

Regional Kick-off Workshop of pilot activities for measuring illicit financial flows (IFFs) in Africa

16-17 June 2021

Concept note

Custodian agencies of SDG indicator 16.4.1, “*Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (IFFs), in current United States dollars*”, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), released a [Conceptual Framework](#) for the Statistical Measurement of Illicit Financial Flows in October 2020. In May 2021, UNCTAD finalised a draft of Methodological Guidelines to Measure Tax and Commercial IFFs for pilot testing, aimed at statistical and other national authorities with a mandate to collect and access relevant information. UNODC are finalising the Guidelines to measure IFFs from extractive activities and illegal drugs markets.

In 2018, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), together with UNCTAD, and with the cooperation of UNODC, inaugurated a new [Development Account project](#) called “*Defining, estimating and disseminating statistics on illicit financial flows in Africa*”. The project is aimed at consolidating existing and testing new methodological guidelines for the measurement of Indicator 16.4.1, as well as to build statistical capacity by providing technical assistance and guidance to pilot countries for the measurement of such indicator using the defined standards and concepts developed by UNCTAD and UNODC.

National circumstances dictate a comprehensive and tailored approach to produce reliable and granular IFF statistics. Measurement of the many types of IFFs in one indicator can only be done in close collaboration within the national statistical system (NSS) and with administrative data providers, in coordination by the national statistical office. The compilation of SDG indicator 16.4.1 is a technical, statistical activity that must be carried out independently in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics¹.

After a call for expression of interest in Africa in February 2021, the following countries participate in pilot testing of the measurement of IFFs: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia.

To present and discuss implementation of activities related to the measurement of IFFs in Africa, a kick-off workshop with national experts and stakeholders from institutions and agencies in African pilot countries is being organised. Specifically, the workshop will:

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>

- Introduce the participants to the concepts and definition of IFFs as included in the UNCTAD-UNODC Conceptual framework for the statistical measurement of IFFs;
- Introduce the methodologies and guidelines developed so far by UNCTAD and UNODC;
- Introduce national stakeholders and solicit their presentation of work and views on IFFs in pilot countries;
- Discuss the workplan for the implementation of pilot activities and present tools for the initial phase of the project (June-November).

The expected outcome of the meeting is to get a clear understanding of country needs, data gaps and steps needed to pilot the new IFFs methodology.

Successful measurement of IFFs requires collaboration across disciplines as illicit phenomena cut across society and data remain highly scattered. Therefore, the relevant government agencies and Ministries, and especially the NSO, Customs and Revenue office and Tax authority, to list but a few, are invited to actively participate in the online workshop. National stakeholders are invited to use the workshop to share their experience on IFFs and related data, specifically to outline the following:

1. What national initiatives, plans and strategies to address IFFs have been developed and adopted?
2. What inter-agency collaboration are in place, and which may be set up set up to facilitate national efforts to measure IFFs?
3. Based on current understanding, which IFFs are most relevant in African countries, or for the work of your agency? Which flows, industries, activities, and commodities are most affected?

The workshop will be conducted in English with interpretation in French and Portuguese.