

UNNONPROFIT HANDBOOK PROJECT

THE UN NONPROFIT HANDBOOK PROJECT seeks to improve the treatment of nonprofit, or civil society, organizations in national economic statistics. The ultimate goal of this work is to enhance both the understanding and credibility of this important sector and to provide a solid, empirical foundation for maximizing the contributions it can make to solving the pressing societal and environmental problems facing the world today.

The lack of official information is a result of the way nonprofits are treated in the System of National Accounts (SNA), the set of international guidelines used for compiling national economic statistics. Under these guidelines, data on the nonprofit sector is merged with data on other sectors, obscuring our view. Developed by the Center in cooperation with an international team of statistical experts, and approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2002, the **UN Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts** resolves this oversight by offering countries a standard set of guidelines for highlighting data on the nonprofit sector so that this can be seen and analyzed.

NONPROFIT “SATELLITE ACCOUNT.” The *NPI Handbook* calls on national statistical offices to prepare “satellite accounts” on the nonprofit sector and philanthropy as part of their regular economic data gathering and reporting. The resulting “**satellite accounts on nonprofit institutions**” pull together a much more comprehensive and reliable picture of the nonprofit sector, making it possible to gauge its contribution and track its evolution over time. As part of this process, statistical agencies are also called on to estimate the scale and value of the **volunteer work** these organizations mobilize and to include this in estimates of economic activity.

Implementation of this *Handbook* is producing a quantum leap forward in the basic information available on civil society organizations, philanthropy, and voluntarism around the world, increasing the visibility and credibility of these organizations. Among the information revealed through this process are:

- ▶ The number of civil society organizations, by field.
- ▶ The number of civil society workers, paid and volunteer.
- ▶ The “value added” by civil society organizations.
- ▶ The value of volunteer contributions, by field
- ▶ Operating expenditures.
- ▶ Sources of revenue, including philanthropy, fees, and government support, both domestic and cross-national.
- ▶ The size and distribution of foundation grants.

Covered by these are the full range of NPOs, including nonprofit development organizations, schools, health clinics, social service agencies, environmental groups, human rights groups, sport clubs, professional associations, foundations, and many more.

IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS *HANDBOOK ON NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS*

THE REMAINING CHALLENGE.

Because use of this *Handbook* is optional, and because its greatest value can be derived through implementation in the largest possible number of countries, the UNSD authorized the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies to launch a global dissemination, technical assistance, and implementation campaign to ensure effective implementation and create a mechanism to assemble and report the results.

To date, 33 countries have committed to implementing the *NPI Handbook* or some version of it (*Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Korea, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Uganda, the United States, and Vietnam*). In addition, several other organizations have lent their support to the effort, including Eurostat, the OECD Statistics Directorate, the European Commission’s Directorate for Enterprise, United Nations Volunteers, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Ford Foundation, and the Skoll Foundation. “**The State of Global Civil Society and Volunteering: Latest findings from the implementation of the UN Nonprofit Handbook**,” compares the results of *Handbook* implementation in 16 countries.

In 2011, the International Labour Organization released a companion volume prepared by the Hopkins team to provide guidance on the comparative measurement of volunteer work and efforts are under way to promote implementation of this ***ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work***.

NEXT STEPS. Organizations interested in participating in this initiative or learning more about it should visit ccss.jhu.edu or contact Center for Civil Society Studies’ International Projects Manager Megan Haddock at UNHandbook@jhu.edu.