

Abstract for “Implementing Comprehensive Revisions in the Canadian SNA: Challenges and Future Directions”

Catherine Van Rompaey (Statistics Canada)

Following a multi-year effort spanning a range of integrated programs, the Canadian SNA has undergone a comprehensive revision, the results of which were published beginning in 2012. This was the first substantial revision to the integrated Canadian accounts since the mid 1990s. Revised SNA 2008 concepts and recommendations, such as the capitalization of R&D and the introduction of an NPISH sector were implemented, along with a range of quality improvements and a substantial overhaul and modernization of classification frameworks.

The scale of the 2012 comprehensive revision and the level of detail in the existing program necessitated important cost-benefit tradeoffs in revisions to historical data. In particular, a decision was made not to revise historical annual regional input-output and supply-use tables, the cornerstone of production estimates and the mechanism for assuring coherence across SNA accounts and productivity estimates. Looking forward, Canada will move away from the former “big bang” approach to implementing more frequent, smaller scale revisions on a continuous basis. This requires a rethink of our current revision policy and a new strategy for ensuring the coherence of historical data across integrated national accounts programs.

This paper will provide an overview of changes implemented in the 2012 Canadian comprehensive revision, highlighting lessons learned and plans for the future. It will also explore practical and operational challenges for a feasible ongoing strategy to assure the coherence of historical estimates in the context of continuous comprehensive revisions.