

# Communication Task Team (CMTT)

## PROGRESS REPORT

UNECE: MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON NATIONAL  
ACCOUNTS

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(Chair of CMTT and Supporting Editor on 2025 SNA)



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  - CM.3 summary of Global Consultation and User testing.
  - CM.4 summary of Global Consultation and finalisation.

CMTT is one of the 2008 SNA Update Workstreams, along with Globalisation, Digitalisation, Well-being and Sustainability and Informal Economy

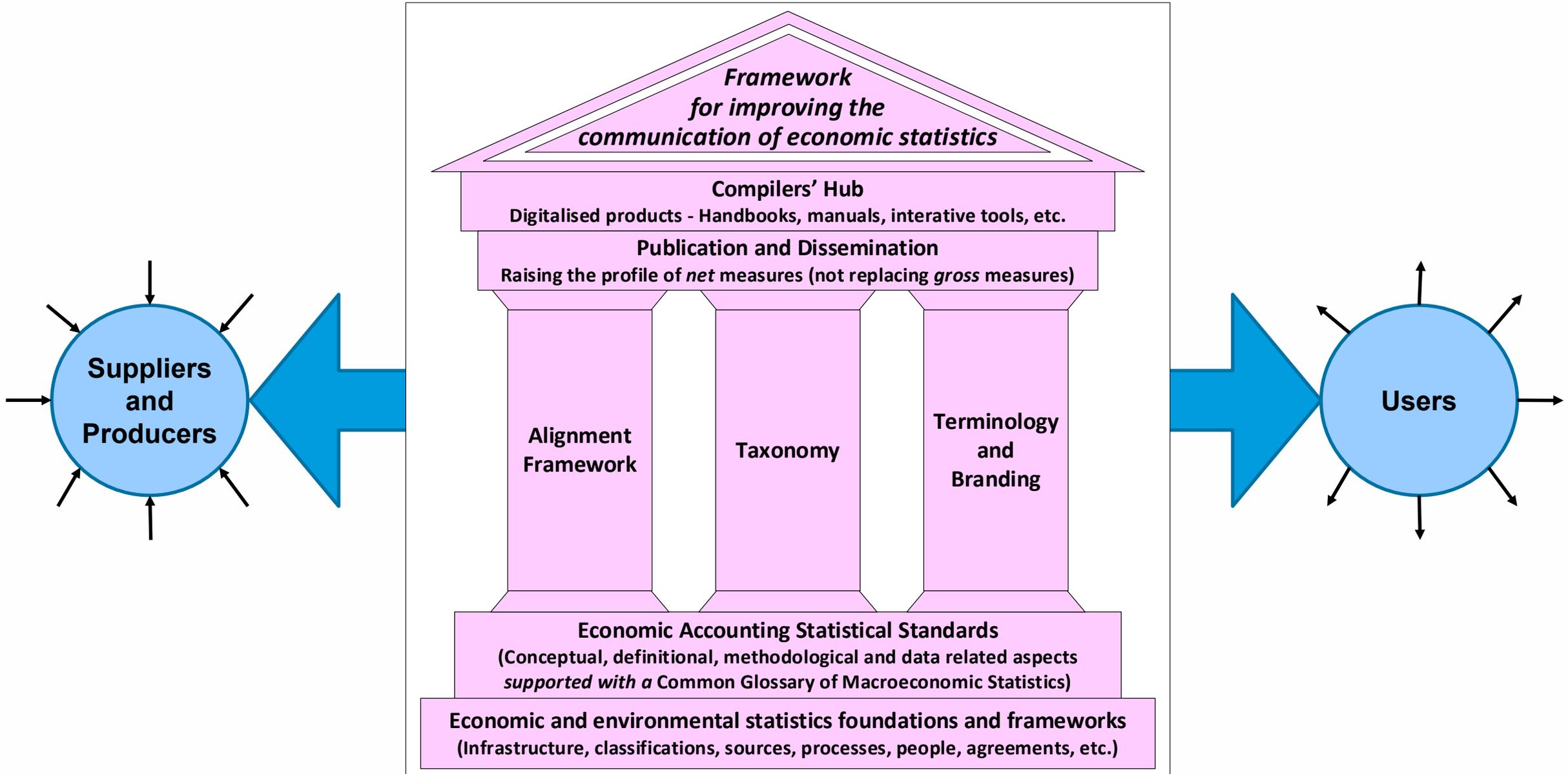
# Background

- The way in which **macroeconomic statistics** are communicated has a significant impact on users' understanding and utilisation of the data.
- **Statistics compilers** should strive to **better communicate** with **all users** to help them maximise the analytical usefulness, quality, scope, comparability and policy application of macroeconomic statistics.
- Update of the **2008 SNA** and **BPM 6** presents a unique opportunity for us to improve the communication of macroeconomic statistics to users.

## **Motivation evidence - Public understanding** of economics and economic statistics:

- Using YouGov, ONS / ESCoE Survey in February 2020 (1,665 people) and in August 2022 (2,007 people).
- In general, public misperceptions about economic figures and the economy continue.
- Better understanding of inflation due to lots of analyses covering the cost of living crisis (including personal calculator) – still confusion over language used price levels, changes in prices and changes in inflation rate.
- GDP is still not well understood and labour related terms / definitions are poorly understood.
- Interest rates - strong understanding of how interest rates affect personal finances for borrowers and savers.

# An Overarching Communication Framework



# CMTT – Main Workstreams and Outputs

## Main Guidance Notes

- **CM.1 Alignment Framework:** develop a clear and consistent framework that measures the degree of alignment with the international economic statistical standards.
- **CM.2 Terminology and Branding:** review the current macroeconomic accounting terminology and branding and identify easier to understand alternative terms and presentations with a 'user' focus. Ensure consistency across domains and with relevant accounting standards.
- **CM.3 Taxonomy:** propose recommended approaches how to describe and present different vintages (revisions) of macroeconomic statistics.
- **CM.4 Gross and Net Measures:** Examines challenges of improving the steps between gross measurement and net measurement with a greater focus on the latter as well as support the need for higher quality and reliable net estimates and recommends steps on the way forward.
- **CM.5 Common Glossary of Macroeconomic Statistics** ensures further harmonisation across international statistical standards and provides users with a clear and consistent understanding of key economic terms and definitions.

Global Consultation	User Testing
Complete	Complete
Complete	In progress
Complete	In progress
Complete	To be covered elsewhere
Process to be considered by SNA/BPM Editors	N/a

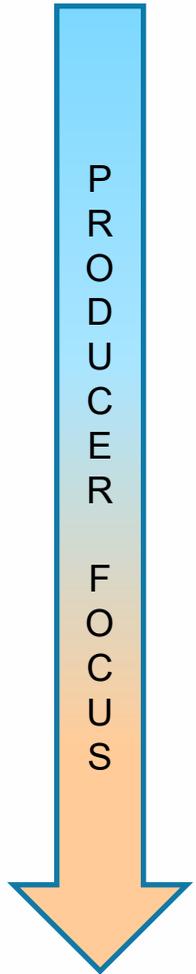
- **Compilers Hub:** develop a digital platform that will facilitate collaboration among compilers of economic statistics and improve the awareness of new and existing information.
- **Digitalised Manuals:** convert the statistical standards into digitally-enabled and interactive tools with cross references.

## CM.2 Terminology and Branding

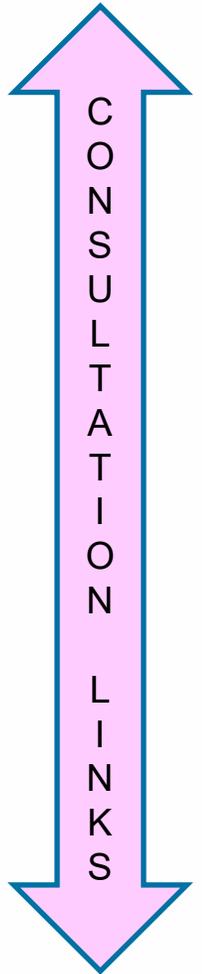
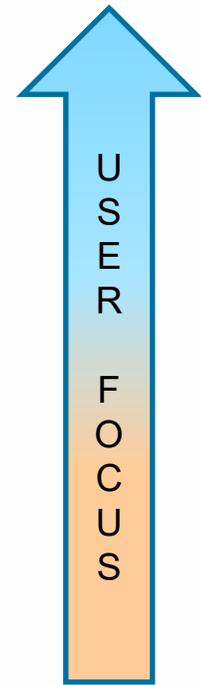
**Objective:** Review the current macroeconomic accounting terminology and propose **simpler alternative** terms and **clarified definitions / descriptions** for more consistent and accurate use in the communication with **users** to better convey the meaning and interpretation of the **concepts and methods**.

The goal is not to change the concepts or definitions used but to express them in a non-technical, easier to understand way to help **users**.

## CM.2 Terminology and Branding: Links to the main process



- Ensure harmonised **definitions** across the economic accounting statistical standards primarily for producers.
  - Primary focus on SNA and BPM but also GFSM, SEEA, MFS, etc.
- Single, harmonised **Common Glossary of Macroeconomic Statistics** covering the economic accounting statistical standards.
  - Primary focus on SNA and BPM but also GFSM, SEEA, MFS, etc.
- Examples of “**user friendly**” and “**easier to understand**” terms for communicating with users.
  - Primary focus on SNA and BPM but also GFSM, SEEA, MFS, etc.
  - Goal is **not** to change the concepts and definitions used but to better communicate them using non-technical, user-friendly language.
  - An alternative term for users will not exist for all terms.



# CM.2 Terminology and Branding: Summary of proposals

## ➤ Overview of the structure of proposals

- Proposal 1: Harmonisation of Concepts
- Proposal 2: Amendments to Account Labels
- Proposal 3: User-friendly Terminology
- Proposal 4: User-friendly Explanations of terms

## ➤ Examples of the types of proposals

- **Align Terminology across domains where relevant:** e.g., align all domains on the use of **revenues and expenses** - replacing SNA's **resource and use** convention and BPM's *debit and credit* convention or implementing consistent use of the term **statistical discrepancy** across all three domains (replacing BPM's *net errors and omissions*).
- **Amend the labels of some accounts for closer alignment in terminology:** e.g., the SNA allocation of primary income account, secondary distribution accounts, and use of disposable income account **to allocation of income account, transfer of income account and use of income account**. Corresponding changes recommended for secondary income account.
- **Develop alternative terminology “for users”:** e.g., *employees’ remuneration* as a supplement for *compensation of employees, natural resource rent for rent, depreciation for consumption of fixed capital, etc.*

## CM.2 Terminology and Branding: Summary of proposals

### ➤ Examples of the types of proposals (continued)

- Develop an integrated **user-friendly glossary** which provides expanded or clarified definitions to existing terms of the EASSs. The expanded or clarified definition should make clear distinction between explanation of the concept and the measurement of the concept where relevant.
- **Eliminate the use of “gross” or “net” in the terminology (across domains) except in cases defined by the SNA.** Instead, emphasis should be given to the full term.
- **More prominence should be given to the “net” aggregates.** For example, referring to the "net" aggregates (e.g., net domestic product) in the sequence of accounts and recognising the treatment of depletion of natural resources.
- **Standardise the naming convention of the three statistical domains** by branding the group of standards as the ***‘Economic Accounting Statistical Standards (EASS)’***

# Different channels of feedback *(lots of feedback!)*

## ➤ Global consultation

- Received a total of 60 responses from 48 economies and international organisations.
- Represented views of national accounts, balance of payments, and government finance statistics compilers.
- Respondents from European economies had the largest participation (46 per cent), followed by those from Western Hemisphere countries (22 per cent), Asia and Pacific countries (13 per cent), Middle East and Central Asia countries (12 per cent), and from Sub-Saharan Africa (seven per cent).
- Majority of respondents agreed with the objective of the GN and specifically with most of the key proposals as expected a few were not accepted or changes provided.
- Respondents also provided several valuable suggestions to further harmonise the terminology of the economic accounting statistical standards.

## ➤ Other avenues of feedback

- Feedback and changes from the Joint AEG / BOPCOM Meetings in March 2022, October 2022 and March 2023.
- UNECE Group of Experts on National Accounts (2022) and OECD CNEFA (2022) meetings.
- Early testing with public users and analysts, e.g.:
  - Public understand “depreciation” and not “consumption of fixed capital”.
  - Do not understand “balance of payments” but do understand “balance of international transactions”.
  - Have absolutely no idea what is FISIM but do understand “interest on loans” and “interest on deposits”.

All the feedback has been reflected in some way (or not) with changes in subsequent versions of the GN.

# Way forward

## ➤ **As agreed at the March 2023 Joint AEG / BOPCOM Meeting**

- The authors to revise the GN to incorporate comments made, including:
  - Dropping the recommendation to change the term “Balance of Payments” to “Balance of International Transactions and Investment Positions”.
  - Using the term “Financial service on loans and deposits” instead of “Interest receivable on loans less interest payable on deposits” to describe financial intermediation services indirectly measured.
  - Also review the recommendation to replace the terms “Credits/Debits” in the relevant balance of payments accounts.
- The authors of the guidance note to circulate the revised guidance note along with a consultation questionnaire to the Committee and AEG for approval by written procedure prior to launching of a global user consultation.

## ➤ **State of play**

- Revised GN and proposed user consultation questionnaire have been submitted to AEG / BOPCOM Members for approval.

# CM.5 Common Glossary of Macroeconomic Statistics

**Need:** A **common glossary** is important as it ensures further harmonisation across international statistical standards and provides **users** with a clear and consistent understanding of key economic terms and definitions.

- As part of the update process, it was agreed that a common harmonised glossary covering SNA , BPM and a range of other economic accounting statistical standards (EASSs) should be developed.
- Seen as an extension to the original scope covered by the Communications Task Team.

**Ambition:** Publish the final Common Glossary as a **separate electronic publication**.

- Form an important part of the digitisation of the EASSs with the goal of using the Common Glossary to enhance search capability across EASSs and related manuals as well as from search engines.
- This facility will also aid future proofing changes to the Common Glossary and the impact of changes across the EASSs in terms of retaining the consistency and harmonisation.

# CM.5 Common Glossary of Macroeconomic Statistics

- **Scope:** Inputs from the SNA, BPM, ESA, GFS, MFS, SEEA, IPSAS and BIS.
- Lots of detailed guidance provided – there is a background note available. Flavour of the examples of the **principles** and **guidance** followed:
  - Focus on terms used in economic statistics.
  - Focus on the concepts, institutional sectors, transactions, stocks, flows, balancing items, etc. (long-lived features of the economic accounting system).
  - Reflect technically correct statistical terminology underpinning the EASSs.
  - Avoid abbreviations.
  - Aim to be brief with the definition description, maybe maximum 50-60 words as a guide.
  - Focus on future proofing, e.g., cross-referencing where applicable but kept to a minimum.
- **Glossary Team:**
  - David Bailey (IMF), Albert Braakmann (Germany), Jannick Damgaard (IMF), João Carlos Fonseca (IPSAS), Foyzunnesa Khatun (IMF), Powkeem Lo Tiap Kwong (IMF), Eric Metreau (World Bank), Wilson Phiri (IMF), Lisbeth Rivas (IMF), Jim Tebrake (IMF) and led by Sanjiv Mahajan (Chair of CMTT and 2025 Supporting Editor).

# CM.5 Common Glossary of Macroeconomic Statistics

- **Broad timeline of work:** Following initial work by the SNA / BPM Editors and IMF.
  - End-Nov 2022            Glossary Group formed.
  - Dec 2022                Meetings, principles, guidance and working baseline formulated.
  - Jan 2023                1<sup>st</sup> Phase Review completed.
  - Feb 2023                2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Review completed and a full review of over 1,240 terms and definitions.
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Mar 2023        New baseline handed over to the SNA / BPM Editors.
  
- **Overview**
  - Started with over 1,240 terms and definitions, reduced to 730 with 90 new terms leaving circa 820.
  - Significant piece of work undertaken by the Glossary Group in the time available - great collaborative effort.
  
- **Way ahead and further work**
  - New “baseline” is now with the SNA / BPM Editors – the cumulative style process will continue.
  - General improvement and consistency to existing terms and definitions.
  - New terms and definitions from the Guidance Notes and appropriate terms from the Resolutions of the ICLS.
  - Opportunity to improve (correct) the style guides.
  - Various feedback channels to cover (e.g., BOPCOM, SEEA, GFS) and Global Consultation.
  - Utilisation through the EASSs.



# Annexes

- CM.1 summary of Global Consultation and User testing.
- CM.2 details of:
  - Summary of Proposals.
  - Improved Branding.
  - The terms “gross” and “net”.
  - Tables with final proposals reflecting changes from the feedback from the Global Consultation and the last Joint AEG / BOPCOM Meeting.
- CM.3 summary of Global Consultation and User testing.
- CM.4 Gross and Net measures

# CM.1 - An Assessment Framework to Measure Alignment with Statistical Standards

## ➤ Global consultation

- Significant majority of the respondents agreed with the proposed list of concepts and definitions, accounting rules, classification systems and presentation dimensions (and elements) of the three frameworks.
- Respondents generally agreed with the dashboard presentation of the frameworks. However, there were concerns about relying on the statistical offices to be objective about the degree of alignment of their statistical programs.
- Respondents were also concerned that with the categories (expressed in per cent) - it could be difficult for compilers to judge elements that are not aligned with statistical standards.
- Most respondents expressed concerns about the number of elements in each of the frameworks.

## ➤ User testing

- Viewed as beneficial for users to understand the alignment of an economy's national accounts and balance of payments statistics programs to the SNA and BPM standards as well as for cross country comparisons and other analytical and management benefits.
- Acknowledged subjective assessment by compilers / national statistics offices in completing the alignment frameworks and thus recommended using quantitative measures to present an overall score of each dimension and perhaps the framework in general.
- Specific feedback received: (i) adjusting the colours; (ii) reviewing the BPM framework for missing elements; (iii) increasing explanatory notes; (iv) adding new issues from SNA/BPM update; and (v) providing additional guidance to ensure consistency of the rating bands.

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## CM.2 - Terminology and Branding: Summary of Proposals

- **Proposal 1:** Change the name of the **SNA allocation of primary income account, secondary distribution accounts, and use of disposable income account** to ***earned income account, transfer income account, and use of income account***. Corresponding changes recommended for BPM.
- **Proposal 2:** Align all domains on the use of ***revenues and expenses*** - replacing SNA's ***resource and use*** convention and BPM's ***debit and credit*** convention. Consistent use of the term ***statistical discrepancy*** across all three domains (replacing BPM's ***net errors and omissions***).
- **Proposal 3:** Develop an integrated **user-friendly glossary** which **clarifies or proposes alternatives to some existing terms and definitions** of the IESS. The expanded or clarified definition should make clear distinction between explanation of the concept and the measurement of the concept where relevant.
- **Proposal 4: Alternative terminologies for example:** 'labour costs' replaces 'compensation of employees', 'natural resource rent' replaces 'rent', 'depreciation' replaces 'consumption of fixed capital', etc.

## CM.2 - Terminology and Branding: Summary of Proposals

- **Proposal 5: Avoid the use of ‘gross’ or ‘net’ in the terminology (across domains) except in cases defined by the SNA.** Instead, emphasis should be given to the full term e.g., Acquisitions less disposals of valuables instead of ~~Net transactions in valuables.~~
- **Proposal 6: More prominence should be given to the “net” aggregates.** For example, referring to the "net" aggregates (e.g., net domestic product) in the sequence of accounts and recognising the treatment of depletion and degradation.
- **Proposal 7: Standardise the naming convention of the IESS across all domains.**
- **Proposal 8: Brand the group of standards as the ‘*International Economic Statistical standards (IESS)*’**

# CM.2 - Improved Branding

- **An umbrella approach is proposed**, where manuals for different statistical domains appear under the same broad headline:
  - ▶ **Economic Accounting Statistical Standards (EASSs)** is the name for the umbrella.
  - ▶ This approach enables to **keep the longstanding and well-introduced names and labels** of the different statistical manuals (year, edition).
- However, **for a clearer distinction of the umbrella**, there are elements that will seek to adjust the names of the statistical domains covered:
  - National Accounts should be amended to **National Economic Accounts**, to highlight the holistic view covering all economic sectors and all economic transactions.
  - ~~Balance of Payments/International Investment Positions should be adjusted to **Balance of International Transactions and Investment Positions**, underlining the fact that this statistical domain covers economic transactions and stocks between residents and non-residents.~~
  - Governments Finance Statistics Statements could be changed to **Governments Finance Statistics Reports**.
  - **Joint presentation of the updated manuals in 2025**, highlighting the harmonisation and common work undertaken to better cover digitalisation, globalisation and well-being and sustainability, would strengthen a common branding.

## CM.2 - The terms “gross” and “net”

To improve clarity and eliminate confusion, CMTT proposes that:

- (i) **the terms “gross” and “net”** in the current accounts and the capital account of SNA and balance of payments are only used to indicate whether an aggregate includes or excludes consumption of fixed capital (CFC); and
- (ii) in other cases, only used in the context laid out in the 2008 SNA as well as the BPM6, in particular the financial transactions in the financial accounts.

With the update of the 2008 SNA and BPM 6, there is an additional case to sit alongside CFC, the depletion of natural resources.

# Changes

**Table 1: Proposal for Further Alignment of Key Concepts in SNA, BPM and GFSM**

SNA	BPM	GFSM	Proposal
Resources	Credits	Revenue	Revenue
Uses	Debits	Expense	Expenditure
Changes in inventories		Net transactions in Inventories	Changes in inventories
Acquisitions less disposals of valuables		Net transactions in Valuables	Acquisitions less disposals of valuables
Acquisitions less disposals of non-produced assets		Net transactions in non-produced assets	Acquisitions less disposals of non-produced assets
Acquisitions less disposals of contracts, leases and licenses		Net transactions in Contracts, leases, and licenses	Acquisitions less disposals of contracts, leases and licenses
Purchases less sales of goodwill and marketing assets		Net transactions in Goodwill and marketing assets	Acquisitions less disposals of goodwill and marketing assets
Statistical discrepancy	Net errors and omissions	Statistical discrepancy	Statistical discrepancy

# Changes (continued)

Table 2. Proposal to Update the Names of the SNA Accounts

Current SNA Terminology	Proposed Update (Individual economic account)	Economic Accounts Groups
The production account	No change	Income and Expenditure Accounts
The generation of income account	No change	
The allocation of primary income account	The allocation of income account Note: the balancing item will not change.	
The secondary distribution of income account	Current transfers account Note: for BOP this implies to replace secondary income by transfer income.	
The use of disposable income account	The use of income account	Accumulation of Economic Assets Accounts
The capital account	No change	
The financial account	No change	
Other changes in the volume of assets account	No change	
Balance Sheets	No change	Balance Sheets

# Changes (continued)

Table 3. Proposals for Alternative More User-Friendly Terminologies in the SNA

2008 SNA	Suggested amendments	Rationale
Constant prices	Price-adjusted figures or data	Previous years' prices used as standard for deflating aggregates
Compensation of employees	Employees' remuneration	More user-friendly term since "compensation" has a mixed meaning.
Consumption of fixed capital	Depreciation	The term depreciation is simpler and more widely understood. Depreciation is already used by several national statistical institutes.
Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured	<del>Interest receiveable on loans less interest payable deposits</del> Or: Financial service on loans and deposits	Proposal focuses on the basic idea, avoiding the technical measurement method. Latter proposal approved.
Financial Lease	Finance lease	Easier language
Imputed Rental	Owner-occupied dwelling services	Gives the concept and avoids confusing rent and rental
Rent	Natural resource rent	More clarity of what is covered
Resource lease	Natural resource lease	More clarity of what is covered
Trade margin	Distribution trade margin	Make clear that trade margins not only occur in retail / wholesale trade but also in other industries.

## Table 4. Proposed Changes in the Statistical Domains

Domain Concerned	Current Term	Aligned Proposal
SNA, GFS	Changes in inventories / Net transactions in Inventories	Changes in inventories
SNA, GFS	Acquisitions less disposals of valuables / Net transactions in Valuables	Acquisitions less disposals of valuables
SNA, GFS	Acquisitions less disposals of non-produced assets / Net transactions in non-produced assets	Acquisitions less disposals of non-produced assets
SNA, GFS	Acquisitions less disposals of contracts, leases and licenses / Net transactions in Contacts, leases, and licenses	Acquisitions less disposals of contracts, leases and licenses
SNA, GFS	Purchases less sales of goodwill and marketing assets / Net transactions in goodwill and marketing assets	Acquisitions less disposals of goodwill and marketing assets
SNA	Constant prices	Price-adjusted data
SNA, BPM, GFS	Consumption of fixed capital	Depreciation
SNA, BPM, GFS	Compensation of employees	Employees' remuneration
SNA, BPM, GFS	Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured	Financial service on loans and deposits
SNA, BPM, GFS	Financial Lease	Finance lease
SNA	Imputed Rental	Owner-occupied dwelling services
SNA, BPM	Net exports of goods and services (under merchanting)	Balance of exports of goods and services (under merchanting)
SNA, BPM, GFS	Net (non-life) insurance premiums	Total (non-life) insurance premiums less service charges
SNA, BPM, GFS	Net re-insurance premiums	Total re-insurance premiums less service charges
SNA	Net social contributions	Total social contributions less service charges
SNA, BPM	Net fees (guarantees)	Total fees (guarantees) less service charges
SNA	Output for own final use	Goods and services produced for own final use
SNA	Product balance	Balance of the supply and use of a product
SNA, BPM	Rent	Natural resource rent
SNA, BPM, GFS	Resource lease	Natural resource lease
SNA	Trade margin	Distribution trade margin
BPM	Balance on trade in goods	Balance on international trade in goods
BPM	Balance on trade in services	Balance on international trade in services

# CM.3 Taxonomy: Summary of Proposals

## ➤ **Communicating Releases (Vintages of Data):**

Standardise the description of data vintages to include information about: (1) *substance of the new vintage*; (2) *timeliness*; (3) *periodicity*; (4) *reference period*; and (5) *update period*.

## ➤ **Communicating Updates / Revisions:**

Framework to communicate updates comprising the **key** components of a statistical standard: (i) *coverage*; (ii) *concept / methods / accounting rules*; (iii) *source data*; and (iv) *accounts / tables*.

## ➤ **Communicating Updates / Revisions:**

Two-tiered standardised labelling of the 'quality' of statistical products as:

- *Official statistics / estimates (of which, provisional estimates); or*
- *Experimental statistics / estimates (often, of a research or indicative nature).*

# CM.3 Taxonomy: Summary of Proposals

The two-level “product” taxonomy proposed:

Level 1	Level 2
<b>Economic Accounts</b>	
	Sequence of Economic Accounts
	Supplementary Accounts
	Extended Accounts (e.g., labour)
	Thematic Accounts (e.g., tourism)
<b>Economic Tables</b>	
	Economic Tables (e.g., SUTs / IOTs)
	Supplementary Tables (e.g., pensions, regional, environmental)
	Extended Tables (e.g., extended SUTs, unpaid work)
	Thematic Tables (e.g., health, tourism, sport, creative sector, etc.)

# CM.3 Taxonomy

## ➤ Global consultation

- Proposal 1a - **Communicating Releases** (Vintages of Data):
  - Majority of respondents agreed to include the five key components in the statistical description of their releases.
  - Some economies noted that this will require some effort/time for their statistical agencies to transition to this standard taxonomy in their communication.
  - Majority agreed that the proposals are broadly in line with their current communication practices (internal and external).
- Proposal 1b - **Communicating Releases** (Vintages of Data):
  - Majority of respondents agreed with the definition of routine revisions as defined in the guidance note.
  - The definitions of benchmark and comprehensive revisions were less supported by the consultation. A small group was not in favour of distinguishing between these types of revisions.
  - CMTT will review the feasibility of aligning or bridging these proposals with existing revisions frameworks.
- Proposal 2 – **Communication Revisions**
  - Majority of respondents agreed that their current statistical infrastructure allows the breakdown of revisions into the proposed categories.
  - Respondents also agreed that revisions could also be broken to show the affected industries, sectors, functional categories or expenditure categories as proposed.
  - Considering the feedback, the CMTT proposes further refinement to this proposal as follows: (i) methodological changes (ii) coverage changes (iii) source data changes.
  - The CMTT also proposes to test this and other proposals in the GN with users of macroeconomic statistics.

# CM.3 Taxonomy

## ➤ Global consultation (continued)

- Proposal 3 – Product quality and type
  - Majority of respondents agreed with the proposed product quality taxonomy and their definitions:
    - Official Estimates
      - Provisional Estimates
    - Experimental Estimates
  - 79 per cent of respondents also agreed with the CMTT's proposals for a two-tiered product type taxonomy.
  - Although majority of respondents agreed with the definition of supplementary / thematic tables / accounts, the consultation showed that further explanation is needed on the distinction between these types of tables/accounts.
- Next steps
  - GN has been revised to reflect the above feedback.
  - User testing has now been completed and to be reviewed.
  - Final GN to produced.

# CM.4 Gross and Net Measures

## ➤ Global consultation

- Overall, very supportive and favourable responses.
- Widespread use of the PIM approach.
- Overwhelming support for raising the profile of net measures (not replace GDP) and transparency in showing CFC and DNR separately.
- Conceptual acceptance but more guidance for implementation, especially DNR.
- Clear support for the use of geometric depreciation.
- Need for more guidance to achieve greater harmonisation and comparability of methods and assumptions as well as welcome more efforts in information sharing (e.g., Hub).
- Some hesitancy in how far we go, e.g., changes to ratios due to legislation and volume indicators.
- Little feedback on users' views.

## ➤ Way forward

- Incorporate feedback from Global Consultation and the AEG Meeting (March 2023) into the Guidance Note – sign-off being sought from AEG Members.
- User testing to be done via WS.6 Accounting for the Economic Ownership and Depletion of Natural Resources; and WS.8 Accounting for biological resources.