Concept Note

EGM on National Accounts (AGNA)

Introduction and background

The implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) is a global statistical initiative that provides an opportunity to improve the quality, availability, consistency, and harmonization of economic statistics and national accounts. In Africa, there is a need to create synergies at all the levels of the African statistical system in order to address the technical, financial, and institutional challenges countries encounter when collection and processing economic statistics needed to compile their national accounts. To address these issues, in January 2008, the African Group on National Accounts (AGNA) was created by the Statistical Commission for African (StatCom-Africa) to facilitate the implementation of the 2008 SNA on the African continent.

The African Project for the Implementation of the 2008 SNA was launched in January 2014. Subsequently, in February 2014, the AGNA developed a detailed Project Implementation Plan (PIP) through consultation with the Heads of National Accounts of all African countries. The PIP identifies leading institutions in six critical areas for implementing the 2008 SNA: (i) Member States will formulate national action plans and take follow-up actions; (ii) AfDB will take the lead in the area of technical assistance; (iii) RECs and Afristat will lead in the area of institutional strengthening; (iv) ECA will lead in the preparation of technical documents; (v) AUC will conduct the advocacy campaign; and (vi) the Secretariat will lead in coordination, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Additionally, since the launch of the Project, progress has been made in implementing the activities outlined by the PIP. Specifically, 70% of African countries have developed or are in the process of developing a national action plan for implementing the 2008 SNA; two methodological documents for compiling administrative data and supply and use table are being finalized; the results of the survey on the implementation of the 2008 SNA and a needs assessment have been completed; workshops for capacity building of national accountants were organized; and technical support was delivered to requesting countries.

Nonetheless, one year after its launch, it is essential to review the progress of the African Project, specifically, the actions taken, the accomplishments and challenges, and the experiences and best practices of countries. The AGNA meeting, which brings together African countries, regional and international organizations, pan-African institutions and development partners, provides a forum for all project stakeholders to discuss and coordinate their actions to avoid duplication and effectively and timely complete Phase I of the Project in order to transition to Phase II. In this context, ECA jointly with AfDB and AUC are organizing an AGNA Meeting to be held 12-15 May 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Objectives of the meeting

The meeting has the following objectives:

- Assess the progress of the African Project on the 2008 SNA in line with the six pillars of the Project Implementation Plan
- Review and share the experiences and best practices of countries during the first year of the project to overcome challenges and problems encountered by countries in implementing the SNA
- Review the training, technical and financial support needs of countries for implementing the 2008 SNA and provide international, regional, sub-regional organizations and development partners with a clear view of those needs
- Define milestones for specific technical issues in order to adopt the 2008 SNA, as requested by the last meeting of the Continental Steering Committee (CSC) of the project; and
- Reach a consensus on how the project should be carried out in the coming year and during Phase II, to be launched in 2016.

Organization of the meeting

The four day meeting will be organized in plenary sessions including presentations of thematic topics and sessions with group discussions. During the plenary sessions, the following topics will be discussed:

- Progress made by key players in the implementation of the project: The aim of this session is to discuss the institutional and technical challenges and issues related to the implementation of the Project in line with the six pillars of the PIP. Countries will also present specific issues related to the implementation of the SNA, report on recent developments and main challenges. Other international and regional organizations will provide an overview of their work and statistical capacity building activities in support of the implementation of the SNA and the development of economic statistics.

- Template to design and implement national action plans: This presentation will provide countries with a developmental outline of a country action plan and its contents. This will be discussed and improved with the experience of countries that have already developed a country action plan.

- Meet the training needs requested by countries: This session will address the training needs of countries as requested through the needs assessment survey. Discuss and identify the key topics and provide guidance on how to conduct the training sessions.

- Technical assistance requested by countries and provided by partners: The aim of this topic is to discuss on how to further support countries’ efforts in developing the country action plans and following actions based on the results of the recent survey on the current status and needs assessment for the Implementation of the 2008 SNA.
• **Country experiences and best practices:** This session, countries could present some specific challenges they are facing in implementing the SNA and the innovative solutions they have developed to address these challenges.

• **Milestones for specific technical issues to adopt the 2008 SNA:** This presentation will offer the main steps for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and related key activities.

• **Transition to Phase II:** This session will specify how the project will be managed to end Phase I and move to Phase II. It should become clear the roles and responsibilities of the various players.

• **Presentation of technical documents:** This session will present the two methodological documents developed by the ECA. These documents relate to the use of administrative data in the compilation of national accounts and the compilation of the Supply and Uses Table (SUT). They meet the needs of countries in terms of harmonization of best practices in the compilation of national accounts.

The meeting will be held with simultaneous interpretation in English and French.

**Expected outcome**

By the end of the meeting participants are expected to develop and agree upon a framework to continue the project. Specifically, anticipated outcomes of the meeting include:

• a detailed report on the achievements or actions taken by all stakeholders for the implementation of the 2008 SNA;
• a template of national action plans;
• a matrix which matches demand for and supply of technical assistance;
• a blueprint on how to continue the implementation of project;
• agreed milestones for implementing the 2008 SNA; and
• publication of information materials and calendar of events.

**Participants**

Heads, chiefs, and managers of national accounts of all the African countries will be invited: Most of them will be from the national statistical offices and some from the ministries of finance, planning, or economy, or the central banks – depending on the specific organizational setting in each country. Managers and senior technical experts of national accounts from international, regional, and sub-regional organizations will also be invited.

***