ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

CONCEPT NOTE

Asia Pacific Stats Café: Measuring the Informal Sector in National Accounts

Statistics Division
25 August 2026 (13:30 p.m. to 14:30 p.m. UTC+7)

Background

The informal sector continues to play a vital role in economic activity and employment across much of Asia and the Pacific. Nevertheless, capturing its full contribution to the economy remains a persistent challenge, both conceptually and operationally owing to the heterogeneity of informal production units, limited administrative data, and the fluid, often transient nature of informal work. Addressing these measurement gaps is critical to ensuring the completeness and accuracy of gross domestic product (GDP) and other key macroeconomic indicators.

The release of the 2025 System of National Accounts (2025 SNA) offers renewed momentum for improving how the informal economy is measured. This updated global standard expands the conceptual framework for the informal economy and provides clearer directives for capturing informal sector output, informal employment, and their integration into national accounts. As countries across the region begin preparing for the 2025 SNA implementation, there is growing demand for practical, data driven approaches to produce reliable informal sector estimates using multiple sources and internationally endorsed methods.

Several Asia-Pacific countries have already developed systems and methodologies for informal sector measurement. Their experiences offer valuable insights for other national statistical offices (NSOs) aiming to enhance the coverage, quality, and cross-country comparability of their national accounts.

To support peer learning and regional knowledge exchange, **the Statistics Division of ESCAP will organize a Stats Café on "Measuring the Informal Sector in GDP" on 25 August 2026 at 13:30 p.m. Bangkok Time (UCT+7).** In support of the 2025 SNA implementation, this Statistics Café will center on measuring the informal sector within national accounts offering NSOs a platform to share firsthand experiences and discuss pragmatic solutions to common methodological hurdles.

The session will feature the national statistical agencies of India and Indonesia, both of which have established robust approaches for measuring the informal sector and embedding its contribution into their national accounts. Resource persons from these agencies will present their country's practices, covering institutional setups, statistical methodologies, data sources, estimation strategies, and quality assurance mechanisms. Participants will also have the opportunity to deliberate on challenges, exchange best practices, and explore approaches that could be tailored to their own national circumstances.

Through fostering South–South knowledge sharing, the Statistics Café aims to bolster regional capacities for informal sector measurement and assist countries in producing more comprehensive, internationally comparable national accounts statistics.

Objectives

This Statistics Café seeks to deepen participants' understanding of informal sector measurement within the 2025 SNA framework while promoting the exchange of practical country-level experiences across the region. More specifically, the session will:

- Showcase the experiences of India and the Indonesia in measuring the informal sector and incorporating its estimates into national accounts;
- Discuss methodologies, data sources, estimation techniques, and quality assurance practices employed in compiling informal sector statistics;
- Facilitate peer learning and the sharing of good practices among NSOs;
- Identify common challenges and opportunities for strengthening informal sector measurements to support improved national accounts compilation.

Expected Outcomes

Participants are expected to gain a clearer grasp of international recommendations for informal sector measurement and their practical application under the 2025 SNA. They will also benefit from concrete, country-specific knowledge drawn from the experiences of India and Indonesia, covering data collection methods, estimation approaches, and the integration of informal sector figures into broader macroeconomic accounts.

In addition, the session is anticipated to strengthen regional practitioner networks in economic statistics, encourage ongoing peer learning and South–South collaboration, and help pinpoint areas where ESCAP could offer further technical assistance, capacity-building initiatives, and knowledge products thereby supporting countries in enhancing their informal sector measurement and advancing the implementation of the 2025 SNA.

Stats Café Registration: Measuring the Informal Sector in National Accounts – Fill out form

Programme

Time	Agenda
13:30–13:35	**Opening** - Welcome by Ms. Rachael Beaven, Statistician, Statistics Division, ESCAP - Stats Café moderated by Mr. Alick Mjuma Nyasulu, Statistician, Economic and Environment Statistics, ESCAP Statistics Division
13:35–13:55	**Compilation of Informal Sector in India National Accounts** - Dr. Dalip Singh, Additional Director General in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India
13:55–14:15	**Compilation of Informal Sector in Indonesia National Accounts** - Mohamad Arif Kurniawan, Senior Statistician, Directorate of Expenditure Accounts, BPS-Statistics Indonesia
14:15–14:25	**Questions and Answers** - Moderated by Mr. Alick Mjuma Nyasulu, Statistician, Economic and Environment Statistics, ESCAP Statistics Division
14:25–14:30	**Closing** - Ms. Rachael Beaven, Statistician, Statistics Division, ESCAP

Virtual meeting through Microsoft Teams at the link below:

Microsoft Teams meeting
Join on your computer or mobile app

https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/342029491979093?p=Ysru82l8Qprj8pKbHM

Join with a video conferencing device
unitevc@m.webex.com
Video Conference ID: 342 029 491 979 093

Alternate VTC dialing instructions
Learn More | Meeting options

Online registration here: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/tA6AraipWF
For information, please contact Mr. Alick Mjuma Nyasulu,
at email address nyasulua@un.org

Follow us:

unescap

unitednationsescap

united-nations-escap

unescap.org