

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2019/2020 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-17 October 2019

Item 2 (d) of the Provisional
Agenda

FOLLOW UP TO THE IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF SATELLITE ACCOUNTING

Prepared by Canada and UNECE¹

*In February 2019, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of satellite accounting based on a paper prepared by Statistics Canada. The Bureau strongly supported the recommendations for further work and asked UNECE in consultation with the authors of the paper to develop a more detailed work programme. **The Bureau discussed and approved the proposals on how to move forward on developing a general guide to satellite accounting and an online inventory of published satellite accounts presented in this paper.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of satellite accounts produced by national statistical organizations. To better understand the reasons for this increase and identify the need of further guidance and coordination, in February 2019 the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of national practices related to the development and processing of satellite accounts. The in-depth review paper was prepared by Statistics Canada with inputs from Eurostat, IMF, OECD, UNSD and UNECE (document ECE/CES/BUR/2019/FEB/2).

2. The in-depth review paper provided a summary of international activities related to satellite accounting and a detailed overview of national practices collected through a country survey which gathered responses from more than 80 countries. On this basis it proposed a typology that can be used to classify the different satellite accounts and recommended the following three areas for further work:

- (a) Develop a general guide to satellite accounting;
- (b) Develop and maintain an on-line inventory of satellite accounts compilation;
- (c) Facilitate the implementation of an extended set of satellite accounts, to be recommended in the context of the international standards for compiling national accounts.

¹ The paper has been prepared by Statistics Canada and UNECE with input from Eurostat, IMF, OECD and UNSD.

3. During the discussion in February 2019, the CES Bureau welcomed the paper and highlighted that it is very timely in light of the increasing importance of satellite accounts and the proliferation of different types of these accounts. It is a good input to the ongoing debate on the usefulness of the System of National Accounts (SNA). The Bureau strongly supported the three recommendations for further work proposed in the paper and stressed the urgency of advancing the work. In addition, the Bureau also noted that:

(a) The paper presents a useful typology of satellite accounts. It is important to have general guidance and principles for satellite accounts to follow existing international standards and harmonise the approaches;

(b) An inventory of satellite accounts would be very useful but needs to be coordinated by one institution, for example UNECE.

4. In conclusion, the Bureau agreed that the Secretariat will consult with the authors of the in-depth review paper and present to the Bureau a proposal on how to move forward on developing a general guide to satellite accounting and an online inventory of published satellite accounts. The Secretariat will follow up with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) on the preparation of a guidance note on an extended set of satellite accounts in the context of the international standards for compiling national accounts.

II. PROPOSED FURTHER WORK

5. After consultation with the authors of the in-depth review, Statistics Canada and UNECE Secretariat propose the following:

A. General guide to satellite accounting

6. In spring 2019 OECD has developed a paper providing guidance on the compilation of thematic transport satellite accounts. The guidance describes the main steps to arrive at an enlarged set of the traditional supply and use tables as well as possible extensions of the institutional sector accounts. OECD has agreed to update the guidance to reflect more generally the development of all types of thematic satellite accounts.

7. As a next step, it is suggested that the revised guidance on thematic satellite accounts be sent for consultation to the UNECE Steering Group on National Accounts (SGNA) and the OECD Working Party on National Accounts (WPNA) Bureau in the fall of 2019, and later on presented to the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts.

8. Further the draft Guidance on Satellite Accounting and the results of the consultation could be presented for discussion and feedback to the OECD Working Party on National Accounts and the joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts of National Accounts with a view of finalization at the end of 2020.

B. Online inventory of satellite accounts

9. Statistics Canada and UNECE, in consultation with the authors of the in-depth review paper, will develop a wiki page presenting core information collected through the survey on satellite accounts compiled by countries. In addition, the page would serve as a reference to existing international guidance on various satellite accounts.

10. The wiki page will be maintained by the UNECE Secretariat and would be updated on a continuous basis in collaboration with UNSD, to enable exchange of best practices among all UN regions. Countries would be asked to verify and update their national data every second year, in conjunction with the meetings of the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on National Accounts. This will provide an opportunity to follow up on the implementation of the existing international guidance on satellite accounts. In addition, the country survey will allow for identifying new developments and innovations in satellite accounting for discussion at the joint Group of Experts meetings.

III. ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE BUREAU

11. **The Bureau is invited to discuss and approve the proposed further work presented in section II.**
