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Reinforcing Capacity for Economic Statistics in Africa, Perspectives on Building Statistical Infrastructure for SNA compliance

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Developing countries with limited statistical capacity face important challenges in achieving compliance to international standards and must maximize opportunities to access technical assistance to advance these objectives. It is critical that these resources are leveraged effectively, that country needs are prioritized, and activities carefully staged for maximum benefit. Streamlined, sustainable solutions are needed to reinforce ongoing capacity for meaningful economic statistics and establish a feasible progression towards compliance to SNA standards, laying a robust foundation for evidence-based decision making in Africa.

This paper will explore strategies underway at the World Bank in partnership with statistical offices in West Africa. These include investing in a modern approach to business registers, business demography and the basic collection of economic statistics. The approach integrates simplified instruments and automated tools, for example, for sampling, questionnaire design and editing, within a streamlined process design, generalized for use in a variety of languages and institutional settings. First empirical results will be presented, with examples tying into World Bank technical assistance objectives for reinforcing quality and advancing prioritized SNA compliance.

The paper will conclude with perspectives for the international community on strategies to advance compliance in Africa, including a proposed progression of activities to build required infrastructure, and recommendations to increase the relevance of statistical standards for countries with limited capacity.