Regional Course on SNA 2008 (Special Topics): Improving Exhaustiveness of GDP Coverage

22 – 30 August, 2016
Daejeon, Republic of Korea

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Introduction

This training course on SNA 2008 is the seventh in an annual series offered by the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific that aims to assist countries in Asia and the Pacific in implementing the 2008 System of National Accounts. The course focuses on selected topics as a follow-up to the annual basic- and intermediate-level e-learning SIAP courses that provide the overview of the SNA framework, introduces the new features of the 2008 SNA and builds knowledge and core skills in compilation of national accounts statistics in accordance with the framework. This year’s course will focus on compiling quarterly national accounts using benchmark indicator methods.

The integrating framework for improving basic economic statistics is the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA); as such, the course supports global, regional and national commitments to implement the 2008 SNA.

The 7-day course will be conducted in collaboration with the Statistical Training Institute (STI) of Statistics Korea (KOSTAT), Government of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in Daejeon from 22-30 August 2016.

II. Course Objectives

The main objective of the training course is to:

a) Provide compilers of national accounts statistics with a good understanding of the SNA 2008 concepts, definitions and standards; and international and regional best practices in data sources, indicators, compilation techniques regarding quarterly estimation, and GDP benchmarking. It will also provide a forum for exchanging knowledge and experiences within the Asia-Pacific region;
b) Identify estimation issues and actions to improve the quality and timeliness of quarterly national accounts including application of seasonal adjustment and trend estimation methods.

III. Learning Objectives

The course is organized to provide a hands-on training in compiling quarterly estimates of GDP using the benchmark-indicator approach. It will focus on three broad areas: rebasing GDP, quarterly national accounts estimation and data quality assurance for national accounts. At the end of the training, participants are expected to be able to:

a) Apply different benchmarking techniques to compile quarterly national accounts;
b) Identify and assesses different data sources and indicators to compile quarterly national accounts;
c) Apply appropriate price, volume indices and their corresponding techniques to compile constant price aggregates in national accounts; and  
d) Develop an action plan to improve the quality of national accounts in the areas covered by the course.

IV. Target Participants

The course is designed for statisticians compiling national accounts. More specifically, the participant is one with the following profile:

a) Is a middle- to senior- level statistician working in national statistical agencies;
 b) Has comprehensive knowledge of the theoretical framework of national accounting at least at the level of the SIAP Intermediate-Level e-Learning Course on SNA 2008;
 c) Has experience in and demonstrated ability to apply different methods for compiling GDP at current and constant prices;
 d) Current job involves estimation and compilation of the items covered in the course;
 e) Holder of a university degree or its equivalent; and
 f) Able to read, write and express themselves well enough in English to participate fruitfully in discussions, presentations and be in a position to share their technical experiences with other participants.

V. Course Content and Design

The course is designed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience across countries in implementing the SNA 2008 on specific topics. Training sessions will consist of lectures, demonstrations, country presentations, group discussions, workshops on working with data and consultation sessions with experts on specific country issues.

Specifically, the course will provide compilers of national accounts statistics with a good understanding of the SNA 2008 concepts, definitions and standards; and international and regional best practices in data sources, indicators, compilation techniques, and data quality assurance with respect to benchmarking GDP estimates and compilation of quarterly national accounts.

Main Topics

A. Rebas ing of Gross Domestic Products (GDP estimates)
   • Volume measures, Price Indices (A, B, C methods for specific industries/expenditure components), Chaining and Linking for annual estimates

B. Quarterly National Accounts estimation
   • Conceptual link with annual accounts, Seasonal adjustment & Trend estimation, Indicators (Value, Volume, Prices), Work in Progress, Benchmarking techniques, Mechanical Projections, Data sources

C. Quality Issues in National Accounts
   • Quality assurance frameworks

VI. Pre-course Requirements: Country Report

All participants need to submit a comprehensive country report which will be the basis for (a) sharing of experiences and practices; (b) consultation sessions with experts and (c) inputs to the action plan.

The report should cover the following:
I. Data sources and estimation methods for compiling quarterly national accounts, areas of concern and possible solutions
II. Methods for rebasing GDP, areas of concern and possible solutions
III. Quality practices and issues in national accounts

For parts (I, II and III), the report should include a description of the following aspects:

A. Current Practices and Status
   1) Describe the estimation techniques such as benchmarking indicator methods for quarterly national accounts, procedures and methods for rebasing GDP, data sources that are critical and currently available.

B. Challenges
   1) Describe three main methodological challenges that need to be addressed in order to improve the quality and timeliness of quarterly and constant price national accounts in line with SNA 2008 standards.
   2) Put up some specific questions that may be raised with experts to obtain guidance on what actions may be taken to address these challenges.

C. Quality practices
   1) Describe the quality assurance framework used, if one is used, and discuss quality issues that have been identified and need to be addressed.