		
2007	2006/2007	3	12	15	5	18
2008	2007/2008	9	3	12	8	16
2009	2008/2009	4	6	10	10	15
2010	2009/2010	3	9	12	8	16
2011	2010/2011	2	10	12	8	16
2012	2011/2012	4	11	15	5	19
2013	2012/2013	6	7	13	7	18

3. MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE SUBMISSION OF 2012 DATA

The inability of countries to provide the complete set of the Minimum Required Data Set (MRDS) tables continues to be a **major** challenge. Based on the 2012 data provided through the NAQ, as seen in **Table 2**, most countries have not submitted the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by expenditure in constant prices** table and the **Rest of the World Account** table. In addition, submissions of the **Output, Gross Value Added and Fixed Assets** table have fallen compared to the previous year and there was also a decline in the number of countries submitting the **National Aggregates/Accounts of the Total Economy** and **GDP by expenditure in current prices**. Submissions of GDP by industry in current and constant prices remained stable.

¹ First year final data, second year preliminary data.

Further, in analysing the tables for the 13 countries that submitted NAQ questionnaires, it was noted that **four (4)** Member States/Associate Members submitted **five or more of the seven MRDS tables** with data for 2012. However, except for the tables on GDP by expenditure and industries, in most cases the other tables that were submitted were somewhat partially completed with significant data gaps in some tables. Of the four (4) countries that submitted more than four tables, one (1) country attempted to complete six tables while another, Jamaica, completed all seven tables for a second consecutive year.

Given the data that countries currently have available from other sources, such as the Balance of Payments, more countries should be able to produce the Rest of the World Account and the Accounts of the Total Economy up to Net Lending/Borrowing.

Table 2: Data Gaps in the MRDS Submitted: 2011 and 2012

Table Name	No of Countries Submitting Table		
	2013 (out of 8 countries)	2012 (out of 13 countries)	2011 (out of 15 countries)
GDP by Expenditure in Constant Prices	2 (25%)	2 (15%)	3 (20%)
Rest of the World Account	1 (13%)	2* (15%)	2* (13%)
Output, Gross Value Added and Fixed Assets by Industries	3* (38%)	5* (38%)	10* (67%)
National Aggregates/Accounts of the Total Economy	6* (75%)	7* (54%)	12* (80%)
GDP by Expenditure in Current Prices	6 (75%)	9 (69%)	12 (80%)
Value Added by Industries in Constant Prices	7 (88%)	12 (92%)	14 (93%)
Value Added by Industries in Current Prices	8 (100%)	13 (100%)	15 (100%)

* Table partially completed by some countries

With respect to the quality of the data provided in the questionnaires, some of the problems observed during verification were as a result of partial updates/revisions, missing data and discrepancies between totals and the sum of the components.

A summary of the submissions/data gaps, challenges/best practices is contained in **Attachment I** to this Paper.

4. DISSEMINATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS STATISTICS

All available National Accounts data from both Member States and Associate Members have been disseminated on the Secretariat's web site. The data include GDP by industry in current and constant prices, GDP by expenditure components in current prices and the national aggregates where available.

The eleventh edition of the CARICOM National Accounts Digest is currently being prepared and is expected to be released by December 2014. This publication covers the period 2008 to 2013 for countries where data are available. The second volume of the 2006-2011 report, which contains highlights from the data, was released in December 2013.

For the first time, the Secretariat was also able to prepare a volume which dealt specifically with the Associate Members. It is the Secretariat's intention to include data for these countries in future editions of the National Accounts report.

5. COMPILATION OF QUARTERLY GDP DATA

The Secretariat continued to collect and disseminate the quarterly GDP estimates produced and published by two Member States, Belize and Jamaica. Data up to the first quarter of 2014 were available for both of these Member States. In the case of Jamaica, data were available by Industry in current and constant prices, while for Belize, the data were available only in constant prices. These quarterly estimates are available on the Secretariat's website.

6. OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTAL WORK UNDERTAKEN IN NATIONAL ACCOUNTS STATISTICS

Developmental work in the area of national accounts continued in 2013/2014 in collaboration with other International Development Partners (IDPs) and Regional Agencies.

Activities that have been undertaken included the following:

European Union Funded Consultancy on National Accounts Statistics

In September 2014, the Secretariat commenced implementation of a project on the ***Improvement in the Production and Dissemination of the System of National Accounts*** which is being funded by the European Union under the Tenth European Development Fund (EDF).

The general objective of the Project is to provide the decision-makers in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with core, high quality statistics for the establishment and monitoring of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) by reinforcing the capacity of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs), built up through support provided under the Ninth EDF, to produce key National Accounts Statistics consistent with International Standards. Wherever possible, collaborative work would be undertaken with key partners as occurred under the Ninth EDF towards achieving this objective.

The project is utilising the services of GOPA Worldwide Consultants to provide the required technical assistance and training to assist Member States in filling the data gaps in National Accounts estimates and in applying the new international standards of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA). Technical Assistance will be applied individually in Member States along with Regional Workshops to reinforce and harmonise the in-country technical assistance and to realise comparable Economic Statistics across countries. Prior to the technical assistance, a gap analysis will be undertaken.

The overall expected result of the project is the improvement in the data sources to enable the production of key tables of the Minimum Required Data Set (MRDS) of the 2008 SNA.

A Briefing Meeting was convened at the Secretariat's Headquarters in Guyana on 25 September 2014 to formally launch the Project. The duration of the consultancy is 225 working days over a period of twenty-four (24) months. The Secretariat has also been engaged in follow-up activities post the Briefing Meeting.

7. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS STATISTICS WORK PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2014/2015

The 2014/2015 National Accounts Work Programme will continue to focus on the improvement and harmonisation of these statistics. This will be driven mainly by the Tenth EDF funded consultancy and the proposed project to be funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), both of which will build on the work started under the Ninth EDF.

Dispatch of 2014 NAQs

The despatch the 2014 NAQs is scheduled for **October/November 2014** with the deadline for submission of the completed questionnaires set for the end of **January 2015**. These questionnaires are being administered in collaboration with the UNSD and the Secretariat strongly urges countries to try to submit their completed questionnaires to **both** the Secretariat **and** the UNSD before the deadline. Countries are requested to provide actual data for **2013**, preliminary estimates for **2014**, if these are available, and any updates/revisions to the data for the earlier years.

Other activities expected to be undertaken in 2014/2015 include:

- (i) Implement activities under the National Accounts consultancy including:

- Review/refine/develop country Statements of Strategy and Implementation Plans;
 - To improve the basic data sources to enable compilation of key MRDS tables;
 - To compile independent estimates of Expenditure on GDP;
 - GDP at constant prices;
 - Review of the Value Added by Industry tables;
 - Enable compilation of the Rest of the World Account and the Accounts of the Total Economy;
- (ii) Provide support for the establishment/update of the Statistical Business Registers of Establishments;
- (iii) Implementation of a programme of attachments/exchange visits and regional workshops to strengthen capacity in the harmonisation of national accounts practices throughout the Region.

ACTION REQUIRED

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

- (i) **consider** the results of the collaborative process between the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNSD in the joint administration of the NAQ, to collect these statistics from all CARICOM Member States and Associate Members and the challenges experienced with specific reference to:
- (a) the timelines for the submission of the data; and
 - (b) the response to the completion of the MRDS;
- (ii) **also consider** the developmental work being undertaken at the regional level to improve and harmonise national accounts statistics.

THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS (39th SCCS)

B.3.1.1 Status Report on National Accounts and Programme of Work 2014/2015

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (Tables etc.)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	RESOURCES REQUIRED Technical Assistance Training Applied or Required	REMARKS
NATIONAL ACCOUNTS - SNA 93	<p>Annual Data:</p> <p>Database updated:</p> <p>2012: 13 Member States (MS) and 5 Associate Members (AM)</p> <p>2013: 10 MS, 2 AM</p> <p>Countries submitting National Accounts Questionnaires (NAQ):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Web site: available 2006-2012 data for all Member States disseminated. ▪ National Accounts Digest: 2006-2011 (Vol 2) ▪ National Accounts Digest: 2006-2012 (CARICOM Associate Members) 	<p>GDP by expenditure in constant prices; Rest of the World Account; Output, gross value added and fixed assets by industry.</p>	<p>4 MS and 2 AM met the 31 January 2014 deadline for the submission of the 2013 NAQs.</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <p>1993 SNA Implementation:</p> <p>Need to assess the quality of the data relative to conformity to the recommended 1993 SNA before moving to the 2008 SNA.</p> <p>MRDS Compliance:</p>		

ATTACHMENT I

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (Tables etc.)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	RESOURCES REQUIRED Technical Assistance Training Applied or Required	REMARKS
	<p>13 NAQs with 2012 data, of which 8 also contained preliminary 2013 data.</p> <p>Actual 2012:</p> <p>9 Member States (MS) and 4 Associate Members (AM)</p> <p>Preliminary 2012:</p> <p>7 Member States, 1 Associate Member</p>			<p>5 or more tables: 3 MS and 1 AM.</p> <p>Lack of capacity to produce the full set of tables in the recommended MRDS.</p> <p>Some of the problems encountered during the validation process were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incomplete updates/partial revisions - missing data - discrepancies between totals and sum of the components <p>Recommended Tables: Capacity Building required in all Member States.</p>		

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AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (Tables etc.)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	RESOURCES REQUIRED Technical Assistance Training Applied or Required	REMARKS
- Quarterly	Q1 2014: 2 Member States	Data collected were disseminated on the Secretariat's web site.	All Member States other than Belize and Jamaica;			Developmental work in this area may be possible under the 10 th EDF-funded National Accounts consultancy and the Attachment Programme.