

GENERAL
LC/CAR/G.679
14 December 2001
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (SNA) 1993
IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**

Table of contents

A brief on the SNA	1
The experience of the SNA 1968 version	2
The problem of insufficient data to fuel the system's needs	2
The problem of limited use of the data available.....	3
SNA 1968 outputs of selected countries.....	4
SNA 1968 outputs of Trinidad and Tobago.....	4
SNA 1968 outputs of Jamaica.....	4
SNA 1968 outputs of the OECS countries.....	5
Prerequisites for the successful implementation of SNA 1993	6
Implementation initiatives at technical level	7
Possibilities of South-South cooperation.....	8
Grouping of countries by national accounting developments.....	8
Movement towards SNA 1993.....	8
Moving the Netherlands Antilles' national accounts to the SNA 1993	9
Suriname – National accounts improvement work.....	9
Trinidad and Tobago – priority areas for implementation of the SNA 1993.....	10
Information architecture.....	11
Training of national accounts personnel	11
Some prime areas for priority attention	11
Implementation plans for SNA 1993 in the Caribbean.....	12
Present status of work on SNA 1993	13
Enablers of implementation	13
References.....	15

Abstract

The Caribbean countries have for decades been described as being “data poor”. The inability of the countries to provide, in a number of areas, data on certain issues of national or world importance has its roots in the poor information infrastructure that characterizes the Caribbean countries.

The national accounts are designed to provide information on almost every aspect of national life that must be of interest to the administration and citizenry alike.

This paper looks at the countries’ implementation of the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) from the attempt to implement the 1968 version to the contemporary effort to update to the 1993 version, which is more demanding of data from a narrow information infrastructure. It discusses SNA 1968 outputs from a selection of Caribbean countries and examines the prerequisites for the successful implementation of SNA 1993. The issues of information architecture, networking and political will are discussed in an attempt to identify a way forward into implementation.

Key words: Data, statistical offices, information, networking, national accounts, SNA.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS (SNA) 1993 IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

A brief on the SNA

The System of National Accounts (SNA) consists of a set of accounts that cover all economic aspects of the working of the economy, including its dealings with the rest of the world. It is an important tool for the analysis and evaluation of economic performance within an accounting time period, usually a one-year period and, in more sophisticated situations, on a quarterly basis. In addition to information on economic activities, the system sheds light on the quantum of productive assets of an economy and the wealth of its people. One account examines the transactions that take place between the residents of the country under review and the rest of the world. Although the estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are widely used to describe the wealth of the country, its calculation is not the only or main purpose for which the accounts are compiled. The system admits of the re-packaging of some of its information to throw light on various types of analysis.

The system employs the double entry system characteristic of conventional business accounting and presents accounts on:

- The production of goods and services;
- The generation of incomes by production;
- The distribution of incomes among institutional units; and
- The use of incomes for purposes of consumption or saving.

In terms of their position in the hierarchy of the statistical office, the national accounts merit the position of centerpiece around which a national information system should be built. Its all-encompassing scope, if catered for by the procurement of the required data, would provide an excellent view of the economy. Other views can be made available by deepening the query or re-directing it to any area that lends itself to study. One useful by-product of the system is its usefulness in providing common definitions and classifications, thereby ensuring consistency in data collected from different sources and systems, such as financial statistics and balance of payments statistics.

Through the system, it would be possible to trace the effect of a change in one of the major variables on the rest of the system and on the GDP, as the working of the economy can be modelled by the system of national accounts. Planners can, therefore, estimate impacts of the movement of any given variable on another, through knowledge of the magnitudes of interaction between them. The model, by the same reasoning, can be a useful tool in forecasting.

The SNA is used for making comparisons over time as well as over space, i.e. regional or international comparisons. Although international comparisons of GDP are very often made, this has never been the main purpose of the system.

The extent to which the SNA has been implemented has depended on the resources available to the several countries of the Caribbean. For instance, some countries have managed to prepare the production, the income and the expenditure accounts while others have, with difficulty, completed the production account. The success in implementation is dependent both on the ability of the statistical office to maximize the use of its national accounts resources and on the level of support that it can receive from the central government by way of additional staff. The national accounts standards of 1968 were revised in 1993 and incorporate the specialist advice of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat.

The experience of the SNA 1968 version

The problem of insufficient data to fuel the system's needs

The 1986 version of the SNA was introduced to the world when the statistical offices of the Caribbean countries were in their infancy. The countries then lacked sophistication in statistics and had little or no local training capability in the subject matter. Establishment surveys had started in the mid-1960s and had merely maintained the sample design and questionnaire content that had characterized the earlier surveys. To a great extent, the description of national capabilities remains as described with reference to the 1968 era, despite massive injections of investment by way of training as a module of project intervention.

In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, in the early part of the 1970s, the IMF appraised the ability of the statistical office to produce statistics that followed the main objectives of the SNA 1968. They noted the insufficient staffing for the exercise and identified an adviser to lead the improvement of the national accounts. The approach was to map the economy to the accounts. This meant that far greater detail than was available had to enter into the accounts. New questionnaires were designed to capture a wider set of data to fuel the accounts that would reflect the structure and ownership pattern of the main sectors of the economy. More staffing was made available and seminars were conducted to bring all staff working on the accounts to a point where they could contribute to the building of the accounts. In this exercise, the Central Statistical Office worked together with the Ministry of Planning and Development and the IMF Adviser on National Accounts to develop a new system that would be primarily of relevance to Trinidad and Tobago, while being able to be re-cast into the SNA mould.

The exercise produced the Trinidad and Tobago System of National Accounts (TTSNA). Among the observations that the Adviser made were the following:

(a) “While Trinidad and Tobago needs an explicit system of commodity supply and demand balances which furthermore distinguishes between commodities originating in domestic production from those which are imported, we do not require the fully articulated input-output accounts of the new United Nations System of industries and commodities”.

(b) The classification of institutional sectors of the economy as suggested by the United Nations System of National Accounts differed from that of the (then new) TTSNA, which required special treatment of the large foreign-controlled sectors (sugar and oil).

(c) While the SNA 1968 required great detail concerning production relations, it called for the transformation of all incomes earned in production to the income and outlay accounts of households, government, capital accounts, etc.

Recognizing the pressure that the SNA would place on the national information sets in developing countries, the 1968 SNA included a chapter on the statistical problems and requirements of such countries. Many insights into the working of the economy could be obtained from an analysis of imports. In the case of the Caribbean countries, this recommendation had merit, taking into consideration the dependence of the countries on external trade. The separation of private enterprise from State-controlled enterprise was also *à propos* and relevant to the understanding of the economies. The problem of large foreign-controlled companies extracting the (natural) resources of small developing countries was not addressed in the SNA 1968 version. In this regard, the SNA 1968 represented a formulation that was not in accordance with the analytical needs of some of the Caribbean countries and many other economies that were characterized by the operation of large companies in their small countries.

The main impediments to a more complete implementation of the SNA 1968 were the detail of information required to complete the accounting and the lack of statistical personnel trained and available to create the accounts. Progress in both areas has been much slower than desired. Whereas all countries have prepared the production accounts, a smaller number has presented a more elaborate presentation of accounts and supporting tables. This uneven implementation by countries has continued for some time.

The problem of limited use of the data available

The problem of insufficient data is closely allied to the problem of limited use of the data available. The latter may be attributed to a human resource problem, as in most cases insufficient recognition of the importance of the national accounts to national development did not lead to the provision of personnel necessary to develop the accounts optimally. Government budget stringencies tended to be approached through staff cuts in the areas of activity that were not profit centres, such as the information activities, which were seen to be cost centres. The cuts in these areas were particularly damaging as those areas that dealt with information were precisely the areas that should have been strengthened to throw light on the problems of the economy and society. With the statistical offices operating under such conditions, research and

integration units, that would examine all possible data sources and extract data to the maximum extent possible and then introduce them into the system, could not be developed.

SNA 1968 outputs of selected countries

SNA 1968 outputs of Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago pursued the TTSNA as designed by the IMF Adviser, Professor Kari Levitt, whose approach has been described above. Under the Levitt system of national accounting, the following accounts were produced:

- Production account
- Income and outlay account
- Capital formation
- Balance of payments
- Public sector account

The production account presented data on output of goods and services, distribution margins, own account capital as in the case of the oil companies or other large companies. The income and outlay account presented data on transfers, property income and savings. The capital formation account presented the source and use of capital and was prepared for the petroleum and other large companies. The public sector account presented the accounts of the central government and State enterprises and utilities.

The balance of payments account was passed over to the central bank as that institution was better equipped to maintain the account.

The Levitt formulation allowed for a re-cast of the TTSNA into the SNA, if required. For national planning, the Levitt approach was the one of choice.

SNA 1968 outputs of Jamaica

The Jamaican System of National Accounts is largely based on the United Nations System of National Accounts 1968 (SNA 1968), with modifications to take account of the local situation. The following standard accounts and tables are produced and disseminated:

- Expenditure on GDP in purchasers' values;
- Cost structure of GDP in purchasers' values;
- National disposable income and its appropriation;
- Capital transactions;

- All accounts - external transactions;
- GDP by industrial sectors in producers values at current and constant prices;
- Composition of fixed capital formation by type.

Quarterly GDP estimates are currently being developed and publication will start in June 2002.

No features of the 1993 SNA have been introduced, but plans are currently underway to start implementation of the 1993 SNA. This will include:

- GDP at current and constant prices disaggregated by kind of economic activity;
- Final expenditure;
- Accounts for institutional sectors;
- Supply and use tables;
- Tourism satellite accounts;

SNA 1968 outputs of the OECS countries

Hazel Corbin (2001)¹ has described the present system of national accounts in use in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries as being based on the SNA 1968. She observes that whereas the system provided for the following five bodies of data, namely:

- National Income and Product;
- Input-Output tables;
- Flow of Funds Statement;
- Balance of Payments; and
- The National Balance Sheet.

only the National Income and Product accounts and the Balance of Payments are produced in the OECS countries. Corbin states that at present member States produce the following national accounts tables:

- GDP by economic activity, in current and constant prices;
- GDP by expenditure, in current prices;
- Economic and functional classification of government accounts;
- Allied aggregates in current and constant prices, such as gross national income, national disposable income, national savings, etc.

¹ Corbin, Hazel, Implementation of the 1993 SNA in the ECCB Territories, Nov 16, 2001.

Corbin describes the challenge of moving to the 1993 version of the SNA. This is addressed in a section that considers the prerequisites for the substantial implementation of the new system.

Prerequisites for the successful implementation of SNA 1993

The SNA in its 1993 revision addresses a wider variety of concerns than did its 1968 predecessor. The data set that is required to fuel the accounts is therefore wider and more comprehensive than before. This means that the 1993 revision breaks the economy into more minute sectors and subsectors. The new data set, as required, allows for more thorough analysis of economic structures, but is also alive to social issues such as the effect of production on the environment. The data demands of the new SNA are generally not met by the national information systems in the Caribbean countries. The perception of the data problem differs between a number of the countries and the National Accounts Adviser. The countries claim that they lack many of the data sets required, but the Adviser believes that there is serious under-response to the international questionnaires sent to the countries. The Adviser claims that the response to the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) questionnaires could be more improved in the light of the work actually being done in the Caribbean. He believes that a serious underutilization of data sources exists. Much of this originates in the lack of training of staff to utilize the data sources in line with the guidelines as set out by the SNA.

The data problem, as discussed above, is the result of an insufficiency in the supply of people to undertake the job of preparing the national accounts as well as providing training for them. The governments of the subregion may wish to examine their national information sets and build them where such action is suggested. If these data sets were available, more targeted planning activities would result in a better understanding of the economy through the more widespread use of econometric modelling.

Corbin (2001) identifies nine pre-requisites to the promotion and maintenance of a comprehensive system of national accounts within the member States. Her proposals address inter alia:

- Strong official support;
- Improvement of the human capital through training;
- The development and maintenance of an improved and modernized database;
- Additional data collection to amplify the coverage of data;
- More networking among government ministries that produce data and statistics of any kind; and
- The technical aspects of survey taking.

Specifically, Corbin identifies external technical support as a required resource. This does not exclude the possibility of technical support from within the OECS subregion or the

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) subregion. The implementation of the SNA 1993 will require the provision by government of more staff at high level.

The foregoing statement of prerequisites supplements the advocacy of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for a process approach to data and information systems². The ECLAC paper recommends interministerial networking and a unified set of concepts, classifications and definitions to be adopted by all ministries and agencies.

Perhaps the most important prerequisite to a fuller implementation of the 1993 SNA would be the recognition by governments of the importance of information and their active support for information systems. The international community has long recognized the importance of integrated national information systems. The need to design and construct integrated national datasets has long been advocated by ECLAC. A recent paper prepared by the organization has underscored the important link between information and governance, in order to emphasize its importance, not *per se*, but from the standpoint of governance.

Implementation initiatives at technical level

At the technical level, the UNSD organized a meeting with the CARICOM Secretariat in May 1997³ to chart a course for the implementation of the SNA 1993 in the CARICOM countries. The programme recognized the fact that implementation would take longer in the OECS countries as a result of the shortage of human resources. A system of attachments for national accounts staff in less advanced countries to the national accounts offices of the more developed countries in terms of SNA 1993 implementation was planned. In addition, the meeting proposed that handbooks and training materials would be developed and would take into account the experiences of the participating countries.

In an annex that details the steps in implementing the 1993 SNA in the CARICOM region, van Tongeren identifies a number of (project) steps that range from the technical actions as per the previous paragraph, to regional workshops, to the development of training materials. The steps identified require the active support of the respective national governments.

To date, no significant progress has been made with the plans for training by way of attachment. It is interesting that van Tongeren predicates the success of the training schedule on the active support of the national governments. Indeed, the technical contact has traditionally been the *modus operandi* of the United Nations. This means that the United Nations has tended to approach the technical arms of the government service in the belief that official support would be automatic and dynamic. It may be that the focus has been on solving technical problems hence the “natural” initial (and perhaps ‘only’) point of contact established by the United Nations on matters like implementing actions to update a system. Today, in the face of downsized or right-sized public services, the separation between technical and policy solutions is not all clear.

² See Information, Information Management and Governance, ECLAC, LC/CAR/G.677, 3 December 2001.

³ Implementation 1993 SNA in the CARICOM region, St. Vincent, 26 – 30 May, 1997 – Mission Report provided by Jan W. van Tongeren, Interregional Adviser, Macro Accounting for Policy Making, UNSD.

Actions that will increase recurrent expenditure must pass through a policy filter. Failure to observe this routing will thwart the success of initiatives that depend on the ability of the national accounts statisticians to convince the ministries of planning or finance of the need to undertake an activity that will involve the appointment of two additional statisticians. A better United Nations approach might therefore be to consult with the administrative level above the statistical office or to poll the opinions of the politicians to ascertain the existence of the political will to have the changes made. If the will is in place, it will unlock the possibility of achieving the technical success factors of the changes being sought.

Possibilities of South-South cooperation

Given the existence of two levels of capability in the compilation of national accounts in the group of countries, van Tongeren's report identifies possible instances of South-South cooperation. Under this modality, the more advanced countries in terms of national accounting capabilities can provide horizontal technical cooperation. His examples were as follows:

Trinidad and Tobago	Institutional sector accounting
Dominican Republic	Tourism accounting
Netherlands Antilles and Aruba	Training and software support
Jamaica	Integration of balance of payments with national accounts

Grouping of countries by national accounting developments

In an analysis of the national accounting capabilities in the CARICOM countries, van Tongeren describes two groupings. One group comprising Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles had gone a considerable distance towards the implementation of the SNA 1993 and had compiled a Supply and Use Table (SUT) and to a limited extent, the integrated economic accounts (IEA). This group had between 20 and 30 staff members engaged in the compilation of the national accounts. The other group was larger in number and had limited national accounting capabilities and resources. This group included Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Bermuda; Dominica; Grenada; St. Kitts-Nevis; Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Within this group, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had three or more staff members working on the national accounts.

Movement towards SNA 1993

The strong push towards implementation of the SNA 1993 is coming from the United Nations Statistical Division. This represents a less-than-satisfactory situation, as the countries

are the ones that should see the benefit of compliance with the system in part, if not in its entirety. Widespread training in data handling at the national level can be done at minimal marginal cost. With some simple innovation, the service can be extended to the statistical offices and government services of countries that possess weak information and national accounts systems.

Moving the Netherlands Antilles' national accounts to the SNA 1993

The programme to be followed is dependent on the characteristics of the economy of the Netherlands Antilles. The agriculture sector is very small and of no real importance to the movement of the main macro variables. No great work in this sector is therefore required.

The priority areas for SNA work identified by van Tongeren would therefore be the following:

- The separation of the industrial breakdown between the non-financial corporations and the household sector;
- The identification of four product groups in output of establishments/industries - trade; restaurants and hotels, other services and goods;
- The reconciliation of import-export customs records with balance of payments data;
- The reallocation of institutional units to SNA sectors;
- Extending some of the sector accounts to financial flows and balance sheets for the financial corporations (FC), non-financial corporations (NFC) and the Government (GOV);
- Development of volume and value measures for Supply and Use Tables.

Suriname – National accounts improvement work

Work in this area was part of a project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The priority was to produce Supply and Use Tables for 1999. The existing data sources were revisited and evaluated. The quarterly survey data revealed inadequacies. As the inventories of a number of large companies were reported in United States dollars, their conversion to Surinamese guilders created distortions over the years because of the variability of the exchange rate. Distortions in the beginning and closing stocks ensued.

The Adviser faced the problem of an understated GDP figure because of the failure to account for the informal activities in gold and the incomplete accounting for value added in government. Generally, the defective nature of the information set militated against the

production of meaningful estimates. In addition, resource inadequacies, mainly human resources, proved to be intractable and led to the abandonment of the attempt to produce the Supply and Use Tables. Suriname therefore possesses some knowledge of SUT and would be in a position to resume work in this area as the statistical base is broadened. Table 1 below indicates a capability in SUT for Suriname.

Trinidad and Tobago – priority areas for implementation of the SNA 1993⁴

- Generation of Supply and Use Tables. This will provide consistency checks on the estimates of GDP. Estimates of GDP are produced using the value added approach. In addition, Supply and Use Tables will be in keeping with the implementation system recommended during the meetings in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and in the Netherlands.
- Provision of independent estimates of GDP by expenditure, i.e. independent estimates of Private Final Consumption Expenditure.
- Provision of detailed sequence of accounts for government and financial corporations sectors.
- Effective management of the existing staff to increase productivity through internal and external training (emphasis on internal). There exists sufficient experience within the national accounts unit in Trinidad and Tobago to train the younger statisticians in SNA1993.
- Ensuring support and cooperation between subject matter and computer division to obtain the data required for the Supply and Use Table
- Thorough review of the survey instruments to obtain the data required for implementation of SNA 1993.
- Rebasing urgently the constant price estimates of GDP and the supporting price and volume indices required.

Whereas van Tongeren believes that there is much information that can be pressed into service in the national accounts exercise, Pariag (2000) believes that there is much data to be collected by way of surveys. It is likely that both opinions are correct. The present situation points to the treatment of two major issues: information architecture and training of national accounts personnel. These two impact heavily on the ability of a country to implement the SNA 1993 more fully than the predecessor version of 1968.

⁴ These priorities have been identified by Mr. Peter Pariag, the Chief of the National Accounts Division for many years at the CSO in Trinidad and Tobago.

Information architecture

The full elaboration of the SNA is heavily dependent on a flow of high quality and relevant data. In most of the Caribbean countries the information infrastructure is not in place to supply the data needed. The need for data and information to inform decision-making is greater now than ever before. The imperative to minimize central government recurrent expenditure has resulted in a reduced ability to be expansive in the use of staff. Different ways of achieving results have therefore to be devised. The need to design information architectures is real and must be addressed at some level. The architecture will serve to unify concepts, definitions and classifications nationally and make the datasets more compatible. The national accounts will benefit from this revolution.

Training of national accounts personnel

In a situation of networking in data gathering, the harmonization of concepts and definitions will produce a set of national accounts aware people wider than the national accounts staff set. This will result immediately in the production of national accounts compliant data. Even if trained personnel move from government department to department, there should be no net loss as they continue to be engaged in data activities or research.

Some prime areas for priority attention

Emerging from a study of the present state of implementation, the Adviser highlighted a number of areas of work that should be addressed with urgency. These include the following:

- (a) Supply and Use Tables;
- (b) The informal and household sectors;
- (c) Foreign trade statistics;
- (d) Tourism accounts;
- (e) Quarterly accounts;
- (f) Institutional sector accounts;
- (g) Purpose classifications;
- (h) Services and international trade in services.

The ability to analyze the **household** sector is extremely variable over the countries, as most do not possess a national household survey capability. The approach to compiling informal sector statistics should be agreed on by the entire group of Caribbean countries. Household sector accounts should therefore be given particular attention. In this regard, the use of the International Standard Classification of all Occupations should be intensified in an attempt to link the SNA with the implementation of Social Accounting Matrices.

Following from the stated opinion of van Tongeren that there exists serious underutilization of data resources, **trade statistics** should be used more intensively to underpin the estimates in the SNA. This is especially important in the case of countries that are heavily dependent on external trade for their development. Also important would be the development of statistics on free zones.

The **tourism** accounts can benefit from a harmonized approach among countries. The rationale is similar to that put forward in the case of the trade statistics, as many of the Caribbean countries are heavily dependent on tourism. Developments in this area will enrich the Supply and Use Table. Work on this account will assist in the development of profiles of tourist expenditure. Appropriate surveys of tourist accommodation and service units can help to develop the capital and financial flows supporting tourism in each of the countries. External economies of this approach are obvious as the weaker countries will be assisted by the stronger partners and be led to produce in relatively short order.

There is an expressed urgency for **quarterly accounts** to be produced on a harmonized basis. This does not only refer to GDP, but also to data on banks, government and the balance of payments. A closer look at the services sector with a view to more accurate measures of volume and deflators is necessary. A regional seminar and follow-up meetings would be necessary to achieve this.

Following on the observation of the need to utilize more fully the trade statistics, it is necessary to analyze the trade statistics to provide trade negotiators with the type of information that they require. The treatment of trade in services for incorporation into the SNA and use in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations should receive attention. In the context of trade in services and, more particularly, the reality of the export of factor income, the Caribbean countries should see the need to pay attention to Gross National Investment in addition to Gross Domestic Product.

Implementation plans for SNA 1993 in the Caribbean

At the meeting of national accounts statisticians in Curacao in 1999, participants agreed on a follow-up meeting, tentatively scheduled for June 2000. The meeting would continue in the format of the 1999 meeting as regards its integrated approach that included national accounting, trade in services and classifications. The follow-up meeting envisaged the conduct of a training course at which new work would be showcased. The desirability of presenting a summary of work done in national accounts to government officials involved in the use of data for policy formulation and analysis is appealing, in that it is likely to create sympathy for the work being attempted and evoke official support.

Several countries offered to develop parts of the SNA and present them to the next scheduled meeting and training course.

Present status of work on SNA 1993

A number of the Caribbean countries participated in a seminar held in Port of Spain in October 2001. They provided an update of their implementation work. Progress is reflected in the table that follows.

Table 1: Presentation of some aspects of implementation of SNA 1993⁵

Aspects of implementation	Implementing countries
Supply and Use Tables	St. Lucia, Suriname
Quarterly GDP estimates	St. Lucia
Methodology for the application of quarterly accounts	Dominica
Preparation of institutional sectors	Jamaica
Feasibility study on SNA, leading to SUT, Integrated Economic Accounts and Cross Classification of industries and sectors	Guyana
Tourism Satellite Accounts	Bahamas
A comprehensive approach to implementation of SNA 93	Netherlands Antilles
Government Accounts	Antigua & Barbuda
Institutional Accounts	Trinidad & Tobago
Non-Profit Institutions serving households	Trinidad & Tobago

Source: Data supplied by CARICOM

Enablers of implementation

The attempts to move the implementation of the SNA 1993 forward have revealed the need for progress in two main areas:

- Technical assistance; and
- Links with the governments at the administrative level.

At the **technical level**, some funding external to the governments will be necessary to craft a programme of assistance that will cater for countries at differing levels of accomplishments in the preparation of the national accounts. The accounts are dependent on the (information) supply side, which is, to a great extent, outside the control of the statistical office.

⁵ Based on incomplete country reporting.

The involvement of key actors in the data supply area will contribute towards the networking that is necessary to enrich the national datasets.

Technical assistance enjoys a higher probability of success if it is provided on a sustainable South-South basis. This means that Caribbean countries that have surmounted the problems now being faced by others can provide technical assistance more cost effectively and maintain a presence in the recipient country or monitor from close quarters. The experience of the donor country of having overcome data supply problems may be relevant to the recipient country and save much time and “re-invention of the wheel” in this regard. The implementation of the South-South assistance modality would be facilitated by the vocal and effective sponsorship of the administration in the recipient country.

The second link, if made at the appropriate level, will help to create political will, which will go a long way towards implementing the revision. The United Nations Statistical Division would benefit from seeking national personnel at high levels of the administration to discuss their plans and obtain support at that level. The administration can then champion the innovation and enable the technical aspect of the implementation. An effective persuader of such political will would be the pronouncements of the World Bank and the IMF, whose appraisals of the need for data and support for the mechanism of technical assistance may influence political awareness of the problem and promote political will.

References

Official unpublished document on progress made in TTSNA project, Kari Levitt, 1973

CARICOM – UNSD Meetings on System of National Accounts

Mission Reports of Jan van Tongeren, UN National Accounts Adviser

Information submissions by selected countries and CARICOM Secretariat

System of National Accounts 1993, United Nations

Cook, Melissa, Building Enterprise Information Architectures – Reengineering Information Systems, Prentice Hall PTR, Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458

Zachman John, Framework for Information Systems Architecture, IBM Systems Journal 26, no.3, 1987.