

# Progress of the Network of Economic Statisticians on Beyond GDP

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UN Network of Economic Statisticians

# Background

The UN's "Our Common Agenda":

- makes explicit reference to the needs to take collective actions to meet the challenges of our time
- mobilizes stakeholders to identify a complement or complements to GDP that will measure inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity
- Challenge member states to identify and agree on pathways for national and global accounting systems to include additional measurements

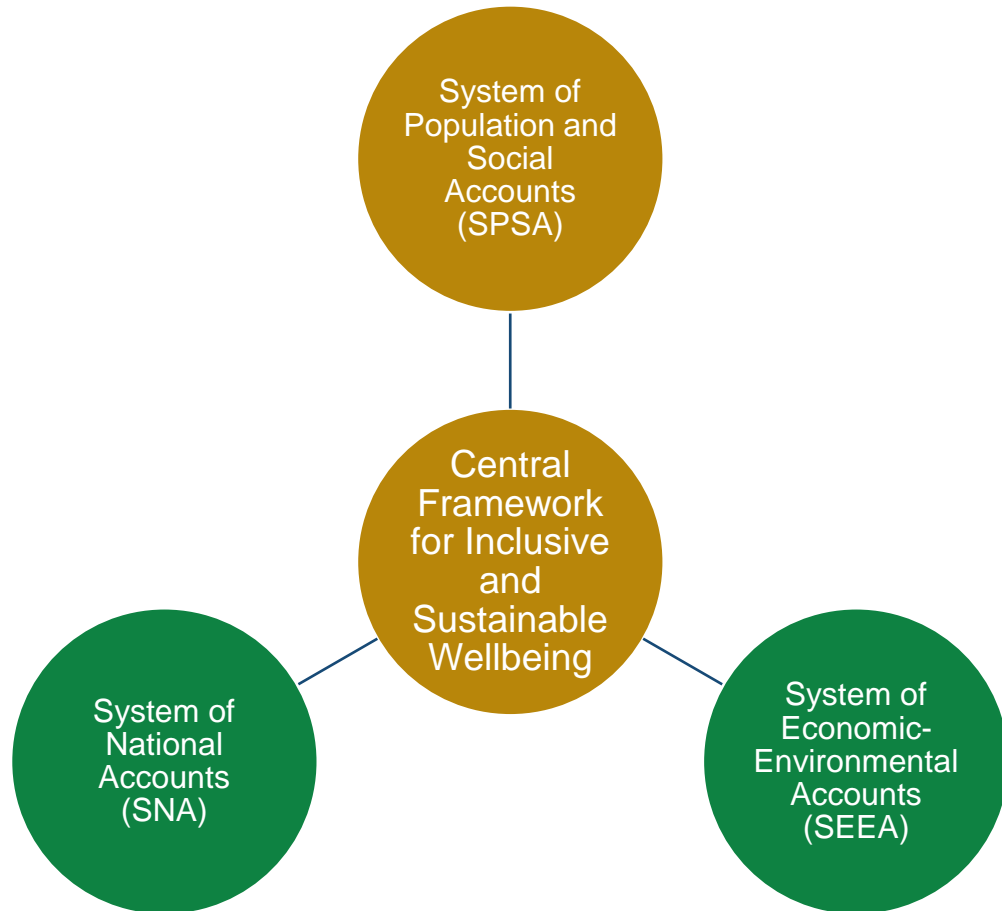
The Network:

- has been working towards bringing together the *Our Common Agenda* with recommendations of the Friends of the Chair Group on economic statistics
- Achieving this by better networking and establishing user-centred partnerships; by challenging the system through use cases in co-production and co-investment; and by better documenting the international conceptual and practical guidance on methodological standards and collective scaling of the capacity building and training

# 2022 Beyond GDP Sprint – objectives and outcome

- broad aim was to review the work done in this domains internationally, identify best practices, and propose areas of high priority for research on an integrated statistical system for measuring inclusive and sustainable wellbeing
- Focused on measures that capture people’s well-being, as well as inclusiveness and sustainability
- Sprint led to a series of concrete proposals summarized in a Prospectus
  - ❑ Identified the need for an integrated system for inclusion and sustainable well-being,
  - ❑ Build on existing standards of the System of National Accounts and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
  - ❑ Complement existing standards with a System of Population and Social Accounts and a Central Framework for Inclusive and Sustainable Wellbeing.
- Proposals fit well with other work done by the ISWGNA and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts on enhancing and broadening of the national accounts framework to better account for elements related to well-being and sustainability;

# Core Proposal



- The development of a **System of Population and Social Accounts (SPSA)**, delivering data which can be integrated with the SNA and SEEA, that brings together the various extended SNA accounts and other existing socio-demographic accounts available today and promotes their potential use
- The development of a **Central Framework for Inclusive and Sustainable Wellbeing** that includes:
  - ❑ a comprehensive dashboard, linked to the SDGs, of core wellbeing indicators and potentially new composite indices,
  - ❑ distributional breakdowns of aggregated and disaggregated accounting and wellbeing indicators,
  - ❑ measures of flows and stocks, building on measures obtained from comprehensive and inclusive wealth accounting, considering a wider landscape of capitals than those covered by the SNA, with a focus on consistency of measurement for the derivation of ‘objective’ composite indices to provide a fuller landscape of the trade-offs involved in achieving economic welfare and people’s wellbeing (now and later).

# Core Proposal – builds on strong existing foundations

There are well-established and high-quality social and demographic-economic accounting methodologies and practices that existed prior to the Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi Report (2009).

**1948 -1968:**  
Development of  
System of  
National  
Accounts (SNA)

**1968-1974:**  
Development of  
System of  
Demographic and  
Social Statistics  
(SDSS), and  
acceptance by  
UNSC,  
comprising ten  
'domains'

**1987:**  
Brundtland Report  
defines  
'sustainable  
development' and  
highlights the  
three dimensions  
of wellbeing –  
'here and now', 'in  
the future' and  
'elsewhere'

**1993 - 2008:**  
SNA (partially)  
incorporates six of  
the ten SDSS  
domains as  
'satellite accounts'

**1974-1990s:**  
Attempts to deliver  
SDSS stall due to  
data challenges.  
Evolution of  
indicators drawn  
from system.

**2010:**  
Stiglitz, Sen and  
Fitoussi report  
highlights need for  
extended indicator  
sets, multi-  
dimensional  
dashboards and  
re-invigorates  
debate, without  
being prescriptive  
in terms of  
approaches.

# Timelines Proposed

The Prospectus proposed a timeline of implementation

- **End of October 2022** – Prospectus publicly shared with members of the Network ✓
- **October - November 2022** – various regional consultations the Global Conference\_\_on Macroeconomic Statistics for the Future,-to be held in Brussels ✓
- **March 2023** - UN Statistical Commission – agree on a formal mandate on the Beyond GDP shared agenda ✓
- **April 2023** – **February 2024** – Preparation of first draft of thematic (wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainability) notes ✓
- **March 2024** - UN Statistical Commission – seek feedback and comment on the first draft of thematic notes
- **April 2024** – **February 2024** – Preparation of revised draft thematic notes and over-arching proposed framework
- **March 2025** - UN Statistical Commission – submission of recommendations for new system's framework architecture

# Core Proposal - consultations

Proposals were subjected to various consultations:

- Proposals were reviewed by the Network members fall 2022 and endorsed
- Presented for discussion and feedback at the Global Conference on Macroeconomic Statistics for the Future last November which garnered support
- The proposed sustainable wellbeing was a subject of the regional consultations on regional statistical priorities and Beyond GDP initiatives and generally supported.
- 2023 sprint series predicated on this path and gathering high level of international engagement and participation
- Presented in the Network's Report to the UNSC's 54<sup>th</sup> meeting: The Commission supported the "exploration of the feasibility of a research agenda for a new integrated statistical framework for measuring inclusive and sustainable well-being in accordance with the research prospectus, in collaboration with the Friends of the Chair group;"

# 2023 Beyond GDP Sprint - objectives

- Following the first Beyond GDP sprint sessions, which covered a broad canvas, we needed to dive deeper into key topics in greater depth.
- To enable this, the Network designed a new series of webinars in 2023, designed at tackling the key aspects of the proposed workstreams of the integrated system
- The Sprint will shed light on how far existing methodologies and guidance exist to support the development of a framework of inclusive and sustainable wellbeing measurement, building upon the SNA and SEEA
- The ONS is leading this initiative however, it will be carried out in collaboration with other NSIs and organizations



# 2023 Beyond GDP Sprint - content

## Second Beyond GDP Sprint Series

- First session explored initiatives to measure and monitor inclusive and sustainable wellbeing and quality of life
- The second webinar provided a picture of key advances made with respect to measuring well-being, and showcased examples of combining existing metrics to track well-being
- The third session tackled the progress made in the development of the standards to measure Environment, Social and Governance performance;

## 2023 Beyond GDP Sprint- content<sub>(continued)</sub>

- The fourth webinar provided examples of the current state of domestic wellbeing dashboards, their uses and impact on policy making; many common challenges were identified;
- The fifth session covered the synergies among the different distributional frameworks used for measuring economic inequality
- The second last meeting discussed the relative benefits and trade-offs between dashboards and composite (single measure) indices
- The last webinar was a retrospective of the previous six meetings, considering the key issues discussed and how they fit together
- Sessions were very well attended and generated a lot of interest and discussion

## Next steps

- The Network will develop a Roadmap to deliver on the proposed new System of Population and Social Accounts (SPSA) and the Central Framework for Inclusive and Sustainable Well-being
- The Roadmap will have two separate deliverables: one for the SPSA and the other for the Central Framework; the format of these deliverables is under discussion, and your suggestions are welcome
- The documents will cover the “what” needs to be achieved, as well as the “how” (resources) needed to do the work
- The Network will seek feedback on the documents from key stakeholders (FOC Social, UN Population Division, OECD WISE, UN Statistics division and other specialized organizations)
- Finally, the document will be presented to the United Nations Statistical Commission for its review in 2024

# Discussion