

**Niger: Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes—Data Module,
Response by the Authorities, Detailed Assessments Using the
Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)**

This Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes on Data Module for Niger was prepared by a staff team of the International Monetary Fund as background documentation for the periodic consultation with the member country. It is based on the information available at the time it was completed on June 9, 2006. The views expressed in this document are those of the staff team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the government of Niger or the Executive Board of the IMF.

The Response by the Authorities on this report and the Detailed Assessments Using the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) are also included.

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Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module

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June 9, 2006

The Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC) data module provides an assessment of Niger's macroeconomic statistics against the recommendations of the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) complemented by an assessment of data quality based on the IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF July 2003). The DQAF lays out internationally accepted practices in statistics, ranging from good governance in data producing agencies to practices specific to datasets.

The datasets covered in this report are national accounts, consumer prices, government finance, monetary aggregates, and balance of payments statistics. The agencies that compile the statistics assessed in this report are the Directorate of Statistics and National Accounts,¹ the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in particular the Directorate General of the Economy, and the National Directorate for Niger of the Central Bank of West African States.

The datasets covered by this report can be accessed in print and, to a limited extent, on the Internet:

Directorate of Statistics and National Accounts: <http://www.stat-niger.org>

BCEAO: <http://www.bceao.int>

WAEMU Commission: <http://www.izf.net>²

This report is based on information provided prior to and during the mission to Niamey from March 1–18, 2005. The mission included Mr. Vincent Marie (Mission Chief), Mrs. Carol (Hoban) Fisher, Messrs. René Fiévet and Khanjar Wabel Abdallah (Senior Economists—all Statistics Department), Mr. Maxime Bonkougou (Expert), and Mr. Mbaye Gueye (Research Officer). The mission was assisted by the IMF's resident representative in Niger, Mr. Jemma Dridi.

¹ This Directorate is part of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

² Niger is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and takes part in the activities of the Union's institutions, particularly its Commission and the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO). At the time of this mission, the WAEMU's own website (www.uemoa.int) was not always readily accessible; however, the website of the franc zone (www.izf.net) provides information about the WAEMU and its member countries.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>1993 SNA</i>	<i>System of National Accounts 1993</i>
AFRISTAT	Sub-Saharan African Economic and Statistical Observatory
BCEAO	Central Bank of West African States
<i>BPM5</i>	<i>Balance of Payments Statistics Manual, 5th edition</i>
CNS	National Council on Statistics
DDP	Directorate of Public Debt
DGE	General Directorate of the Economy
DNN	BCEAO National Directorate for Niger
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
DSBB	Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board
DSCN	Statistical and National Accounts Directorate
GDDS	General Data Dissemination System
GDP	Gross domestic product
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
<i>GFSM 1986</i>	<i>A Manual on Government Finance Statistics, 1986</i>
<i>GFSM 2001</i>	<i>Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001</i>
HCPI	Harmonized Consumer Price Index
INS	National Statistical Institute
ISWGNA	Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
<i>MFSM</i>	<i>Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual</i>
NCOA	Nomenclature of West African Consumption
<i>NIS</i>	<i>Notes d'Information et Statistiques (BCEAO)</i>
ROSC	Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes
TOFE	Government Operations Table
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1. Niger has participated in the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) since February 26, 2002 and posts its metadata on the IMF's Data Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB). Appendix I provides an overview of Niger's dissemination practices compared to the GDDS.

2. This ROSC data module contains the following main observations. Niger's overall macroeconomic statistics is a picture of contrasts. On one hand, the harmonized consumer price index (HCPI), monetary, and balance of payments statistics, which have been developed for the most part within a regional framework, are collected and compiled under relatively favorable conditions. They reflect in part the substantial means at the disposal of the BCEAO. On the other hand, the national accounts and government finance statistics suffer from a chronic lack of resources in the compiling agencies, which also lack a clear strategic vision. The 2004 legislation that, among other things, establishes the National Statistical Institute (INS) and gives it a clear and precise mandate is a step in the right direction, and this legislation should be fully implemented and emulated in the case of fiscal sector data. Other benefits of the legislation should include an improved identification of responsibilities between statistics-producing agencies, a strengthening of resources, and enhanced coordination. These improvements would allow compilers to better respond to users' needs by enhancing the serviceability of real sector statistics and other statistical products. Generally speaking, resource constraints hamper the development and implementation of work programs, with the possible exception of monetary statistics. Statistical coordination is not always effective because the former National Committee on Statistics was not operational and the new National Council on Statistics (CNS) is not yet operational and not in a position to promote real cooperation among the various agencies that produce macroeconomic statistics. While underlying concepts and definitions usually conform to international standards, the scopes of price and government finance statistics and the classification of national accounts and monetary statistics are weak. Accuracy and reliability suffer from the weakness of data sources, notably in national accounts and price statistics. Each data-producing agency should pay greater attention to improving the serviceability of its statistical products. Dissemination practices across all data-producing agencies focus primarily on a limited circle of known users, neglecting the public at large, with the possible exception of price statistics. For most published data, Niger meets the GDDS periodicity recommendations but falls below these recommendations for the timeliness of dissemination. Section II provides a summary assessment by agency and dataset based on a four-part scale, followed by mission recommendations in Section III. The authorities' response to this report and a volume of detailed assessments are presented in separate documents.

3. The remainder of this section presents the mission's main conclusions. The presentation is undertaken at the level of the DQAF's quality dimensions, by agency for the first two dimensions and across datasets for the remaining four dimensions.

4. **Prerequisites of quality and assurances of integrity:**

- The statistical legislation adopted in 2004 is scheduled to be fully implemented in 2005. The legal framework regulating Niger's statistical system is thus in a transitional period, and the following ordinance and decree remain the main legal points of reference: the 1993 Ordinance creating the National Committee on Statistics and regulating coordination, reporting obligations, and secrecy in statistical surveys, and the 1994 Decree on the powers and organization of the MEF's **Statistical and National Accounts Directorate (DSCN)**.³ The 1994 Decree gives the DSCN the mandate to collect, compile, organize, and disseminate the official statistics of Niger and organize its activities. The 2004 texts are more precise in defining these responsibilities. Within the 1993 legal framework, the DSCN has primary responsibility for a wide range of statistics and takes a leading role in compiling the national accounts and prices statistics. The CNS is not operational, and coordination between agencies is therefore at best informal. Relevance could be improved by systematically assessing users' needs. Resource constraints, which impose trade-offs between quality dimensions, will need to be addressed before a complete statistics program can be considered. Quality improvement processes need to be introduced along with a culture that emphasizes professionalism. Quality objectives focus on taking steps to eliminate weaknesses only at the time they are identified. The DSCN's status and its financial dependence on the government budget limits its autonomy, though statistics seem to be produced impartially. Ethical standards are covered by general civil service regulations, but no specific code of conduct exists other than statistical secrecy rules. A public announcement of privileged access to statistics by government officials would enhance transparency. Overall, the DSCN has only a partial view of quality, with insufficient attention being paid to the serviceability and accessibility dimensions.
- Except for public debt statistics, the responsibility of the **Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)** for compiling government finance statistics (GFS) is not formally defined by law but is rather derived from various texts regulating public accounting and the budget. The MEF's General Directorate for the Economy (DGE) compiles data on Government Financial Operations (TOFE), broadly according to regional standards laid out in a WAEMU statistical directive, using source data from various MEF units and the BCEAO National Directorate for Niger (DNN). No legal document requires transmission of source data to the DGE, and reporting delays can thus be significant. Severe staffing and material constraints in the DGE impede preparation of the TOFE. Debt data are prepared by the Public Debt Directorate under a MEF instruction (*Arrêté*). TOFE and debt data are produced for a very limited circle of users and are not disseminated by the MEF. Users other than official users are not

³ The INS was formally established in mid-2005. However, because this report reflects the situation as of the time of the ROSC mission, reference continues to be made to the DSCN.

consulted on ways to improve the relevance of statistics. The nature of the source data (accounting and other administrative records) and the public accountant's professional standards contribute to data integrity. The civil service code of conduct establishes clear guidelines for professional behavior. The fact that MEF officials have advance access to the data for their internal needs is not publicized.

- The **BCEAO** is responsible for monetary and balance of payments statistics. Its legal mandate derives from the Treaty establishing the West African Monetary Union (WAEMU), the BCEAO statutes and banking legislation, together with a WAEMU regulation regarding balance of payments statistics. However, as they relate to the monetary survey, these provisions apply only at the regional level and not to individual Member States. Responsibilities are distributed between Headquarters, in charge of methodology and data collection at the regional level, and the DNN for compilation at the country level. The improvement of statistical quality is a steady priority of the BCEAO, as evidenced by efforts to adhere to international standards, such as migration to the IMF's *Balance of Payments Statistics Manual*, 5th edition (*BPM5*), the holding of seminars, and the recent allocation of additional resources for monetary statistics. However, the BCEAO's statistical resources could be distributed in a more balanced way; in 2004 a new staff member for monetary statistics was added, but staffing for the balance of payments statistics is still inadequate. The integrity of statistics appears to be firmly established by the BCEAO statutes, which give it legal independence from government, particularly in recruitment and promotion matters. Transparency would be enhanced, however, by public notification of privileged access to statistics. Staff are informed of the importance of ethical standards, mainly through the 2003 Personnel Charter, which was accompanied by a letter on the subject from the Governor.

5. **Methodological soundness.** As already mentioned, Niger is a member of the WAEMU, which has a Commission as its executive body and the BCEAO as its common central bank. The concepts and methods of member countries' macroeconomic statistics are increasingly being determined by these regional bodies, with a view to promoting and monitoring economic convergence. Thus, in addition to the long-standing harmonized approach to monetary and balance of payments statistics practiced by the BCEAO, the WAEMU Commission has issued directives over the past several years aimed at harmonizing statistics for the national accounts (1998), government finance (1997–99), and the harmonized consumer price index (HCPI), (1997). These statistics are broadly in conformity with international guidelines. The national accounts follow the *System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA)*, but have not adopted all of its recommendations. The Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI) methodology is broadly consistent with internationally accepted practices but its geographical scope is limited to the city of Niamey. Government finance statistics compiled in the TOFE are broadly consistent with *A Government Finance Statistics Manual, 1986 (GFSM 1986)* but their institutional coverage falls short of the manual's recommendations and of the WAEMU directive. No migration path to the *Manual on Government Finance Statistics 2001 (GFSM 2001)* is in place. The monetary statistics are generally based on the *Guide to Money and Banking Statistics in IFS (1984 Guide)* but uses an incomplete sectorization of assets and liabilities. Implementation of

the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual (MFSM)* has started, but without a precise timetable. The balance of payments statistics are compiled in conformity with the *BPM5*.

6. **Accuracy and reliability.** All data sets are affected in various degrees by limitations and inadequacies in their respective source data. National accounts data originate essentially from administrative sources, with many shortcomings, and the household and informal sector surveys are not up-to-date. The unavailability of certain data sources forces the DSCN to use some questionable statistical techniques for the treatment of some national accounts operations. Gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated from the production and expenditure approach but is based on largely obsolete ratios for many line items. Deflators are mostly derived from the HCPI, in the absence of more appropriate price indices. The accuracy of the HCPI is adversely affected by an outdated household expenditure survey that covers only three months of consumption and is thus subject to a seasonal bias. Data for the TOFE, although based on disparate sources, appear to be broadly accurate and reliable. They could be further improved by archiving of preliminary data and by conducting revision studies. The source data for monetary statistics are generally reliable, though they may be reported late. However, the free circulation of banknotes within countries of the zone complicates the estimation of currency in circulation. Although the survey response rate is low, the source data for the balance of payments are adequate. The above-mentioned difficulties owing to banknote circulation among WAEMU countries can complicate the estimation of gross external assets. GDP validation possibilities are limited because the same calculation method is used for estimates and final data. No revision studies are conducted for national accounts statistics and poor archiving practices preclude the conduct of such studies for GFS. Monetary statistics are generally not subject to revisions. While balance of payments data are revised, preliminary data and revisions studies are provided to official users only.

7. **Serviceability** of the disseminated data is generally inadequate. Except for GFS, the periodicity of dissemination conforms to GDDS recommendations, but the timeliness of the national accounts, GFS, balance of payments, and monetary statistics falls short of GDDS recommendations. Consistency standards are met by the datasets other than the national accounts and government finance. There is a need to introduce, institutionalize, and publicize revision policy and practice for all datasets. Macroeconomic statistics are for the most part designed for a restricted circle of official users and the needs of the general public are not monitored or inadequately so. All these statistics are available in the form of long time series. Revision studies, if any, are not published.

8. **Accessibility.** The DSCN's dissemination efforts are impeded by a lack of resources. National accounts are not accessible to all on an equal basis. Most GFS are available on request only, but the public is not so notified. Apart from the HCPI, the balance of payments, and to a lesser extent national accounts, macroeconomic statistics are disseminated without commentary. Metadata are generally not accessible in French. Contact information is limited to the IMF's DSBB. No link exists between official websites (DSCN, BCEAO, and IZF) and the DSBB. The DSCN and the BCEAO publish a catalog of their publications. Assistance to users is insufficient for all datasets other than prices.

II. ASSESSMENT BY AGENCY AND DATASET

9. Assessment of the quality of the five macroeconomic datasets (national accounts, consumer price index, government finance, monetary, and external sector statistics) were conducted in accordance with the DQAF. In this section, the results are presented at the level of the DQAF elements, using a four-point rating scale (Table 1). Assessments of the prerequisites of data quality and the assurances of integrity (Dimensions “0” and “1” of the DQAF) are presented in Tables 2a–c. For each statistical dataset, the assessment of methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability, and accessibility (Dimensions “2” to “5” of the DQAF) is shown in Tables 3a–e.

Table 1. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework July 2003—Summary Results

Datasets		National Accounts	Consumer Price Index	Government Finance Statistics	Monetary Statistics	Balance of Payments Statistics
Key to symbols: O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed; NA = Not Applicable						
Dimensions/Elements						
0. Prerequisites of quality						
0.1	Legal and institutional environment	LO	LO	LNO	LO	O
0.2	Resources	LNO	LO	NO	O	LO
0.3	Relevance	LO	O	LO	LO	LO
0.4	Other quality management	LO	LO	LO	O	LO
1. Assurances of integrity						
1.1	Professionalism	LO	LO	O	O	O
1.2	Transparency	LO	LO	LO	LO	LO
1.3	Ethical standards	LO	LO	O	O	O
2. Methodological soundness						
2.1	Concepts and definitions	LO	O	LO	LO	O
2.2	Scope	LO	LNO	LNO	LO	O
2.3	Classification/sectorization	LNO	O	O	LNO	O
2.4	Basis for recording	LO	O	LO	LO	LO
3. Accuracy and reliability						
3.1	Source data	LNO	LNO	LO	LO	LO
3.2	Assessment of source data	LO	O	O	O	LO
3.3	Statistical techniques	LNO	O	O	O	LO
3.4	Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs	LO	LO	O	O	O
3.5	Revision studies	NO	NA	NO	NA	LO
4. Serviceability						
4.1	Periodicity and timeliness	LNO	O	LNO	LNO	LNO
4.2	Consistency	LO	O	LO	O	O
4.3	Revision policy and practice	LO	LNO	LNO	LNO	LO
5. Accessibility						
5.1	Data accessibility	LO	O	LNO	LO	LO
5.2	Metadata accessibility	LNO	LO	LNO	LNO	LNO
5.3	Assistance to users	LO	O	LNO	LO	LO

Practice observed: current practices generally in observance meet or achieve the objectives of DQAF internationally accepted statistical practices without any significant deficiencies.
Practice largely observed: some departures, but these are not seen as sufficient to raise doubts about the authorities' ability to observe the DQAF practices. **Practice largely not observed:** significant departures and the authorities will need to take significant action to achieve observance. **Practice not observed:** most DQAF practices are not met. **Not applicable:** used only exceptionally when statistical practices do not apply to a country's circumstances.

Table 2a. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 0 and 1—Directorate of Statistics and National Accounts

<p>0. Prerequisites of quality</p>	<p>1. Assurances of integrity</p>
<p>Legal and institutional environment: The legal and institutional environment for statistical production and dissemination in Niger is undergoing a transition. The 1993 ordinance still regulates the National Statistical System, and the new statistical legislation adopted in 2004 is expected to become fully effective in 2005. The 1993 ordinance assigns the primary responsibility for policy formulation and coordination to the National Committee for Statistics. The decree of the Ministry of Finance and Planning of July 28, 1994 assigns the collection, compilation and dissemination of official statistics to the DSCN, including national accounts and prices. The confidentiality of statistical information and the obligatory character of statistical declarations are governed by the March 30, 1993 ordinance as well as by the new legislation. Because of a lack of resources and, above all, a lack of political will, the National Committee on Statistics was not operational. As a result, coordination between statistical producing agencies has been ad hoc, informal, and lacking in transparency.</p> <p>Resources: Financial resources are inadequate for the proper conduct of statistical activities. The major surveys needed for the national accounts are overly dependent on external financing. The HCPI, which has a specific budgetary allocation for price surveys, constitutes an exception. The DSCN plans its activities in light of available resources and seeks ways to use them rationally. Limited career prospects and modest pay scales have affected the retention rate of qualified staff. Computer resources are broadly adequate, but there is no proper backup system to safeguard databases in case of a natural disaster, except for the HCPI. The DSCN's access to the Internet and e-mail is occasionally suspended.</p> <p>Relevance: There are no framework and surveys for dialogue between the DSCN and statistics users. There are however some mechanisms in place for soliciting users' opinions. In publications of the national accounts, users are invited to send their observations to the DSCN. The documentation center keeps a record of such opinions, and users have an opportunity to express their needs during follow-up contacts with the national accounts department for supplementary data.</p> <p>Other quality management: The managers of the DSCN strive to ensure the quality of their statistical products by making improvements whenever problems are identified. The DSCN is also working with other countries of the WAEMU and through Sub-Saharan African Economic and Statistical Observatory (AFRISTAT) to improve and harmonize its statistical products and bring them up to international standards. However, the DSCN must make trade-offs between quality dimensions. It emphasizes reliability and accuracy at the expense of timely dissemination and data accessibility.</p>	<p>Professionalism: Until it is replaced by the National Statistical Institute under the legislation adopted in 2004, the DSCN's statute gives it limited independence or authority in the conduct of its activities. Nevertheless, the statistics seem to be compiled on an impartial basis. The choices of data sources, statistical techniques, and decisions relating to data dissemination are made solely on the basis of statistical considerations but must take account of resource constraints. Measures are taken to improve underlying statistical methodologies, consistent with international standards. The work is done by statisticians trained in the 1993 <i>SN4</i> or in the HCPI methodology, who are not sufficiently encouraged to produce methodological descriptions and analytical notes. The DSCN is entitled to comment on the misuse or misinterpretation of its statistical products.</p> <p>Transparency: All laws and decrees are published in the <i>Journal Officiel</i>. References to the DSCN's mandate to request data and disseminate statistics are included in letters sent out with surveys and data collection initiatives. Senior officials of the MEF have access to the national accounts data prior to their release, although this practice is not publicized. The DSCN clearly identifies its statistical products but does not request attribution when its statistics are reproduced by others. Users are not given advance notice of major changes in methodology or statistical technique for the national accounts.</p> <p>Ethical standards: Ethical standards are those that apply to the civil service as a whole. There are no specific ethical rules other than the legal provisions on statistical secrecy and the obligation to respond. These texts are provided to new employees upon request only. At best, new employees are made aware of these rules informally by the staff responsible for their training.</p>

Table 2b. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 0 and 1—BCEAO

<p>0. Prerequisites of quality</p> <p>Legal and institutional environment: The BCEAO’s responsibilities for monetary statistics are mentioned in the section of its statutes on monthly bulletins and its annual report (Title IV, Section 5). Article 70 requires preparation of a report on monetary developments within the WAEMU, but only at the regional level. These provisions make no reference to a monetary survey for each member state. The BCEAO’s balance of payments responsibilities derive from a WAEMU regulation (Article 1, Annex III to Regulation R09/98/CM/WAEMU of December 20, 1998). Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate (thanks to the CBP for balance of payments statistics), and there are sufficient safeguards over the confidentiality of data. Reporting by banks to the BCEAO is based on rules and procedures that are the same throughout the WAEMU. Under the terms of the banking law, commercial banks must report to the BCEAO using a common WAEMU chart of accounts (PCB).</p> <p>Resources: Generally speaking, the resources allocated to the production of monetary statistics are adequate. However, there is a shortage, equivalent to 2.5 full-time staff members, in the balance of payments and foreign exchange control unit. Material resources, including computer equipment and software, were recently upgraded for both units and are now adequate.</p> <p>Relevance: Statistical output is directed mostly to official policy makers and analysts. In practice, the only users whose needs are monitored are official users who can for example express their needs at meetings of the Balance of Payments Committee (CBP). The general public is not usually asked for comments on the relevance and serviceability of statistical products, and there is no formal survey to solicit outside users’ feedback. There is no user advisory committee or other periodic consultation process to review existing data practices and emerging data needs.</p> <p>Other quality management: Procedures are in place to verify information at each stage of data collection, processing, and dissemination. The main thrust of improvements of monetary statistics concerns the adoption of the <i>MFSM</i> methodology. With respect to the balance of payments, the views of users other than the members of the CBP are not monitored.</p>	<p>1. Assurances of integrity</p> <p>Professionalism: The statutory provisions under which the BCEAO headquarters and the DNN compile monetary and balance of payments statistics are adequate to support its impartiality. BCEAO staff are tenured and can be dismissed only for serious misconduct. Professional qualifications play a key role in the recruitment and promotion policy of statistics-producing departments, both in Dakar and in Niamey. The staff who compile these statistics enjoy adequate professional independence and are given opportunities to enhance their professional skills through participation in external courses and in-house training. The choice of data sources and statistical methods is determined solely by the need to produce analytically meaningful data. While the BCEAO is entitled to comment on the erroneous use of monetary statistics, it seldom does so. In general, the BCEAO provides little in the way of explanatory material and briefings to prevent misinterpretation of the data.</p> <p>Transparency: The statute of the BCEAO and other relevant texts are publicly available and are posted on the BCEAO website (www.bceao.int). Statistics are disseminated to all users simultaneously. While there is no government access prior to the release of monetary statistics, members of the Balance of Payments Committee are aware of the data before publication, as indicated on the GDDS metadata posted on the DSBB. BCEAO statistical publications are clearly identified as products of the BCEAO, but the producing department is not mentioned. Introduction of a new survey or a new statistical technique is not announced in advance, but statistics users are notified of any new survey results or statistical technique that has been used to prepare the data, as was the case with the introduction of statistics based on the <i>BPM5</i>.</p> <p>Ethical standards: At the time of recruitment, BCEAO staff are made aware of the applicable ethical standards, which were reinforced in 2002 upon revision of the staff regulations. These standards address issues of transparency, accountability, confidentiality, and conflict of interest. In January 2003, each BCEAO employee received a copy of the Personnel Charter, which stresses professionalism, the sense of responsibility, loyalty, and integrity.</p>
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Table 2c. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 0 and 1—Ministry of Economy and Finance

0. Prerequisites of quality	1. Assurances of integrity
<p>Legal and institutional environment: The MEF’s responsibility for GFS is not defined in any particular text but flows from its public accounting, budget, and debt functions, as defined by Decree No. 2004-078 of March 9, 2004. The Council of Ministers has not yet adopted a decree giving the MEF’s Commissariat in Charge of the Economy the responsibility for producing the table on government statistics (TOFE). The various aspects (methodology, frequency, etc.) of compiling the TOFE are harmonized at the regional level by WAEMU Directive 06/98/CM. The BCEAO National Directorate participates in the compilation of TOFE data by supplying data on net credit to the government by the banking system, and budgetary grants and loans. Although no formal data sharing arrangements exist between the MEF and the BCEAO, these institutions coordinate closely in exchanging data. The compilation of direct government debt, and on-lent and government-guaranteed debt statistics, is the responsibility of the Directorate of Public Debt (DDP) as part of its public debt management responsibilities, pursuant to Decree 326 of September 29, 1995.</p> <p>Resources: The unit responsible for compiling the TOFE, the General Directorate of Economy (DGE) of the CCE, is severely understaffed. Only one person, assisted by a volunteer, is in charge of compiling the TOFE. Data entry must be done with one PC, with outdated technology and software. Twelve DGE positions have been vacant since its creation. Lack of personnel translates into long overtime. Basic source data suppliers also suffer, to a lesser extent, from the MEF’s general lack of resources. The DDP also suffers from a lack of personnel, with fewer than 10 staff members, including volunteers.</p> <p>Relevance: TOFE data are prepared primarily for use by a small circle of official users, including international and regional institutions (IMF, World Bank, BCEAO, WAEMU) for monthly monitoring of fiscal and policy. There are no specific provisions for consulting users for their opinions on ways to improve the TOFE. The MEF does not publish the TOFE, but the DGE provides it upon request.</p> <p>Other quality management: The DGE meets monthly with BCEAO and MEF source data suppliers to validate and ensure the consistency of the TOFE data. However, there are no specific plans for statistical quality improvement.</p>	<p>Professionalism: TOFE data originate mainly from accounting and other administrative data, and are subject to public accountants’ professional standards. Despite the absence of laws or other formal provisions guaranteeing the professional independence of the DGE, the prevailing culture ensures a large measure of independence in the GFS matters. DGE staff indicated that they are free from political interference in the compilation of the TOFE. The DGE follows internationally recognized methodologies. Employment and promotion policy follows objective and impartial criteria based on professional qualification and skills.</p> <p>Transparency: All decrees related to public accounting, budget, and debt matters are published in the <i>Journal Officiel</i>. MEF officials have access to the TOFE before publication, since they are used as a working tool, but this fact is not made public. A header to the published TOFE clearly identifies the DGE as the source.</p> <p>Ethical standards: The Code of Conduct of the civil service in Niger establishes clear guidelines for professional behavior, including guidance on handling conflict of interest. New recruits are made aware of these regulations. There are no specific ethical rules pertaining to statistics.</p>

Table 3a. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—National Accounts

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p>Concepts and definitions: AFRISTAT's methodological guide to prepare national accounts in member states constitutes the main analytical framework. It broadly follows the concepts and definitions of the 1993 SNA. Some recommendations of the guide are not fully applied, in part because of source data limitations.</p> <p>Scope: The GDP covers almost all resident units and a great part of the informal sector. Certain regional institutional units are excluded. The same is true for illegal activities. Apart from the capital account for the Rest of the World, the tables and accounts of the 1993 SNA identified as recommended "minimum requirements" by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts are covered, but on an annual basis only.</p> <p>Classification/sectorization: The GDP is calculated annually using the production and the expenditure approaches. However, the classification of institutional units differs slightly from the 1993 SNA. Private nonprofit institutions serving households (NPISH) are included in general government rather than the household sector. The nomenclature used is derived from the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, Third Revision, but at an insufficient level of detail. The Central Product Classification and the classification of functions by government are not used, because the uses of GDP are not detailed.</p> <p>Basis for recording: Market output is valued at producer prices, all taxes included, including value added tax (VAT), because the available source data do not allow for a separate determination of VAT and estimation of basic prices. Flow data for the government sector are not always on an accrual basis, as is the case in many countries.</p>	<p>Source data: The source data are taken primarily from administrative data, which have many shortcomings and are very late, and from often-obsolete household budget and consumption surveys and surveys of the informal sector.</p> <p>Assessment of source data: The DSCN assesses and sometimes corrects data from different sources before they are used. Unrecorded trade source data from the BCEAO are used without adjustments, despite well-known deficiencies.</p> <p>Statistical techniques: Estimate of missing data use only fixed extrapolation coefficients. Transaction accounts with the rest of the world are provided by the balance of payments compiled by the BCEAO. The statistical methods used to deal with some particular issues related to GDP estimates are deficient (e.g., imputed rents). A difference in the assessment of Niger's economic situation between the DSCN and the IMF following the 1994 devaluation of the CFAF has led to differing estimates of GDP since that date; this requires a coordination framework between the MEF Economic Commission (on which the IMF relies) and other statistics-producing agencies.</p> <p>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs: GDP estimated by the production and the expenditure approaches are reconciled, and, for any gap, a stocks-based residual is estimated. However, at present, there is no appropriate framework, such as supply and use tables, to check the internal consistency of the data. Discrepancies are identified and corrected to the extent of the available information.</p> <p>Revision studies: Revisions of the preliminary and semi-final accounts are not accompanied by any studies of their direction and scope. Methodological revisions are publicized only at the time the revised data are published, and they are not the subject of any studies.</p>	<p>Periodicity and timeliness: Niger meets GDDS requirements for periodicity but not for the timeliness of national accounts. The latest accounts, published in December 2004, cover the provisional accounts for 2003 and the definitive accounts for 2000.</p> <p>Consistency: GDP estimations using the two approaches (production and expenditure) provide a consistency check. Because the balance of payments and TOFE data are used as source data for the national accounts, these different databases are consistent with each other. Intertemporal consistency is not always observed, partly because of the <i>ad hoc</i> introduction of revised databases without retrospective adjustment of the whole series.</p> <p>Revision policy and practice: Revised statistics are identified as such. There is no specific data revision schedule.</p>	<p>Data accessibility: The national accounts are mainly disseminated in hard copy. A 2–3 page analytical note accompanies the national accounts tables. Charts illustrate GDP components and uses. A list of 90 users receiving the national accounts free of charge is provided in the publication. Other users must purchase them from the DSCN. Additional data can be obtained upon request.</p> <p>An advance release schedule is not prepared.</p> <p>No database is publicly available. Data found on the website are not up-to-date.</p> <p>Metadata accessibility: The DSCN has written a highly summarized note of 20 pages, titled <i>Synthèse des Méthodes d'élaboration des comptes nationaux</i> ("Methodological summary of national accounts preparation") but it is not published. Niger's GDDS metadata are posted on the DSBB (in English only).</p> <p>Assistance to users: The DSCN website contains contact information (the director's name, address, email, and phone number, but no specific contact to the national accounts compilers), a list of publications and their prices, but adequate user assistance is not assured.</p> <p>For more information on the national accounts, the public must apply directly at the DSCN.</p>

Table 3b. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Consumer Price Index

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p>Concepts and definitions: The methodology, concepts, and definitions of the HCPI are those of the harmonized consumer price index of the WAEMU member countries, which are broadly consistent with the guidelines of the International Labor Organization.</p> <p>Scope: The HCPI covers household consumption according to the 1993 SNA. Certain types of expenditures are excluded because of international conventions or because of their small weights. The coverage of the HCPI is limited to resident African households in the capital city of Niamey, which represents only 6 percent of the total population of Niger.</p> <p>Classification/sectorization: The HCPI classification is the <i>Nomenclature de la Consommation Ouest-Africaine (NCOA)</i> which is common to all WAEMU countries and derived from the <i>Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose of the 1993 SNA</i>. In Niger, the NCOA is subdivided into 12 functions, 32 groups, 73 subgroups, 105 items, and 346 varieties.</p> <p>Basis for recording: In accordance with the 1993 SNA, final consumption expenditures are valued at the acquisition price, which includes relevant mark-ups and taxes.</p>	<p>Source data: The estimates of the HCPI budgetary coefficients are obtained from an outdated household expenditure survey limited to the Niamey metropolitan area, affecting the accuracy of the HICP, which also suffers from a seasonal bias because the survey was limited to April–June 1996. A planned light survey to generate the weights for seasonal products was precluded by budgetary constraints.</p> <p>Assessment of source data: Price data are first checked manually by the collector. They are then verified with the Computerized Calculation of Harmonized Prices software to detect atypical data. These checks deal with the exhaustiveness of prices, weights, and reasonableness.</p> <p>Statistical techniques: The HCPI is a standard Laspeyres-type index that is internationally accepted. The treatment of missing data is based on sound practices.</p> <p>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs: Since no producer price or any other monthly indices are produced, it is not possible to compare the primary results of the HCPI with other sources for validation purposes. All prices outside the relevant ranges are automatically displayed and verified, and potential problems are analyzed.</p> <p>Revision studies: The HCPI weights have not been revised since they were introduced, and revision studies have thus not been relevant or necessary.</p>	<p>Periodicity and timeliness: The monthly periodicity of the HIPC and its timeliness are in accordance with GDDS recommendations.</p> <p>Consistency: The data are internally consistent, and the results obtained after aggregation of classes of goods or services are the same, regardless of the method of aggregation used. Consistent and continuous series are available from January 1998. There is no price index from other sources to which the HCPI could be compared. The BCEAO does not provide the DSCN with its price index, which is prepared for its own internal use.</p> <p>Revision policy and practice: In principle, the base year of the HCPI must be revised every five years, but this schedule has not been adopted.</p>	<p>Data accessibility: The DSCN disseminates the HCPI monthly in its publication <i>Indice Harmonisé des Prix à la Consommation</i>. Each table is followed by comments on changes in the index and a few charts showing its movements in order to assist users. The level of published detail is adequate. The index appears before the 10th day of each month. Newspapers also publish the HCPI.</p> <p>Metadata accessibility: Two methodological guides published by EUROSTAT and the WAEMU Commission constitute the main reference tools. The first issues of the HCPI bulletin contained summary methodological notes on the index. The metadata prepared for the GDDS are posted on the DSBB (in English).</p> <p>Assistance to users: The contact information of the producers of the HCPI is mentioned in the monthly note and at the DSCN and AFRISTAT websites. HCPI publications are sold but can also be consulted at the DSCN documentation office. Additional information can also be obtained from the DSCN Indices Division. A list of the DSCN publications is posted on its website.</p>

Table 3c. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Government Finance Statistics

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p>Concepts and definitions: Concepts, definitions, and the analytical framework used for GFS compilation follow in general the WAEMU-wide system, which is derived from the <i>GFSM 1986</i>. There is no program for migration towards the <i>GFSM 2001</i>.</p> <p>Scope: The statistics cover central government only, i.e., the State budget and special accounts. The EPAs (autonomous administrative agencies), the social security fund, and local governments are not included. Some foreign-financed operations are excluded. Statistics on debt cover direct external and domestic debt of the government, as well as government-guaranteed, on-lent, and cross debt.</p> <p>Classification/sectorization: All flows and stocks are classified according to the <i>GFSM 1986</i> methodology, except privatization receipts and grants that are classified as financing (thereby anticipating the <i>GFSM 2001</i> methodology in the case of grants). The distinction between foreign and domestic debt is based on the <i>BPM5</i> residency criterion.</p> <p>Basis for recording: Revenue is generally recorded on a cash basis in accordance with the <i>GFSM 1986</i>, but expenditure on a payment order (<i>ordonnancement</i>) basis. Gross debt is valued at face value. External debt is valued using end-of-period exchange rates. Foreign exchange transactions are converted at rates set by the BCEAO, which are market rates.</p>	<p>Source data: Source data are obtained from numerous directorates (tax, customs, budget, Treasury, and financing directorates), and other agencies (BCEAO). The reporting system works relatively well, despite the lack of a legal basis. The source data are not always received on time, however. This reliance on disparate sources reflects the fact that a fairly complete general Treasury ledger is available with considerable delay only.</p> <p>Assessment of source data: Source data are examined prior to validation, and any inconsistencies within and across sources are checked with the reporting agencies.</p> <p>Statistical techniques: Because data are extracted from accounting and other administrative records, no special statistical techniques are necessary.</p> <p>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs: There are no intermediate results in TOFE compilation.</p> <p>Revision studies: Preliminary and provisional data are not archived, and no revision studies can be conducted.</p>	<p>Periodicity and timeliness: The only TOFE data that are systematically disseminated to the general public are the annual data disseminated by the BCEAO. This periodicity does not conform to the quarterly recommendation of the GDDS. Monthly data are disseminated only to a small circle of official users. The monthly public debt data are not disseminated either. Furthermore, the dissemination timeliness of the data does not conform to the recommendations of the GDDS.</p> <p>Consistency: TOFE statistics are internally consistent; the overall deficit equals overall financing but an adjustment to cash basis contains an element of estimation. The flow-stocks reconciliation is generally satisfactory for financing and external debt, but less so for domestic nonbanking debt. As the BCEAO is the source of bank financing, TOFE is also consistent with monetary data. TOFE data are fed into the national accounts, which ensures consistency with them.</p> <p>Revision policy and practice: TOFE data are not subject to revisions once they are disseminated to the general public. However, the data provided to official users prior to general dissemination are preliminary. These data are not archived. The availability of preliminary data is not publicized.</p>	<p>Data accessibility: The MEF does not disseminate the TOFE outside a narrow circle of official users. While the TOFE is available on request from the general public about two months following the end of the reference month, as indicated by the authorities, this possibility is not publicized (nor is there a release calendar). The BCEAO publishes the annual TOFE statistics, with long lags, in its information and statistical bulletin.</p> <p>Metadata accessibility: No methodological document is published or available, other than the metadata posted in English on the DSBB, which in some cases need updating. On the other hand, the WAEMU directives on the TOFE, where the analytical framework, scope, and definitions are explained, are publicly available at the WAEMU website.</p> <p>Assistance to users: Interested users must go in person or must telephone the MEF for assistance. The MEF does not have a website. There is no catalog of publications.</p>

Table 3d. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Monetary Statistics

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p>Concepts and definitions: The analytical framework is broadly consistent with the <i>Guide on Money and Banking in International Financial Statistics 1984 (1984 Guide)</i>. The BCEAO has started implementing the <i>MFSM</i>, in particular with respect to sectorization, but there is no timetable for migration to the new methodology.</p> <p>Scope: The coverage recommended by the <i>Guide</i> is incomplete as it does not include the savings accounts of the National Postal and Savings Office. Decentralized financial institutions are excluded.</p> <p>Classification/sectorization: Classification principles are broadly consistent with the <i>Guide</i>. However, as regards sectorization, there is no identification of the nonfinancial public sector other than central government. The distinction between resident and nonresident units is based on the <i>BPM5</i> methodology.</p> <p>Basis for recording: Valuation principles are generally consistent with the <i>Guide</i>. Data are recorded on an accrual basis with the exception of interest, which is recorded only when due. Impaired assets are declared net of provisions, which does not conform with the <i>MFSM</i> recommendations.</p>	<p>Source data: The accounts of the DNN are compiled from detailed accounting statements. Monthly balance sheets of other depository institutions are derived from a well-documented, WAEMU-wide chart of accounts. The free circulation of banknotes in countries of the zone complicates the estimation of currency in circulation, and these sources must be completed by an elaborate process of banknote sorting. Source data are usually available with a 30-day lag for all the commercial banks but one, which reports with an additional delay of one week to 10 days. The timetable for establishing the balance sheet of the DNN was shortened in December 2004, reducing the publication lag to 60 days.</p> <p>Assessment of source data: Source data, which are drawn almost exclusively from accounting sources, are rigorously checked. Bank report forms are subjected to automatic consistency and accuracy checks before being entered in the BCEAO database. Intertemporal consistency and internal consistency is systematically tested. The same remark applies to the consistency of the corresponding interbank positions.</p> <p>Statistical techniques: As data compilation is fully based on administrative sources, without any resort to sampling, statistical adjustments are not made. Statistical work is automated, and this minimizes processing time and errors. The BCEAO does not publish seasonally adjusted series.</p> <p>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs: By construction, the monetary statistics compilation process does not produce intermediate results. Unexplained fluctuations in monetary aggregates are investigated, mainly through contacts with the respondents.</p> <p>Revision studies: There are no revision studies, because published data are not usually subject to revisions.</p>	<p>Periodicity and timeliness: Periodicity complies with GDDS guidelines, but timeliness, with a lag of three months, does not, despite progress accomplished in compiling the central bank's balance sheet.</p> <p>Consistency: Internal data consistency is adequate and the intertemporal consistency was recently improved. There is a homogeneous time series back to 1994, and a historic series is available covering the period 1965–1994. The main series breaks are indicated. Consistency with the balance of payments and GFS statistics is ensured by using the same data sources. Differences between the net position of the banking system vis-à-vis the government, if any, are explained by differences of coverage.</p> <p>Revision policy and practice: There is no formal revision policy. Once published, the data are not usually subject to revisions. On the rare occasion when preliminary data are published, this is indicated in the <i>NIS</i>.</p>	<p>Data accessibility: The monetary statistics for Niger are disseminated in the BCEAO monthly statistical publication <i>Notes d'Information et de Statistiques</i> and on its website. The hardcopy tabular and graphical presentation is clear and relevant but is not accompanied by any commentary on SMI trends. The site presentation lacks clarity. No release calendar is announced in advance. Statistics are made available to all users at the same time, and individual requests for supplementary data are met. However, these policies are not publicized.</p> <p>Metadata accessibility: There is no detailed <i>sources and methods</i> documentation available to the public other than a glossary in the <i>Notes d'Information et de Statistiques—BCEAO (NIS)</i>, the GDDS metadata posted on the DSBB (in English only), and an internal document prepared in 1995 by the Directorate of Research and Forecasting.</p> <p>Assistance to users: Contact information is presented on the DSBB only. No such information appears in the BCEAO's statistics bulletin or at its website. The existence of the website is not mentioned in the <i>NIS</i>.</p>

Table 3e. Niger: Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Balance of Payments Statistics

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p>Concepts and definitions: Concepts and definitions conform to internationally accepted statistical standards, namely the <i>BPM5</i>.</p> <p>Scope: The balance of payments records all transactions between residents and nonresidents, including transactions by the traditional or informal sector with the rest of the world, and smuggling. It covers the entire national territory.</p> <p>Classification/sectorization: Data compiled by the BCEAO largely meet the <i>BPM5</i> recommendations for classification and sectorization.</p> <p>Basis for recording: Statistics are generally recorded in conformity with <i>BPM5</i> recommendations. Balance of payments flows are recorded on an accrual basis, except for some categories of income that are recorded on a cash basis (private sector interest income). Valuation is usually at contractual prices.</p>	<p>Source data: The data collection system is based on diversified sources and appears to be well adapted to the context of Niger. The main shortcoming relates to private sector deposits and loans with nonresident banks, which are generally insufficiently covered by surveys. Problems in sorting bank notes from other WAEMU countries can also complicate the calculation of gross external assets. Source data are generally received in time.</p> <p>Assessment of source data: Most source data are routinely assessed, for example by comparison with the previous year. High-value transactions are checked by direct contact with the respondents. The seemingly low rate of responses to the questionnaires (about 60 percent) does not appear to raise a major statistical coverage issue as the BCEAO ensures that the major transactors provide responses.</p> <p>Statistical techniques: The statistical techniques used to complete or adjust the source data, notably in the case of external trade statistics (e.g., converting data from c.i.f. to f.o.b.), are sound. However, there is no underlying methodology supporting the arbitrary adjustment made for unrecorded trade.</p> <p>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs: Crosschecks and supplementary surveys are conducted to assess intermediate results. Changes are made to correct asymmetries identified in bilateral balances of WAEMU countries.</p> <p>Revision studies: Analyses of revisions to the provisional estimates distributed to official users prior to the dissemination of the final data to the general public are undertaken within the framework of the monetary program. These analyses are contained in an internal report called “Review of the monetary program.”</p>	<p>Periodicity and timeliness: The periodicity is annual and corresponds to the GDDS recommendations. However, the bank settlement reports system should in principle allow for the production of a quarterly balance of payments statement. Balance of payments data are published 14 months after year-end, which does not conform to GDDS recommendations (6 to 9 months).</p> <p>Consistency: Statistical series are sufficiently detailed to check that data are internally consistent overall. Time series are also consistent within the same methodological framework, and with other data sets, notably government finance and monetary statistics, with which they share common data sources.</p> <p>Revision policy and practice: No publicized revision policy exists. Data disseminated to the general public are not subject to revisions. However, preliminary data are distributed to a small circle of official users prior to dissemination of final data to the general public.</p>	<p>Data accessibility: Balance of payments data are presented in a relatively comprehensive report (about 20 pages), published each year by the MEF and the CBP. This document provides comments on the main items of the balance of payments and also a presentation of the international investment position. A very succinct balance of payments table is also published in the BCEAO’s <i>N/S</i> and on its web site. The website presentation contains no graphs, and cannot be downloaded. Hardcopy and website dissemination are not simultaneous. No advance release calendars are published. Statistics are made available to policymakers, notably to the members of the Balance of Payments Committee, before they are publicly released. This practice is not publicized by the BCEAO.</p> <p>Metadata accessibility: There is no detailed <i>sources and methods</i> documentation available to the public other than the GDDS metadata posted on the DSBB (in English only). Contact information is included only with the DSBB metadata. No such information appears in the BCEAO statistical bulletin or its website. The metadata are not prepared with different audiences in mind.</p> <p>Assistance to users: User assistance is available only through contact with the headquarters Research Department.</p>

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Based on the review of Niger's statistical practices, discussions with the data producing agencies, and responses from data users (see Appendix III of the Detailed Assessments volume), the mission made recommendations. They are designed to increase further Niger's adherence to internationally accepted statistical practices and would, in the mission's view, enhance the analytical usefulness of Niger's statistics. Some additional technical suggestions are included in the Detailed Assessments volume.

Cross-cutting Recommendations

Short term

- Complete adoption of the new legislative and regulatory provisions in statistics.
- Adopt a strategy for statistical development that will incorporate this report's recommendations and GDDS improvement plans. Identify corresponding measures and quantify them with a view to seeking support from donors.
- Increase human resources for all three agencies.
- Promote in compiling agencies a culture of serviceability aimed at the general public and conduct regular users' surveys, and
- Post GDDS metadata in French on the Internet and inform the public of this.

Medium term

- Draw up and implement a "statistics master plan" (*schéma directeur de la statistique*) as a medium-term program for statistical activities and for raising INS resources.
- Draft and publish comprehensive *sources and methods notes* as necessary, and revisions studies.
- Complete the work underway on the improvement of the coefficients for sorting out banknotes stocks in the BCEAO zone, and
- Reduce dissemination lags to bring timeliness into conformity with the GDDS standards.

National Accounts

Short term

- Complete the ongoing overhaul of the national accounts (*1993 SNA*) using the ERE/TES module, and
- Prepare and publish methodological notes on national accounts preparation.

Medium term

- Develop more appropriate deflators and a producer price index, and
- Request technical and financial support to improve source data and conduct surveys for updating the basis for estimating the informal sector and household consumption.
- Review methodology used by the DSCN to estimate GDP (in the light of conflicting statistical series used for monitoring the IMF-supported programs). This could be made through a Fund's TA mission to the DSCN.
- Compile quarterly economic indicators (e.g., manufacturing, agriculture, etc., as well as producer prices).

Consumer Price Index

Short term

- Conduct a household expenditure survey covering an adequate time frame and coverage.

Medium term

- Broaden the HCPI's geographical coverage beyond the city of Niamey and plan the preparation of a national price index.

Government Finance Statistics

Short term

- Formalize in a text the DGE's responsibility for compiling a comprehensive set of government finance statistics.
- Increase the DGE's human and material resources, and
- Post TOFE and debt data and metadata on the WAEMU Commission website.

Medium term

- Implement more fully the WAEMU directive on the TOFE, and extend coverage, and
- Develop a plan to adopt *GFSM 2001*, in consultation with the WAEMU Commission.

Monetary Statistics

Short term

- Advise *NIS* readers that there is an Internet site for the BCEAO (www.bceao.int).
- Provide advance notice on the BCEAO Internet site of forthcoming changes in the periodicity and timeliness of dissemination in the *NIS*.
- Prepare and disseminate a release calendar.

- Accelerate publication of the BCEAO's balance sheet and separate the publication of central bank statistics from the publication of banks and other financial institutions statistics.

Medium term

- Expedite the plan to integrate the available annual databases on the decentralized financial system into the core annual monetary and financial statistics.
- Establish a comprehensive and detailed subsectorization and classification of the nonfinancial public sector, consistent with the *MFSM*, and
- Undertake a revision study using the outcome of the working group on application of coefficients for sorting banknote stocks in the zone.

External Sector Statistics

Short term

- Define a methodology for adjusting official trade data to account for informal trade, and
- Increase the rate of response to questionnaires.

Medium term

- Increase human resources in order to improve the currentness and reliability of the BOP estimates.
- Make bank settlement reporting more timely and reliable so that quarterly balance of payments statistics can be produced and published.

Table 4. Niger: Overview of Current Practices Regarding Coverage, Periodicity, and Timeliness of Data Compared to the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS)
(Based on GDDS Metadata Posted on DSBB)

GDDS Data Category	Coverage (meets GDDS)	Periodicity		Timeliness	
		GDDS	Niger	GDDS	Niger
COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK					
Real sector: National Accounts	No	A	A	10–14 mos.	6–10 mos.
Fiscal sector: Central govt. operations	No	A	M, diss A	6–9 mos.	7 mos. after end of year
<i>General govt. operations</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>6–9 mos.</i>	<i>NA</i>
Central govt. debt	M	A	M	6–9 mos.	7 mos.
Financial sector: Broad money survey	Yes	M	M	2–3 mos.	3 mos.
External sector: Balance of payments	Yes	A	A	6–9 mos.	14 mos.
<i>International investment position</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>6–9 mos.</i>	<i>14 mos.</i>
DATA CATEGORIES AND INDICATORS					
Real Sector					
GDP (nominal and real)	Yes	A (Q)	A	6–9 mos.	Provisional: 6–10 mos.
<i>Gross national income, capital formation, saving</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>6–9 mos.</i>	<i>NA</i>
Manufacturing / industrial production index	NA	M	Q	6wks–3 mos.	NA
Primary commodity	NA	As relevant	NA	6 wks–3 mos.	NA
Consumer price index	Yes	M	M	1–2 mos.	10 days
<i>Producer price index</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>1–2 mos.</i>	<i>NA</i>
Employment	Yes	A	A	6–9 mos.	Appr. 10 mos.
Unemployment	No	A	Irregular	6–9 mos.	Irregular
Wages/earnings (all sectors)	Yes	A	A	6–9 mos.	Appr. 10 mos.
Fiscal Sector					
Central govt. budgetary aggregates.	Yes	Q	M, diss A	1qtr	25 days
<i>Interest payments</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Q</i>	<i>M, diss A</i>	<i>1 qtr</i>	<i>5–7 mos.</i>
Central govt. debt: domestic and foreign debt, as relevant, with appropriate breakdowns (debt holder, instrument, currency)	Yes	A (Q)	M	1–2 qtrs	5–7 mos.
<i>Government guaranteed debt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>1–2 qtrs</i>	<i>NA; Compiled, not diss</i>
Financial Sector					
Broad money and credit aggregates	Yes	M	M	1–3 mos.	2–3 mos.
Central bank aggregates	Yes	M	M	1–2 mos.	2 mos.
Short- and long-term govt. security rates, policy variable rate	Yes	M	Varies	In high-frequency publication	Varies
<i>Money or interbank market rates and a range of deposit and lending rates</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>In high-frequency publication</i>	<i>Varies</i>
<i>Share price index, as relevant</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>In high-frequency publication</i>	<i>1 day</i>
External Sector					
Balance of payments aggregates	Yes	A (Q)	A	6 mos.	14 mos.
Public and publicly guaranteed external debt outstanding, with maturity breakdown	Yes	Q	M, diss A	1–2 qtrs	3 Qts
Public and publicly guaranteed debt service schedule	Yes	Twice Yearly	A	3–6 mos.	7 mos.
<i>Private external debt not publicly guaranteed</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>6–9 mos.</i>	<i>NA; compiled, not diss</i>
Gross official reserves in U.S. dollars	Yes	M	M	1–4 wks	2–3 mos.
<i>Reserve-related liabilities</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>1–4 wks</i>	<i>NA</i>
Total exports and total imports	Yes	M	M	8 wks–3 mos.	9–10 mos.
<i>Major commodity breakdowns with longer time lapse</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>8 wks–3 mos.</i>	<i>9–10 mos.</i>
Exchange rates: spot rates	Yes	D	D	In high frequency publication	1–3 D

Italics indicate encouraged categories **Note:** (D) daily; (W) weekly; (M) monthly; (Q) quarterly; and (A) annual; (DD) Domestic debt; (FD) Foreign debt

Source: DSBB, Table II. Metadata last updated January 2003

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

NIGER

Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module

Response by the Authorities

June 9, 2006

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I. GENERAL COMMENTS

In the area of statistical organization, the following measures were implemented after the March 2005 ROSC mission:

- The DSCN was transformed into the National Statistical Institute (INS);
- The new organization of the INS now features Directorates (each of which has Divisions and Units), including a Directorate responsible for statistical coordination in order to address the inadequacy of coordination identified by the mission;
- In order to remedy the shortcomings and improve the quality of human resources, the INS has hired, thanks to financial support from the European Union, a number of contractual senior statistical personnel.

II. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS STATISTICS

A. Resources

As regards resources, the following measures were implemented after the ROSC mission or are being envisaged:

- An economist has been appointed chief of the National Accounts Division;
- The Division now has two units: a modern sector accounts unit, and an informal sector accounts unit;
- In light of the ongoing restructuring of the INS, the IT equipment will be reallocated, as will office space and mopeds.

B. Dissemination

As part of its dissemination efforts, and in keeping with Niger's participation in the General Data Dissemination System, the INS has prepared final national accounts through 2002 and provisional accounts for 2004, which were published in October 2005.

C. Implementation of Recommendations from IMF Staff

- The work on overhauling the national accounts and the resulting change in base were announced in the paper on the provisional accounts for 2004 disseminated in October 2005;
- Moreover, a note on the revision of the national accounts is now part of any publication of the accounts.

III. PRICE STATISTICS (CONSUMER PRICE INDEX)

A. Dissemination

The INS website is now operational and the price indices are published regularly.

B. Implementation of Recommendations from IMF Staff

The revision of the HPCI is still under study at the WAEMU Commission level.

IV. GOVERNMENT FINANCE STATISTICS

A. Resources

Since the ROSC mission, two additional staff were added to work on the TOFE and the old computer has been replaced.

B. Migration to *GFSM 2001*

It should be noted that, following their participation in the AFRITAC-WEST seminar on the *GFSM 2001* held in Lomé, Togo, from November 21 to December 2, 2005, MEF staff have submitted proposals with respect to the migration process, which were endorsed by the senior staff at the Ministry. A six-point strategy has been proposed in order to facilitate the transition from the *GFSM 1986* to *GFSM 2001*:

Definition of the institutional framework

- Adoption of legal provisions identifying the unit responsible for preparing government finance statistics within the Ministry of Economy and Finance;
- Appointment within that unit of a coordinator for the compilation of government finance statistics and of a correspondent with the IMF Statistics Department for the purposes of disseminating Niger's GFS data;
- Establishment of a committee in charge of compiling GFS data comprising all units that provide source data. The committee's tasks are as follows:
 - * ensuring that data are timely communicated to the unit in charge of preparing GFS;
 - * validating data prior to their submission for review to the Ministry of Economy and Finance and official transmission to the IMF Statistics Department.

Preparation of the institutional table

In view of the fact that *GFSM 2001* and *SNA 1993* have the same institutional coverage, the institutional table can be prepared with reference to the table of institutional sectors used by

the INS. Accordingly, all institutional units will be classified and those that are in the general government sector will be readily identified.

Training

Training will target all members of the committee in charge of GFS compilation and the main official users of those statistics. The training will focus on the general principles of the *GFSM 2001* and implications for the TOFE.

Analysis of the status of current GFS production

An analysis of current GFS production will be undertaken covering:

- The various information sources (revenue, expenditure, grants, debt, financing, net credit to government) and;
- The procedures used to record the data;
- TOFE.

The aim of this analysis is to assess, on the basis of current practices, the steps to be undertaken to migrate to the *GFSM 2001*.

Gathering and integrating data from institutional units not yet covered

This entails broadening the scope of coverage of the current TOFE in order to cover the entire general government sector.

- CNSS [social security fund];
- local governments (8 regions and 265 communes);
- Government administrative agencies (EPAs).

Planning implementation of *GFSM 2001*

- Production of government financing statistics on the basis of existing data;
- Based on the analysis of the current situation, each structure, depending on its capacities, will prepare a timetable for producing GFS according to the *GFSM 2001* classification. Such GFS data will include:
 - Grants in kind;
 - The government's balance sheet;
 - Fixed capital consumption;
 - The use of goods and services (a requirement of materials accounting).

V. MONETARY AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS STATISTICS

The mission made several recommendations on the preparation of the monetary statistics and balance of payments statistics. The status of the implementation of these recommendations is as follows:

A. Monetary Statistics

In all, eight recommendations were made, five of them for the short term. The areas where changes have been made are as follows:

- The address and contact points, as well as the BCEAO website, are indicated in the new published version of the *Notes d'Information et Statistiques (NIS)* in French and English;
- The launch of the reorganized website now makes it possible to access all BCEAO publications without major difficulty. The data are published in the *NIS*, and appear on the main *Publications* menu accessible from the *Homepage* as well as in the annual reports, analytical notes, the BCEAO's yearbooks and balance sheets, and many other documents available to the public;
- The change in data dissemination method was announced in a *Notice to Subscribers* to the BCEAO's publications on November 18, 2004, in order to indicate that hard-copy publications had been replaced by an electronic version now available through August 2005;
- The work on updating the *MFSM* is in progress: a timetable for the various tasks to be carried out has been adopted, and the complete and detailed sectorization of the financial corporations sector is in progress (a note has already been drafted);
- The method of determining currency in circulation has been revised.

B. Balance of Payments Statistics

Three recommendations were made as regards the methodology for taking the informal sector into account, the response rate to questionnaires, and the publication of quarterly balances. Since the ROSC mission took place, implementation is as follows:

- Consideration is currently being given for revising the methodologies used to adjust the official external trade data. The various ratios used to correct customs statistics (value and coverage) are now being revised;
- The anticipated rate of response to questionnaires in 2005 is 70 percent, as compared to less than 60 percent in earlier years.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

NIGER

Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module

Response by the Authorities

June 9, 2006

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I. GENERAL COMMENTS

In the area of statistical organization, the following measures were implemented after the March 2005 ROSC mission:

- The DSCN was transformed into the National Statistical Institute (INS);
- The new organization of the INS now features Directorates (each of which has Divisions and Units), including a Directorate responsible for statistical coordination in order to address the inadequacy of coordination identified by the mission;
- In order to remedy the shortcomings and improve the quality of human resources, the INS has hired, thanks to financial support from the European Union, a number of contractual senior statistical personnel.

II. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS STATISTICS

A. Resources

As regards resources, the following measures were implemented after the ROSC mission or are being envisaged:

- An economist has been appointed chief of the National Accounts Division;
- The Division now has two units: a modern sector accounts unit, and an informal sector accounts unit;
- In light of the ongoing restructuring of the INS, the IT equipment will be reallocated, as will office space and mopeds.

B. Dissemination

As part of its dissemination efforts, and in keeping with Niger's participation in the General Data Dissemination System, the INS has prepared final national accounts through 2002 and provisional accounts for 2004, which were published in October 2005.

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INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

NIGER

Detailed Assessments Using the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF)

Prepared by the Statistics Department

Approved by Robert W. Edwards and Abdoulaye Bio-Tchané

June 9, 2006

This document contains a detailed assessment by dataset of the elements and indicators that underlie the data quality dimensions discussed in Niger's Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module. It also includes as appendices the DQAF generic framework and the results of the users' survey.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>1993 SNA</i>	<i>System of National Accounts 1993</i>
AFRISTAT	Sub-Saharan African Economic and Statistical Observatory
AGRHYMET	<i>Centre régional de formation et d'application en agro-météorologie et hydrologie opérationnelle</i> (Regional training and application center in agrometeorology and operational hydrology)
ASECNA	<i>Agence pour la Sécurité de la Navigation Aérienne</i>
BCEAO	Central Bank of West African States
BGT	<i>Balance générale des comptes</i>
<i>BPM4</i>	<i>Balance of Payments Statistics Manual, 4th edition</i>
<i>BPM5</i>	<i>Balance of Payments Statistics Manual, 5th edition</i>
BPR	Balance of Payments in Settlement Terms
BPT	Balance of Payments in Transaction Terms
CAADIE	<i>Caisse Autonome d'Amortissement de la dette Extérieure</i>
CBP	Balance of Payments Committee
CCP	Postal Checking Accounts
CHAPO	<i>Calcul Harmonisé des Prix par Ordinateur</i> (Harmonised Computer-aided Calculation of Prices)
CNCD	National Customs Chain Committee
CNS	National Council on Statistics
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose
CPC	Central Product Classification
CRP	<i>Compte rendu de paiements</i>
CS DRMS	Commonwealth Software
DB	Budget Directorate
DDP	Directorate of Public Debt
DEVINFO	Database system on social development indicators
DGB	Directorate General of the Budget, MEF
DGD	Directorate General of Customs, MEF
DGE	Directorate General of the Economy, MEF
DGEP	General Directorate of Plan and Economy
DGF	General Directorate of Financing, MEF
DGI	General Tax Directorate, MEF
DNN	National Directorate for Niger, BCEAO
DSBB	Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board
DSCN	Statistical and National Accounts Directorate, MEF
DSF	<i>Declaration statistique et fiscale</i>
DSFD	Directorate of the Decentralized Financial System
EPA	Public Administrative Establishments
ERE/TES	Supply and use tables/Input and output tables
GDDS	General Data Dissemination System
GFCF	Gross Fixed Capital Formation
GFS	Government Finance Statistics

<i>GFSM 1986</i>	<i>A Manual on Government Finance Statistics, 1986</i>
<i>GFSM 2001</i>	<i>Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001</i>
HCPI	Harmonized Consumer Price Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ILO	International Labour Office
INS	National Statistical Institute
<i>ISIC, Rev. 3</i>	<i>International Standard Industrial Classification, Revision 3</i>
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
<i>MFSM</i>	<i>Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual</i>
NAD	National Accounts Division, DSCN
NAEMA	Classification of activities of Afristat member States
NCOA	Nomenclature of West African Consumption
<i>NIS</i>	<i>Notes d'information et statistiques</i>
NOPEMA	Classification of products of Afristat member States
NPHISH	Nonprofit Institutions Serving Households
ONPE	National Postal and Savings Office
PID	Price Index Division, DSCN
ROSC	Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
SFD	Decentralized Financial System
TGN	General Treasury of Niger
TOFE	<i>Tableau des opérations financières de l'État</i>
VAT	Value Added Tax
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAMU	West African Monetary Union

DETAILED ASSESSMENT USING THE DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (DQAF)

The following detailed information on indicators of statistical practices in the areas of the national accounts, prices, government finance, money and banking, and balance of payments statistics was gathered from publicly available documents and information provided by the Nigerien officials. This information, which is organized along the lines of the generic DQAF (see Appendix II), was used to prepare the summary assessment of data quality elements, based on a four-part scale of observance, shown in Niger's Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module.

I. NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

0. Prerequisites of quality

0.1 *Legal and institutional environment*

0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified

The legal and institutional framework governing the Niger statistical system is in a transition. For the time being, Ordinance No. 93-025 of March 30, 1993, establishing a national statistics committee and regulating the coordination, mandatory nature, and confidentiality of statistical surveys, and Decree No. 93-082/PM/MF/P of April 15, 1993, continue to govern most statistical activity. The Statistical and National Accounts Directorate (DSCN) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) is assigned responsibility by a July 28, 1994 MEF decree for preparing complete national accounts and macroeconomic aggregates. This responsibility is reaffirmed by Decree No. 2004-264/PRM/ME/F of September 14, 2004 converting the DSCN into an autonomous statistical institute.

However, the new statistical legislation adopted in 2004 is not yet in force. Law No. 2004-011 of March 30, 2004, Organization of Statistical Activity and Creating the National Statistics Institute, provides for establishing the National Statistical Institute (INS) and a new unit responsible for statistical coordination—the National Council on Statistics (CNS). Both the institute and the council are expected to begin operations by the end of June 2005.

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate

The National Committee on Statistics, responsible for the coordination of statistical activity under the 1993 Ordinance, is not operational because of a lack of funds and political will. The actual establishment of the CNS, provided for in 2004 to replace this committee, is still awaiting the adoption of the necessary texts. As a result, statistical coordination (including the flow of source data among agencies) is currently conducted on an adhoc and informal basis.

Coordination within the DSCN itself is insufficient. For example, the National Accounts Division (NAD) has not been fully included in methodological discussions or in the conduct of the 1-2-3 survey of the informal sector.

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only

A tradition exists in Niger of protecting the confidential nature of statistical data. The above-mentioned March 30, 1993 Ordinance affirmed the confidential nature of individual data in statistical surveys. The law of March 30, 2004 clearly reaffirms that “individual data collected by departments and agencies of the national statistical system in the course of statistical surveys and censuses and in consulting administrative records for statistical purposes, may not be disclosed in any manner without the authorization of the individuals or legal entities concerned.” It goes on to state that “individual data of an economic or financial nature appearing in questionnaires used in statistical surveys and censuses may not in any case be used for tax audit or economic control purposes, nor for purposes of research by the administrative, political, military, police, or judicial authorities.”

To protect the confidential nature of individual data, the DSCN ensures that the level of aggregation prevents identification of individuals or legal entities. The principle of aggregating the data of at least three units is the rule. However, an exception exists in the case of the national accounts, for which data on the “extractive industries,” which cover only two units, are published. The violation of statistical secrecy is punished by law.

Access to individual data stored by the DSCN is limited to staff responsible for the national accounts. No recent violations of statistical secrecy were brought to the mission’s attention.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response

The obligation to report statistics is governed by the Ordinance of March 30, 1993, which provides for fines in case of noncompliance. This ordinance is not enforced, however, as the requirements relate only to those statistical surveys and censuses included in the annual program and bearing the official stamp, which has never been affixed. Furthermore, despite a low DSF response rate, the DSCN has never made use of these legal prerogatives, preferring instead to foster a sense of responsibility among respondents and persuade them in writing or through verbal reminders.

The Law of March 30, 2004 restates and clarifies the provisions of the 1993 Ordinance; the reference to surveys and censuses requiring the statistical stamp is dropped and replaced by a reference to surveys and statistical censuses in the context of statistical programs adopted by the CNS and approved by the Council of Ministers.

0.2 Resources

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs

The NAD has seven employees: an economist/statistician, a statistical projects expert, an economist, and four senior statistical technicians. In other words, the NAD has three senior staff members (with three years of post high school studies), four mid-level staff members (with two years of post high school studies) and a secretary. Since the minimum staffing necessary to implement the ERE/TES module is considered to be approximately five senior staff members (economist/statisticians and statistical projects experts combined), the number and the qualifications of the current staff are insufficient, as evidenced by the delay in implementing the ERE/TES module.

Most of NAD senior staff have received brief training in the compilation of *System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA)*-based national accounts.

The civil service pay schedule applies to DSCN employees. Pay is not considered commensurate with the workload, difficulties, and the technical complexity faced by statisticians. In recent years, several DSCN senior staff who left for jobs with better working conditions and pay were replaced by nonstatisticians.

NAD's IT equipment, database security, offices, and vehicles demonstrate need for improvement:

- Most IT equipment was purchased with external funds. It consists of eight microcomputers with an average age of three years. Four of the computers are in very good condition, two are less reliable, and two are not working.
- The NAD has no adequate means of backing up the data in the event of a catastrophe. Duplicate copies are stored only on the department's microcomputers.
- The NAD has five small offices, with an average of two employees each. The furniture is dilapidated and storage is insufficient. Office ventilation and lighting are poor, and numerous power outages complicate the situation. The mission noted frequent power outages during its working meetings.
- For data collection, the department has three mopeds, one of which was purchased over ten years ago. They break down often and need to be replaced.

The operating budget of the DSCN as a whole is quite small and insufficient to cover the needs of the various departments, including the NAD. Budget appropriation takes no account of DSCN's budget proposals and simply reproduces the previous year's appropriation. The current annual budget, amounting to about CFAF 10 million for the entire DSCN, represents a third of the 1980 ceiling and is expected to decrease further. However, some DSCN

activities receive special government financing not included in its own budget (for the harmonized consumer price index for example). Occasional statistical surveys are generally financed externally.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented

DSCN activities are constrained by available resources. The costs of statistical surveys and censuses are tracked, and measures to ensure efficient use of the resources are sought. However, the DSCN does not have specific procedures to measure performance. Staff are evaluated in the overall context of the civil service provisions. All civil servants are rated annually by their superiors. Apart from receiving merit promotions, staff are promoted automatically every two years, without major financial impact. In practice, very few DSCN employees earn merit promotions; this is especially so for senior statistical technicians.

0.3 Relevance

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored

The DSCN documentation center provides a register where users can comment and make suggestions. The center greets about 65 visitors every month, mostly students and researchers. Users seeking additional information on the national accounts and price indices can contact the NAD and the Price Index Division (PID), respectively. The NAD receives an average of 20 visitors per month. Nevertheless, no formal framework promotes interaction between users and the DSCN, and no means exists for identifying and monitoring user needs and satisfaction with the statistics.

0.4 Other quality management

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality

According to DSCN staff, despite the absence of a formal commitment or measure to assess quality within the DSCN, the importance attached to the quality of statistics is evidenced by DSCN's participation in certain subregional institutions—such as Sub-Saharan African Economic and Statistical Observatory (AFRISTAT)—to improve national accounts and prices. In fact, the structure and coverage of Niger's GDP were used as a model for estimating harmonized GDPs in WAEMU countries. Moreover, at periodic departmental meetings, ways of improving the national accounts are discussed, notably as the DSCN is increasingly questioned about the quality of gross domestic product (GDP) estimates. Attempts at finding a solution are made each time a problem arises.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program

National accounts compilation is a team effort, and all NAD staff are informed of outstanding problems. Advice and comments are sought from AFRISTAT. An AFRISTAT expert provides technical assistance in connection with ERE/TES module implementation.

0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program

The NAD assigns more importance to the accuracy and reliability of the data than to the other dimensions of quality, particularly timeliness. Consequently, provisional accounts are finalized only when the coverage of enterprises submitting statistical and tax returns (DSFs) and of the government is considered sufficient.

1. Assurances of integrity

1.1 Professionalism

1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis

The DSCN is a directorate of the MEF. However, in spite of being part of the MEF staff, DSCN officials have always considered that they work with complete professional independence, even before the subject was mentioned in the law. The new Law of March 30, 2004, provides that “in performing their tasks of producing and disseminating statistical data, the components of the national statistical system (...) shall work in a completely transparent and impartial manner....”

All DSCN employees receive initial training in statistics, either in the major statistical schools of the subregion (Abidjan, Dakar, etc.), or locally at the Training and Retraining Center. Moreover, to augment the theoretical and practical training of national accountants, the DSCN takes advantage of every opportunity for training and retraining in regional seminars and workshops, especially those organized by AFRISTAT, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Carl Duisburg Geseellschaft of Munich, Germany, the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Development Bank through the International Comparison Program (PCI). However, the DSCN does not sufficiently encourage employees to produce methodological notes and studies.

1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations

The choice of statistical sources for the national accounts is based on their availability, reliability, and consistency with the concepts and definitions of the 1993 SNA. Nonstatistical considerations are not taken into account. This explains the preference given data from the 1995 informal sector survey over data from the 2001 1-2-3 survey to address problems

involving deviation from concepts and definitions, choice of sample, and geographic coverage.

Which data to disseminate to the public and when is determined solely by the DSCN and only on the basis of statistical considerations.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics

The DSCN has the right to comment on erroneous interpretations or the misuse of statistics. In this connection, DSCN officials pointed out the drafting of at least four memoranda explaining the respective approaches of the DSCN and the General Planning and Economics Directorate (DGEPE) for estimating GDP.

1.2 Transparency

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public

All laws and decrees are published in the official gazette. The 2004 laws and decrees governing statistical activity are also posted on the newly introduced DSCN website (<http://www.stat-niger.org>). In addition, the questionnaires sent to enterprises mention the law on statistical secrecy and the obligation to respond.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified

Before the national accounts are disseminated, a letter is sent to the MEF, to provide information on the level and trend of GDP. This practice is not disclosed to the public. Users do not have access to the publications at the same time; accounts are first disseminated free of charge to about 90 entities in the public sector, civil society, and technical and financial partners (the names of which are included in the national accounts publications). Other users can purchase them from the DSCN or view them at the documentation center.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such

The DSCN includes its name in its publications. The source is stated when DSCN statistics are used or reproduced by other agencies, and particularly the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), WAEMU, and AFRISTAT. However, there is no requirement to acknowledge the source whenever DSCN statistics are reproduced by others.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques

Users are not given advance notice of major changes in methodology or statistical techniques. The currently undertaken changes of national accounts methodology and base

year as part of the overhaul under the ERE/TES module have not been brought to the attention of the public. These actions are however carried out in the context of highly visible externally financed projects approved by the Council of Ministers, whose resolutions are published in the official gazette.

The gradual introduction of methodological aspects of the *1993 SNA* into the existing accounts is mentioned only at the time the accounts are published. Reconciliation with the old accounts is not always carried out or announced.

1.3 Ethical standards

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff

No specific ethical rules are in place, other than those contained in the civil service code of conduct and in the legislative provisions on statistical secrecy and the obligation to respond. These texts are provided to new employees upon request only. At best, new employees are made aware of these rules informally by the staff responsible for their training. These rules are not the subject of regular reminders.

2. Methodological soundness

2.1 Concepts and definitions

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The *Methodological Guide for National Accounts Compilation in the AFRISTAT Member States* provides the analytical framework for compiling the national accounts. This guide reiterates the recommendations of the *1993 SNA*. Furthermore, work is underway to fully implement the *1993 SNA*, based on a methodology common to all the WAEMU member countries, using the ERE/TES national accounts compilation software.

However, certain recommendations in the guide are not followed, owing to source data limitations (concerning, for example, transfers and remuneration in kind, the revaluation of fixed assets and inventories, and the computation of fixed capital consumption).

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Most resident economic units, including territorial enclaves, are covered by the national accounts, as defined in the *1993 SNA*. However, because of the lack of source data, certain regional institutional units (such as the DNN, the national ASECNA representative's office, and, formerly, Air Afrique) are not covered. The informal sector is partially covered, based

on the availability of source data. Illegal production sold to consenting buyers is not covered (sale of drugs, for example). Recreational, literary or artistic production, and assets related to defense that can be used for civilian purposes, valuables, historical monuments, or certain intangible assets are not currently covered.

Except the financial accounts for the economy, the capital account for the rest of the world and the supply-use tables, the other tables and accounts of the *1993 SNA* identified as the “essential minimum” by the Inter-secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) are prepared but only on an annual basis. Contrary to ISWGNA recommendation, no quarterly national accounts are prepared.

Although incomplete, GDP coverage is consistent with the coverage defined by the WAEMU as the first step toward the harmonization of GDP in the member countries. As already indicated, the structure and coverage of Niger’s GDP were used as a model for estimating harmonized GDPs in WAEMU countries. While Niger needed to adjust its GDP only by 0.5 percent, other countries needed an adjustment of approximately 10 percent.

2.3 Classification/sectorization

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The classification of institutional units differs in several respects from the *1993 SNA*. The nonprofit institutions serving households is not differentiated because of insufficient data. It is included with general government, which is itself subdivided into *domestically financed general government* and *externally financed general government*.

The classification of economic activities is based on the *International Standard Industrial Classification, Revision 3 (ISIC, Rev. 3)*. The level of disaggregation is insufficient: 21 industries instead of 44 selected for the overhaul of the national accounts under the ERE/TES module. Moreover, this classification is inconsistent with the ones adopted by the WAEMU countries (NAEMA and NOPEMA). The education and health sectors are not differentiated, as recommended in the *1993 SNA*.

The Central Product Classification (CPC) and the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) are not used. Similarly, because household consumption is not broken down, the Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose is not used. For the overhaul of the accounts, a classification of 200 products is used.

2.4 Basis for recording

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks

Market output is valued at producer prices, all taxes included, including value-added tax (VAT), because the available source data do not allow for a separate determination of VAT and estimation of basic prices.

Operations in foreign currencies are converted at the annual average market exchange rate, contrary to the recommendations of the *1993 SNA*, according to which “flows and stocks concerning foreign currency are converted to their value in national currency at the rate prevailing at the moment the transaction takes place.”

Imports and exports are valued at FOB prices. Production for own use is valued at market-equivalent prices whenever such information is available; operations in foreign exchange are converted at the annual average market exchange rate.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis

Most transactions are recorded on an accrual basis as recommended in the 1993 SNA. However, central government revenue and some expenditure are recorded on a cash basis and treated as such in the national accounts without any reprocessing, except for "salaries and wages" when there are arrears payments (as in 1996 for example).

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Transactions between establishments of a single enterprise are recorded on a gross basis only when the available statistical data permit.

3. Accuracy and reliability

3.1 Source data

3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions

The source data are obtained primarily from administrative sources with numerous deficiencies in terms of coverage and reliability and from periodic or outdated one-off censuses or surveys (consumption budget survey, informal sector survey, etc.). These two main sources are supplemented with the results of one-off studies produced by NGOs or in the context of certain projects, as well as with estimates based on very quick surveys.

Regarding the sources of the basic data used to compile the accounts of the various institutional units, data are obtained as follows:

- For the basic statistics on nonfinancial corporations (approximately 12 percent of total value added in 2003), the NAD does not have a complete list of enterprises. It uses the DSFs prepared annually by enterprises and submitted to the Directorate General of Taxes.

The collection of DSFs presents significant problems for the DSCN. Since the entry into service of the SYSCOA in 1998, the law no longer requires enterprises to submit copies of DSFs to the DSCN. The DSCN collects DSFs either directly from enterprises or through the Directorate General of Taxes, with which it has developed a close working relationship. The DSCN does not have access to the DSFs received by the BCEAO for purposes of implementing the corporate balance sheet database (*centrale des bilans*).

The DSCN collected about 900 DSFs in 2001 and 800 in 2002. The BCEAO received about 1,200 DSFs. The rate of coverage is approximately 65 percent to 75 percent on that basis, but is probably much lower because the figure of 1,200 is largely underestimated. There are numerous deficiencies in many of the DSFs, which are sometimes incomplete or improperly filled out. The items concerning fixed assets, production, intermediate consumption, stocks, and employment lack detail or are incorrect. Of the 1,200 DSFs received by the BCEAO, about half are incomplete.

The NAD has established a quick survey mechanism for enterprises and educational institutions based on a simplified questionnaire. This questionnaire is sent to enterprises that have not submitted or updated DSFs.

The conduct of an enterprise survey and the drawing up of a list of enterprises, as well as the implementation of the corporate balance sheet database by the BCEAO, should considerably improve the source data of this sector.

The coverage of financial corporations (less than 1 percent of total value added in 2003) is incomplete. Units engaged in microfinance, especially credit unions, are scarcely taken into account because their number is unknown and their accounting records are not available. Also unavailable are the accounting data of the National Directorate for Niger (DNN).

- The basic statistics used to estimate the household sector account are obtained primarily from two major sources: the informal sector survey and agricultural data.

The informal sector estimate is based on the national informal sector survey (ENS) conducted in 1995 using an approach based on the methodology of 1-2-3 surveys. This base is outdated; in 2001 the NAD conducted a quick survey of the main activities of the informal sector with a view to partially adjusting the technical coefficients, pending the implementation of a new ENS, scheduled for 2005–06.

The recent 1-2-3 survey of the informal sector adopted a definition of the informal sector that does not meet the needs of national accountants, and its geographic coverage is limited to the town of Niamey.

The data on agricultural production, livestock, and fisheries come, respectively, from the Agriculture Directorate, the Livestock Directorate, and the Fisheries Directorate. The Agricultural Markets Information System and the Livestock Markets Information System (SIM-bétail) provide producer prices.

The main problem in the agricultural sector is its insufficient coverage, especially with regard to counter-seasonal crops. Similarly, livestock statistics are incomplete and unreliable. The estimates are based on the livestock census carried out since 1987. The NAD recently used a study conducted by the AGRHYMET Center to estimate the livestock sector account and adjust the entire series.

The ongoing agricultural and livestock census should contribute to improving the source data of this sector.

Regarding general government (9 percent of total value added in 2003), the main sources are the National Treasury for revenue; the Directorate General of the Budget for expenditure; information on special accounts; the budgets of local governments at the Ministry of the Interior, the *Tableau des opérations financières de l'État* (TOFE) at the Directorate General of the Economy, data from the Social Security Fund, and the United Nations Development Program for external assistance. Reports on external assistance are produced with a considerable lag, and some local governments do not submit their statements of revenue and expenditure.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required

For the nonprimary informal sector (approximately 31.8 percent of total value added in 2003), the source data come from the 1995 informal sector survey. This base is now outdated and should be brought up to date. For the modern sector, the source data generally meet national accounting needs but are very difficult to collect, especially DSFs.

Most operations are recorded on an accrual basis. However, government revenue and expenditure are recorded on a cash basis.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

Source data are not available on a timely basis, notably DSFs and data on externally financed general government.

3.2 *Assessment of source data*

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and nonsampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

The DSCN assesses the data from the various surveys before using them to estimate the national accounts. For example, it assessed the data from the 1-2-3 survey of the informal sector and expressed reservations as to their validity for national accounts purposes. For foreign trade statistics, adjustments for unrecorded border trade are not made by the DSCN, but by the BCEAO, and the figures are used directly in the national accounts. The method used by the BCEAO is not disclosed and is nontransparent, and the DSCN believes that this method of estimation needs to be reviewed and improved. A committee was established recently to work on improving these estimates. It is chaired by the DSCN, and the BCEAO is a member.

3.3 *Statistical techniques*

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

Administrative data are analyzed and any errors detected are corrected by contacting the enterprises or government agencies concerned. The data are also compared with prior years' data for any given financial and nonfinancial corporations. Any inconsistencies detected are corrected with the cooperation of the reporting institutions. However, unavailable data on account of the absence of DSF filing are summarily estimated by the DSCN by applying growth indicators calculated on the basis of a sample of enterprises that responded during years n-1 and n. The criterion selected is production or turnover. Extreme values are disregarded. The accuracy of the fiscal data is also assessed regularly, and respondents are asked for explanations if there are any questions.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

The assessment of GDP, in both value and volume terms, is based on statistical techniques that are unsound owing to the deficiencies observed in the source data.

Production approach

As regards the production approach, ratios are sometime derived from outdated surveys and censuses. Furthermore, certain techniques are not consistent with the *1993 SNA*, as in the case of:

External general government: For each type of assistance, the accounting treatment consists of calculating the portions used to finance investment, operating expenses, and

personnel expenditure. In most cases, an allocative key, prepared in 1987 and partially updated in 2004, is used for this breakdown, owing to the lack of detailed information.

Agriculture: Net agricultural production is estimated after deducting losses. The same rate of loss has been used since it was determined in 1980, based on a study of agricultural products whose validity needs to be assessed.

For counter-seasonal crops (roughly 30 percent of total agricultural production), production for the crop year, which straddles two years (November to March), is attributed to year n. This treatment is inconsistent with the *Methodological Guide for National Accounts Compilation in the AFRISTAT Member States*, which recommends following the recommendations of the *1993 SNA*. Intermediate consumption is determined by calculating the value of inputs used for production for the final accounts or by applying the last known rate for the provisional accounts.

Livestock: The livestock size used to determine production quantities is obtained by applying a growth rate per animal species, unchanged since 1987, the date of the last livestock census. For more recent data, a study conducted by AGRHYMET is used, and a backward extrapolation to 1995 performed. Intermediate consumption is obtained directly for the final accounts, and using the last known rate for the provisional accounts.

Fisheries and Forestry: Production quantities and average prices per kilo charged by fishermen are provided by the Directorate of Fisheries and Pisciculture. When fish prices are not available, the average annual change in the prices of fish on the Niamey market is applied to the preceding year's producer price. A rate of intermediate consumption is applied to the value of production to determine intermediate consumption. Firewood production is determined using the ratio produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization for the annual per capita consumption of firewood. The production of lumber, tanning products, and other products is determined on the basis of informal construction output. The intermediate consumption of these two sub-industries is determined using a rate applied to the value of production.

Nonprimary informal sector: Estimates of production and intermediate consumption of this sector's industries are based on a series of price and volume indicators, based on the results of the National Informal Sector Survey of 1995.

Finally, a number of deficiencies occur in some of the statistical techniques used for the determination of GDP; no estimates for work in progress or inventory valuation adjustments are made. General government data obtained on a cash basis are not converted to the accrual basis.

Housing production on own account (owner-occupied housing), called imputed rent, is estimated on the basis of the data from the consumer budget survey of 1993, which give the costs of different categories of housing. In the absence of the price indices associated with

them, the consumer price index line item for housing is used to estimate the imputed rents, with all the shortcomings which that implies.

Expenditure approach

Contrary to the production approach, GDP uses, or expenditures, are not disaggregated. At most, they are broken down into the two components “private” and “public.” Moreover, ratios obtained in outdated surveys are used to estimate final household consumption.

Final household consumption: Up to 2003, the technical coefficients used to estimate final consumption come from the budget/consumption survey conducted in 1989/1990 for the urban environment and in 1992/1993 for the rural environment. The sampling base is from the 1988 census. Its coverage is national, and the survey is spread out over a period of 12 months for each environment. As this survey is now largely outdated, since 2004, the final consumption is determined on the basis of the population growth rate and the inflation rate.

Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) of general government: An equivalence table serves as a bridge between the government accounting classification and the national accounts classification, so that domestic general government GFCF can be obtained directly. The GFCF of externally financed general government is determined by using an allocative key for expenditure financed externally. The key was developed in 1987 and partly updated in 2001.

The GFCF of modern enterprises in the nonfinancial and financial corporations sector is determined on the basis of those enterprises’ accounting documents, by calculating the changes in the fixed assets shown in the balance sheets for years n and $n+1$.

Changes in inventories: There is no direct method of determining inventories in the agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and forestry sectors. For each of these sectors, supply and use balances by product are prepared, and inventories are calculated as a residual. For general government and nonfinancial corporations, inventories are obtained from their accounting records, but adjustments are made subsequently.

Foreign trade: The value of exports and imports of goods and services is that furnished by the BCEAO, by way of balance of payments statistics.

Compilation of the national accounts at constant prices began in 1990, with 1987 as the base year. This reference base is now obsolete and no longer reflects the current structure of the economy. Two approaches are taken in calculating constant GDP: production approach and expenditure approach. The two approaches are then reconciled to arrive at GDP. With the production approach, several deflators are used per industry or sub-industry. Another series of prices is used with the expenditure approach. In both cases, the availability of data determines the choice of deflators.

When the data permit, the double deflation method is used, as recommended in the 1993 SNA. This is the case of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries.

In other cases, the indices used are subject to limitations:

- For industries other than agriculture, livestock, and fisheries, the national accounts use price or volume indicators, depending on the type of variables for directly deflating value added, based on the questionable assumption of the homogeneity of each industry's inputs and outputs.
- For final consumption of general government, the civil service wage index, weighted by category of staff, is used.
- Consumer price indices are used for the final consumption of households.
- For gross fixed capital formation, construction material price indices are used, and
- Exports and imports of goods and services use export and import price indices.

A difference in the way the DSCN and the IMF assessed and treated Niger's economic situation, following the devaluation of the CFAF, has led to different GDP estimates since that time.

3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

Consistency between the balance of payments and the TOFE and corresponding items in the national accounts is ascertained in the final accounts.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

GDP estimates are prepared from the production and expenditure approaches. Owing to the preponderance of estimates according to the production approach, there are few discrepancies among the various national accounts aggregates. There is at present no appropriate framework, such as supply and use tables, to check the internal consistency of the data. These tables will be produced with the assistance of the ERE/TES module. Verification of the consistency of the data is currently determined by the availability of sources.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

When the accounts are prepared, the estimates of GDP according to the two approaches and their reconciliation are useful for detecting and correcting discrepancies.

3.5 Revision studies

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3)

No revision studies are carried out, despite the fact that the DSCN produces provisional, semifinal, and final accounts. Over the years, the national accounts have been revised on numerous occasions as a result of the implementation of the WAEMU regulation on the harmonized GDP in member countries, and also because of the stepwise approach to introducing the recommendations of the *1993 SNA*. In addition, a regional study on the number of animal species led to a revision of the livestock subsector account for the period since 1995.

4. Serviceability

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The periodicity of national accounts data is annual, as recommended by the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS). Although encouraged, quarterly accounts are not compiled.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

The accounts are published with a substantial lag, especially the final accounts, and the GDDS recommendation in this respect (6-9 months) is not met. The most recent accounts, published in December 2004, include:

- Provisional accounts for 2003;
- Semifinal accounts for 2001–2002; and
- Final accounts for 1998–2000.

4.2 Consistency

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

Internal consistency of the data is ensured. Reconciliation of the GDP estimates according to the production approach and expenditure approach sometimes leads to the discovery of discrepancies. When the latter are less than 5 percent, the estimates are considered good, and very good if below 2 percent. The DSCN ensures consistency between these two approaches, and adjustments are made by netting.

GDP estimates are prepared at current and constant 1987 prices, which are consistent in the formula "value = volume × price."

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

In the most recent accounts published, major revisions were made. While some were taken into account to reconstruct the series for 1985–2003, data are not strictly comparable over time. Moreover, the changes in the methodology for assessing the livestock sector were reflected only in the 1995–2003 period. The introduction of these revised data means that the series is not strictly comparable over the entire 1985–2003 period.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

The balance of payments and the TOFE are used as source data for national accounts compilation. As a result, these three frameworks are consistent with each other. However, there is no reconciliation between the official national accounts data prepared by the DSCN and GDP data prepared by the MEF for African Department Fund missions.

4.3 Revision policy and practice

4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule

Data and methodological revisions are not announced in advance. Users are not informed of revisions until the accounts are disseminated. A few summary indications are given at the time of publication without any real details.

4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified

In the statistical yearbook and in the national accounts publication, mention is made of the nature of the data, and revised series are identified as such.

4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1)

The DSCN does not assess the impact of revisions on comparability or any biases that may have been introduced.

5. Accessibility

5.1 Data accessibility

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

Data are disseminated with a reasonable level of detail in a distinct publication, A summary analysis of two to three pages in length is attached to the national accounts tables. Pie diagrams on the structure of GDP and its uses are included.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

The national accounts are essentially disseminated on paper. The recently launched DSCN website is not yet fully used and does not disseminate the national accounts. There is no national accounts database available to users. In addition, the historical series are affected by a data storage problem.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

No calendar for the release of the national accounts exists.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

Ninety entities receive the national accounts free of charge once they are released. Their names are included in the publication. Other users can purchase a copy from the DSCN. National accounts publications can also be consulted at the DSCN documentation center.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Users can obtain additional available data by visiting the DSCN.

5.2 Metadata accessibility

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

Metadata in French are limited to the DSCN document “Summary of National Accounts Compilation Methods,” which provides only a brief (20-page) summary of national accounts methodology and is not disseminated; it covers sources and methods for estimating GDP according to the two approaches, including constant price valuation. The metadata prepared in the context of the GDDS are posted in English on the Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB). These metadata were last updated in January 2003.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

No metadata are adapted to different levels and needs of the targeted audience.

5.3 Assistance to users

5.3.1 Contact points for each subject field are publicized

The DSCN website contains only general contact information (the director’s name, address, email, and phone number) and the prices of publications, but user assistance is not assured.

No particular address is provided in the national accounts publications for contact purposes. Users can obtain assistance and additional information directly from the DSCN's documentation center, which will refer them to the relevant department as needed.

5.3.2 Catalogs of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

A catalog of the various publications of the DSCN is available on its website, at the documentation center, and in the director's office. However, the price of the various publications is not indicated.

Table 1. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for National Accounts
(*Compiling Agency: DSCN*)

Element	NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO		
0. Prerequisites of quality							
0.1 Legal and institutional environment			X			Legal and institutional environment in transition. National Council on Statistics not yet operational. Informal coordination.	Short term—Complete the implementation of the 2004 legislation Medium term—Develop a statistical program.
0.2 Resources				X		Human and financial resources extremely limited.	Short-term—Increase staffing and computer equipment.
0.3 Relevance			X			No user survey. Assistance limited to those who visit the DSCN.	Short term—Examine the register kept at the documentation center for user comments and take them into account. Medium term—Conduct a user opinion/satisfaction survey.
0.4 Other quality management			X			No specific statement, formal commitment, or measure to assess quality within the DSCN exists. Need for trade-off between quality dimensions.	Short/medium term—Include compliance with GDDS guidelines regarding major elements of the quality of statistics.
1. Assurances of integrity							
1.1 Professionalism			X			DSCN employees not sufficiently encouraged to produce methodological notes and analyses.	Short term—Prepare methodological notes and analyses on the national accounts.
1.2 Transparency			X			The fact that certain senior government officials have access to data before they are published is not made public. No prior announcement of major methodological or procedural change.	Short term—Inform all users in publications and on the DSCN website of any access to the national accounts before they are published, in order to increase transparency.
1.3 Ethical standards			X			Staff not formally instructed in rules.	Short term—Inform all employees of the ethical rules and remind them regularly. Medium term—Consider administering an oath to statisticians, as is done in some countries.

Key to symbols: NA = Not Applicable; O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed; SDDS = Complies with SDDS Criteria

Table 1. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for National Accounts
(*Compiling Agency: DSCN*)

Element	NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO		
2. Methodological soundness							
2.1 Concepts and definitions			X			1993 SNA concepts and definitions not always applied.	Short term—Emphasize the complete overhaul of the accounts based on the 1993 SNA, using the ERE/TES module.
2.2 Scope			X			Certain subregional institutional units not covered. Illegal activities not covered, etc. No financial accounts and resources-uses tables.	Short term—Expand coverage with the ongoing overhaul of the national accounts.
2.3 Classification/sectorization				X		CPC and COFOG not used. Institutional sectors inconsistent with 1993 SNA; industry classifications not disaggregated. Education and health not shown separately.	Short term—The SCN adopted new classifications in the context of implementing the ERE/TES module; this process should continue.
2.4 Basis for recording			X			Use of producer rather than basic prices. Government transactions not always recorded on an accrual basis. Internal enterprise flows not always recorded on a gross basis.	Medium term—Explore the possibility of estimating the VAT component of prices so as to derive basic prices.

Table 1. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for National Accounts
(Compiling Agency: DSCN)

Element		NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO	NO		
3. Accuracy and reliability								
3.1 Source data								
3.2	Assessment of source data			X		Coverage insufficient and reliability poor. Outdated survey data. Source data sometime not timely.	Short term—Use the results of the 1-2-3 survey. Short term—Draw up a memorandum of understanding with the BCEAO for the use of DSFs and for access to the future corporate balance sheet database. Medium term—Draw up a list of enterprises. Medium term—Conduct a survey of the informal sector with national coverage. Medium term—Conduct a budget-consumption survey.	
3.3	Statistical techniques		X		X	Method used by the BCEAO to adjust foreign trade data not disclosed Use of outdated fixed ratios. The base year is obsolete (1987) and the constant price estimates are poor. Summary estimates are made for missing data.	Short term—Activate the committee established to estimate unrecorded trade and include an NAD representative in the committee. Short term—Expedite the work of overhauling the accounts with base year 2000. Short term/Medium term—Conduct studies and surveys to update the various ratios. Medium term—Review methodology used by the DSCN to estimate GDP. Medium term—Continue the work of implementing the harmonized industrial production index and compile quarterly economic indicators (manufacturing, agriculture etc.).	
3.4	Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs				X	Discrepancies identified but treated only within the limits of available information	Medium term—Improve the treatment of discrepancies as additional information is made available.	
3.5	Revision studies				X	No revision studies.	Short term/Medium term—Regularly conduct studies of the various revisions of the national accounts and make them available to users.	

Table 1. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for National Accounts
(*Compiling Agency: DSCN*)

Element		NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO	NO		
4. Serviceability								
4.1	Periodicity and timeliness			X		Delays in publishing the accounts.	Medium term—Shorten the publication deadline for provisional accounts to six months and for final accounts to two years.	
4.2	Consistency		X			Temporal consistency not always assured.	Medium term—Reconcile series, taking all methodological revisions into account.	
4.3	Revision policy and practice		X			Status of the data indicated but no revision schedule is publicized. Notice of revisions given after the fact. No revision studies are disseminated since none are conducted.	Short term—Inform users concerning the overhaul of the national accounts currently in progress.	
5. Accessibility								
5.1	Data accessibility		X			The analysis that accompanies the data is quite limited. No advance release calendar is disseminated to the public. Privileged access for certain users. No electronic database.	Short term/Medium term—Devise a data dissemination strategy targeting all users Medium term—Develop a database.	
5.2	Metadata accessibility			X		Metadata only available on the IMF's DSBB, and only in English.	Short term—Post the GDDS metadata in French on the DSCN website. Short term—Start preparing and disseminating detailed sources and methods on the national accounts.	
5.3	Assistance to users		X			Assistance to users poor. Lack of contact information in national accounts publication.	Short term—Provide specific contact information regarding national accounts experts.	

II. PRICE STATISTICS (CONSUMER PRICE INDEX)

0. Prerequisites of quality

0.1 *Legal and institutional environment*

0.1.1 *The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified*

Please refer also to the national accounts section for this indicator.

Decree 185/MF/P/SE/P/DSCN of July 28, 1994, related to the duties and structure of the Directorate of Statistics and National Accounts, gives the Statistical and National Accounts Directorate (DSCN) responsibility for preparing and calculating current price indices: household consumer prices, industrial production prices, etc. This responsibility was reaffirmed by Decree 2004-264/PRN/ME/F of September 14, 2004 in respect of the duties and operations of the National Statistical Institute (INS). The DSCN Price Indices Division (PID) of the General Statistics Department is responsible for price statistics.

The Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) also prepares an index of consumer prices, strictly for internal use, according to the same method as the Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI), using a sample a third the size of the sample tracked by the DSCN. Computation of the BCEAO index aims at anticipating the official index by several days, at calculating certain subindices, and at providing a substitute if the HCPI publication is delayed. Although this approach is justified, enhanced synergy between the two institutions could lead to improving HCPI budget coefficients and expanding its geographic coverage.

0.1.2 *Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate*

Please see the national accounts section for this indicator.

0.1.3 *Individual reporters' data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only*

Please see also the national accounts section for this indicator.

Statistical confidentiality is also ensured by the nomenclature used. Information on individual retail outlets is not communicated outside the PID, except to the BCEAO, which uses this information in compliance with confidentiality requirements

0.1.4 *Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response*

Please see the national accounts section for this indicator.

0.2 Resources

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs

The PID is responsible for preparing the HCPI. The division includes eight staff: two statistical engineers, two technical statistical assistants, three technical officers, and one assistant. Three officers are assigned management tasks, and the other staff are involved in field data collection activities. The division chief was trained through Eurocost and AFRISTAT in HCPI methodology and the data processing CHAPO software. All other staff have received on-the-job training in due course on HCPI data collection methodologies. Staff are retrained from time to time, and all new staff joining the unit are trained before they begin work.

The PID has three microcomputers, two of which were purchased after 2001, and the third earlier. All are in good condition. These machines are sufficient and have been judiciously allocated to three types of tasks: index processing and production, backup copies and related work, and training of data collection staff. Renewal of these computers, however, must be programmed. The division has a Jaz 2 GB drive reader for backup copies. These copies are made every month after the index is produced. In addition, two of the microcomputers contain copies of the CHAPO application and database.

PID staff occupy three offices, two of which are their own, while the third office is shared with another division. These small offices are each occupied by an average of four to five staff. The division chief occupies one of the offices. The office furniture is worn, and the storage equipment insufficient or inadequate. Ventilation and lighting are inadequate, and numerous power outages occur. The division has also a 15-year-old vehicle for data collection, and three light motorcycles averaging seven years, which often break down.

An annual budget of approximately CFAF 7.2 million is allocated to HCPI production. This government allocation is not included in the DSCN operating budget.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented

Staff assigned to price surveys at various retail outlets are subject to effective field control to ensure that they rigorously follow instructions. Accordingly, performance is assessed in connection with such controls, but without recourse to any particular evaluation or rating.

The budget allocated to the purchase of products on the market is assessed from time to time and adjusted to reflect general price trends.

0.3 Relevance

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored

Please see the national accounts section for this indicator. However, in the case of price data, users are asked in the publications to send their reactions and commentaries in order to assist the DSCN in improving its price statistics products.

0.4 Other quality management

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality

Every month, before price collection begins for calculating the HCPI, division staff meet to receive instructions to optimize field collection operations. Division managers supervise those assigned to collection activities to ensure that the rules are observed. Furthermore, several copies of the monthly HCPI bulletin are submitted to a review committee prior to publication. An HCPI monitoring committee has also been established at the level of the WAEMU to provide methodological supervision for the country teams.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program

HCPI preparation is a team effort, and PID staff are kept abreast of problems encountered in the collection and processing of source data. The PID also receives advice and comments from Sub-Saharan African Economic and Statistical Observatory (AFRISTAT) on HCPI methodology, and assistance from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) Commission with CHAPO software.

0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program

The PID ensures the accuracy and reliability of the current HCPI, while generally succeeding in publishing the index by the 10th of each month, however, no measure are being undertaken to improve the coverage of the HCPI. No user survey exist to query users about quality aspects of the statistics.

1. Assurances of integrity

1.1 Professionalism

1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis

Please see the national accounts section for this indicator.

1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations

The choice of statistical sources for the HCPI, and specifically retail outlets and products to be included in the basket, is based exclusively on the WAEMU methodological guidelines.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics

The HCPI is published and commented on in the media at the time of its publication. The DSCN examines any erroneous interpretations and introduces improvements in the presentation of the bulletin to reduce potential for such occurrences. The DSCN exercises its right of response so as to provide further information and clarification. It endeavors to improve the quality of its publications to minimize errors and sources of confusion.

1.2 Transparency

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public

See also the national accounts section for this indicator.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified

There is no internal governmental access to the HCPI prior to dissemination. The IMF office in Niger and the BCEAO are the only institutions that regularly receive information on certain types of statistics such as the HCPI. This is indicated on the DSBB presentation for Niger, but not in any national publication.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such

Please see the national accounts section for this indicator.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques

Major changes in methodology or statistical techniques are generally announced in advance in the monthly price bulletin, generally two to three months prior to the initial dissemination. During introduction of the HCPI, the first publications were accompanied with detailed methodological information.

1.3 Ethical standards

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff

Please see the national accounts section for this indicator.

Staff do not receive regular reminders of their ethical obligations. New staff are informed of these rules by their mentors during their probation period.

2. Methodological soundness

2.1 Concepts and definitions

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The HCPI methodology, concepts, and definitions are those common to WAEMU countries and conform to the guidelines of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The HCPI reference population comprises African households resident in the city of Niamey, which represented only about 6.3 percent of Niger's total population in 2001. This population excludes non-African households and expatriate African households in which one of the members is employed by an international organization or the diplomatic corps.

The scope of the HCPI covers a representative selection of components corresponding to the definition of household consumption expenditure as defined in the *1993 SNA*. The following expenditure items are excluded from this theoretical field: fixed capital operations (housing purchases), financial operations, saving operations, direct taxes, social contributions, interest paid, and grants or pensions paid to other households. Purchases of secondhand goods and household internal consumption (food products and housing services) are also excluded under international arrangements. HCPI operations are limited to monetary purchases and rent actually paid by tenants.

The following goods and services are part of the scope but are not covered by the HCPI owing primarily to their small share of household consumption in WAEMU countries: health insurance services, education support services (canteen, accommodation, etc.), services in connection with social measures, certain housing related services (sanitation and insurance), some medical services, and some leisure and cultural goods (information processing hardware, major durable goods, horticulture, and animals used for recreation).

2.3 Classification/sectorization

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The HCPI follows the West African consumption nomenclature (NCOA), which is common to all WAEMU countries and is derived from the *Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose* (COICOP) of the *System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA)*. The NCOA is configured in a pyramidal structure with 12 functions, 32 groups, 73 subgroups, 105 items, and 346 varieties.

2.4 Basis for recording

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks

The rules of valuation used to record expenditures and prices are in accordance with *1993 SNA*. Final consumption expenditures are valued at purchase price, which includes all relevant margins and taxes. The varieties selected for calculation of the HCPI comprise homogeneous varieties (standard and nonstandard units) assessed at the average retail price, and heterogeneous varieties valued at prices negotiated on the market.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis

Prices of goods and services are recorded at the time of acquisition as recommended under the *1993 SNA*.

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Procedures for grossing/netting are used in processing acquisitions and sales of secondhand or used goods. These types of goods are excluded from the scope of the index as they are difficult to determine. This issue is therefore not applicable in the framework of the HCPI.

3. Accuracy and reliability

3.1 Source data

3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions

Budget coefficients or weights, base period prices, and monthly price readings constitute the sources for the HCPI. Budget coefficients are based on a household consumption structure derived from an outdated survey on household expenditure. This survey is limited only to the city of Niamey and covers the period April–May 1996. Base prices also relate to 1996.

The light follow-up survey to describe seasonality in some fresh products (fish and other fresh fishery products, and fresh vegetables) was not carried out owing to insufficient financial resources, and the HCPI therefore entails a seasonal bias.

Price data are obtained from vendors and suppliers of goods and services. The HCPI basket consists of 12 consumption functions, 32 groups, 73 subgroups, 105 items, and 346 varieties. This constitutes a sufficient level of detail. Varieties and retail outlets were selected to take account of the presumed business volume. With regard to heterogeneous varieties, a monthly reading is taken for each product at four retail outlets. For homogeneous varieties, 30 readings are taken per month in six markets. Homogeneous products sold in nonstandard units are purchased. The products are weighed by the PID. Price collectors record the detailed features of nonhomogeneous products, such as brand, volume, origin, etc. After a product has been selected, the same product is tracked each time.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required

The source data correspond to the definitions, scope, and classifications under HCPI requirements. Price readings are taken during the reference month, with the exception of tariffs (*tarifs*) and rental prices, which are covered in a light survey.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

The timetable for price readings makes it possible each month to prepare the HCPI before the 10th of the month following the reference month.

3.2 Assessment of source data

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and nonsampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

Information on price readings is subject to two kinds of control: (1) control on data completeness in respect of prices and weights by manual verification of questionnaires and using the CHAPO software validation module (*module d'apurement*); (2) a price consistency control using CHAPO to identify and process out-of-line data owing to improper data collection or entry error.

Calculations of sampling errors in the 1996 household consumption survey for the city of Niamey were used to assess the results of the survey. Information on nonsampling errors such as insufficient or excessive coverage or classification errors is not published.

With regard to the survey on price readings, sampling errors cannot be calculated as the varieties and retail outlets were systematically selected on the basis of their business volume.

3.3 *Statistical techniques*

3.3.1 *Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources*

The level of detail of the products selected is sufficient to analyze price trends to the one-digit level under the COICOP. Published monthly are also indices for unprocessed cereals, meat, fish, condiments, fresh vegetables, milk, and oils, as well as average prices for five mass consumption products (rice, millet, maize, sorghum, and cowpeas).

The HCPI uses an unbiased formula to calculate elementary level indices. The standard Laspeyres formula was adopted for aggregation of elementary indices. This index is generally accepted at the international level, while the *Consumer Price Index Manual* developed by a group of international organizations under the leadership of ILO expresses a preference for other formulas.

HCPI weights comprise a seasonal bias because they are related to a survey conducted in April–June 1996 rather than to an entire year. Following adoption of the 1996 weights, time series (only at the aggregate level) were constructed by chaining of old and new indices. This procedure used 1996 as an overlap period to calculate the chaining coefficients.

When a product is not present at a point of sale, the survey worker reports the missing product to the PID manager, who selects the most appropriate treatment. If the product's absence is temporary, the previous month's price is used. If the absence is observed for two consecutive months, the product is replaced with a similar one. If the product has disappeared definitively from the market, its weight is absorbed among the remaining items. CHAPO has the capability to calculate a base price for the new series. The prices of seasonable products (about ten) are imputed on the basis of prices of similar goods during the period when they are not available on the market,

No adjustments are made to reflect quality changes. Another method for estimating the base price of new products is to consider price trends to be proportional with trends in certain specific product characteristics (weight, volume, surface, power, etc.).

In practice, completely new goods or services (such as cellular telephones) are not introduced into the HCPI basket.

When a price changes in the course of the month, the HCPI reflects the average price for that month on the basis of the number of days during which the old and new prices were in effect.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

The main elements not covered by the HCPI are expenditure by households residing outside Niamey, own account consumption of agricultural products, and owner housing services. The DSCN is envisaging the establishment of a price index with a broader scope.

3.4 *Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

There is no producer price index or other price index to which intermediate HCPI results can be compared. The BCEAO calculates a consumer price index for internal use based on readings from approximately one third of the market. The HCPI, however, is not compared with the index calculated by the BCEAO, which is not made available to the DSCN.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

CHAPO automatically applies certain corrections to price readings, using ranges. All prices outside the relevant ranges are displayed and verified.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

Potential statistical problems (for example, data on aberrant price readings) are analyzed and subjected to specific treatment, although these problems are generally not pointed out to users.

3.5 *Revision studies*

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3)

In conformity with international practices, HCPI results are not revised. HCPI weights, which should in principle be revised every five years, have not been revised since their first calculation. Accordingly, revision studies are not conducted.

4. *Serviceability*

4.1 *Periodicity and timeliness*

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The periodicity of the HCPI is monthly and meets General Data Dissemination System (GDSS), as well as the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), recommendations.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

The HCPI is generally disseminated before the 10th of the month following the reference month and therefore meets GDDS and SDDS recommendations. With assistance from AFRISTAT, the DSCN has introduced a website that facilitates dissemination of the HCPI in a timely manner. The website is currently not updated on a regular basis.

4.2 Consistency

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

Results before and after aggregation of goods and services categories are the same, regardless of the method of aggregation used, which attests to the consistency of the data.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

Consistent, uninterrupted time series are available from January 1998. Series from the old 1989 base consumer price index are linked to the HCPI only at the aggregate level. Publication of the HCPI is accompanied with a summary notice prepared by the DSCN with comments on any important fluctuations occurring in the monthly time series.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

As already indicated, there are no price statistics other than the HCPI. The BCEAO does not provide the DSCN with its price index, which is prepared for its own internal use.

4.3 Revision policy and practice

4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule

While, in principle, the HCPI base should be revised every five years, this timetable is not observed. There have been no major methodological changes in recent years, with the exception of the increase from 10 to 12 functions in the nomenclature.

4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified

The HCPI has not been subject to revision.

4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1)

No revision analysis is conducted because the index has not been revised since its implementation.

5. Accessibility

5.1 Data accessibility

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

The HCPI is published in the monthly *Indice Harmonisé des Prix à la Consommation*, which provides the level of the general index, as well as 12 functions and eight subgroups of the food products and nonalcoholic beverages function. The tables include comments on trends in the index and a number of graphics illustrating changes to facilitate analysis by users.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

The data are disseminated in a four-page hard-copy bulletin. The data are in principle also published in other DSCN publications, such as the *Niger Statistical Yearbook (Annuaire Statistique du Niger)*. Publication of the bulletin has been delayed three to four months owing to technical problems with the CHAPO software. Dissemination is also carried out through the websites of the DSCN, AFRISTAT, BCEAO, and WAEMU. Newspapers also publish the HCPI.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

The preannounced schedule of data release is provided in the methodological bulletin, which specifies that the HCPI is disseminated on the 10th day following the end of the month.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

Data are made available to all users at the same time in the monthly bulletin *Indice Harmonisé des Prix à la Consommation*.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

The different levels of HCPI aggregation are available to the public on request from the DSCN. The bulletin states that users should contact the DSCN's PID for further information.

5.2 Metadata accessibility

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

Two methodological guides prepared by Eurocost and relayed by the WAEMU Commission constitute the main methodological reference. The guides are *Indice Harmonisé des Prix à la Consommation dans les Pays Membres de l'UEMOA* and *Théorie et Pratique* and *Indice*

Harmonisé des Prix des Pays de l'UEMOA, application informatique. These, however, do not cover aspects specific to individual countries, including Niger. HCPI metadata are also published on the DSBB.

No recent documentation, such as brochures, provides users with information on the published indices in Niger.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

The metadata are available at different levels of detail (see 5.2.1).

5.3 Assistance to users

5.3.1 Contact points for each subject field are publicized

The names and coordinates of the price index compilers are included in the monthly bulletin. The same information is also available on the DSCN and AFRISTAT websites. HCPI publications are available for sale, but can be consulted at the DSCN's Documentation Center. Further information is available directly from the PID.

5.3.2 Catalogs of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

A list of DSCN publications is available on the DSCN and AFRISTAT websites.

Table 2. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Price Statistics (Consumer Price Index)
(*Compiling Agency: DSCN*)

Element	NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO		
0. Prerequisites of quality							
0.1 Legal and institutional environment			X			Legal and institutional environment in transition. Coordination informal and ad hoc.	Short term—Make the CNS operational and enhance coordination between agencies.
0.2 Resources			X			Offices are inadequate. Unreliable means of transportation.	Short term—Enhance DSCN facilities and working environment.
0.3 Relevance		X					
0.4 Other quality management			X			DSCN has limited options in terms of quality dimensions and must make tradeoffs.	Medium term—Try to improve all dimensions of quality as much as possible.
1. Assurances of integrity							
1.1 Professionalism			X			Staff are not sufficiently encouraged to produce methodological analyses and notes.	Short term—Encourage staff to undertake methodological analyses.
1.2 Transparency			X			The DSCN website is still not sufficiently communicated to the public, nor is the website regularly updated.	Short term—Ensure that the DSCN website is operational and up to date.
1.3 Ethical standards			X			Rules on the civil service and provisions of laws on statistical secrecy are available only on request. Rules are not regularly reviewed.	Short term—Inform newly recruited staff on ethical standards and regularly remind staff of these standards.
2. Methodological soundness							
2.1 Concepts and definitions		X					
2.2 Scope				X		HCPI is limited to the capital, Niamey.	Medium term—Extend the HCPI geographic coverage area beyond the city of Niamey and plan production of a national price index.
2.3 Classification/sectorization		X					
2.4 Basis for recording		X					

Key to symbols: NA = Not Applicable; O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed; SDDS = Complies with SDDS Criteria

Table 2. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Price Statistics (Consumer Price Index)
(Compiling Agency: DSCN)

Element		NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO	NO		
3. Accuracy and reliability								
3.1	Source data			X		Outdated household expenditure survey. Seasonal bias. Geographic scope limited to Niamey. Seasonal bias.	Short term—Update the index weights by conducting a survey on household expenditure with adequate time coverage.	
3.2	Assessment of source data		X					
3.3	Statistical techniques		X					
3.4	Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs			X		Lack of validations possibilities (no other indices to compare the HCPI to).	Short term—Develop additional indices, such as a producer index and/or request the BCEAO's own index calculation.	
3.5	Revision studies	X				HCPI weightings have not been revised since implementation. Accordingly, revision studies cannot be conducted.	Medium term- Revise HCPI weights	
4. Serviceability								
4.1	Periodicity and timeliness		X					
4.2	Consistency		X					
4.3	Revision policy and practice				X	No revision policy. The HCPI should be revised every five years, although this schedule has yet to be implemented.	Medium term—Envisage revision of HCPI weightings to reflect changes in household consumption structure.	
5. Accessibility								
5.1	Data accessibility		X					
5.2	Metadata accessibility			X		While documentation prepared under the aegis of the WAEMU is available, country specific methodological information for outside users does not exist.	Short term—Prepare methodological documentation specific to Niger. Post GDDS metadata at the DSCN website, in French.	
5.3	Assistance to users		X					

III. GOVERNMENT FINANCE STATISTICS

0. Prerequisites of quality

0.1 *Legal and institutional environment*

0.1.1 *The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified*

No government finance statistics are intended for dissemination to the general public in Niger. These statistics, aimed mainly at meeting the needs of policymakers, international organizations, and other partners in development, are compiled in the *Tableau des opérations financières de l'État* (TOFE), a monthly table common to other West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries, comprising revenue, expenditure, lending minus repayments, a balance, and financing.

The TOFE is produced by the Directorate General of the Economy (DGE) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), but no text clearly defines this responsibility. Indeed, the March 9, 2004 Decree No. 2004-078/PRN/ME/F, defining the powers of the MEF, makes no direct reference to the TOFE. Furthermore the responsibility with regard to the TOFE (or to any other matter) of the Office of the Commissioner of Economy, under whose authority the DGE operates, has not yet been defined. The only reference to statistics in the above-mentioned decree relates to “the collection, processing, and use of statistics of all types, particularly economic and social statistics,” “the preparation of the Nation’s economic accounts,” and the “centralization and dissemination of economic and social information,” all of which fall under the sole responsibility of the National Statistical Institute (INS).

In the absence of a specific statistical text covering government finance statistics (GFS), the preparation, collection, and dissemination of fiscal data are determined by texts governing public accounting and budgetary procedures, as well as WAEMU public finance legislation in the area of government accounting (Decree No. 196/PRN/MF/E), and budget nomenclature (Decree No. 198/PRN/MF/E). Furthermore, Directive No. 06/98/CM/WAEMU, amended by Directive No. 06/99/CM/WAEMU, sets out the generic coverage, analytical framework, and classification that WAEMU countries must follow for the TOFE and public debt statistics. This directive, however, does not address certain aspects, such as the methods of compilation and the dissemination of data.

TOFE source data emanate from numerous MEF departments and other agencies. No text requires that these data be reported to the DGE. In the circumstances, the flow of source data is ensured via a monthly letter from the DGE requesting the data. Monthly validation meetings of the TOFE data are held regularly between the DGE and source data providers, during which numerous issues concerning data quality are discussed.

Domestic and external public debt statistics are prepared and disseminated by the Directorate of Public Debt (DDP). According to its organic text (Ordinance No. 326 of September 29,

1995), the DDP is responsible for managing the direct debt of the government, on-lent debt,¹ assumed debt,² and reciprocal debt.³ The same ordinance also assigns the responsibility to the DDP for the preparation of periodic or ad hoc public debt statistics (Article 2).

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate

According to the authorities, the above-mentioned provisions are effective in ensuring cooperation between the DGE and other entities participating in the production of the TOFE, despite the absence of a text regulating data exchange. The monthly DGE letter constitutes a reminder of the procedures to be followed, and the monthly validation meetings provide a forum during which outstanding issues can be discussed.

While there is no formal agreement on data exchanges between the MEF and the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), the DGE is in constant contact with the latter's Research Department, which (1) prepares the Net Government Position and forwards it to the DGE; and (2) reports to the DGE information on external budgetary assistance (budget support grants and loans). The TOFE, which constitutes a source for the national accounts to determine government consumption and investment, is provided on a timely basis on request to the Statistical and National Accounts Directorate (DSCN).

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only

Staff of the DGE as well as employees of the various departments that provide source data are bound by civil service and government accounting regulations to ensure the confidentiality of individual information in their possession. In addition, certain departments (General Tax Directorate (DGI) and Directorate General of Customs (DGD)) provide administrative and criminal penalties for violations.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response

As indicated above, the reporting of information necessary for the compilation of TOFE statistics to the DGE is not covered by any official provision, decree, or circular, but is based on the monthly letter from the DGE.

¹ Debt contracted by the government and on lent to a third party (corporations, enterprises, offices) on identical or different terms. It may be included in the government budget, or in the budget of the recipient.

² A debt guarantee called because of the default of the principal debtor.

³ Debt that government corporations, public enterprises and offices owe to one another, which is managed under the Public Enterprises Sectoral Adjustment Program and financed by multilateral and bilateral donors and lenders.

Regarding public debt, Article 2 of Ordinance No. 326 of September 29, 1995 clearly charges the DDP with “compiling periodic or ad hoc statistics on public debt.”

0.2 Resources

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs

The total number of people (one full-time person and one volunteer) working at the DGE to prepare the TOFE is inadequate in light of the other duties. Since the creation of the DGE, numerous positions (three managers and nine department heads) remain vacant.

IT resources are also inadequate, with only one old microcomputer. Understaffing results in a workday that extends well beyond regular business hours.

With the exception of the DGI and the DGD, other units involved in preparing the TOFE are also understaffed, but to a lesser degree than the DGE. These units, as well as the revenue-collecting agencies, also report a lack of equipment. As regards public debt data, the DDP lacks qualified personnel. “Volunteers” are part of the debt staff, which is already small (fewer than ten employees at present). The French version of the Commonwealth software, CS DRMS, is now operational, and staff have been trained in its use.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented

The costs of producing the TOFE are not quantified or assessed regularly because budgetary information from DGE and other source-data producers (budget appropriation) does not identify these costs. Nevertheless, tasks and responsibilities would seem to be efficiently distributed within the MEF.

0.3 Relevance

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored

By its nature, the TOFE is relevant to the small circle of official users to which it is directed, namely international and regional organizations (IMF, World Bank, WAEMU, BCEAO), who use it to monitor fiscal developments on a monthly basis. There are no specific provisions for obtaining feedback from these users, and their views are solicited on an ad hoc basis. Because the TOFE is not disseminated to the general public (other than by the annual BCEAO data with a considerable delay), the latter's views are not solicited either.

0.4 Other quality management

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality

The search for quality is evidenced by the monthly validation meetings held by the DGE to discuss sources of data, their interpretation, as well as problems likely to affect the integrity of the statistics.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program

As indicated earlier, conformity of the TOFE with the WAEMU Commission TOFE Directive is an objective of the DGE, and procedures are in place to monitor this effort.

0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program

Quality issues are explicitly addressed and taken into account in the monthly meetings between the providers of source data and the DGE. However, users' feedback on quality standards and on new and emerging data needs is not actively sought. Despite the extremely meager resources allocated to the TOFE, the DGE closely monitors inconsistencies, particularly over time, of the data it receives and contacts the sources in question to bring these inconsistencies to their attention, without waiting for the monthly validation meeting.

1. Assurances of integrity

1.1 Professionalism

1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis

Although no laws or other formal provisions guarantee the professional independence of the DGE by prohibiting third-party interference in the compilation and dissemination of statistics, the predominant culture largely assures independence in the compilation and distribution of the TOFE. The DGE insists that its work has never been influenced by anyone. The TOFE is based on source data recorded in large part by public accountants in the course of their work, with the strict standards that this implies.

The DGE is well aware of the need to reprocess statistics to move from a budgetary presentation to an economic presentation. It does not hesitate to contact the agency or agencies that provided source data to request explanations when the data seem incorrect or inconsistent.

The DGE has already provided TOFE training courses for its own staff and for the staff of source data providers. It is also planning another TOFE workshop for its staff and that of source data providers, in the WAEMU context, under financing of the European Union. Although most training occurs on-site, DGE staff have recently participated in regional

training seminars on such subjects as financial programming (Dakar) and the *Government Finance Statistic Manual 2001 (GFSM 2001)* at the Joint Africa Institute (Tunis).

1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations

The availability of sources for government finance statistics is dictated by the underlying public accounting and budget recording systems, and, as a result, compilers have little leeway regarding the choice of sources. This choice is further constrained by the methodological requirements of the WAEMU directive, which constitutes an essential reference in the region. Furthermore, the DGE notes that the methodological choices made for the TOFE are largely observed and discussed with the African Department in the context of the Fund Program, which reinforces its authority. The DGE insists that it has never been pressured by anyone to change a figure.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics

To date, no erroneous interpretation or misuse of statistics has occurred. The DGE can bring any such cases that may arise to the attention of the MEF and prepare a response if necessary. It notes, however, that the monthly TOFE is still directed to a restricted circle of official users and is not disseminated to the general public and the media.⁴

1.2 Transparency

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public

The decree organizing the MEF is publicly available (official gazette), as are all organic laws, budget laws, and various legislation organizing the government accounts and the budget classification. Given the small number of users of the TOFE, the DGE does not disseminate specific provisions governing data compilation, or the conditions under which it carries out its activities.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified

To the extent that the monthly TOFE is a statistical tool used for analysis in the conduct of economic policy, government officials who participate in economic and financial policy meetings have access to TOFE data before they are made available to others. In particular, MEF departments and the DNN have privileged access to the data. This fact seems to be well known among users but is not publicized.

⁴ The annual TOFE is published by the BCEAO with considerable delay.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such

A notation at the top of the page identifies the “DGE” as the source of the TOFE. The MEF is identified as the source of TOFE data in BCEAO publications where the latter are presented.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques

The TOFE not being directed to the general public, this issue is not applicable. Nevertheless, the harmonization of the TOFE within WAEMU is the subject of fairly detailed directives (in accounting, budgetary nomenclature as well as statistics) in which the associated methodological changes are publicized in advance. The extension of the TOFE will be the subject of a detailed study that will be available to the general public.

1.3 Ethical standards

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff

No specific ethical rules concern the production of the TOFE. The staff of the DGE and DDP operate in accordance with general administrative rules, such as the General Civil Service Statute, as well as the public accounting regulations.

2. Methodological soundness

The methodology of the IMF’s *GFSM 2001* has not yet been adopted in Niger. Consequently, methodological soundness is assessed herein with reference to *A Manual on Government Finance Statistics*, 1986 (*GFSM 1986*). No migration path towards the new methodology has been established. As in all WAEMU countries, the adoption of the *GFSM 2001* can be expected to be a regional undertaking.

2.1 Concepts and definitions

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Niger’s TOFE is mostly based on Directive 06/98/CM/WAEMU of December 22, 1998 on the presentation and preparation of the TOFE, amended by Directive 06/99/WAEMU of December 21, 1999 on the harmonization of government finance statistics in WAEMU countries. The recommendations of these directives are broadly in line with the *GFSM 1986*, and the TOFE follows the structure, concepts, and definition of that manual: revenue, expenditure, lending minus repayments, grants, overall balance equal to domestic plus external financing. The debt tables cover the entire public debt—foreign and domestic. The

major departures from *GFSM 1986* are the classification of grants and privatization receipts as financing rather than above-the-line as revenue and repayment of lending, respectively.

2.2 *Scope*

2.2.1 *The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices*

The coverage of the TOFE is limited to the operations of the budgetary central government, that is, covering the general budget, externally financed expenditure (investment), special funds, and gross operations of Treasury Special Accounts, including HIPC operations. Overall, the TOFE tends to have the same coverage as the general budget and does not yet cover the whole of the central government; it does not include government administrative agencies (EPAs) or the national social security fund. In addition, local governments (*collectivités territoriales*) are not included in the scope of the TOFE. Finally, the coverage of grants and loans “directly managed” by donors is not taken into account.

Since September 2002, efforts have been made to expand the scope of the TOFE to include the operations of EPAs and the *Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale* and to compile a consolidated TOFE covering all of central government. Extending the scope of the TOFE to local governments is not currently envisaged.

The TOFE contains the following:

- revenue by major category, with a breakdown available upon request (*GFSM 1986*, Table A, excluding grants, which are reflected in financing in the TOFE);
- an economic classification of expenditure and lending minus repayments (*GFSM 1986*, Table C, excluding privatization); and
- financing by type (external/internal) and a breakdown of domestic financing by sector (bank/nonbank) (*GFSM 1986*, Table D). However, the breakdown by instrument (*GFSM 1986*, Table E) is not available.

For internal use, the MEF’s Directorate of the Budget (DGB) produces a functional classification of authorized as well as executed expenditure on a cash basis (*GFSM 1986*, Table B), based on budget items and budget execution.

Detailed total public debt

Public debt covers direct government debt (budget and special funds, project debt, and on-lent debt) and assumed debt under government guarantees (guaranteed debt). The public debt tables cover both domestic and external debt, broken down by type of holder and by economic sector.

External public debt covers the direct debt of the Treasury: drawings for own account, project debt, and “on-lent” debt. Domestic public debt covers debts or payment arrears consolidated in the context of specific agreements, as well as the government’s disputed claims.⁵ In addition, guaranteed domestic and external debts are recorded and included in the debt totals reported to the WAEMU Commission. The debt of public enterprises managed directly by these enterprises is often not reported to the DDP.

2.3 Classification/sectorization

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The detailed classification of revenue, expenditure, and financial stocks and flows conforms broadly to the *GFSM 1986*. Domestic financing distinguishes between bank financing and nonbank financing. Privatizations are recorded below the line.⁶

In the TOFE, IMF debt transactions are correctly classified under domestic financing flows (treated as an indirect loan through the central bank). With regard to the HIPC Initiative, certain operations are treated by agreement with donors and the IMF; for example, the grant element of the debt service is recorded as an adjustment line under financing, rather than as a grant above the line.

2.4 Basis for recording

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks

Flows are valued on the basis of the amounts actually paid for expenditure, which generally reflect market prices, revenue, and financing. Domestic borrowing transactions are calculated from the change in stocks, which may entail departure from market prices. External repayments (cash basis) are obtained by deducting repayment arrears from the amounts of repayments due.

Gross debt is valued at face value. Stocks of debt in foreign currency are correctly converted at the end-period exchange rate, using the exchange rate of the euro (to which the CFAF is pegged) relative to other currencies on the last day of the period. Transactions in foreign currency use the effective rate (essentially the rate applied by the BCEAO and notified to the DDP through the Treasury), in particular for drawings abroad, payments on external debt, and budgetary support disbursements—an acceptable practice.

⁵ Related to BCEAO statutory advances to the government, subject of an agreement that will be executed in 2005 instead of 2003.

⁶ Anticipating the *GFSM 2001*.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis

WAEMU Directive 06/98/CM requires that revenue be recorded on a cash basis (Article 12) and expenditure on a payment order basis (Article 13). At present, Niger's TOFE is largely in compliance with that provision. All budgetary revenues are recorded on a cash basis. Current budgetary expenditures are recorded on a payment order basis. However, investment budget expenditure executed by donors is not always known at the payment order stage when the TOFE is prepared. In such cases, commitments are taken into account. In practice, apart from expenditure incurred entirely at the donor's initiative and of which the national government may not have prior knowledge, as well as emergency expenditure, the payment order can be considered as existing when the disbursement request is submitted.⁷

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The TOFE generally records revenue and expenditure transactions on a gross basis and financial transactions on a net basis. The TOFE sometimes helpfully identifies loan drawings separately from repayments. Sales by administrative entities are recorded as revenue rather than net of costs. Expenditures are not shown net of duties and other related revenues or taxes.

Since 2001, tax exemptions relating to externally financed projects (by the DGI and the DGD) and electricity imports from Nigeria by the electricity company NIGELEC (in the "Customs Statement") are included in expenditures and revenues, respectively. The taxes collected on behalf of third parties (for example by the DGI for local governments) are not recorded, which is normal. The bonuses distributed to collection officers (customs, taxes, and Treasury), particularly for penalties for late payment of taxes, are not recorded in the TOFE.

3. Accuracy and reliability

3.1 Source data

3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions

The program for the collection of source data used to prepare the TOFE is suited to Niger's specific situation. In principle, source data for government finance statistics should be based on the accounting ledger of the various institutional entities, and TOFE data should in

⁷ The use of monetary statistics, which record the stock of funds always available to project managers, should in principle allow for measuring the actual expenditure of the managers. The use of allocative keys, by economic nature, for externally financed projects (goods, and services, wages, etc.) would also significantly improve the analytical value of the TOFE.

principle be based on the general Treasury ledger (*Balance générale des comptes*, or BGT). However, because a complete BGT is not available in a timely manner, the DGE must obtain the source data from numerous departments (DDP, DO, DB, TGN, DGI, DGD, BCEAO, and DGF). The DGE also receives data from the BCEAO on grants, other budget assistance, and the net government position. To the extent that such disparate sources are used, their mutual consistency should be ascertained as far as possible. To that end, the DGE meets monthly with source data providers to discuss sources of data, their interpretation, as well as problems likely to affect the integrity of the statistics. Most of the problems identified are solved. For example, differences between expenditure on a commitment basis obtained from the DGF and the DGB are resolved by relying on the farthest upstream source of the data, and differences between executed expenditure of the TGN and the DGB are reconciled.

Revenue: The DGI collects all direct taxes and most indirect taxes (the rest are collected by the DGD). The total amount of taxes is reported to the DGE. The tax administrations (DGI and DGD) collect data on disbursements, by type of revenue, from the local offices in the first few days of each month, by fax in the case of the DGI, and by radio in the case of the DGD. They prepare a summary, which they forward directly to the DGE. The DGD records customs duties on a cash basis, except for a category of revenue known as *recettes d'ordre* (exemptions), which are recorded on an accrual basis. These exemptions are recorded in the TOFE as both revenue and expenditure (subsidies and self-financed capital expenditure).

The TGN compiles information on the revenue of government departments (sales, duties, and administrative fees, etc.).

Expenditure: Expenditure data regarding payment orders are reported by the DGB and by the TGN. The DGF also provides an expenditure commitment statement, similar to the DGB statement. The expenditure commitment procedure, regular or simplified, involves interaction between the appropriations manager and the sections that must add their approvals: DGF (commitment) and DGB (payment order), and each step is entered into the computerized system.

Expenditure financed under the HIPC Initiative is tracked in a subaccount of the Treasury account at the BCEAO.

Externally financed projects: Projects that are externally financed by grants or loans are monitored by the DGF on a payment order basis. As regards grants managed by donors, the DGF is largely dependent on information they supply. Because donors sometimes neglect to report disbursements, which can be quite substantial, or do so very late. Given the size of these operations, this represents a significant gap in the system. The DGF contacts donors at the end of the year to ask them to submit data on directly managed grants.

The DGF produces a breakdown of grants and loans on a functional basis, an economic basis, by creditor, and by sector of activity.

Debt and financing: The DDP essentially manages the records on current debt, and the Treasury the records on domestic arrears from 2000 onward. (The CAADIE is responsible for managing domestic arrears prior to 2000.) Donors notify the DDP of disbursements of grants and project loans, except for project loans that are managed directly by the donors, in which case the information does not always reach the DDP, or does so only after a certain delay.

The DDP database contains both stocks and flows: drawings, repayments authorized and paid, interest authorized and paid. Consequently, the DGE takes the figure from the DDP.

Finally, the DGE uses the BGT obtained from the TGN, as well as information from the BCEAO on the government's position with it.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required

The budget classifications on revenue and expenditure are largely consistent with the TOFE categories or can be reclassified to provide the needed categories. However, the TOFE source data are insufficiently detailed to consolidate the EPAs and achieve coverage of the entire central government.

The time of recording revenue is consistent with the *GFSM 1986* cash basis. As noted, however, expenditures are not provided on a cash basis by the data sources. Valuation corresponds to the price used for the transaction which generally corresponds to the market price. Statisticians seem to be fully aware of the differences between the concepts governing source data and those of the GFS. The TOFE has the same scope (sectorization) as the budget.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

The source data are not always received on time. The data are generally available from the sources within the first two weeks of the following month, but more than six weeks can pass after the end of the month before the DGE receives some of these data. Owing to the lack of a formal text requiring the various departments to report their data to the DGE by a given cut-off date, the speed of submission is determined on an adhoc basis according to the constraints of each data provider.

3.2 *Assessment of source data*

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and nonsampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

The source data are assessed by cross-checking various sources, for instance, data from the TGN, the DGF, and the DGB for committed expenditure, and the TGN and the DGB for executed expenditure. The source data are analyzed in the stage prior to validation, and any inconsistency over time, such as a drop in revenue from a given tax or an abnormal change in the wage bill, leads to direct verification by the DGE with the reporting agencies and to correction as relevant.

3.3 *Statistical techniques*

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

Because data are extracted from accounting and other administrative records, no special statistical techniques are necessary. Therefore, processing tends to be limited to the validation of the source data. The preliminary TOFE data are first validated with the sources and then become provisional data, which are eventually replaced with the final (verified) data at the end of the year, when the budget is closed. During the validation meeting, the DGE: (1) confirms or rejects the figures; and (2) draws attention to the provisional status of the data. All data are corrected as new data become available.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

Because the TOFE is chiefly based on accounting sources and because the bridge tables between the budget classification and the TOFE are straightforward, few adjustments are necessary.

3.4 *Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

There are no intermediate TOFE results.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

There are no intermediate TOFE results.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

The TOFE produced from source data is analyzed in the stage prior to validation, and any inconsistency over time, such as a drop in revenue from a given tax or an abnormal change in the wage bill, leads to direct verification by the DGE with the reporting agencies and to eventual correction.

3.5 Revision studies

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3)

Data are not subject to revisions after they are disseminated to the general public. Studies and analyses of the revisions made throughout the compilation process are not carried out, as the preliminary *TOFE* (before validation) is not archived. Because of the critical shortage of resources, the DGE would probably not be in a position to undertake such studies.

4. Serviceability

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

The only TOFE data that are systematically disseminated to the general public are the annual data disseminated by the BCEAO. This periodicity does not conform to the quarterly recommendation of the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) as regards the dissemination of central government aggregates. Monthly data are disseminated only to a small circle of official users. The authorities indicated that these data are available upon request but that no announcement is made of this possibility. The monthly public debt data are not disseminated either.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

The dissemination timeliness of the data does not conform to the recommendations of the GDDS. As already indicated, the only TOFE data disseminated to the general public are those disseminated by the BCEAO and these data are disseminated with a considerable delay. The TOFE is distributed to official users approximately two months after the end of the reference month.

4.2 Consistency

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

TOFE revenue, expenditure, and balances are generally in line with financing. The difference between the cash basis balance (calculated above-the-line) and financing (calculated below-the-line) is added to expenditure as a statistical adjustment, to equalize the deficit/surplus and financing on a cash basis. This adjustment, which is discussed by the DGE with the providers of source data, can sometimes be sizable or not fully explained.

Expenditures, which are on a payment order basis, include a number of expenditures awaiting settlement. The difference between expenditure on a payment order basis and payments is treated as an adjustment to the cash basis. However, no distinction is made between funds in transit and true arrears, and the total amount is considered arrears.

The articulation between flows and stocks (e.g., the link between net borrowing and changes in liabilities) is generally satisfactory in the case of external debt, but for domestic debt, the disparate nature of the sources (Treasury, DDP, CAADIE) is such that it is not always possible to ensure complete consistency between changes in stocks and flows.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

The annual TOFE is obtained directly as the cumulative TOFE for December; therefore annual and infra-annual data are consistent. Annual time series are also consistent over time.

Any atypical change, such as a drop in certain tax revenue, between one cumulative TOFE and the next, or an unrealistic change in the wage bill, leads immediately to contact with the source agencies and to a correction as needed.

Overall, trends of the revenue or expenditure over time reflect closely fiscal policy and the underlying economic developments.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

The TOFE is used to prepare the aggregates for the national accounts, through government consumption and investment, hence the consistent relationship with the national accounts statistics. The TOFE data on government financial transactions with nonresidents are largely consistent with the balance of payments data, and those on the banking sector with the monetary and financial statistics, given that the BCEAO is the only source of government financing data for the TOFE.

4.3 Revision policy and practice

4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule

There is no formal policy or schedule for revisions, and data disseminated to the general public are not subject to revisions. As regards the data distributed to official users prior to their dissemination to the general public, revision practices are the following: provisional data (following validation) become final after the accounts and the supplementary period are closed. There is no archiving of provisional *TOFE* data. The public is not informed of this.

4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified

In the documents sent to official users prior to the dissemination of the data to the general public, the preliminary statistics are clearly identified by the mention "Preliminary *TOFE*." Following validation of the source data by the agencies that contribute to the sources, the *TOFE* is called the "Provisional *TOFE*" to indicate that the data it contains, although validated, may be subject to revision up to the closing of the current budget. After the budget is closed on December 31 and the supplementary period ends, the *TOFE* is called the "Final *TOFE*."

4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1)

There are no chronological series of revisions and no study of revisions.

5. Accessibility

5.1 Data accessibility

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

As indicated already several times before, the *TOFE* is not systematically disseminated to the general public. Unless otherwise indicated, the discussion below relates to information provided to official users of the *TOFE*.

The *TOFE* is presented in a way that identifies the principal aggregates and balances based on the *GFSM 1986*, including relevant breakdowns. It is accompanied by an analytical note covering four aggregates: Revenue, Expenditure, Balances, and Financing. This note help make the connection, which is not directly apparent, between the *TOFE* and the Budget. Data sources are not provided.

The level of detail in the monthly *TOFE*, like public debt, appears adequate, although revenue could be further disaggregated along the line of the *WAEMU TOFE*.

The TOFE time series, including long annual series, are available upon request. The time series on public debt do not appear to be available to the general public.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

Dissemination formats are limited. The TOFE is distributed to official users in paper and electronic format (diskette). The annual TOFE is published for the general public by the BCEAO in its statistical bulletin and on its website, but with considerable delay. The website data are not downloadable.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

The release date of GFS is not announced in advance. However, the TOFE is generally available about two months after the reference month.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

The TOFE is disseminated only to a small circle of official users. Members of the general public can in principle obtain it upon request but are not informed of this possibility.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

The DGE can provide supplementary details to the public on request. This availability of additional statistics and the conditions governing access to them are not made public.

5.2 Metadata accessibility

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

The only metadata available consist of the WAEMU TOFE directive, which sets out the generic coverage, analytical framework, and classification of the TOFE and the public debt in all WAEMU countries, and the GDDS metadata posted on the Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB), in English only.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

There are no metadata adapted to the needs of different users.

5.3 Assistance to users

5.3.1 Contact points for each subject field are publicized

Contact information is indicated only in the GDDS metadata posted on the DSBB. Users generally must seek assistance in person.

5.3.2 Catalogs of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

There is no catalog of the list of publications where the TOFE data and other government finance statistics can be found.

Table 3. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Government Finance Statistics
(*Compiling Agency: Ministry of Economy and Finance—DGE*)

Element		NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO	NO		
0. Prerequisites of quality								
0.1	Legal and institutional environment			X			The MEF's responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating GFS is not covered in a specific text. Coordination informal and ad hoc.	Short term—Draft a text clearly defining the powers of the relevant entities for the collection, processing, and dissemination of government finance statistics in general, and for the production and dissemination of the TOFE in particular.
0.2	Resources				X		The staffing and equipment of the DGE, which prepares the TOFE, are very insufficient. Lack of training. Cost of producing the TOFE not quantified.	Short term—Augment the human and material resources of the DGE to enable it to accomplish the tasks assigned to it.
0.3	Relevance				X		The TOFE is used chiefly by a very small circle of official users including international and regional organizations (IMF, World Bank, WAEMU, and BCEAO). The TOFE is not disseminated, and there are no specific provisions on seeking feedback from users.	Medium/Long term—Expand the DGE's program to include addressing user needs through specific actions (such as following up with regular and occasional users and distributing questionnaires).
0.4	Other quality management				X		There are no specific plans to improve the quality of statistics. User comments on that subject are not sought.	Medium/Long term—Provide a more detailed TOFE, particularly with regard to revenue, in accordance with WAEMU directives on the TOFE. Medium/Long term—Inquire about external users' needs, including the general public.
1. Assurances of integrity								
1.1	Professionalism		X				Public not informed of provisions concerning the production of the TOFE, including changes in methodology and procedures, and privileged access to the TOFE.	Short term—Inform public of terms and conditions of data production and dissemination.
1.2	Transparency				X			
1.3	Ethical standards			X				

Key to symbols: NA = Not Applicable; O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed; SDDS = Complies with SDDS Criteria

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(Compiling Agency: Ministry of Economy and Finance—DGE)

Element		NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO	NO		
2. Methodological soundness								
2.1	Concepts and definitions			X			Concepts and definitions broadly conform to the <i>GFSM 1986</i> . No program for adoption of the <i>GFSM 2001</i> methodology is currently in place.	Medium term—Plan for migrating to the <i>GFSM 2001</i> for GFS compilation, in consultation with the WAEMU commission.
2.2	Scope			X			TOFE statistics cover only budgetary operations and the special accounts. The EPAs, the social security fund, and local governments are not covered.	Medium/Long term—Extension of the TOFE to government administrative agencies (EPAs) of the central government in 2005, and then extension to the territorial communities (WAEMU directive on the TOFE).
2.3	Classification/sectorization		X				Revenue is generally recorded on a cash basis and expenditure on a payment order basis. Gross debt is valued at face value.	Medium/Long term—Improve the basis of recording.
2.4	Basis for recording			X				
3. Accuracy and reliability								
3.1	Source data			X			Excessive reliance on disparate data sources; sources not produced in a timely manner.	Medium/Long term—Improve and accelerate the production of the General Treasury Ledger, which should be used as a main statistical source in accordance with the WAEMU directive on the TOFE. Short term—Text requiring producers of TOFE source data (MEF directorates and BCEAO) to submit TOFE source data to the DGE by a given date (15th of the following month?). Medium/Long term—Expedite the plan to improve the BGT (computerization of regions, accelerated training of accountants in the new PCE, separation of administrative and accounting functions, etc.)
3.2	Assessment of source data		X					
3.3	Statistical techniques		X					
3.4	Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs		X					

Table 3. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Government Finance Statistics
(*Compiling Agency: Ministry of Economy and Finance—DGE*)

Element		NA	Assessment			Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO		
3.5 Revision studies					X	No revision studies are carried out and preliminary data are not archived	Medium/Long term—Archive the preliminary and provisional TOFE series and conduct revision studies annually.
4. Serviceability							
4.1 Periodicity and timeliness					X	Though TOFE data are produced monthly, the periodicity and timeliness of their dissemination does not meet GDDS recommendations.	Medium/Long term—Disseminate in the public at large, through an appropriate medium, monthly or quarterly data within the timeliness recommended by the GDDS.
4.2 Consistency				X		Adjustment line in the TOFE needed to reconcile deficit/surplus with financing occasionally sizeable or not fully explained; articulation between flows and stocks is not always satisfactory for nonbank domestic debt.	Short term—Ensure that the coverage of above the line transactions is the same as the coverage for financing. Short term—Conduct studies to identify the sources of discrepancy between the deficit/surplus and financing.
4.3 Revision policy and practice					X	There is no policy on revising the TOFE data. No archiving of preliminary and provisional TOFEs. No revision studies are conducted. This is not made known to the public.	Short term—Explanation of revision practices. See recommendations under 3.5.
5. Accessibility							
5.1 Data accessibility					X	The MEF does not disseminate the TOFE; public not informed of its availability upon request.	Short term—Disseminate the TOFE and debt data on the DSCN and WAEMU websites; inform the public of this in a periodic publication.
5.2 Metadata accessibility					X	No methodological note is published or available upon request.	Medium/Long term—Include a methodological note in the TOFE and debt data. Medium/Long term—Post the GDDS metadata on the DSCN and WAEMU websites.
5.3 Assistance to users					X	Users must show up in person in MEF for assistance	Short term—Provide complete contact information for TOFE and debt data (name of division, address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address, as applicable).

IV. MONETARY STATISTICS

0. Prerequisites of quality

0.1 *Legal and institutional environment*

0.1.1 *The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified*

Niger is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and shares a common central bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), with other member countries. The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating monetary statistics does not flow from a single text. The BCEAO Headquarters' Research Department and the National Directorate for Niger (DNN) jointly collect and process the source data. The BCEAO Headquarters disseminates Niger's monetary statistics and the DNN data related to BCEAO's financial statement. However, this responsibility is not explicitly mentioned in the BCEAO Statutes. Only Article 70 of the Statutes (Title IV—Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 5—Monthly Survey and Annual Report) provides that, for each fiscal year, a report on changes in the “integrated monetary situation” (SMI)⁸ of the West African Monetary Union (WAMU) must be presented.⁹ Taken literally, Article 70 does not imply monitoring the monetary situation in each individual WAMU country. Similarly, Article 36 of the Statutes (Title II—Central Bank Operations, Section 6—Support Provided by the Central Bank to WAMU Governments) mentions only “the general monetary and financial situation of the Union.”

The responsibility and internal organization cited above are supplemented by other legal provisions. Under the terms of Article 19 of the Treaty Establishing the WAMU and Article 69 of the Statutes of the BCEAO, the BCEAO each month must prepare a statement of its accounts, which must be published in the official gazette of each of the participating countries.¹⁰ In particular, the monthly BCEAO statement for Niger is prepared jointly by the DNN and BCEAO Headquarters. Furthermore, each month the BCEAO must prepare a statement for each national directorate on currency issue and its counterparts.

⁸ The term used for the broad money survey of WAEMU states.

⁹ The August 1, 1994 WAEMU Treaty is an extension of the WAMU Treaty which, therefore, remains in force.

¹⁰ Normally, the balance sheet of the BCEAO should be published once a year in Niger's Official Gazette. While annual publication has been regular, the date varies depending on when the information is received from the DNN. Moreover, in January, the DNN publishes in the Official Gazette a list of banks licensed in Niger. The accounting statements of these banks can also be published at their request and their expense.

The above-mentioned “shared responsibility” between the Headquarters and the national directorates of the BCEAO can be further specified as a fairly centralized structure, in which the Headquarters sets the statistical compilation program and the national directorates carry out the collection and first stages of compilation of data in their respective countries. The accounting statements of banking institutions (commercial banks and financial institutions) located in Niger are collected by the DNN. The WAEMU chart of accounts for banks (PCB) explicitly provides that their monthly accounting statements shall be sent to the main national office of the BCEAO, that is, to the DNN in the case of Niger. Niger’s SMI is established by the DNN and validated by the Headquarters.

0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate

Procedures for exchanging and coordinating data exchange among DNN offices and other source data providers, that is, the banks, the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), specifically the Treasury, and the National Postal and Savings Office (ONPE), appear rational and adequate. The procedures for the submission of financial statements are codified in detail within the PCB in terms of content and structure (formats of statements and computer files). By contrast, data supplied by the Treasury and the ONPE (for postal checking accounts (CC) and savings deposits) are not derived from the PCB. Data obtained from the Treasury for cash in vault and collateralized bonds are transmitted under ad hoc bilateral agreements.

0.1.3 Individual reporters’ data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only

The monetary statistics produced by the BCEAO are subject to statistical secrecy; only aggregate data on all deposit money banks are published, preventing identification of transactions carried out by individual institutions. Only transactions of the central bank, the Treasury, and the CCPs are identifiable. Owing to the statute and missions of these institutions, identification of their operations does not conflict with the rules of confidentiality. Confidentiality is reaffirmed in BCEAO Staff Regulations as well as in the By-laws, which provide for penalties in case of unjustified disclosure of individual data. The new Staff Regulations, adopted in February 2002, further strengthened the confidentiality expected of staff by forbidding them from making public statements while employed and extending this requirement even after a staff member leaves his position (Article 4 of the Staff Regulations).

The accounting statements of banking institutions and other sources of monetary statistics are kept in secured electronic files.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response

Article 54 of Law 90/18 of August 6, 1990 regulating banks in Niger provides that “banks and financial institutions must, during the fiscal year, prepare statements at the intervals and

on the terms prescribed by the DNN. These statements shall be submitted to the DNN, the BCEAO Headquarters, and the Banking Commission of the WAMU.” The statutory deadline for submission of monthly statements is one month. In case of noncompliance, substantial and sharply progressive penalties are provided for (see Article 54 of the banking law);¹¹ penalties are actually applied (as in the case of delays related to Y2K issues).

Although the banking law does not apply to the Treasury or the ONPE (see Article 2), the latter must provide the BCEAO with information deemed necessary for the performance of its duties (see Articles 42 and 43).

The information that the BCEAO may obtain from banking institutions, the Treasury and the ONPE broadly cover the data needed to produce the monetary statistics (bank risk, unpaid checks and commercial paper, and any other payment-related events). Professional secrecy may not be invoked against the BCEAO or the Banking Commission.

0.2 Resources

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs

DNN staff resources assigned to the preparation of monetary and financial statistics were until 2004 insufficient. The DNN’s Research Department has now a staff of 13 (March 2005), of whom three (the head of the Monetary and Financial Statistics Division and two operating officers) work directly on the preparation of monetary statistics. Human resources appear therefore to be adequate to cope with the responsibilities, and also with the adoption of the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual (MFSM)* methodology envisaged over the medium term. To that end, Headquarters devoted particular attention during 2004 to reducing the delay in dissemination of the BCEAO survey to 60 days. Measures are planned for 2005 to increase the reliability of measures of currency in circulation. In November 2004, Headquarters organized a meeting to improve the sectorization and classification of units of the nonfinancial public sector. Training of the entire staff is envisaged.

The head of the SMF took the March 2005 course on monetary and financial statistics sponsored jointly by STA and the Joint Africa Institute. He also took part in a seminar on the redefinition of monetary aggregates held in Dakar in April 2003. On-the-job training for the other two officers will be handled by the DNN's Research Department. Staff are given the possibility to attend seminars and workshops whenever and wherever they are held.

¹¹ CFAF 10,000 per day of delay for the first 15 days, CFAF 20,000 per day of delay for the next 15 days, and CFAF 50,000 per day of delay thereafter.

Each SMF staff responsible for monetary statistics has access to a computer installed in 2004 to replace older models. Each computer is connected to the BCEAO's intranet. Processing of source data and calculation of the monetary statistics are fully computerized.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented

The human, financial, and material resources allocated to monetary statistics are determined by the Headquarters, which ensures the allocation of resources among its national directorates and seems ready to take needed measures to make more effective use of human resources. For example, during 2003, the DNN requested and received a staff increase in order to meet new tasks in the area of monetary and financial statistics.

0.3 Relevance

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored

The BCEAO does not conduct surveys of external users to obtain their views (satisfaction index, suggestions for improvement). The general public is not invited to express comments or wishes. However, the BCEAO is open to any request for information regarding monetary statistics.

0.4 Other quality management

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality

There is normally no trade-off between timeliness and the completeness of the data. In fact, the small number of reporting entities (central bank, ONPE, Treasury, and eight deposit money banks) allows for final monetary statistics to be calculated directly. However, it should be noted that provisional monetary statistics are disseminated. Only final statistics are disseminated.

Overall coordination for preparing and disseminating monetary statistics for Niger is the responsibility of the BCEAO Headquarters. Data are exchanged quickly among the units involved, always via electronic file transfer.

BCEAO staff, particularly management-level staff, are concerned about data quality, as evidenced by the numerous controls undertaken during the preparation of monetary statistics. For example, the section chief responsible for the collection and compilation of banking data employs several systems of vertical and horizontal checks, together with a system of matching the asset and liability items recorded by correspondent institutions for the same transaction.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program

The process of preparing monetary statistics is well-established and not especially complex. The work is overseen by a supervisor appointed by the National Director, to whom he reports. Moreover, BCEAO inspection missions verify working procedures and the application of management rules. In particular, inspections of this kind look at the regularity of monetary statistics collection, processing, and dissemination.

0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program

The main BCEAO objective in statistics is the medium-term adoption of the *MFSM* methodology, which has already started. No specific calendar has yet been adopted, however.

Within the BCEAO, working groups comprising Headquarters and national directorates staff are established whenever methodological changes are made; for example, recently a working group prepared a review of the PCB. The DNN is participating in this working group.

Finally, the BCEAO is a member of the Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics (www.ifcommittee.org), which provides an international forum for discussion on improving monetary and macroeconomic statistics.

1. Assurances of integrity

1.1 Professionalism

1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis

The authority of the BCEAO Headquarters, under which the DNN operates, ensures the DNN independence from the government. Staff are permanent employees and cannot be dismissed except for serious offense. Recruitment is competitive and subject to a committee review. Requirements vary depending on the type of position. Each staff is required to adhere to the Personnel Charter that deals with responsibility, integrity, and professionalism (see paragraph 1.3.1 below for details on the new 2003 Charter).

Staff are encouraged to develop their professional skills. They may produce memoranda or studies, some of which are published in the monthly *Notes d'information et statistiques (NIS)*. They are informed of training opportunities offered to the DNN, and have access to training, seminars, colloquia, and meetings with other experts. In the course of 2003, for example, staff were able to participate in, among other things, a seminar on the redefinition of monetary aggregates, a seminar on the “prudential provisions of the WAMU on the eve of the new Basel capital accord,” national training workshops on the WAEMU public securities market, a seminar on the validation of the draft on common WAEMU legislation on money-laundering in member states, and a seminar on central bank security.

1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations

The source data from all reporting entities are sufficient to produce all the expected statistics. Techniques do not rely on particular statistical methods, given that source data are obtained through exhaustive collection of the accounting statements from all the institutions covered by Niger's monetary statistics.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics

Even though it has the right to comment, the BCEAO has not reacted publicly to date to errors of interpretation of the statistics it produces. No such erroneous comments on monetary data have been registered by the media and the BCEAO has not had to face this sort of situation.

1.2 Transparency

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public

The statutes of the BCEAO and the banking law are accessible on the BCEAO Headquarters website. General information is likewise provided on the website regarding the principal conditions that govern the collection of source data, confidentiality, the preparation of results, or the obligation to disseminate them. However, the Governor of the BCEAO, and other WAEMU senior officials, take every opportunity to stress the importance given to transparency.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified

Government officials have no access to the statistics before they are published. Procedures for preparing and approving the statistics are solely the responsibility of the BCEAO.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such

The *NIS* that contain monetary statistics are published under the BCEAO name without explicit reference to the DNN, or to the Research Department and the SMF. The General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) metadata accessible on the Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB) identify the specific units of the DNN and BCEAO Headquarters that are responsible for producing Niger's monetary statistics.

1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques

Major methodological and procedural developments are not announced in advance to the public. The DNN notes that the conversion to the methodology contained in the *MFSM* will constitute a major change, owing to the innovations to be introduced regarding current practices, particularly regarding expanding institutional coverage, preparing flow data, and recording claims and liabilities on an accrual basis. Consequently, this conversion could be reported in advance to users, through joint agreement with BCEAO Headquarters.

1.3 Ethical standards

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff

Ethical standards are clear and well-known. New DNN staff, including trainees, are informed about BCEAO Staff Regulations, as revised in February 2002, and its By-laws, and must pledge in writing to comply with professional secrecy and discretion. Staff are also regularly reminded about these rules. Staff members are subject to professional secrecy, under penalty of sanctions (Article 47 of the Statutes of the BCEAO). They cannot hold any interests in any company, particularly financial institutions (Article 48 of the Statutes of the BCEAO).

Title II of the BCEAO Staff Regulations (version of February 2, 2002) sets out the duties, obligations, and conflicts of interest for staff members. Article 4 deals with the obligation of fairness, and specifies that duties must be performed with full independence from external authorities and organizations. Article 5 deals with the obligations of discretion and restraint: "Staff members are bound by professional secrecy and must exercise restraint and absolute discretion with regard to all matters relating to the activities of the BCEAO." It also states that "Termination of their employment, for any reason whatsoever, does not release staff members from these obligations, and former staff members of the BCEAO must avoid any actions that may cause difficulties for the bank." Article 6 indicates that "staff members may not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the independence and impartiality required in their roles as BCEAO staff, unless a waiver is granted by the Governor." Finally, Article 7 provides that "staff members may not obtain or receive any investment, interest, or compensation of any kind whatsoever, through work or advice, in a public or private enterprise...without a waiver granted by the Governor. Any professional activity on the part of the staff member's spouse must be declared to the BCEAO, which shall take appropriate steps to safeguard its interests, as necessary."

The personnel statute was updated and reinforced by the BCEAO Personnel Charter, published in January 2003, of which every employee received a copy. The charter is "the synthesis of the cardinal values that have forged the BCEAO spirit, namely solidarity, professionalism, a sense of responsibility, loyalty and integrity." In a personal letter addressed to each employee of the BCEAO, and accompanying the Charter, the Governor exhorts staff "to embody these values so as to pursue the work of building a modern, independent, transparent and efficient central bank, serving a shared ideal, with the same

rigor, the same selflessness, the same enthusiasm and the same striving to exceed as in the past.”¹²

The DNN National Director is appointed by the Governor of the BCEAO for an indefinite period after obtaining the consent of the national authorities. His appointment is revocable by decision of the Governor after consultation with the national authorities.

2. Methodological soundness

The methodological soundness dimension is assessed in terms of indicators below (elements 2.1 to 2.4) that relate to the guidelines outlined in the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual (MFSM)*. These indicators are applicable to countries that have adopted these guidelines (with references provided below to specific parts of the *MFSM*, as relevant).

During an interim period, countries that have yet to adopt *MFSM* will be assessed on the basis of a hybrid of guidelines, including, but not limited to: the *MFSM*, the *System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA)*, and various internationally accepted good practices, including the IMF guide for compilation of *International Financial Statistics*. For these countries, an appropriate migration path from the existing practices to the guidelines of *MFSM* should be adopted.

The *MFSM* is available on the Fund website (in English and French) (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/mf/manual/indexhtm>) and the bound, published version is available (in English and French) from Publication Services, International Monetary Fund, 700 19th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20431.

2.1 Concepts and definitions

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The monetary statistics are largely consistent with the principles presented in the now outdated *Guide to Money and Banking Statistics in International Financial Statistics (Guide)*.¹³ In 2001–02 the BCEAO began implementing the *MFSM* methodology. More

¹² Annual Report of the BCEAO, 2003, page ix.

¹³ While most features of the *Guide* have been fully adopted, a few have not been officially adopted, but the BCEAO takes supplementary actions to provide comparable presentation of data; thus, in the cases in which there is not full adherence, users can obtain the same statistical information from the available data. For example, and as described further in 2.3.1, the *Guide* recommends the complete disaggregation of the nonfinancial public sector, but the BCEAO has opted to retain a traditional French banking statistical practice that entails a less disaggregated presentation, particularly of lending, with the two main breakdowns of lending to the State (“crédit à l’Etat”) and lending to the rest of the economy (“crédit à l’économie”). The second sector includes credit to public enterprises. However, the BCEAO provides supplementary information on this sub-sector and each DNN monitors carefully the complete financial profile of each significant nonfinancial public enterprise. By doing so, the BCEAO provides roughly comparable statistical information although not in the same format as recommended by the *Guide*.

specifically, following a May 2001 STA technical assistance mission in Dakar, it indicated that the first steps toward bringing the monetary statistics of the WAEMU countries into compliance with the *MFSM* would take place in 2002, and would be continued in 2003. In April 2003, a workshop attended by all the heads of monetary statistics departments in the BCEAO was held in Dakar. As an outcome of this workshop, each National Directorate is required to collect data from the nonfinancial public sector, distinguishing the components of central government, local and regional government, and nonfinancial public enterprises. However, no deadline has been set as regards the complete implementation of the *MFSM*. See also 2.3.1.

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Coverage of the financial sector is not complete, but covers well the central bank and traditional depository corporations. The depository corporations included in Niger's integrated monetary survey are the central bank, the eight commercial banks, the Treasury (deposits and guarantees), and postal checks (CCP). However, the DNN has not received statements from the Treasury (deposits and guarantees) for the period 1995–2002. Under these conditions, and in view of the small amounts involved, the DNN has been using the last statement available. Commercial bank statements cover the operations of their Headquarters and branches located within the economic territory.

The DNN does not receive statements for the savings accounts of the ONPE. This gap reflects the status of that institution's ongoing restructuring. A revival of the former National Savings Fund, including resumption of deposit activity statements, is planned for 2006.

Similarly, the operations of the decentralized financial system (SFD) are not included in the monetary statistics. Dominated by savings and loan cooperatives and associations, these entities have grown significantly in recent years and are expected to become yet more important in future years. These entities collect savings deposits similar to those of commercial banks, and they are already required to produce accounting statements and to disseminate annual statistics, which they submit to their supervisory ministry.

In December 1993, the WAMU adopted a regulation covering the SFD. To ensure the implementation of that regulation, the BCEAO, on July 30, 1999, established the Mission for the Regulation and Development of Microfinance (MRDM), which became the Directorate of the Decentralized Financial System (DSFD) in February 2003. This Directorate supervises, coordinates, and monitors programs that support regulation of the SFD, and is involved in strengthening the capacity of decentralized financial institutions and their control structures. The DSFD is also responsible for streamlining and improving SFD management and control practices and for creating a database on decentralized financial institutions. The DSFD works with the SFD monitoring unit set up within the MEF. In Niger, the SFD is

governed by the Ordinance No. 96/024 of May 30, 1996 on the regulation of savings and loan cooperatives and associations.

Niger does not directly hold monetary gold, which is centralized at the BCEAO Headquarters. Monetary gold, therefore, is not included in the DNN balance sheet and is not included in the monetary statistics of Niger.

2.3 Classification/sectorization

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The assets and liabilities of deposit institutions are broken down first on the basis of the residence of the counterparty. The definitions of residents and nonresidents are consistent with that used in the balance of payments. Then the assets and liabilities against residents are broken down using a sectorization that is not sufficiently detailed. In fact, the sectorization embraces only two categories: the net government position, which covers central government; and net credit to the economy. The current coverage of net credit to government in Niger includes, in addition to central government, units of general government (units of municipal government [*communes*], units of regional government, and departmental enterprises and other administrative and social units [*établissements publics à caractère administratif et social*]). There is no distinction of the nonfinancial public sector other than government.

Net credit to the economy is a broader concept than credit to the private sector. It covers nonfinancial public enterprises, and all private enterprises, including financial institutions other than commercial banks. Transactions of commercial banks with other financial institutions are not broken down by subsectors (insurance companies, other financial intermediaries, financial auxiliaries). Experienced users, however, can derive some of the above-mentioned subsectors through additional manipulation of the data: for example, the nonfinancial public enterprises subsector can be identified within credit to the economy. Because of the prolonged restructuring of the ONPE, passbook savings accounts with the ONPE are excluded from narrow money, while passbook savings deposits at commercial banks are included in time deposits.

Repos between deposit institutions are treated as loans, not as sales of securities with a repurchase option; therefore they are handled in compliance with the *MFSM*. SDR allocations are included in the DNN's foreign liabilities, although they should figure in the capital account in accordance with the *MFSM*.

2.4 Basis for recording

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks

Assets and liabilities in foreign currencies are valued at the average market rate of the last day of the month. As already indicated (see above 2.1.2), there is no gold holding recorded at the national level in WAEMU countries and, therefore, no valuation of gold.

According to Directives 2001-02 and 2001-03 establishing accounting rules for securities belonging to banks and financial institutions, investment securities are recognized at market value. Securities issued by connected enterprises, equity securities, and long-term investments (portfolio formed without a yield objective) are recognized at the lower of the acquisition cost and the use value (“valeur d’usage”). Investment securities that must be held until maturity are subject to straight-line depreciation over their lifetime for the difference between book value and redemption value.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis

Recording is on a partial accrual basis. The PCB (Directive 94-07 concerning the recording of linked claims and debts, Article 2) indicates that “on each closing date, accrued interest with respect to claims and debts must be entered in the accounts and subaccounts for linked claims and debts (“créances et dettes rattachées”) provided for this purpose, from the moment that this interest is transferred to the profit-and-loss account.” In fact, *accrued interest not yet due* is not transferred to the profit-and-loss account; accordingly, it does not appear on the accounting statements used to calculate the monetary statistics. *Interest due but not paid* is added to claims and corresponding debts.

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Doubtful claims are reported net of provisions established to cover potential losses. This practice is not consistent with the recommendations of the *MFSM*.

The PCB (Directive 94-06 concerning the use of netting) does not permit netting between the assets and debts of different legal entities, between the assets and debts of the same legal entity expressed in different currencies or having different terms, between a term deposit and a partial and/or temporary advance granted against that deposit, between interest expense debited from and interest income credited to the account of the same legal entity, and between income and charges relating to repurchase agreements. These provisions are consistent with internationally accepted principles and are reflected in the statistics.

In the *NIS*, the SMI presents the government position and external assets on a net basis, but gross magnitudes are also presented (in Tables 2.5.2 and 2.2.2).

3. Accuracy and reliability

3.1 Source data

3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions

Source data for the integrated monetary survey are exhaustive. These data are submitted by all institutional units included in the integrated monetary survey. The data correctly reflect the reality of the monetary and banking transactions of Niger based on accounting statements. The BCEAO has its own chart of accounts, and banks and financial corporations have a common WAEMU chart of accounts (PCB). The PCB is supplemented by two documents: the Compendium of Directives Concerning the Recording and Valuation of Bank Transactions, and the General Measures Concerning Models and Rules for the Submission of Statements. The PCB was introduced in January 1, 1996.

The stocks of savings deposits at the ONPE are not obtained directly; however, the ONPE will be in a position to resume reporting once its restructuring is ensured.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required

Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required, and approximations are not used as a substitute for source data, except with respect to the amount included under *currency in circulation*. Owing to the free circulation of banknotes among the WAEMU countries, the banknotes paid into the windows of the BCEAO by commercial banks have been issued indiscriminately, in proportions that vary over time and space, by the eight countries in the zone.¹⁴ Accordingly, for a given country, the deduction of the total stock of banknotes to be sorted by country held in the vaults of the BCEAO within the territory of that country from the total issued by that country will result in overestimating or underestimating currency in circulation within the country, depending on whether the country is an overall exporter or importer of banknotes. To reduce these errors in measurement, BCEAO Headquarters staff break down by country the stocks of banknotes that are held in each country in the BCEAO vaults. They attribute to each country in the area the banknotes that it has issued and are considered held in the BCEAO vaults of the other seven countries. This breakdown is performed by using keys based on the results observed in each country following the banknote sorting operations by country. It should be noted that this practice remains flawed: the distribution keys applied to the stocks of banknotes to be sorted by country in the BCEAO vaults, should also be applied to the banks' vault cash and to the large numbers of banknotes circulating in the economies.

¹⁴ The banknotes issued in each country are marked with a distinctive letter; "H" indicates Niger.

The monthly accounting statements of the commercial banks and the attached tables are submitted in diskettes to the BCEAO. Consistency checks on the submission are run when the data are loaded into the computer: general balance of the accounting statement, consistency of the attached tables with the accounting statement. Next, the SMF, responsible for preparing the monetary statistics, performs accounting controls (stocks of refinancing transactions with the central bank through reconciliation with money market transactions, stocks of syndicated seasonal credits through reconciliation with the statements kept by the lead bank) and reasonableness checks (for each item in the accounting statement, any change greater than two percent against the previous month is checked via telephone with the declaring bank).

3.1.3 Source data are timely

Most of the eight Niger commercial banks submit their monthly statements within the statutory 30-day deadline. One commercial bank is often late by a week to 10 days. The SC issues reminders to late filers. These reminders may be in the form of letters of injunction sent to the managing directors of such institutions, reminding them of the financial penalties provided under Article 54 of the banking law.

The data from the Treasury (cash in vault and collateralized bonds) and from the CCP are submitted on time. Data on savings deposits with the ONPE are not reported to the DNN.

3.2 Assessment of source data

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and nonsampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

The supporting medium for collecting source data from banks and financial institutions (diskettes) allows for computerized processing. The Fisec-EPM database used jointly by the SC and the Research Department for preparing the monetary statistics is managed by an expert. The successive aggregations and consolidations performed as the monetary statistics are compiled ensures that accounting equilibria are maintained.

3.3 Statistical techniques

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

The BCEAO does not make substitutions for source data, because the source data are exhaustive. Provisional carry-forwards of data are done to make up for delays on the part of smaller declaring entities (Treasury, ONPE); when the final data are received, they are used to replace the data carried forward. The BCEAO does not publish seasonally adjusted data.

3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques

The source data come almost exclusively from accounting sources. The reporting entities comprise the entirety of the population, and there is no sampling or amendment of data.

3.4 *Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs*

3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable

By design, the monetary statistics compilation process does not produce intermediate outputs. Calculation of the main aggregates and their breakdown is based directly on accounting data; no more reliable sources exist with the same coverage.

3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated

The compilation process for the monetary statistics does not provide for producing intermediate data.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

In case of a significant or unexplained fluctuation in the monetary statistics, contact is made directly or by letter with the relevant declaring institution.

3.5 *Revision studies*

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3)

The monetary statistics compilation process does not include systematic revisions. Monetary statistics are considered final, and only isolated corrections may result in a revision of the outputs. The compilation process is highly stable, and error corrections are infrequent.

4. Serviceability

Timeliness and periodicity are assessed against the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) for countries subscribing to the SDDS, and against either the SDDS or the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), depending on countries' circumstances, for all other countries.

4.1 *Periodicity and timeliness*

4.1.1 *Periodicity follows dissemination standards*

The monetary statistics (in particular the central bank balance sheet and deposit money bank survey) are monthly, in accordance with the GDDS recommendation.

4.1.2 *Timeliness follows dissemination standards*

Timeliness does not conform to the recommendation of the GDDS (i.e., one month for the central bank balance sheet and three months for the deposit corporation survey). On March 10, 2005, the central bank balance sheet and monetary survey posted on the BCEAO website were for end-November 2004. At the same time, the last issue of the *NIS* provided to the mission was dated "December 2003" and included the two statements as at end-September 2003.

The monetary statistics for Niger are disseminated by BCEAO Headquarters simultaneously with those of the other WAEMU member countries in the monthly *NIS*, published also on the BCEAO website (www.bceao.int). The main monetary statistics found in the *NIS* are also reproduced on the website of the DSCN (www.stat-niger.org), as well as the websites of the WAEMU Commission (www.uemoa.int) and of the region (www.izf.net).¹⁵

The central bank survey is not posted separately from the banking survey on the BCEAO website. "De-linking" the dissemination of the two would therefore allow staff to improve the timeliness of the dissemination of the central bank survey.

¹⁵ However, more recent data could in principle be posted as the BCEAO reports to STA data that are more recent. For example, on February 15, 2005, the BCEAO reported to STA certain monetary statistics for Niger for the month of November 2004 (central bank survey and survey of deposit money banks) for re-dissemination in *International Financial Statistics (IFS)*.

4.2 Consistency

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

The internal consistency of the monetary statistics is assured; the various statements and detailed tables that make up the monetary statistics are carefully structured (see paragraph 5.1.1). Reciprocal assets and liabilities of the central bank and the other deposit institutions are consistent. Flow data are not available, and thus the consistency between stocks and flows cannot be checked.

Since the other financial institutions are not covered by the monetary statistics, the consistency of reciprocal assets and liabilities of deposit institutions and other financial corporations cannot be checked.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

Monthly data are available in accordance with a consistent methodology. Headquarters recently undertook to reconstitute all data series back to 1962–65 (depending on their starting dates), and these will become available on the website during the course of 2005.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

The consistency between external assets and liabilities of the SMI and the international investment position is checked, and a bridge table between the aggregates is published in the annual balance of payments publication.

The deposits and liabilities of the central government with the central bank as they appear in government finance statistics are consistent with the comparable monetary statistics data, given that government finance statistics use monetary statistics as source data. However, some divergences do remain but are explained by government coverage differences between the BCEAO and the Treasury. Similarly, central government deposits and liabilities with other deposit institutions in the government finance statistics are not identical to those appearing in the monetary statistics, but these discrepancies can be explained.

Monetary statistics cannot be compared with national accounts statistics because the national accounts do not include financial accounts.

4.3 Revision policy and practice

4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule

No revision policy and schedule are publicized. As already indicated, the monetary statistics compilation process does not include systematic revisions. Disseminated monetary statistics

are rarely subject to revision, and only isolated corrections may result in a revision of the outputs. The compilation process is highly stable, and error corrections are infrequent.

4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified

Preliminary statistics are indicated as such in *NIS* when they are occasionally shown.

4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1)

This is not applicable as no substantial revisions are carried out.

5. Accessibility

5.1 Data accessibility

5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)

The monetary statistics of Niger are published each month in the *NIS* by the BCEAO Headquarters, along with the statistics of the other WAEMU member countries.

The monetary statistics comprise seven tables:

- Survey of monetary institutions (integrated monetary survey);
- Net government position;
- Central bank survey;
- Banking survey (deposit money banks);
- Net foreign assets of monetary institutions;
- Uses of credit reported to the Central Risk Recording Service, and
- Base money

These tables include data for the three most recent months and the data at end-December for the previous eight years.

Three charts present:

- the integrated monetary survey (net foreign assets, net government position, money supply, domestic credit, credit to the economy),
- the money supply and three of its components (currency in circulation, money,¹⁶ bank deposits), and

¹⁶ This wording is not included in Table 2.1.2 “Survey of monetary institutions.” The series presented under the word “money” in the chart seems to correspond to the “narrow money” line in Table 2.1.2. The BCEAO is requested to make the wording in the table and the wording in the chart consistent. Moreover, from a purely logical perspective the concept of “money” would be the same as the concept of “money supply,” because in the

(continued)

- credit to the economy (total credit, seasonal credits, short-term credits, medium- and long-term credits), and refinancing obtained at the central bank.

In addition to the national data of the eight member countries, the *NIS* presents the corresponding data consolidated for the entire WAEMU area.

The *NIS* does not include commentary on changes in the integrated monetary survey.

5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate

Apart from the Official Gazette of Niger, there is no national monetary statistics publication. No press releases are issued once the data are produced. The monetary statistics are also published on the BCEAO website. The online information is a picture of the tables appearing in the *NIS* (without the charts) and cannot be downloaded. The data posted on the website are considerably more up-to-date than those published in the *NIS* (see paragraph 4.2.1). Access to the monetary statistics at the BCEAO website, however, could be improved.

5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule

There is no preannounced schedule for the dissemination of monetary statistics.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

No government institution receives the monetary statistics prior to their public availability.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Requests for unpublished subaggregates can be sent to the BCEAO Headquarters, which has a database with longer series than those available to the DNN. However, the DNN still serves as the requester's contact, and the response is made through the DNN. The availability of nonpublished subaggregates is not publicized.

absence of any other additional information, these two ideas correspond to the broadly defined money supply. The glossary at the front of the *NIS* indicates that narrow money is defined as currency in circulation (banknotes) plus demand deposits. The mission suggests replacing the term "narrow money" (*disponibilités monétaires*) with the term "means of payment" (*moyens de paiement*) and to use that term in the table and the chart.

Moreover, in this table, there is no note to the effect that the narrow money item excludes deposits with the ONPE.

Finally, the first chart is called "Integrated Monetary Survey" while Table 2.1.2, of which the chart is clearly an illustration, is called "Survey of Monetary Institutions." The BCEAO is requested to make the titles of the chart and the table consistent, or to indicate that the two terms are synonymous, which is not done in the glossary.

5.2 *Metadata accessibility*

5.2.1 *Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated*

The main concepts and scope of the monetary statistics, as well as differences from international statistical standards, are described only in the GDDS metadata, available in English on the IMF website. No French version is available in print or on the Internet. The BCEAO prepared in 1995 a methodological note entitled “Compilation of Monetary Statistics by the BCEAO” (Central Research and Forecasting Department), which is not published.

The PCB can be purchased from the BCEAO. On the other hand, the BCEAO chart of accounts is not publicly available, nor is it provided to users even on request. Only a few privileged correspondents have access to it at BCEAO offices, at the discretion of the National Director of the BCEAO.

5.2.2 *Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience*

No methodological document has been developed as a function of the intended audience.

5.3 *Assistance to users*

5.3.1 *Contact points for each subject field are publicized*

The *NIS* does not publicize any contact person other than the director of the publication (Director of Statistics and Research—BCEAO Headquarters). Similarly, no regional or national contact is identified on the BCEAO website. However, the GDDS metadata identify contacts for each category and indicator of financial sector statistics (name, title, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail information). The staff of the SMF is available to external users at the DNN to provide any assistance needed with regard to the monetary statistics, but this possibility is not publicized.

5.3.2 *Catalogs of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available*

The *NIS* includes a notice on how to obtain the publication (address, single issue price, subscription rate). The *NIS* does not mention the existence of the BCEAO website.

The catalog of periodical and occasional publications is available on the BCEAO website. All the necessary information is also provided on how to obtain and subscribe to the publication (contact, single issue price, subscription rate).

Table 4. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Monetary Statistics
(Compiling Agency: BCEAO)

Element	NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO		
0. Prerequisites of quality							
0.1 Legal and institutional environment			X			Responsibility for national monetary statistics not clearly specified.	Short term—Specify the responsibility of national agencies in the compilation of national monetary statistics.
0.2 Resources		X					
0.3 Relevance			X			Little attention is paid to outside users.	Short term—Adopt practices aimed at servicing outside users.
0.4 Other quality management		X					
1. Assurances of integrity							
1.1 Professionalism		X					
1.2 Transparency			X			Major developments not announced in advance of published data.	Short term—Announce in advance major developments, such as changes in methodology, in publications and on website.
1.3 Ethical standards		X					
2. Methodological soundness							
2.1 Concepts and definitions			X			Use of an outdated methodology.	Medium term—Accelerate the adoption of the <i>MSMF</i> .
2.2 Scope			X			Limited scope.	Medium term—Integrate SFD's in the SMI.
2.3 Classification/sectorization				X		Insufficient detail and failure to distinguish between various public subsectors.	Medium term—Determine accurately the various nonfinancial public subsectors.
2.4 Basis for recording			X			Some categories of income, such as interests, not recorded on an accrual basis; doubtful claims recorded net of provisions.	Medium term—Review the treatment of accrued interest.

Table 4. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Monetary Statistics
(Compiling Agency: BCEAO)

Element		NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
			O	LO	LNO	NO		
3. Accuracy and reliability								
3.1	Source data		X			Problems in sorting banknotes by country of issue; ONPE's financial statements not available.	Short term—Continuation of the work of the Working Group on the Sorting of Banknotes.	
3.2	Assessment of source data		X					
3.3	Statistical techniques		X					
3.4	Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs		X					
3.5	Revision studies	X				Absence of revision studies.	Medium term—Conduct revision studies, notably in connection with the possible impact of the results of work on the Working Group on the Sorting of Banknotes.	
4. Serviceability								
4.1	Periodicity and timeliness			X		Timeliness does not conform to GDDS.	Short term—Bring timeliness in accordance with GDDS guidelines, notably by accelerating the publication of the BCEAO's balance sheet.	
4.2	Consistency		X					
4.3	Revision policy and practice			X		No formal revision policy. Normally published data not subject to revisions; occasional revisions only.	Short term—Formalize and publish revision policy.	
5. Accessibility								
5.1	Data accessibility			X		No comments accompany data; there is no advance release calendar. No comments accompany the data. Data no downloadable	Short term—Disseminate advance release calendar and provide comments with data releases, as relevant.	
5.2	Metadata accessibility			X		Access to the methodological notes is very limited.	Short term—Disseminate methodological descriptions to the general public, notably the French version of the GDDS metadata.	
5.3	Assistance to users			X		Contact information provided only on the DSBB (in English only); existence of the BCEAO website not indicated in the <i>M/S</i> . External users are not informed in paper publications of the availability of BCEAO staff to assist them.	Short term—Inform the public in the <i>M/S</i> of the availability of data on the BCEAO website. Facilitate access to assistance at the DNN in Niamey and inform the public of this availability in publications and the website. Provide contact information in publications and website. Provide BCEAO's website address in paper publications.	

V. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS STATISTICS

0. Prerequisites of quality

0.1 *Legal and institutional environment*

0.1.1 *The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified*

The Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) is responsible for preparing the balance of payments for the member countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Article 1 of Annex III of Regulation R09/98/UEMOA of December 20, 1998 (the Regulation) concerning external financial relations of Member States of the WAEMU confers on the BCEAO responsibility for preparing external balance of payments statistics. For this purpose, the Regulation authorizes the BCEAO to collect data from national and international agencies, either directly or through banks, financial institutions, the postal administration, and notaries (Article 8, Annex III of the Regulation). This obligation is implemented by each National Directorate of the BCEAO in the case of enterprises and banks located in each national territory and by the BCEAO Headquarters in the case of international organizations.¹⁷

The Balance of Payments Committee (CBP), created by Article 3 of the Regulation, meets once a year to validate and disseminate the definitive balance of payments figures. The Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and is composed of the following agencies: the Statistical and National Accounts Directorate (DSCN), the Directorate General of Customs (DGD-MEF), the Treasury (MEF), the Directorate of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Commerce, Directorate of Money, Credit, and Savings of the BCEAO, the National Post and Savings Office (ONPE), and the Ministry of Mining and Energy. The DNN provides the secretariat for this Committee.

0.1.2 *Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate*

On the whole, exchange and coordination of data among data-producing agencies function adequately, following two modalities:

- 1) Coordination groups (of which the main one is the CBP) comprising the main public producers of source data (see above) are responsible for examining, validating and authorizing external accounts publication. A second such body is the National Customs

¹⁷ Apart from enterprises and banks, implementation by the national directorates of the BCEAO of the provisions of Regulation R09 also concerns foreign embassies, nonfinancial international agencies, and NGOs. Action by BCEAO Headquarters in this area includes intergovernmental or international organizations whose activities simultaneously cover the member countries of the WAEMU (e.g., ASCENA, IRD ex-ORSTOM, WAMU Banking Commission, URTNA, etc.).

Chain Committee (CNCD), which, under the chairmanship of DSCN, is responsible for the processing of foreign trade data. This Committee meets once a year. A working party, created on September 8, 2003, was established in the CNCD to work out a methodology for estimating unrecorded trade.¹⁸ This group has commenced its work.

- 2) Bilateral relations exist between the BCEAO and the main public agencies providing source data for the balance of payments. According to the BCEAO, cooperation is very good.

0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only

The BCEAO is not authorized to disclose individual transactions or data in its possession. Article 2(1) of Annex III of the above-mentioned Regulation guarantees confidentiality of the information gathered for purposes of compiling the balance of payments. Only agents involved in balance of payments compilation have access to such information and are forbidden to communicate it to any other person or agency. Furthermore, in the correspondence sent to respondents, a reminder is included of the confidential nature of the data and the use of the information supplied for the sole purpose of compiling balance of payments statistics. Finally, with each annual survey, a technical note and a letter from the BCEAO National Director remind recipients that the information supplied will only be used in aggregate form and solely for purposes of producing the data. Article 2(2) of the Regulation prohibits the disclosure of individual data.

Other practical internal rules guarantee that individual data cannot be used for other purposes than the compilation of statistics:

- Only BCEAO staff directly in charge of collecting individual data have access to them. The other staff members involved downstream, especially during the validation phase in the Balance of Payments Committee, have no access to individual data.
- After processing, the individual data are filed and entrusted to the Department Head in charge of preparing the balance of payments.
- At the dissemination stage, only the approved items are presented in the detailed tables for external distribution. No individual data are made public.

The physical security of data is assured by the premises of the DNN and by computer systems that prevent copying of files from any in-house terminal.

¹⁸ This working party consists, under the chairmanship of the Director General of Customs, of the DSCN, the DNN, the MEF, the Ministry of Commerce and Private Sector Promotion, the SONIDEP, and the Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, Industry, and Crafts of Niger.

Please see also the monetary statistics section for this indicator.

0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response

The obligation to report data is based on the Regulation (Article 1). The BCEAO's authority is established clearly and unambiguously. There are no reported or potential conflicts between the legal authorization to collect the necessary data for establishing balance of payments statistics and any other laws or regulations. Furthermore, the CBP provides a forum for preventing any differences in approach in the implementation of the Regulation.

The obligation to report data provides for penalties (Regulation Article 10) both for failure to meet deadlines and for sending erroneous data, and is dealt with under the exchange control violation legislation and the banking law. In practice, however, these provisions have never been invoked in Niger, and the BCEAO prefers to encourage coordination and awareness on the part of respondents.

0.2 Resources

0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs

The staff assigned to the Balance of Payments and Exchange Regulation Section are five in number: two senior professionals, one mid-level professional, and two nonprofessionals. Leaving aside the ancillary tasks, in particular those concerning the exchange control regulation, this comes to about 3.5 staff (full-time equivalent) permanently assigned to establishing the balance of payments and the international investment position. This staffing, in real terms, is 2.5 persons short of the theoretical staffing deemed necessary (see on this subject the conclusions of the BCEAO Headquarters evaluation mission of December 1997).

The allocation of budgetary resources roughly matches the needs for preparing the balance of payments. The IT resources are also adequate insofar as each officer has a computer, and the modern data processing technologies permit automatic processing using the Balance of Payments in Transaction Terms (BPT) and in Settlement Terms (BPR) applications.

0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented

No specific approach evaluates costs for compiling the balance of payments. However, the BCEAO is introducing an analytical accounting system that will capture this category of costs at the national and regional level. This evaluation is limited to the BCEAO alone and will not capture costs incurred by respondents (enterprises, banks), or any cost/benefit approach at the national level related to collection and data processing choices.

0.3 Relevance

0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored

Feedbacks on statistical production emanate from official users only and no regular mechanism exists for consulting the general public. Outside users are not called upon to make comments or express their wishes. However, institutional users frequently submit requests to the BCEAO. These users mainly belong to the CBP, and contacts established when preparing balance of payments data allow these institutions to communicate.

0.4 Other quality management

0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality

Quality considerations include training staff; preparing surveys and all methods of collecting source data matching requirements; using a methodology conforming with international standards; and implementing a software application that operates uniformly at all national directorates of the BCEAO.

These measures are supplemented by an internal control, which is performed by the Inspectorate of Services and the Internal Auditor, who examines the implementation of management rules and procedures in force in all units of the central bank.

0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program

The CBP—the lead unit behind the quality of data collection, statistics processing, and data dissemination—gives its opinions on methodology and makes recommendations on data sources and strategies for improvements in data production. In general, processes to monitor the quality of the statistical program involves official users only, as external users are not consulted.

0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program

As regards quality, the BCEAO's main aim is to comply with international methodology and to produce an annual balance of payments within 12 months, with an adequate coverage. The DNN focuses on source data collection, especially their exhaustiveness, timeliness being more or less guaranteed by the computerization of the production process. The CBP is also the focal point for exchanges of views and discussions about improving the statistics.

1. Assurances of integrity

1.1 Professionalism

1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis

Economic and monetary decisions concerning balance of payments statistics emanate from decisions made unanimously by WAEMU countries. This guarantees the objectiveness and independence of the BCEAO and, coincidentally, the impartiality of its statistics. As the DNN acts in all aspects of its activities under the auspices of the BCEAO Headquarters, it enjoys independence from the government in its choices in compiling balance of payments statistics.

Please see also the monetary statistics section for this indicator.

1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations

All collection and aggregation techniques are based solely on statistical requirements, notably those of the *BPM5*. Internal methodological notes, which transpose *Balance of Payments Statistics Manual*, 5th edition (*BPM5*) definitions and concepts, are intended to help BCEAO technicians in their tasks and are not published.

1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics

Even though it has the right to comment, the BCEAO does not react publicly to errors of interpretation of the statistics it produces. No erroneous comment on balance of payments data has yet been recorded in the media.

1.2 Transparency

1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public

The statutes of the BCEAO and the banking law are accessible on the BCEAO website. However, BCEAO's own regulations in matters of balance of payments are not systematically reproduced in the BCEAO's traditional publications. For example, the annual publication does not identify the BCEAO and the MEF as being responsible for the data¹⁹ or the confidentiality of individual data sent in by respondents.

¹⁹ The BCEAO is responsible for preparing the balance of payments on behalf of the member states, while their dissemination is incumbent upon the Minister in Charge of Finance, who is the Chairman of the CBP.

1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified

The staff of the MEF, which is a supplier of source data, see the provisional aggregated balance of payments data before they go to the CBP. This prior communication to Ministry staff is mentioned in the GDDS metadata posted on DSBB.

1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such

All data disseminated under the authority of the BCEAO bear the latter's own imprint and identification. Those who reproduce the data are asked to mention the source. Balance of payments data are prepared and published in the name of the MEF.

1.2.4 Advanced notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques

There is no preannouncement of the introduction of a new survey or a new statistical technique, but balance of payments statistics users are informed of any new survey data or statistical technique used in compiling data at the time of publication. Thus, when the 1996 balance of payments was prepared, respondents were notified about the transition to *BPM5*. The public was advised about the transition to *BPM5* in a methodological note enclosed with the data.

1.3 Ethical standards

1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff

Please see the monetary statistics section for this indicator

2. Methodological soundness

2.1 Concepts and definitions

2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The statistics are presented in accordance with the definitions, concepts, and classification of *BPM5*. For example, the concept of residence complies with the definition given in *BPM5*, both at the regional level of the Monetary Union area and in the national economies.

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

Niger's balance of payments covers all transactions between residents and nonresidents. The concept of residence follows the *BPM5*'s recommendations and is based on the principle of the center of economic interest, which provides a complete geographic coverage. Emigrants are considered to be nonresidents and immigrants residents. This treatment is clearly described in the technical notes produced by the BCEAO for its staff.

2.3 Classification/sectorization

2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

At the national level, institutional units as well as transactions are classified in conformity with *BPM5*. The same principle is applied to the regional balance of payments.

2.4 Basis for recording

2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks

In principle, transaction values correspond to the amount exchanged and are recorded on the date of the transaction at the effective exchange rate agreed to by the parties, in conformity with the principles of the *BPM5*. Foreign exchange transactions are converted into CFA francs and valued on the basis of the exchange rate at the time of the transaction. Stocks are valued as of the end of year, and foreign exchange transactions, calculated on the basis of changes in stocks, are recorded using the average CFA franc/foreign currency rate over the period under consideration.

2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis

Balance of payments transactions are established on an accrual basis, except for certain categories of private sector revenues (interest), which are on a cash basis.

2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

The grossing/netting principles established by *BPM5* are complied with. Transactions distinguish between assets and liabilities. Current transactions are declared and recorded on a gross basis; financial operations are declared and recorded separately by category and excluding fees and financial charges, each asset and liability component being broken down separately. Recording conventions are identical at both the national and regional levels.

3. Accuracy and reliability

3.1 Source data

3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions

The source data used for the balance of payments are numerous and diversified, and reflect well Niger's situation. The main shortcoming concerns private deposits and borrowings with nonresident banks, which could be better captured by using BIS data.

The balance of payments data collection system is based on two categories of information: direct surveys of the main operators (specific questionnaires and other documents) and declarations submitted by banks on external settlements. Apart from the data collected domestically, BCEAO Headquarters produces data on external banknotes (banknotes issued by a WAEMU Member State that are included in cash balances held by another agency), BCEAO assets and liabilities, and transactions of a number of regional agencies.

In principle, collection by bank settlements (BPR application) should provide the basis for establishing a provisional balance of payments. The main piece of information is the payment report (*compte rendu de paiements*, or CRP), which tracks the settlements by banks on behalf of their customers and for their own account. These CRPs are submitted every 10 days to the BCEAO for processing. This information is supplemented by other statements (BP1, BP2, MCE, and DEC 2000), with which a comprehensive statement of settlements can be established for each bank:

DEC 2000: a bank accounting statement (DEC = Document of Credit Institutions).

BP2 Statement: monthly statement on stocks, which gives the distribution by currency of claims and liabilities vis-à-vis nonresidents in the reporting bank statement (DEC 2000).

MCE Statement (movements in foreign accounts): for each of the currencies in the correspondents' accounts in the BP2 statement, the MCE picks up, account by account, the balance at start of period, debit and credit movements, and the balance at end of period. For a single cut-off date, the sum of the balances of the accounts in any given currency should match the amount declared on statement BP2 for the same currency.

BP1 Statement: a statement of the movements in foreign correspondents' accounts which extracts comprehensively, currency by currency, the information from the MCE statement and details debit and credit movements distinguishing between those that generate CRPs and those that are cashflow movements, with an adjustment item that makes it possible to take into account the effect of the change in the foreign exchange rate.

The main sources for the annual definitive balance of payments are the questionnaires sent to the main economic operators (enterprises, NGOs, certain government agencies, banks),

which were designed after a typology corresponding to each category of economic activity likely to be involved in international transactions. In all, about forty different questionnaires have been drafted. CRPs, which to some extent record the same transactions as the questionnaires, are not used for compiling the definitive balance of payments.

For data processing purposes (BPT application), these questionnaires obey a common logic: they cover flows describing current transactions over the year and stocks of financial assets and liabilities used for the financial account of the balance of payments over the year (by comparison with the stocks of the previous year) but also for the international investment position.

The data from the *Centrale des Bilans* (a database the BCEAO maintains, which provides summary statements of corporate balance sheets) makes it possible to cross-check data from questionnaires and therefore constitutes a prime source of supplementary information. The questionnaire's data sources are reviewed annually by the DNN, which systematically revises the register of operators who take part in international transactions in Niger, with a view to identifying enterprises that have been created or have gone out of business.

Customs data are also a major source for the balance of payments. Judged more reliable than survey and CRP data, they are incorporated into the balance of payments after some adjustments to ensure conformity with the methodology and to improve the coverage.

3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required

Source data on the whole approximate the desired definitions, classifications, valuations and time of recording. The main adjustments to gross data are for merchandise trade, which undergoes two series of adjustment. The first adjustment, made by the CNCN, incorporates some information on merchandise trade supplied by members of this committee (Société Nigérienne des Produits Pétroliers, Ministère des Mines et de l'Énergie), after which the DSCN publishes the definitive data for foreign trade about nine months after the reference year. Then, corrections are made to the customs data by the DNN to ensure conformity with the balance of payments methodology and the desired coverage: conversion from imports c.i.f. to imports f.o.b., exclusion of imports and exports of nonresident entities (diplomatic missions, for example), airline refueling stops at Niamey Airport, and replacement of certain customs data with survey data deemed more reliable. Adjustments are also made to certain products, such as cowpeas, and to take due account of market prices for the main agro-pastoral products. Furthermore, standardized corrections are made to adjust for informal trade.

3.1.3 Source data are timely

Source data are generally received in a timely fashion, insofar as the statement of settlements and the definitive balance of payments are produced within scheduled deadlines. When correspondence is sent out, respondents are informed of the deadline for returning the

questionnaires, in principle one month after they are sent out. Reminders are sent as needed and, if there is no reply, visits are arranged to collect data on the spot.

3.2 *Assessment of source data*

3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and nonsampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes

Survey data are cross-checked against previous year data. Because the whole population is targeted, there are no problems connected with the choice of a sample.

The current response rate is however quite low (about 60 percent), even though the BCEAO believes this figure is deceptive and that the effective rate of responses is closer to 80 percent, notably since the actual number of potential respondents is smaller than the number of questionnaires sent out (enterprises gone out of business, for example). The BCEAO does not see any major coverage problem, especially since it ensures that the main operators respond to the survey.

The staff of the Balance of Payments Section conduct category-by-category cross-checks. For example, direct investment revenues for the current year are cross-checked against direct investment stocks of the previous year. Large transactions are verified automatically at the input stage and at the end of the analysis when the data are inputted into an overall macroeconomic framework. They are also confirmed through direct contacts with respondents.

Furthermore, the initial consolidated results by category of economic agent (called the “centralized” questionnaire) are used to verify the reliability of current data by comparison with previous years’ data.

3.3 *Statistical techniques*

3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources

On the whole, data compilation is based on sound modalities and principles. However, bank settlement reports are not used to compile a provisional BOP statement. Gross data received from respondents are automatically processed after manual treatment by the DNN. Since 1997, a computer application developed by BCEAO Headquarters (Balance of Payments in Transaction Terms—BPT) has been installed at all National Directorates. It consists of automated verification procedures, such as the logical comparison with the source data submitted the previous year, or the adding up of subcomponents. This application is described in a single document accessible by the relevant staff. The survey forms are easy to complete and have been tested on a sample of respondents.

3.3.2 *Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques*

The other statistical procedures are based on uneven methods that could be improved:

- For *merchandise trade*, the flat 21 percent c.i.f./f.o.b. ratio, computed in coordination with other national directorates, is not regularly revised on the basis of an analysis of individual customs declarations. This ratio could certainly be fine-tuned by excluding freight provided for imports by local transport companies.
- *Unrecorded trade*, which is not included in the foreign trade statistics, is covered by a flat 10 to 20 percent correction for exports and a flat 2 to 5 percent correction for imports depending on the year, with no underlying specific methodology.
- The travel item calls for no particular comment: it is based on questionnaires sent to the MEF and enterprises for business travel, and to the Ministry of Tourism, as well as on a statistical correction on ticket sales for personal travel.
- At the regional level, a correction is made in the *other investments—currency and deposits* item to neutralize external holdings in banknotes of another country in the CFA franc area. Thus, the assets and liabilities of a given country are on a net basis (after deduction of the assets of the other countries).

Currently, the main weakness lies in the use of bank settlements. A provisional quarterly balance of payments is produced by the BCEAO, based on the BPR application, but the unreliability of declarations makes it impossible to publish it. The computer application is the main cause, because it does not allow extraction by category of amounts, by operation, or by respondent, which makes checking very difficult. A new version of the software application is expected to solve the problem.

3.4 *Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs*

3.4.1 *Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable*

All intermediate data are subject to thorough verification by the BCEAO, focusing mainly on foreign trade data, information on foreign debt, the situation of banks, etc. However, settlement statements, of questionable quality, are not currently used to produce a provisional quarterly balance of payments.

3.4.2 *Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated*

Discrepancies are duly examined. The centralized questionnaires are also used to track major economic developments from one year to the next for a given category of economic agents. The behavior of certain series is regularly monitored by means of closely related series.

3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators of problems in statistical outputs are investigated

Errors and omissions are examined on the basis of a ratio that is calculated as the amount of errors and omissions relative to the highest amount of either debits and credits. If this ratio (5 percent) is exceeded, verifications, adjustments, and cross-checks are initiated between current transactions and capital and financial operations, and additional surveys are conducted, so as to reduce this rate. The cumulative errors and omissions over a period of several years is also close to zero.

Under the current method, bilateral matching and comparisons with the mirror data from other members of the monetary union are carried out by the BCEAO Headquarters. At this stage, any identified asymmetries are reported to the relevant national directorates.

3.5 Revision studies

3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3)

Analyses of revisions made throughout the compilation process are carried out routinely. The BCEAO produces provisional data, mostly estimates, which can be revised up to the time the CBP adopts the definitive balance of payments. The provisional data supplied to official users as part of monetary planning are accompanied by a memorandum from the National Directorate explaining any changes from the initial estimates in the new estimates (“Review of the Monetary Program”).

4. Serviceability

4.1 Periodicity and timeliness

4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards

Balance of payments statistics in transaction terms are disseminated annually, in accordance with the GDDS. Some components are prepared more frequently: the net external assets of the BCEAO and resident banks are published monthly by the BCEAO in the *NIS*. As previously mentioned, the BCEAO does not publish provisional quarterly statistics.

4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards

Balance of payments data are disseminated about 14 months after the end of the year, which is not in conformity with the GDDS recommendations (6 to 9 months).

4.2 Consistency

4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset

The internal consistency of data is corroborated by the level of detail of the series produced, which follows the standard classification set forth in *BPM5*. In the long term, errors and omissions present a stable profile, thanks to the controls described above. Breaks in series are flagged for the users' attention and are explained.

4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time

Annual time series following the *BPM5* format have been produced for 1986 onward. Any atypical developments are explained as necessary in the context of the central bank annual reports. Data prior to 1986 still follow the national *Balance of Payments Statistics Manual*, 4th edition (*BPM4*)-based presentation. Also, at the time of transition to *BPM5*, the major methodological changes were identified and explained to the users in notes that accompanied publication. The time series were systematically retroplated and, after 1996, which was the first year compiled with the new methodology, balance of payments series for 1986–95 were reorganized according to the *BPM5* classification, so as to ensure data consistency.

4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks

Balance of payments statistics are generally consistent with other statistics. The bridge tables or reconciliation tables between customs data for merchandise trade and those for goods in the balance of payments are published. Consistency with the monetary and government finance statistics results from the fact that these datasets use the same sources as balance of payments statistics. Finally, consistency is examined collegially over the year by the CBP, which brings together all balance of payments institutional users.

4.3 Revision policy and practice

4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule

Once published, data are not subject to revisions. According to the BCEAO, the duration of processing the annual data provides enough time to include all available data. No change of methodology having been introduced recently, there is no need to revise data from this point of view. On the other hand, the preliminary balance of payments data disseminated to several categories of official users (see 3.5.1.) prior to their dissemination to the general public are subject to revisions which are sent to these same users.

4.3.2 *Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified*

The data's preliminary status is clearly identified when they are distributed to MEF users and members of the CBP Committee. The reference "provisional" is included in all these documents and tables.

4.3.3 *Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1)*

Revisions studies are made (and identified as such) only for MEF users and members of the CBP (see 3.5.1.).

5. **Accessibility**

5.1 **Data accessibility**

5.1.1 *Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts)*

Balance of payments statistics are presented in the form of a relatively comprehensive booklet (about twenty pages) published by the MEF and the CBP once a year in *Balance des paiements de la République du Niger, année N* (the most recent edition available is for 2003). This document includes an analysis of developments and of the international environment during the period under review and a commentary on the main items of Niger's balance of payments. This booklet also contains a presentation of the IIP. Balance of payments data are also published in a very concise table, without Niger-specific comments, in the *Notes d'information et statistiques (NIS)*, a quarterly series, and in the *Rapport Annuel de la BCEAO*, published by BCEAO Headquarters.

The tables in the *NIS* and the *Rapport Annuel* are displayed on the BCEAO website www.bceao.int. However, the figures on this site in early March 2005 related to 2003 estimates, whereas the CBP adopted the definitive numbers in December 2004.

5.1.2 *Dissemination media and format are adequate*

The dissemination media and formats are appropriate. Balance of payments data are made available to the main country's documentation and information centers, for both national and regional data. The formal adoption of the data does not occasion any press releases. After adoption, the data are in principle posted on the BCEAO website.

5.1.3 *Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule*

No dissemination schedule is announced ahead of time, the rule being that data for year X must in principle be released before the end of year X+1.

5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time

Only CBP members have access to the data before their dissemination to the public. Immediately after their adoption, these statistics are made available to all users.

5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request

Unpublished aggregates may be sent to users on request. However, these data only concern balances already adopted or data that are not subject to modification.

5.2 *Metadata accessibility*

5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated

No methodological document is normally directed to the public. Methodological notes intended for CBP members are produced and may be communicated to external users upon request. However, the BCEAO has not publicized the existence of these notes. The GDSS metadata on the DSBB (in English only) constitute the only methodological reference.

5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience

No metadata are prepared with different publics in mind.

5.3 *Assistance to users*

5.3.1 Contact points for each subject field are publicized

Please see the monetary section for this indicator.

5.3.2 Catalogs of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available

Please see the monetary section for this indicator.

Table 5. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Balance of Payments Statistics
(Compiling Agency: BCEAO – National Directorate of Niger)

Element	NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO		
0. Prerequisites of quality							
0.1 Legal and institutional environment		X				Staff shortage in the Balance of Payments and Exchange Regulation Section.	Medium term—Review staffing needs and increase human resources.
0.2 Resources			X			Lack of interest in external users' needs.	Short term—Adopt practices aimed at servicing outside users. Provide contact information in publications and on website.
0.3 Relevance			X			Users other than members of the CBP are not surveyed or questioned systematically on the quality of data.	Short term—Identify outside users and consider surveying them.
0.4 Other quality management			X				
1. Assurances of integrity							
1.1 Professionalism		X					
1.2 Transparency			X			No public notification of privileged access to statistics prior to release; no early announcement of the introduction of a new survey or a new statistical technique.	Short term—Inform public about process of data release and announce in advance forthcoming changes in BCEAO publications and website.
1.3 Ethical standards			X				
2. Methodological soundness							
2.1 Concepts and definitions		X					
2.2 Scope		X					
2.3 Classification/sectorization		X					
2.4 Basis for recording			X			Certain categories of income, such as interests are not recorded on an accrual basis.	Medium term—Review the application of the accrual principle.

Key to symbols: NA = Not Applicable; O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed; SDDS = Complies with SDDS Criteria

Table 5. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Balance of Payments Statistics
(Compiling Agency: BCEAO – National Directorate of Niger)

Element	NA	Assessment				Comments on Assessment	Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO		
3. Accuracy and reliability							
3.1 Source data			X			Insufficient coverage of private sector deposits and loans with nonresident banks. Problems with sorting banknotes issued by other WAEMU countries.	Medium term—Review coverage as applicable and follow up on the recommendations of the Working Group on the Sorting of Banknotes.
3.2 Assessment of source data			X			Seemingly weak rate of response to questionnaires.	Short term—Improve the rate of response by surveyed entities.
3.3 Statistical techniques			X			No underlying methodology to adjust trade data for unrecorded trade.	Short term—Follow up on the conclusions of the working group set up under the auspices of the CNCD to define a methodology to estimate unrecorded trade.
3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs			X			The lack of reliability of bank settlement reports does not permit the production of a quarterly balance of payments statement.	Medium term—Prepare a new version of the BPR application to enhance reliability of settlement reports.
3.5 Revision studies			X			Revisions studies are only for internal use.	Medium term—Publish revisions studies.
4. Serviceability							
4.1 Periodicity and timeliness				X		Timeliness is deficient.	Medium term—Bring timeliness in conformity with the GDDS guidelines.
4.2 Consistency			X			There is no publicized revision policy; revision studies are for internal use only	Short term—Clarify revision policy in publications and on the website.
4.3 Revision policy and practice			X				

Table 5. Niger: Data Quality Assessment Framework (July 2003): Summary of Results for Balance of Payments Statistics
(Compiling Agency: BCEAO – National Directorate of Niger)

Element	NA	Assessment				Plans for Improvement and Target Dates
		O	LO	LNO	NO	
5. Accessibility						
5.1 Data accessibility			X			Short term—Disseminate an advance release calendar.
5.2 Metadata accessibility			X			Medium term—Draft and disseminate <i>sources and methods</i> adapted to the needs of the various targeted publics, including the general public.
5.3 Assistance to users			X			Short term—Facilitate access to assistance at the DNN in Niamey and inform the public of this availability in publications and the website. Provide contact information on publication and website. Provide BCEAO’s website address in paper publications.

Summary of the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS)

Data coverage, periodicity, and timeliness

Dissemination of reliable, comprehensive, and timely economic, financial, and socio-demographic data is essential to the transparency of macroeconomic performance and policy. The GDDS contains specific recommendations concerning coverage, periodicity, and timeliness for comprehensive frameworks as well as for data categories and indicators.

Quality

Data quality must have a high priority. Data users must be provided with information to assess quality and quality improvements. The GDDS recommends:

- dissemination of documentation on methodology and sources used in preparing statistics; and
- dissemination of component detail, reconciliations with related data, and statistical frameworks that support statistical cross-checks and provide assurance of reasonableness.

Integrity

To fulfill the purpose of providing the public with information, official statistics must have the confidence of their users. In turn, confidence in the statistics ultimately becomes a matter of confidence in the objectivity and professionalism of the agency producing the statistics. Transparency of practices and procedures is a key factor in creating this confidence. The GDDS, therefore, recommends:

- dissemination of the terms and conditions under which official statistics are produced, including those relating to the confidentiality of individually identifiable information;
- identification of internal government access to data before release;
- identification of ministerial commentary on the occasion of statistical releases; and
- provision of information about revision and advance notice of major changes in methodology.

Access to the public

Dissemination of official statistics is an essential feature of statistics as a public good. Ready and equal access by the public are principal requirements. The GDDS recommends:

- dissemination of advance release calendars; and

- simultaneous release to all interested parties.

Plans for improvement

The GDDS recommends that plans for improvement be developed for all areas in which shortcomings exist and that these plans be disseminated.

The GDDS also recommends that any needs for assistance be identified in the metadata. This may also be helpful for donors and technical assistance providers to prioritize their activities.

For each participating member country, the GDDS metadata provide descriptions of the dimensions listed above, together with plans for improvement and needs for assistance. This information is posted on the DSBB; participating countries are encouraged to also post the metadata on their national websites.

Source: Guide to the GDDS, March 2002: <http://dsbb.imf.org>

**DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK—GENERIC FRAMEWORK
(JULY 2003 FRAMEWORK)**

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
<p>0. Prerequisites of quality</p>	<p>0.1 Legal and institutional environment—<i>The environment is supportive of statistics</i></p> <p>0.2 Resources—<i>Resources are commensurate with needs of statistical programs.</i></p> <p>0.3 Relevance—<i>Statistics cover relevant information on the subject field.</i></p> <p>0.4 Other quality management—<i>Quality is a cornerstone of statistical work.</i></p>	<p>0.1.1 The responsibility for collecting, processing, and disseminating the statistics is clearly specified.</p> <p>0.1.2 Data sharing and coordination among data-producing agencies are adequate.</p> <p>0.1.3 Individual reporters' data are to be kept confidential and used for statistical purposes only.</p> <p>0.1.4 Statistical reporting is ensured through legal mandate and/or measures to encourage response.</p> <p>0.2.1 Staff, facilities, computing resources, and financing are commensurate with statistical programs.</p> <p>0.2.2 Measures to ensure efficient use of resources are implemented.</p> <p>0.3.1 The relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs are monitored.</p> <p>0.4.1 Processes are in place to focus on quality.</p> <p>0.4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the statistical program.</p> <p>0.4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations in planning the statistical program.</p>
<p>1. Assurances of integrity</p> <p><i>The principle of objectivity in the collection, processing, and dissemination of statistics is firmly adhered to.</i></p>	<p>1.1 Professionalism—<i>Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles.</i></p> <p>1.2 Transparency—<i>Statistical policies and practices are transparent.</i></p> <p>1.3 Ethical standards—<i>Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards.</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis.</p> <p>1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations.</p> <p>1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.</p> <p>1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public.</p> <p>1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified.</p> <p>1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such.</p> <p>1.2.4 Advance notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.</p> <p>1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff.</p>

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
<p>2. Methodological soundness</p> <p><i>The methodological basis for the statistics follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</i></p>	<p>2.1 Concepts and definitions—<i>Concepts and definitions used are in accord with internationally accepted statistical frameworks.</i></p> <p>2.2 Scope—<i>The scope is in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</i></p> <p>2.3 Classification/sectorization—<i>Classification and sectorization systems are in accord with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</i></p> <p>2.4 Basis for recording—<i>Flows and stocks are valued and recorded according to internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices</i></p>	<p>2.1.1 The overall structure in terms of concepts and definitions follows internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p> <p>2.2.1 The scope is broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p> <p>2.3.1 Classification/sectorization systems used are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p> <p>2.4.1 Market prices are used to value flows and stocks.</p> <p>2.4.2 Recording is done on an accrual basis.</p> <p>2.4.3 Grossing/netting procedures are broadly consistent with internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices.</p>
<p>3. Accuracy and reliability</p> <p><i>Source data and statistical techniques are sound and statistical outputs sufficiently portray reality</i></p>	<p>3.1 Source data – <i>Source data available provide an adequate basis to compile statistics.</i></p> <p>3.2 Assessment of source data—<i>Source data are regularly assessed.</i></p> <p>3.3 Statistical techniques—<i>Statistical techniques employed conform to sound statistical procedures</i></p> <p>3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs—<i>Intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated.</i></p> <p>3.5 Revision studies—<i>Revisions, as a gauge of reliability, are tracked and mined for the information they may provide.</i></p>	<p>3.1.1 Source data are obtained from comprehensive data collection programs that take into account country-specific conditions.</p> <p>3.1.2 Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.</p> <p>3.1.3 Source data are timely.</p> <p>3.2.1 Source data—including censuses, sample surveys, and administrative records—are routinely assessed, e.g., for coverage, sample error, response error, and nonsampling error; the results of the assessments are monitored and made available to guide statistical processes.</p> <p>3.3.1 Data compilation employs sound statistical techniques to deal with data sources.</p> <p>3.3.2 Other statistical procedures (e.g., data adjustments and transformations, and statistical analysis) employ sound statistical techniques.</p> <p>3.4.1 Intermediate results are validated against other information where applicable.</p> <p>3.4.2 Statistical discrepancies in intermediate data are assessed and investigated.</p> <p>3.4.3 Statistical discrepancies and other potential indicators or problems in statistical outputs are investigated.</p> <p>3.5.1 Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes (see also 4.3.3).</p>

Quality Dimensions	Elements	Indicators
<p>4. Serviceability <i>Statistics, with adequate periodicity and timeliness, are consistent and follow a predictable revisions policy.</i></p>	<p>4.1 Periodicity and timeliness— <i>Periodicity and timeliness follow internationally accepted dissemination standards.</i></p> <p>4.2 Consistency— <i>Statistics are consistent within the dataset, over time, and with major datasets.</i></p> <p>4.3 Revision policy and practice—<i>Data revisions follow a regular and publicized procedure.</i></p>	<p>4.1.1 Periodicity follows dissemination standards. 4.1.2 Timeliness follows dissemination standards.</p> <p>4.2.1 Statistics are consistent within the dataset. 4.2.2 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time. 4.2.3 Statistics are consistent or reconcilable with those obtained through other data sources and/or statistical frameworks.</p> <p>4.3.1 Revisions follow a regular and transparent schedule. 4.3.2 Preliminary and/or revised data are clearly identified. 4.3.3 Studies and analyses of revisions are made public (see also 3.5.1).</p>
<p>5. Accessibility <i>Data and metadata are easily available and assistance to users is adequate.</i></p>	<p>5.1 Data accessibility— <i>Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable manner, forms of dissemination are adequate, and statistics are made available on an impartial basis.</i></p> <p>5.2 Metadata accessibility— <i>Up-to-date and pertinent metadata are made available.</i></p> <p>5.3 Assistance to users— <i>Prompt and knowledgeable support service is available.</i></p>	<p>5.1.1 Statistics are presented in a way that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons (layout and clarity of text, tables, and charts). 5.1.2 Dissemination media and format are adequate. 5.1.3 Statistics are released on a preannounced schedule. 5.1.4 Statistics are made available to all users at the same time. 5.1.5 Statistics not routinely disseminated are made available upon request.</p> <p>5.2.1 Documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, basis of recording, data sources, and statistical techniques is available, and differences from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated. 5.2.2 Levels of detail are adapted to the needs of the intended audience.</p> <p>5.3.1 Contact points for each subject field are publicized. 5.3.2 Catalogs of publications, documents, and other services, including information on any charges, are widely available.</p>

Users' Survey

A survey of the principal users of official economic statistics of Niger was conducted in February–March 2005, with the purpose of determining the usefulness of the statistics and identifying user's needs. The questionnaire was sent out to a sample of 76 users (including national and regional institutions, public agencies, embassies, private sector, etc.), and recorded a rather low response rate (less than 27 percent). In Niamey, the IMF mission hosted a meeting with users. The users' interest in the official statistics was illustrated by specific comments in their areas of concern, as well as by large participation in the meeting.

The following comments summarize the opinions of users who participated in the meeting, and those expressed in the responses to the questionnaire.

Overall, the quality of Nigerien economic statistics is considered satisfactory, except for national accounts and public finance statistics, a situation similar to that of other countries in the region. Unlike national accounts and government finance statistics, monetary, balance of payments, and price statistics are considered reliable and accurate. In most areas, more respondents considered the quality of Niger's statistics to be equal or inferior, in comparison with other countries of the region.

Main shortcomings pointed out by the users related to a poor record on timeliness, lack of an advance notice on the dates of publication, insufficient documentation on the revision of statistics and methodologies, as well as difficult access to data.

The timeliness is considered too long for most types of economic statistics, particularly for the national accounts and government finance statistics. The only exception is the CPI, which is usually released on time.

The scope is considered inadequate for the national accounts and balance of payments statistics, which do not cover the informal sector adequately. The coverage of the CPI is limited to the capital city.

The *degree of detail* is regarded as insufficient for national accounts statistics .

The frequency is considered inadequate for national accounts and could be improved for government finance statistics and balance of payments.

There is too little information on the *calendar of publication* for all statistics (CPI to a lesser extent) as well as on the revision of statistical methodologies.

Most respondents found the *accessibility of data* unsatisfactory. They saw a need for broadening the data dissemination means (i.e., Internet, e-mail, regional institutions websites, etc.) The methodological notes are not sufficiently descriptive or are inappropriate to a nonexpert audience. The access to them is often difficult, notably for national accounts and government finance statistics.

Areas that could be improved relate mainly to **national accounts** (timely data available annually, more frequent surveys and censuses, more detailed data on published indicators, increased accuracy of data), **consumer price index** (increase of the coverage to the entire country), **government finance statistics** (greater detail and frequency of internal debt data, regional harmonization of indicators for better comparability, development of a government finance database and posting data on the Internet), availability of data on local administrations and **balance of payments statistics** (data dissemination on a more regular and frequent basis). Several users indicated the need to improve coordination among the data producing agencies and to present consistent statistics at the national level.