

FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSULTATION PROCESS RELATED TO THE REVISION OF THE SYSTEM OF HEALTH ACCOUNTS (SHA)

Objective of this document

The revision of the System of Health Accounts (SHA) requires an agreed programme of work and a framework for co-operation between OECD, Eurostat and WHO and a wider consultation process involving other international and national organisations, networks and individual experts engaged in producing and utilising national health accounts. Three documents, including this one, are being prepared to guide the revision process. These documents are:

1. Terms of reference for the International Health Accounts Team (IHAT),
2. Framework for the consultation process related to revising the SHA,
3. Programme of Work for the SHA revision.

1. This document contains proposals for a framework for the international consultation process related to the revision of the System of Health Accounts (SHA).

Introduction

2. The basic methodological framework presented in the manual “A System of Health Accounts” (SHA) has become widely accepted: the SHA manual is currently used in a large and growing number of OECD and non-OECD countries as the standard accounting framework for statistics on health expenditure and financing. At the same time, in order to enhance the analytical power of the SHA and the usefulness of the statistical guidelines, both the SHA Manual and the *International Classification for Health Accounts* (ICHA) require some refinement and further extension.

3. The SHA Manual served as a basis for the *Guide to producing national health accounts with special applications for lower and middle-income countries* (Producer Guide) published by the WHO, World Bank and USAID in 2003. Many WHO Member States have implemented national health accounts following the Producer Guide, and many others are initiating the process.

4. The SHA Manual emphasised that “Version 1.0” should be considered as work in progress, and envisaged a revision process in the light of experience from pilot implementations. OECD, Eurostat and WHO have been engaged in several projects aimed at the further development of health accounting methodology during the past few years. Methodological development has also been undertaken in several countries. These efforts by the international organisations and countries provide important input for the revision of the SHA Manual.

5. OECD, Eurostat and WHO have a responsibility, based on their respective mandates to regularly collect and publish health expenditure data of their member countries and further develop the underlying methodologies. With the purpose of reducing the burden of data collection for the national authorities and increasing the use of international standards, the three organisations established a framework for a joint

health accounts data collection covering OECD and EU member and candidate and acceding countries, and successfully conducted the first data collection in 2006. WHO has also decided to promote the Joint Questionnaire in countries that are not members of OECD or EU.

6. OECD, Eurostat and WHO all have in their work programme the revision of the health accounts methodology and a draft of the SHA Manual Version 2.0 by the end of 2009.

7. In 2006, OECD, Eurostat and WHO, having agreed that it would be desirable to avoid the development of diverging versions of health accounts methodology, decided to structure their joint co-operation in methodological developmental work by working towards a common revised manual for the System of Health Accounts.

General requirements for a revised SHA Manual

8. In general, the revised SHA Manual is expected to provide:

- a refined conceptual framework and a revised and expanded version of the International Classification for Health Accounts which should be suitable from both a health policy analysis and a statistical point of view,
- better methods and more detailed guidance for improving the comparability of health expenditure data across countries and over time,
- relevant classification schemes for data used for the analysis of the sustainability of financing, macro-level efficiency and equity of utilisation of resources,
- information on the role of the health branch within the national economy through a solid statistical framework that is comprehensive, consistent and appropriately linked to other statistical systems, in particular to the System of National Accounts.

Coordination between OECD, Eurostat and WHO

9. The International Health Accounts Team (IHAT) is responsible for the organisation of the consultation process on the SHA revision. A separate document puts forward the terms of reference for the IHAT.

10. Where necessary, the IHAT shall meet at a senior level. The IHAT at a senior level comprises the Head of the OECD Health Division, the Head of Unit of Health and Food Safety Statistics of Eurostat and the Head of the cluster Health Systems Financing/National Health Accounts of WHO.

11. The IHAT at a senior level will keep the other international organisations, in particular the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) informed on the state of play at regular intervals.

12. The IHAT will if necessary convene at a senior level to consider the revised Draft Manual and, provided there is agreement, submit it to the decision-making bodies and structures of the three organisations for ratification.

The Programme of Work for the SHA revision

13. The IHAT will draw up and update whenever relevant a programme of work consisting of studies to be carried out under its auspices which relate to the revision of the SHA manual. This programme is also

valid in the case where already existing documents are used to integrate into a 'new' document. This programme of work will set out:

1. The distribution of the subject matter of the SHA revision into units.
 2. The coordinating organisation or organisations for each unit of work.
 3. The rationale behind each unit, the key issues to be addressed in each unit and the links between the subject matter in the units.
14. There is no obligation that studies outside the agreed common programme and the agreed time framework will be included in the revision process.
15. The following organisations and experts will be sent the Draft Programme of Work and this document and will be invited to take part in the consultation process:
1. Head of Statistical offices of all OECD and EU member and candidate and acceding countries.
 2. Head of National authorities other than statistical offices involved in work on national health accounts in OECD and EU member and candidate and acceding countries.
 3. Ministries of Health.
 4. Experts serving as focal points for the Joint OECD, Eurostat and WHO Health Accounts data collection.
 5. Health accounts networks.
 6. European Commission.
 7. UNSD, OECD Statistics Directorate.
 8. World Bank, Regional Development Banks, IMF.
16. The Draft Program of Work will be posted on the SHA-revision web-site. Comments on the draft programme of work and proposals for further studies for inclusion are welcome. Responses must be received within the time frame set out in this document.

Principles for the studies prepared under the SHA revision

17. The preparation of a study (as part of the intended revised SHA manual version 2.0) under the programme of work will proceed through a number of stages, including a wide consultation process (refer to Annex 1). Every part of the intended revised manual under this framework should be clearly identified by the words: "Draft under SHA Revision Process".
18. In preparing contributions, experts should take account of the following criteria:
- a. Previous documents and discussions on a given topic should be considered. This should include detail of the way in which the study differs from the current SHA Manual and the Producer Guide, if appropriate.

- b. Proposals for changes in concepts and methodology should also be assessed from the perspective of measurability (availability of data and feasibility of regular data collection, backward compatibility).
- c. Assessment of proposals should examine the relevance of the proposal for comparability of data across countries in global terms, and comparability of data across a group of countries (e.g. across OECD, or across low income countries).
- d. International comparability and country-specific needs may require reconciliation of different views. In this case, the proposed methodology should define the level of international comparability and allow for country specific solutions at a more disaggregated level.
- e. Relationship to other statistical systems, in particular to SNA, should be examined.
- f. The documents should be clear, not only for health accounts experts, but experts in health policy and related areas. The language should be plain and where necessary should provide an annex explaining technical terms and complex concepts.
- g. Documents may contain some questions which reviewers can address in their feedback.
- h. Particular attention should be paid to country cases supporting or opposing the study, or suggesting possible new approaches to the question.

Principles for consultation

19. OECD, Eurostat and WHO believe that a wide-ranging consultation process and contribution of health accounts experts to the SHA revision are of utmost importance to enhance the analytical power of SHA and improve its quality as a statistical framework.

20. A joint OECD, Eurostat and WHO SHA revision website and Electronic Discussion Group (EDG) will be established. All documents, studies, comments and feedback to comments will be made public on the website, unless the respondent requests otherwise.

21. The International Health Accounts Team will seek feedback on each draft paper under the SHA revision process, using the webpage on the SHA revision process, from national and international organisations, health accounts networks, and a wide range of individual experts, including health accounts experts, health policy experts and national accountants.

22. A study under the SHA Revision Process may be discussed in two ways:

- 1. through a consultation procedure organised jointly by OECD, Eurostat and WHO, and
- 2. through a consultation procedure organised separately by OECD, Eurostat and WHO, according to their own administrative structure and rules (refer to Annex 1).

23. The consultation process should allow for an expert to express his/her individual view, regardless of the existence or content of the view of his/her organisation. However, it should be made clear whether a comment is made as an individual contribution or on behalf of an organisation. If it is on the behalf of an organisation, the process through which the consensus was reached and whether there was any minority opinion should be indicated.

Key steps in the Joint Preparation, Consultation and Approval Process

24. The key steps and timing in the preparation and consultation process are outlined in Chart 1.

1. IHAT will issue a draft Programme of Work, consisting of a list of units, the organisation coordinating for the unit and a list of topics within each unit. An invitation to submit (produce or supply) input documents will be made by the coordinating organisation. Input documents will be posted on the SHA revision web-site for comments. Deadlines for input documents may be different for the different topics.
 - *The Programme of Work will be posted on the webpage. The invitation to submit by topic will be indicated on the webpage. All deadlines will also be posted on the webpage. Input documents will be submitted via a generic email indicated on the webpage. When received, the input documents will be transferred by email to the coordinating organisation. Input documents will be posted on the webpage. Discussion on the input document should occur via the SHA revision EDG by registered users. All interested health accounts, health policy and national accounts experts are invited to register as a SHA revision EDG user. All interested persons, including those registered on the EDG, have the option of communicating their views via the generic email. It should be emphasised that communication via the EDG is preferable as all comments can be read by users. Documents will be placed on the webpage with the permission of the author(s).*
 - *All documents posted on the webpage will have a coverpage with the title, author(s), institutional affiliation (if relevant), relevant unit of the manual, coordinating organisation for the unit, date of posting and the words “Draft under revision for SHA Manual 2.0” (and in addition the status of the document under the revision process) . Existing documents and comments received from individuals or countries addressing a topic will also be made available on the SHA revision webpage.*
 - *Overall, the webpage is the forum for managing and uploading all documentation relating to the revision and for posting deadlines. The EDG is the forum for discussion rather than uploading of documents.*
2. The organisation(s) coordinating the given topic will produce a proposal taking into consideration the input (comments) received (8 weeks after the deadline for submission of the input documents).
3. The IHAT will discuss the proposal and produce the First IHAT Draft (max 8 weeks). The coverpage will indicate the status of the paper under the revision process. The first draft of any document should spell out the differing views and seek opinions from the participants of the consultation process regarding the different possibilities. The first draft will be issued for a wide international consultation via the SHA revision web-site (8 weeks) and this period should be perceived as the second step of the consultation process.
 - *The first draft will be posted on the webpage. Comments should be channelled via the SHA revision EDG.*
4. After a period of consultation the Second IHAT draft will be produced (8 weeks). If there is IHAT consensus on the second draft, it will be sent to via IHAT at a senior level to OECD, Eurostat and WHO. (Note: official approval for the final draft SHA Manual 2.0 should be given when the

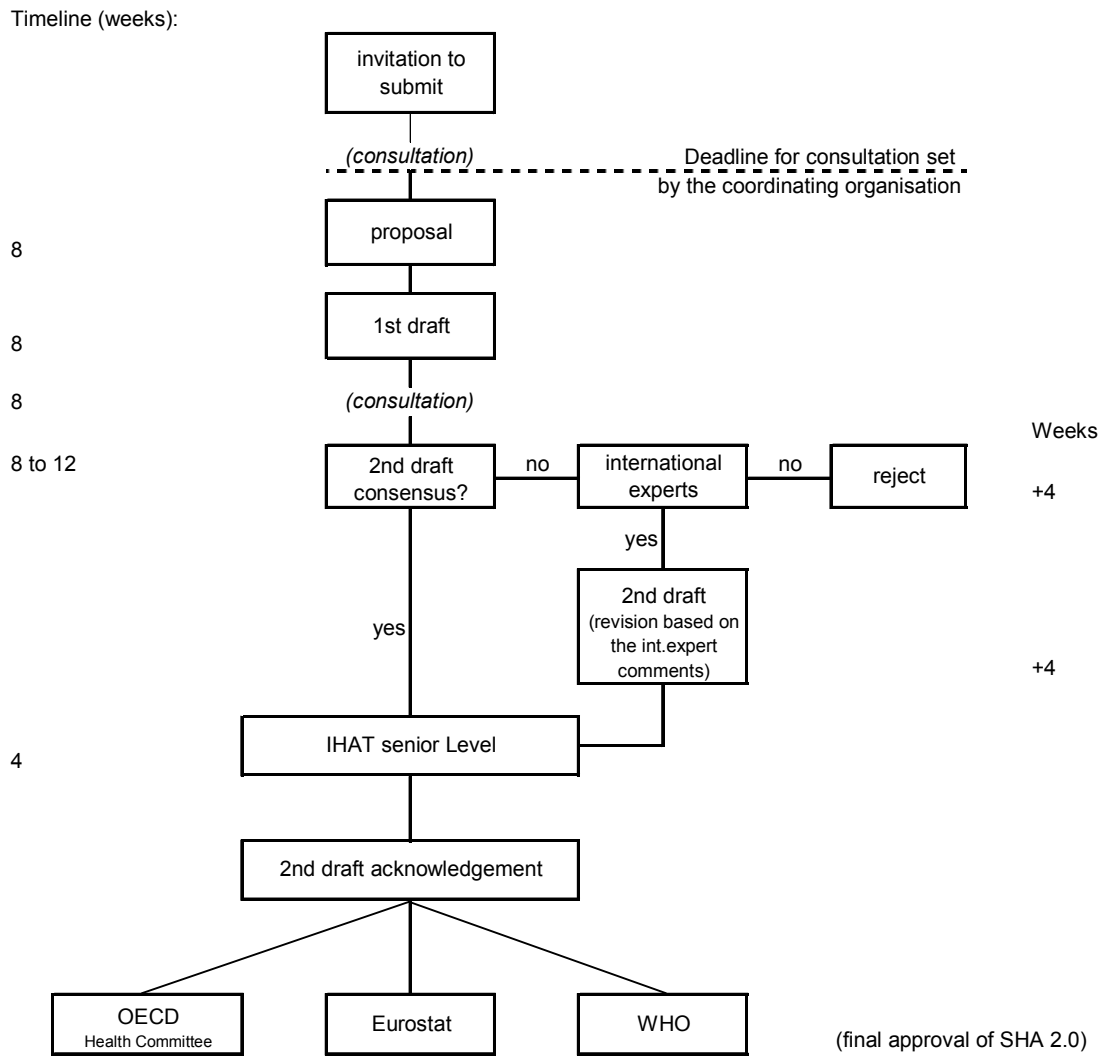
whole Manual is ready, as due to interlinking of the material, a given chapter can not be finalised until it is integrated into the whole.)

– *The second draft will be posted on the webpage.*

5. If consensus cannot be reached within the IHAT, the second draft will be sent to selected international experts (8 weeks). If they endorse the second draft, the IHAT will meet to decide whether the proposal should be modified in the light of the experts' comments and if it should be passed to the participating organisation via IHAT at a senior level for acknowledgement.
6. Where necessary the IHAT shall meet at a senior level.
7. If the selected international experts reject the proposal, either the draft document or the part of the draft document under contention will be rejected.
8. There will be a final overall revision of the SHA 2.0 draft for consistency.

– *The final draft will be posted on the webpage. Comments should be channelled via the SHA revision EDG.*
9. The decision on whether to accommodate comments on the final draft will be taken by IHAT at a senior level.
10. The draft of SHA 2.0 will be sent to OECD, Eurostat and WHO for approval.

Chart 1: Key steps and timing in the preparation and consultation process of a study



Total: excluding period for first consultation, 36 to 40 weeks with consensus and up to 48 weeks without consensus.

Annex 1: Consultation process organised separately within the 3 organisations (OECD, Eurostat, WHO)

25. The main OECD forum to discuss studies is the OECD Health Accounts Experts Meeting. Experts representing regional health accounts networks and experts serving as focal points for the joint health accounts data collection in countries that are not members of OECD are also invited to the meetings of the Health Accounts Experts.

26. In addition, OECD will:

1. send the studies to focal points and other health accounts and health policy experts and organisations in countries that are not members or candidate countries of the European Union, seeking comments on the draft proposals;
2. organise ad hoc meetings for which nominated experts may be invited from all OECD member countries as well as selected individual experts.

27. The main Eurostat forum to discuss studies is the Technical Meeting Care as well as the Core Group Care. EUROSTAT will inform all these experts by e-mail of the results available in the EDG. Other governmental and non-governmental organisations in the EU may be informed likewise. The progress of the work undertaken and the results reached will be offered to the Working Group on Public Health of EUROSTAT. Moreover the process will be co-ordinated with the work done in special task-forces (Development Group on SHA-revision) or the management teams of special projects set up in this area.

28. The main WHO forum to discuss studies is going to be a set of special consultation regional meetings involving all WHO Member States and notably their health accounts experts. Expert consultation meetings will also be organised in order to discuss specific technical proposals.