

Chapter 4: Institutional units and sectors

A. Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter is concerned with the definition and description of institutional units and the way in which they are grouped to make up the sectors and subsectors of the SNA. Another key concept to be discussed is residence since the total economy consists of the entire set of resident institutional units.
- #### 1. Institutional units
- 4.2 *An institutional unit is an economic entity that is capable, in its own right, of owning assets, incurring liabilities and engaging in economic activities and in transactions with other entities.* The main attributes of institutional units may be described as follows:
- An institutional unit is entitled to own goods or assets in its own right; it is therefore able to exchange the ownership of goods or assets in transactions with other institutional units;
 - It is able to take economic decisions and engage in economic activities for which it is itself held to be directly responsible and accountable at law;
 - It is able to incur liabilities on its own behalf, to take on other obligations or future commitments and to enter into contracts;
 - Either a complete set of accounts, including a balance sheet of assets and liabilities, exists for the unit, or it would be possible and meaningful, from an economic viewpoint, to compile a complete set of accounts if they were to be required.
- 4.3 There are two main types of units in the real world that may qualify as institutional units, namely persons or groups of persons in the form of households, and legal or social entities.
- 4.4 For purposes of the SNA, *a household is a group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.* As well as individual households, there are units described as institutional households that comprise groups of persons staying in hospitals, retirement homes, convents, prisons, etc. for long periods of time.
- 4.5 The individual members of multiperson households are not treated as separate institutional units. Many assets are owned, or liabilities incurred, jointly by two or more members of the same household while some or all of the income received by individual members of the same household may be pooled for the benefit of all members. Moreover, many expenditure decisions, especially those relating to the consumption of food, or housing, may be made collectively for the household as a whole. It may be impossible, therefore, to draw up meaningful balance sheets or other accounts for members of the household on an individual basis. For these reasons, the household as a whole rather than the individual persons in it must be treated as the institutional unit.
- 4.6 The second type of institutional unit is a legal or social entity that engages in economic activities and transactions in its own right, such as a corporation, non-profit institution (NPI) or government unit. *A legal or social entity is one whose existence is recognized by law or society independently of the persons, or other entities, that may own or control it.* Such units are responsible and accountable for the economic decisions or actions they take, although their autonomy may be constrained to some extent by other institutional units; for example, corporations are ultimately controlled by their shareholders. Some unincorporated enterprises belonging to households or government units may behave in much the same way as corporations, and such enterprises are treated as quasi-corporations when they have complete sets of accounts.
- 4.7 In the legal sense, corporations may be described by different names: corporations, incorporated enterprises, public limited companies, public corporations, private companies, joint-stock companies, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and so on. Conversely, some legal entities that are non-profit institutions may sometimes be described as “corporations”. The status of an institutional unit cannot always be inferred from its name, and it is necessary to examine its objectives and functions. In the SNA, *the term corporation covers legally constituted corporations and also cooperatives, limited liability partnerships, notional resident units and quasi-corporations.* The description of these various institutional units is given in section B.
- 4.8 *Non-profit institutions (NPIs) are legal or social entities created for the purpose of producing goods and services but whose status does not permit them to be a source of income, profit or other financial gain for the units that*

establish, control or finance them. In practice, their productive activities are bound to generate either surpluses or deficits but any surpluses they happen to make cannot be appropriated by other institutional units. The articles of association by which they are established are drawn up in such a way that the institutional units that control or manage them are not entitled to a share in any profits or other income they generate. For this reason, they are frequently exempted from various kinds of taxes. A description of the treatment of NPIs within the SNA is given in section C.

4.9 ***Government units are unique kinds of legal entities established by political processes that have legislative, judicial or executive authority over other institutional units within a given area.*** Viewed as institutional units, the principal functions of government are to assume responsibility for the provision of goods and services to the community or to individual households and to finance their provision out of taxation or other incomes; to redistribute income and wealth by means of transfers; and to engage in non-market production.

2. Residence

4.10 ***The residence of each institutional unit is the economic territory with which it has the strongest connection, in other words, its centre of predominant economic interest.*** The concept of economic territory in the SNA coincides with that of the *BPM6*. Some key features are as follows. In its broadest sense, an economic territory can be any geographic area or jurisdiction for which statistics are required. The connection of entities to a particular economic territory is determined from aspects such as physical presence and being subject to the jurisdiction of the government of the territory. The most commonly used concept of economic territory is the area under the effective economic control of a single government. However economic territory may be larger or smaller than this, as in a currency or economic union or a part of a country or the world.

4.11 The economic territory includes the land area, airspace, territorial waters, including jurisdiction over fishing rights and rights to fuels or minerals. In a maritime territory, the economic territory includes islands that belong to the territory. The economic territory also includes territorial enclaves in the rest of the world. These are clearly demarcated land areas (such as embassies, consulates, military bases, scientific stations, information or immigration offices, aid agencies, central bank representative offices with diplomatic immunity, etc.) located in other territories and used by governments that own or rent them for diplomatic, military, scientific, or other purposes with the formal agreement of governments of the territories where the land areas are physically located.

4.12 Economic territory has the dimensions of physical location as well as legal jurisdiction. The concepts of economic territory and residence are designed to ensure that each institutional unit is a resident of a single economic territory. The use of an economic territory as the scope of economic statistics means that each member of a group of affiliated enterprises is resident in the economy in which it is located,

rather than being attributed to the economy of location of the head office.

4.13 In general, an institutional unit is resident in one and only one economic territory determined by the unit's centre of predominant economic interest. Exceptions may be made for multiterritory enterprises that operate a seamless operation over more than one economic territory. Although the enterprise has substantial activity in more than one economic territory, it cannot be broken up into separate branches or a parent and branch(es) because it is run as an indivisible operation with no separate accounts or decisions. Such enterprises are typically involved in cross-border activities and include shipping lines, airlines, hydroelectric schemes on border rivers, pipelines, bridges, tunnels and undersea cables. If it is not possible to identify a parent or separate branches, it is necessary to prorate the total operations of the enterprise into the individual economic territories. For more information on these special cases, reference should be made to *BPM6*.

4.14 An institutional unit has a centre of predominant economic interest in an economic territory when there exists, within the economic territory, some location, dwelling, place of production, or other premises on which or from which the unit engages and intends to continue engaging, either indefinitely or over a finite but long period of time, in economic activities and transactions on a significant scale. The location need not be fixed so long as it remains within the economic territory. Actual or intended location for one year or more is used as an operational definition; while the choice of one year as a specific period is somewhat arbitrary, it is adopted to avoid uncertainty and facilitate international consistency.

4.15 The concept of residence in the SNA is exactly the same as in *BPM6*. Some key consequences follow:

a. The residence of individual persons is determined by that of the household of which they form part and not by their place of work. All members of the same household have the same residence as the household itself, even though they may cross borders to work or otherwise spend periods of time abroad. If they work and reside abroad so long that they acquire a centre of economic interest abroad, they cease to be members of their original households;

b. Unincorporated enterprises that are not quasi-corporations are not separate institutional units from their owners and, therefore, have the same residence as their owners;

c. Corporations and NPIs may normally be expected to have a centre of economic interest in the country in which they are legally constituted and registered. Corporations may be resident in countries different from their shareholders and subsidiary corporations may be resident in countries different from their parent corporations. When a corporation, or unincorporated enterprise, maintains a branch, office or production site in another country in order to engage in production over a long period of time (usually taken to be one year or more) but without creating a subsidiary corporation for the purpose, the branch, office or site is considered

to be a quasi-corporation (that is, a separate institutional unit) resident in the country in which it is located;

- d. Owners of land, buildings and immovable structures in the economic territory of a country, or units holding long leases on either, are deemed always to have a centre of economic interest in that country, even if they do not engage in other economic activities or transactions in the country. All land and buildings are therefore owned by residents;
- e. Extraction of subsoil resources can only be undertaken by resident institutional units. An enterprise that will undertake extraction is deemed to become resident when the requisite licences or leases are issued, if not before;
- f. For entities such as many special purpose entities, that have few if any attributes of location, the location is determined by their place of incorporation.

Further elaboration of borderline cases is given in chapter 26 and in *BPM6*.

3. Sectoring and economic behaviour

- 4.16 The institutional sectors of the SNA group together similar kinds of institutional units. Corporations, NPIs, government units and households are intrinsically different from each other in that their economic objectives, functions and behaviour are different.
- 4.17 Institutional units are allocated to sector according to the nature of the economic activity they undertake. The three basic economic activities recorded in the SNA are production of goods and services, consumption to satisfy human wants or needs and accumulation of various forms of capital. Corporations undertake either production or accumulation (or both) but do not undertake (final) consumption. Government undertakes production (but mainly of a different type from corporations), accumulation and final consumption on behalf of the population. All households undertake consumption on their own behalf and may also engage in production and accumulation. NPIs are diverse in nature. Some behave like corporations, some are effectively part of government and some undertake activities similar to government but independently of it.
- 4.18 Fundamental to the distinction between corporations and government is the basis on which production is undertaken. Corporations produce for the market and aim to sell their products at economically significant prices. Prices are said to be economically significant if they have a significant effect on the amount that producers are willing to supply and the amounts purchasers wish to buy. These prices normally result when the producer has an incentive to adjust supply either with the goal of making a profit in the long run (or at a minimum, covering capital and other costs) and consumers have the freedom to purchase or not purchase and make the choice on the basis of the prices charged. There is more extensive discussion of the definition of economically significant prices and the meaning of market and non-market production in chapters 6 and 22.

4.19 Corporations are divided between those mainly providing financial services and those mainly providing goods and other services. The two groups are known as financial corporations and non-financial corporations respectively. The distinction is made because of the special role that financial corporations play in the economy.

4.20 The economic objectives, functions and behaviour of government units are quite distinct. They organize and finance the provision of goods and services, to individual households and the community at large and therefore incur expenditures on final consumption. They may produce most of these goods and services themselves but the products are usually either provided free or at prices determined by considerations other than purely market forces. Government units are also concerned with distribution and redistribution of income and wealth through taxation and other transfers. Government units include social security funds.

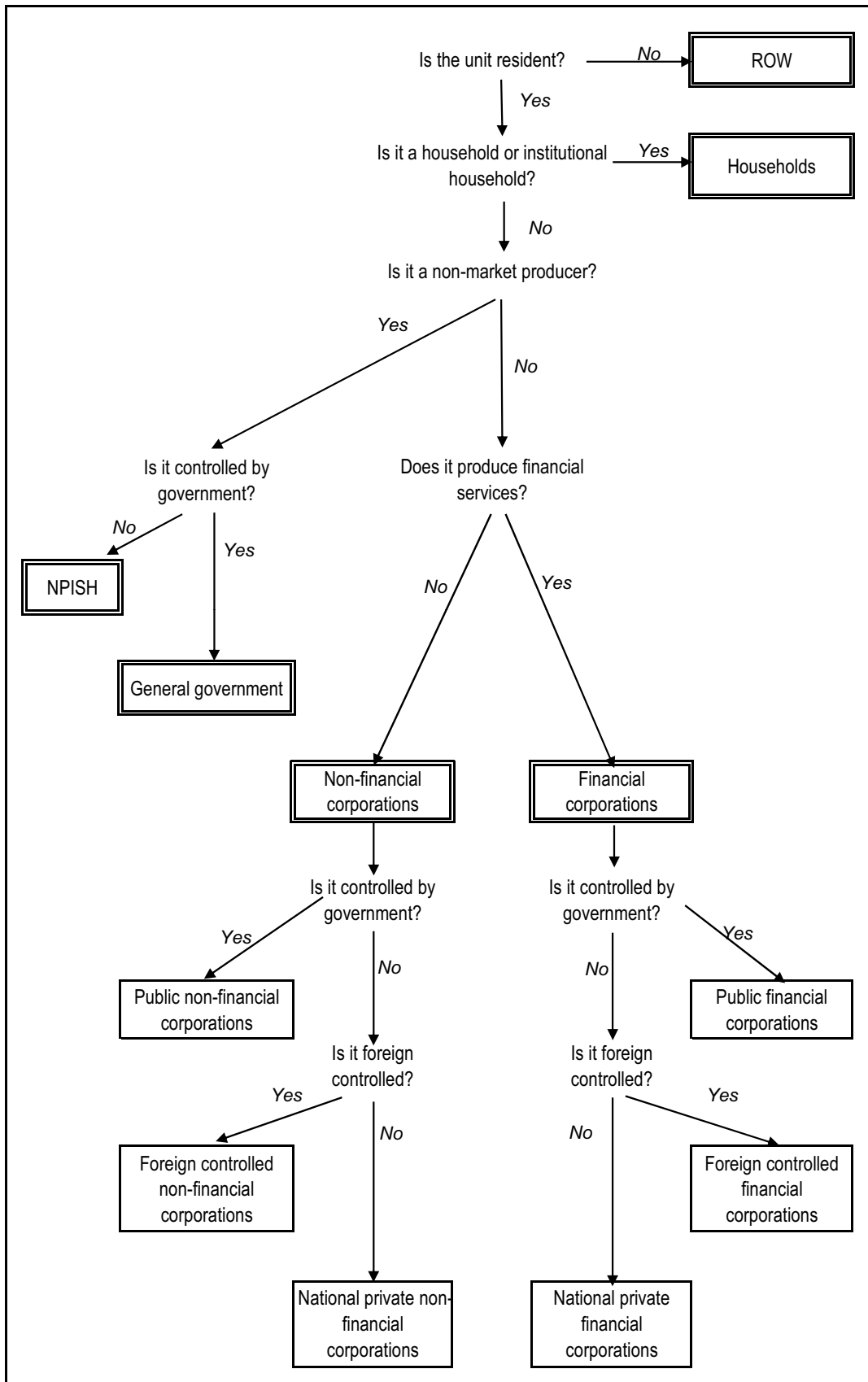
4.21 The economic objectives, functions and behaviour of households are different again. Although primarily consumer units, they can also engage in production. Often this production activity is relatively small scale and includes informal and subsistence activities. When the production units of households are not legal entities (and cannot be treated as such) they are described as unincorporated enterprises. They remain part of the same institutional unit as the household to which they belong.

4.22 NPIs are institutional units created for the purpose of producing or distributing goods or services but not for the purpose of generating any income or profit for the units that control or finance them. Nevertheless, some NPIs deliver goods and services to customers at economically significant prices and, when they do, these NPIs are treated in the same way as corporations in the SNA. Other NPIs that are controlled by government are treated as government units. The remaining NPIs, those that produce goods and services but do not sell them at economically significant prices and are not controlled by government, are treated as a special group of units called non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). They are in effect non-governmental social institutions.

4. The total economy

4.23 *The total economy is defined as the entire set of resident institutional units.* The resident institutional units that make up the total economy are grouped into five mutually exclusive institutional sectors. Sectors are groups of institutional units and the whole of each institutional unit must be classified to one or other sector of the SNA. The full sequence of accounts of the SNA may be constructed for a single institutional unit or a group of units. The attributes of an institutional unit described in paragraph 4.2 explain why it is not possible to compile a full set of accounts for only part of a unit. However, it is possible, useful and common practice to compile some accounts for sub-divisions of corporations, discriminating on the basis of the type of production the parts undertake. This is the subject of chapter 5. For the present chapter attention focuses on the allocation of complete units to one sector or another.

Figure 4.1: Illustrative allocation of units to institutional sectors



5. An overview of institutional sectors

4.24 All resident institutional units are allocated to one and only one of the following five institutional sectors:

The non-financial corporations sector;

The financial corporations sector;

The general government sector;

The non-profit institutions serving households sector;

The households sector.

4.25 The conceptual basis for the allocation of a unit to the appropriate sector can be seen in figure 4.1. The boxes for the sectors of the total economy, plus the box for the rest of the world, appear with double borders. Once non-resident units and households are set aside, only resident legal and social entities remain. Three questions determine the sectoral allocation of all such units. The first is whether the unit is a market or non-market producer. This depends on whether the majority of the unit's production is offered at economically significant prices or not.

4.26 The second question determining sectoral allocation applies to non-market units, all of which, including non-market NPIs, are allocated either to general government or to the NPISH sector. The determining factor is whether the unit is part of, or controlled by, government. The criteria to establish control are discussed in section C below.

4.27 The third question determining sectoral allocation applies to market units, all of which, including market NPIs, are allocated to either the non-financial corporations sector or the financial corporations sector. In the context of sectors as elsewhere in the SNA, the term "corporation" is used to encompass cooperatives, limited liability partnerships, notional resident units and quasi-corporations as well as legally constituted corporations.

4.28 All resident non-financial corporations are included in the non-financial corporations sector and make up most of the sector in practice. In addition, the sector includes non-profit institutions (NPIs) engaged in the market production of goods and non-financial services: for example, hospitals, schools or colleges that charge fees that enable them to recover their current production costs, or trade associations financed by subscriptions from non-financial corporate or unincorporated enterprises whose role is to promote and serve the interests of those enterprises. The non-financial corporations sector is described further in section D.

4.29 The financial corporations sector includes all resident corporations whose principal activity is providing financial services including financial intermediation, insurance and pension fund services, and units that provide activities that facilitate financial intermediation. In addition, the sector includes NPIs engaged in market production of a financial nature such as those financed by subscriptions from financial enterprises whose role is to promote and serve the

interests of those enterprises. The financial corporations sector is described further in section E.

4.30 The general government sector consists mainly of central, state and local government units together with social security funds imposed and controlled by those units. In addition, it includes NPIs engaged in non-market production that are controlled by government units or social security funds.

4.31 The non-profit institutions serving households sector consists of all resident NPIs, except those controlled by government, that provide non-market goods or services to households or to the community at large.

4.32 The households sector consists of all resident households. These include institutional households made up of persons staying in hospitals, retirement homes, convents, prisons, etc. for long periods of time. As already noted, an unincorporated enterprise owned by a household is treated as an integral part of the latter and not as a separate institutional unit unless the accounts are sufficiently detailed to treat the activity as that of a quasi-corporation.

6. Subsectors

4.33 Each of the five institutional sectors listed above may be divided into subsectors. No single method of subsectoring may be optimal for all purposes or all countries, so that alternative methods of subsectoring are recommended for certain sectors. Dividing the total economy into sectors enhances the usefulness of the accounts for purposes of economic analysis by grouping together institutional units with similar objectives and types of behaviour. Sectors and subsectors are also needed in order to be able to target or monitor particular groups of institutional units for policy purposes. For example, the household sector has to be divided into subsectors in order to be able to observe how different sections of the community are affected by, or benefit from, the process of economic development or government economic and social policy measures. Similarly, it may be important to treat corporations subject to control by non-residents as subsectors of the financial and non-financial corporate sectors not only because they are liable to behave differently from domestically controlled corporations but because policymakers may wish to be able to identify and observe those parts of the economy that are subject to influence from abroad. The division of sectors into subsectors depends upon the type of analysis to be undertaken, the needs of policymakers, the availability of data and the economic circumstances and institutional arrangements within a country.

Public and foreign control

4.34 One common subsectoring is to identify those non-financial and financial corporations that are controlled by the government, called public corporations, and those that are controlled from abroad. The remaining corporations form the national private corporations in an economy. The criteria for determining control by government and from abroad are discussed in section B. Figure 4.1 includes this type of subsectoring for both groups of corporations.

Non-profit institutions

- 4.35 As described above, the SNA assigns NPIs to different sectors according to whether they produce for the market or not, regardless of motivation, status of employees or the activity they are engaged in. However, there is increasing interest in considering the full set of NPIs as evidence of “civil society” so it is recommended that NPIs within the corporate and government sectors be identified in distinct subsectors so that supplementary tables summarizing all NPI activities can be derived in a straightforward manner as and when required.

Other subsectoring

- 4.36 The question of subsectoring is included in the more extensive consideration of each institutional sector in

following sections. Particular subsectors are suggested for general government, financial corporations and households.

7. The rest of the world

- 4.37 On occasion it is convenient to refer to non-resident households or corporations as units that are resident in the rest of the world. Whenever accounts are drawn up for institutional sectors, as well as an account for the total economy, a further account is shown showing the relationship with the rest of the world. In effect, therefore transactions with the rest of the world are recorded as if the rest of the world is a de facto sixth sector.

B. Corporations in the SNA

1. Types of corporations

- 4.38 In the SNA, the term corporation is used more broadly than in just the legal sense. In general, all entities that are:
- capable of generating a profit or other financial gain for their owners,
 - recognized at law as separate legal entities from their owners who enjoy limited liability,
 - set up for purposes of engaging in market production,

are treated as corporations in the SNA, however they may describe themselves or whatever they may be called. As well as legally constituted corporations the term corporations is used to include cooperatives, limited liability partnerships, notional resident units and quasi-corporations. Whenever the term corporation is used, the broader coverage rather than the narrow legal definition is intended unless otherwise stated. Each of the main components of the broader coverage is discussed in turn below.

Legally constituted corporations

- 4.39 Legally constituted corporations may be described by different names: corporations, incorporated enterprises, public limited companies, public corporations, private companies, joint-stock companies, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and so on. ***A legally constituted corporation is a legal entity, created for the purpose of producing goods or services for the market, that may be a source of profit or other financial gain to its owner(s); it is collectively owned by shareholders who have the authority to appoint directors responsible for its general management.***

- 4.40 The laws governing the creation, management and operations of legally constituted corporations may vary from country to country so that it is not feasible to provide a precise, legal definition of a corporation that would be universally valid. It is possible, however, to indicate in more detail the typical features of corporations that are most relevant from the point of view of the SNA. They may be summarized as follows:

- A corporation is an entity created by process of law whose existence is recognized independently of the other institutional units that may own shares in its equity. The existence, name and address of a corporation are usually recorded in a special register kept for this purpose. A corporation may normally be expected to have a centre of predominant economic interest (that is, to be resident) in the country in which it is created and registered.
- A corporation that is created for the purpose of producing goods or services for sale on the market does so at prices that are economically significant. This implies that it is a market producer. (A description of economically significant prices and the difference between market and non-market production is given in chapters 6 and 22.)
- A corporation is fully responsible and accountable at law for its own actions, obligations and contracts, this being an essential attribute of an institutional unit in the SNA. A corporation is subject to the tax regime of the country where it is resident in respect of its productive activities, income or assets.
- Ownership of a corporation is vested in the shareholders collectively. The amount of income actually distributed to shareholders as dividends in any single accounting period is decided by the directors of the corporation. Income is usually distributed to shareholders in proportion to the value, or amounts, of

the shares or other capital participations they own. There may be different kinds of shares in the same corporation carrying different entitlements.

- e. In the event of a corporation being wound up, or liquidated, the shareholders are similarly entitled to a share in the net worth of the corporation remaining after all assets have been sold and all liabilities paid. If a corporation is declared bankrupt because its liabilities exceed the value of its assets, the shareholders are not liable to repay the excess liabilities.
- f. Control of a corporation is ultimately exercised by the shareholders collectively. A corporation has a board of directors that is responsible for the corporation's policy and appoints the senior management of the corporation. The board of directors is usually appointed by the collective vote of the shareholders.
- g. In practice, however, some shareholders may exert much more influence or control over the policies and operations of a corporation than others.
- h. The voting rights of shareholders may not be equal. Some types of shares may carry no voting rights, while others may carry exceptional rights, such as the right to make specific appointments to the board of directors or the right to veto other appointments made on a majority vote. Such exceptional rights may be held by the government when it is a shareholder in a corporation.
- i. Many shareholders with voting rights do not choose to exercise them, so that a small, organized minority of active shareholders may be in a position to control the policy and operations of a corporation.

Cooperatives, limited liability partnerships, etc.

- 4.41 Cooperatives are set up by producers for purposes of marketing their collective output. The profits of such cooperatives are distributed in accordance with their agreed rules and not necessarily in proportion to shares held, but effectively they operate like corporations. Similarly, partnerships whose members enjoy limited liability are separate legal entities that behave like corporations. In effect, the partners are at the same time both shareholders and managers.

Quasi-corporations

- 4.42 Some unincorporated enterprises function in all (or almost all) respects as if they were incorporated. These are termed quasi-corporations in the SNA and are included with corporations in the non-financial and financial corporations sectors. *A quasi-corporation is:*
 - a. *either an unincorporated enterprise owned by a resident institutional unit that has sufficient information to compile a complete set of accounts and is operated as if it were a separate corporation and whose de facto relationship to its owner is that of a corporation to its shareholders, or*

b. an unincorporated enterprise owned by a non-resident institutional unit that is deemed to be a resident institutional unit because it engages in a significant amount of production in the economic territory over a long or indefinite period of time.

- 4.43 Three main kinds of quasi-corporations are recognized in the SNA:
 - a. Unincorporated enterprises owned by government units that are engaged in market production and that are operated in a similar way to publicly owned corporations;
 - b. Unincorporated enterprises, including unincorporated partnerships or trusts, owned by households that are operated as if they were privately owned corporations;
 - c. Unincorporated enterprises that belong to institutional units resident abroad, referred to as "branches".
- 4.44 The intent behind the concept of a quasi-corporation is clear: namely, to separate from their owners those unincorporated enterprises that are sufficiently self-contained and independent that they behave in the same way as corporations. If they function like corporations, they must keep complete sets of accounts. Indeed, the existence of a complete set of accounts, including balance sheets, for the enterprise is a necessary condition for it to be treated as a quasi-corporation. Otherwise, it would not be feasible from an accounting point of view to distinguish the quasi-corporation from its owner.
- 4.45 As a quasi-corporation is treated as a separate institutional unit from its owner, it must have its own value added, saving, assets, liabilities, etc. It must be possible to identify and record any flows of income and capital that are deemed to take place between the quasi-corporation and its owner. The amount of income withdrawn from a quasi-corporation during a given accounting period is decided by the owner, such a withdrawal being equivalent to the payment of a dividend by a corporation to its shareholder(s). Given the amount of the income withdrawn, the saving of the quasi-corporation (that is, the amount of earnings retained within the quasi-corporation) is determined. A balance sheet is also needed for the quasi-corporation showing the values of its non-financial assets used in production and also the financial assets and liabilities owned or incurred in the name of the enterprise.

- 4.46 Experience has shown that countries have difficulty treating unincorporated enterprises owned by households as quasi-corporations. However, it is not useful to introduce additional criteria, such as size, into the definition of quasi-corporations owned by households. If an enterprise is not in fact operated like a corporation and does not have a complete set of accounts of its own, it cannot and should not be treated as a quasi-corporation however large it may be.

Branches

- 4.47 When a non-resident unit has substantial operations over a significant period in an economic territory, but no separate

legal entity, a branch may be identified as an institutional unit. This unit is identified for statistical purposes because the operations have a strong connection to the location of operations in all ways other than incorporation. An unincorporated enterprise abroad should be treated as a quasi-corporation when indications of substantial operations can be identified separately from the rest of the entity. As with other quasi-corporations, either a complete set of accounts for the unit exists or it would be meaningful from an economic point of view to compile them. The availability of separate records indicates that an actual unit exists and makes it practical to prepare statistics. In addition, all or most of the following factors tend to be present for a branch to be recognized:

- a. Production based in the territory is undertaken or intended for one year or more in a territory other than that of its head office:
 - If the production process involves physical presence, then the operations should be physically located in that territory. Some indicators of an intention to locate in the territory include purchasing or renting business premises, acquiring capital equipment, and recruiting local staff.
 - If the production does not involve physical presence, such as some cases of banking, insurance, or other financial services, the operations should be recognized as being in the territory by virtue of the registration or legal domicile of those operations in that territory.
- b. The operations are recognized as being subject to the income tax system, if any, of the economy in which it is located even if it may have a tax-exempt status.

4.48 Some construction projects undertaken by a nonresident contractor may give rise to a branch. Construction may be carried out or managed by a nonresident enterprise, without the creation of a local legal entity, for example, major projects (such as bridges, dams, power stations) that take a year or more to complete and that are managed through a local site office.

Notional resident units

4.49 Immovable assets such as land and other natural resources, and buildings and structures are treated as being owned by resident units except in one particular circumstance. If the legal owner is actually non-resident, an artificial unit, called a notional resident unit, is created in the SNA. The notional resident unit is recorded as owning the asset and receiving the rent or rentals that accrue to the asset. The legal owner owns the equity in the notional resident unit and then receives income from the notional resident unit in the form of property income paid abroad. The only exception is made for land and buildings in extraterritorial enclaves of foreign governments (such as embassies, consulates and military bases) that are subject to the laws of the home territory and not those of the territory where they are physically situated.

4.50 A long-term lease to use immovable assets such as land and other natural resources must also be held by a resident. If

necessary, a notional resident unit is identified in this case also.

2. Special cases

Groups of corporations

4.51 Large groups of corporations, or conglomerates, may be created whereby a parent corporation controls several subsidiaries, some of which may control subsidiaries of their own, and so on. For certain purposes, it may be desirable to have information relating to a group of corporations as a whole. However, each individual corporation should be treated as a separate institutional unit, whether or not it forms part of a group. Even subsidiaries that are wholly owned by other corporations are separate legal entities that are required by law and the tax authorities to produce complete sets of accounts, including balance sheets. Although the management of a subsidiary corporation may be subject to the control of another corporation, it remains responsible and accountable for the conduct of its own production activities.

4.52 Another reason for not treating groups of corporations as single institutional units is that groups are not always well defined, stable or easily identified in practice. It may be difficult to obtain data for groups whose activities are not closely integrated. Moreover, many conglomerates are much too large and heterogeneous for them to be treated as single units, and their size and composition may be continually shifting over time as a result of mergers and takeovers.

Head offices and holding companies

4.53 Two quite different types of units exist that are both often referred to as holding companies. The first is the head office that exercises some aspects of managerial control over its subsidiaries. These may sometimes have noticeably fewer employees, and more at a senior level, than its subsidiaries but it is actively engaged in production. These types of activities are described in *ISIC Rev. 4* in section M class 7010 as follows:

This class includes the overseeing and managing of other units of the company or enterprise; undertaking the strategic or organizational planning and decision making role of the company or enterprise; exercising operational control and manage the day-to-day operations of their related units.

Such units are allocated to the non-financial corporations sector unless all or most of their subsidiaries are financial corporations, in which case they are treated by convention as financial auxiliaries in the financial corporations sector.

4.54 The type of unit properly called a holding company is a unit that holds the assets of subsidiary corporations but does not undertake any management activities. They are described in *ISIC Rev. 4* in section K class 6420 as follows:

This class includes the activities of holding companies, i.e. units that hold the assets (owning controlling-levels of equity) of a group of subsidiary corporations and whose

principal activity is owning the group. The holding companies in this class do not provide any other service to the enterprises in which the equity is held, i.e. they do not administer or manage other units.

Such units are always allocated to the financial corporations sector and treated as captive financial institutions even if all the subsidiary corporations are non-financial corporations.

Special purpose entities

- 4.55 A number of institutional units may be described as special purpose entities (SPEs) or special purpose vehicles. There is no common definition of an SPE but some of the following characteristics may apply.
- 4.56 Such units often have no employees and no non-financial assets. They may have little physical presence beyond a “brass plate” confirming their place of registration. They are always related to another corporation, often as a subsidiary, and SPEs in particular are often resident in a territory other than the territory of residence of the related corporations. In the absence of any physical dimension to an enterprise, its residence is determined according to the economic territory under whose laws the enterprise is incorporated or registered. For more detail on problematical cases see *BPM6*.
- 4.57 Entities of this type are commonly managed by employees of another corporation which may or may not be a related one. The unit pays fees for services rendered to it and in turn charges its parent or other related corporation a fee to cover these costs. This is the only production the unit is involved in though it will often incur liabilities on behalf of its owner and will usually receive investment income and holding gains on the assets it holds.
- 4.58 Whether a unit has all or none of these characteristics, and whether it is described as an SPE or some similar designation or not, it is treated in the SNA in the same way as any other institutional unit by being allocated to sector and industry according to its principal activity unless it falls into one of the three following categories:
- Captive financial institutions,
 - Artificial subsidiaries of corporations,
 - Special purpose units of general government.

Each of these is described below.

Captive financial institutions

- 4.59 A holding company that simply owns the assets of subsidiaries is one example of a captive financial institution. Other units that are also treated as captive financial institutions are units with the characteristics of SPEs as described above including investment and pension funds and units used for holding and managing wealth for individuals or families, holding assets for securitization, issuing debt securities on behalf of related companies (such

a company may be called a conduit), securitization vehicles and to carry out other financial functions.

- 4.60 The degree of independence from its parent may be demonstrated by exercising some substantive control over its assets and liabilities to the extent of carrying the risks and reaping the rewards associated with the assets and liabilities. Such units are classified in the financial corporations sector.
- 4.61 An entity of this type that cannot act independently of its parent and is simply a passive holder of assets and liabilities (sometimes described as being on auto-pilot) is not treated as a separate institutional unit unless it is resident in an economy different from that of its parent. If it is resident in the same economy as its parent, it is treated as an “artificial subsidiary” as described immediately below.

Artificial subsidiaries of corporations

- 4.62 Within the SNA, the term corporation is used to denote both those institutions legally recognized as corporations and other units treated in the SNA as corporations, specifically quasi-corporations, branches and notional units. For the following six paragraphs, however, the term corporation is used in the sense of a corporation as a legal entity.
- 4.63 A subsidiary corporation, wholly owned by a parent corporation, may be created to provide services to the parent corporation, or other corporations in the same group, in order to avoid taxes, to minimize liabilities in the event of bankruptcy, or to secure other technical advantages under the tax or corporation legislation in force in a particular country. For example, the parent may create a subsidiary to which ownership of its land, buildings or equipment is transferred and whose sole function is to lease them back again to the parent corporation; the subsidiary may be the nominal employer of all the staff who are then contracted to other corporations in the group, the subsidiary may keep the accounts and records of the parent on a separate computer installation; the role of the subsidiary may be established to take advantage of favourable funding or regulatory treatments and so on. In some cases, corporations may create “dormant” subsidiaries that are not actually engaged in any production but which may be activated at the convenience of the parent corporation.

- 4.64 In general, these sorts of corporations do not satisfy the definition of an institutional unit in the SNA because they lack the ability to act independently from their parent corporation and may be subject to restrictions on their ability to hold or transact assets held on their balance sheets. Their level of output and the price they receive for it are determined by the parent that (possibly with other corporations in the same group) is their sole client. They are thus not treated as separate institutional units in the SNA but are treated as an integral part of the parent and their accounts are consolidated with those of the parent. As noted above, the accounts for passive SPEs (those on auto-pilot) are also consolidated with their parent corporation unless they are resident in an economy different from that where the parent is resident.

4.65 Quasi-corporations such as a partnership or trust may also be set up by a parent corporation for similar reasons to the subsidiary corporations just described. Within the SNA, these are also treated as an integral part of the parent and their accounts are consolidated with the parent.

4.66 A distinction must be made between artificial subsidiaries as just described and a unit undertaking only ancillary activities. As described in more detail in section D of chapter 5, ancillary activities are limited in scope to the type of service functions that virtually all enterprises need to some extent or another such as cleaning premises, running the staff payroll or providing the information technology infrastructure for the enterprise. Units undertaking only ancillary activities will in general not satisfy the conditions of being an institutional unit (for the same sort of reason as artificial subsidiaries do not) but they may sometimes be treated as a separate establishment of the enterprise if this is analytically useful.

Special purpose units of general government

4.67 General government may also set up special units, with characteristics and functions similar to the captive financial institutions and artificial subsidiaries of corporations just described. Such units do not have the power to act independently and are restricted in the range of transactions they can engage in. They do not carry the risks and rewards associated with the assets and liabilities they hold. Such units, if they are resident, are treated as an integral part of general government and not as separate units. If they are non-resident they are treated as separate units. Any transactions carried out by them abroad are reflected in corresponding transactions with government. Thus a unit that borrows abroad is then regarded as lending the same amount to general government, and on the same terms, as the original borrowing.

3. Ownership and control of corporations

4.68 The ownership of a listed corporation is diffused among the institutional units that own its shares in proportion to the shareholdings. It is possible for one single institutional unit, whether another corporation, a household or a government unit, to own all the equity or shares in a corporation but, in general, ownership of a listed corporation is diffused among several, possibly very many, institutional units.

4.69 A single institutional unit owning more than a half of the shares, or equity, of a corporation is able to control its policy and operations by outvoting all other shareholders, if necessary. Similarly, a small, organized group of shareholders whose combined ownership of shares exceeds 50 per cent of the total is able to control the corporation by acting in concert. There may be exceptional cases in which certain shareholders enjoy privileged voting rights, such as a “golden share” giving a right of veto, but in general an individual institutional unit or group of units owning more than half the voting shares of a corporation can exercise complete control by appointing directors of its own choice. The degree of autonomy exercised by the directors and managers of a corporation is, therefore, likely to vary considerably, depending upon the extent to which the ownership of its shares is concentrated in the hands of a small number of other institutional units, whether these are

other corporations, households or government units. In general, institutional units do not have to be autonomous but they do have to be responsible, and accountable, for the decisions and actions they take.

4.70 Because many shareholders do not exercise their voting rights, a single shareholder, or small number of shareholders acting together, may be able to secure control over a corporation, even though they may hold considerably less than half of the total shares. When ownership of shares is widely diffused among a large number of shareholders, control may be secured by owning considerably less than half of the total shares.

4.71 However, it is not possible to stipulate a minimum shareholding below 50 per cent that will guarantee control in all cases. The minimum must vary depending upon the total number of shareholders, the distribution of shares among them, and the extent to which small shareholders take an active interest, etc.

Subsidiary and associate corporations

4.72 It is common for corporations to own shares in other corporations, and certain interrelationships between corporations need to be specified for purposes of the SNA.

Subsidiary corporations

4.73 Corporation B is said to be a subsidiary of corporation A when:

a. Either corporation A controls more than half of the shareholders' voting power in corporation B; or

b. Corporation A is a shareholder in corporation B with the right to appoint or remove a majority of the directors of corporation B.

4.74 Corporation A may be described as the parent corporation in this situation. As the relationship of a parent corporation to a subsidiary is defined in terms of control rather than ownership, the relationship must be transitive: that is, if C is a subsidiary of B and B is a subsidiary of A, then C must also be a subsidiary of A. If A has a majority shareholding in B while B has a majority shareholding in C, A cannot also have a majority shareholding in C. Nevertheless, A must be able to control C if it controls B. By analogy with families of persons, corporation B can be described as a first generation subsidiary of corporation A, and corporation C as a second generation subsidiary of A. Evidently, large families of corporations may be built up with any number of subsidiaries at each level or generation and also any number of generations. Very large families of corporations, described as conglomerates, are encountered in some countries. Conglomerates that include corporations resident in different countries are usually described as multinational corporations.

Associate corporations

4.75 Corporation B is said to be an associate of corporation A when corporation A and its subsidiaries control between 10

per cent and 50 per cent of the shareholders' voting power in B so that A has some influence over the corporate policy and management of B.

- 4.76 By definition, a corporation is able to exert less influence over an associate corporation than over a subsidiary. Although some corporations may be able to exert considerable influence over their associates, this cannot be guaranteed. The relationship between associates is weaker than that between parent and subsidiary corporations, and groups of associates may not be well defined.

Government control of corporations

- 4.77 A corporation is a public corporation if a government unit, another public corporation, or some combination of government units and public corporations controls the entity, where control is defined as the ability to determine the general corporate policy of the corporation. The expression "general corporate policy" as used here is understood in a broad sense to mean the key financial and operating policies relating to the corporation's strategic objectives as a market producer.

- 4.78 Because governments exercise sovereign powers through legislation, regulations, orders and the like, care needs to be applied in determining whether the exercise of such powers amounts to a determination of the general corporate policy of a particular corporation and therefore control of the corporation. Laws and regulations applicable to all units as a class or to a particular industry should not be viewed as amounting to control of these units.

- 4.79 The ability to determine general corporate policy does not necessarily include the direct control of the day-to-day activities or operations of a particular corporation. The officers of such corporations would normally be expected to manage these in a manner consistent with and in support of the overall objectives of the particular corporation. Nor does the ability to determine the general corporate policy of a corporation include the direct control over any professional, technical or scientific judgments, as these would normally be viewed as part of the core competence of the corporation itself. For example, the professional or technical judgments exercised by a corporation set up to certify aircraft airworthiness would not be considered controlled in respect of individual approvals and disapprovals, though its broader operating and financial policies, including the airworthiness criteria, may well be determined by a government unit as part of the corporation's corporate policy.

- 4.80 Because the arrangements for the control of corporations can vary considerably, it is neither desirable nor feasible to prescribe a definitive list of factors to be taken into account. The following eight indicators, however, will normally be the most important and likely factors to consider:

- a. *Ownership of the majority of the voting interest.* Owning a majority of shares will normally constitute control when decisions are made on a one-share one-vote basis. The shares may be held directly or indirectly, and the shares owned by all other public entities should be aggregated. If decisions are not made on a one-share one-vote basis, the classification should

be based on whether the shares owned by other public entities provide a majority voice.

- b. *Control of the board or other governing body.* The ability to appoint or remove a majority of the board or other governing body as a result of existing legislation, regulation, contractual, or other arrangements will likely constitute control. Even the right to veto proposed appointments can be seen as a form of control if it influences the choices that can be made. If another body is responsible for appointing the directors, it is necessary to examine its composition for public influence. If a government appoints the first set of directors but does not control the appointment of replacement directors, the body would then be part of the public sector until the initial appointments had expired.
- c. *Control of the appointment and removal of key personnel.* If control of the board or other governing body is weak, the appointment of key executives, such as the chief executive, chairperson and finance director, may be decisive. Non-executive directors may also be relevant if they sit on key committees such as the remuneration committee determining the pay of senior staff.
- d. *Control of key committees of the entity.* Subcommittees of the board or other governing body could determine the key operating and financial policies of the entity. Majority public sector membership on these subcommittees could constitute control. Such membership can be established under the constitution or other enabling instrument of the corporation.
- e. *Golden shares and options.* A government may own a "golden share," particularly in a corporation that has been privatized. In some cases, this share gives the government some residual rights to protect the interests of the public by, for example, preventing the company selling off some categories of assets or appointing a special director who has strong powers in certain circumstances. A golden share is not of itself indicative of control. If, however, the powers covered by the golden share do confer on the government the ability to determine the general corporate policy of the entity in particular circumstances and those circumstances currently existed, then the entity should be in the public sector from the date in question. The existence of a share purchase option available to a government unit or a public corporation in certain circumstances may also be similar in concept to the golden share arrangement discussed above. It is necessary to consider whether, if the circumstance in which the option may be exercised exists, the volume of shares that may be purchased under the option and the consequences of such exercise means that the government has "the ability to determine the general corporate policy of the entity" by exercising that option. An entity's status in general should be based on the government's existing ability to determine corporate policy exercised under normal conditions rather than in exceptional economic or other circumstances such as wars, civil disorders or natural disasters.

- f. *Regulation and control.* The borderline between regulation that applies to all entities within a class or industry group and the control of an individual corporation can be difficult to judge. There are many examples of government involvement through regulation, particularly in areas such as monopolies and privatized utilities. It is possible for regulatory involvement to exist in important areas, such as in price setting, without the entity ceding control of its general corporate policy. Choosing to enter into or continue to operate in a highly regulated environment suggests that the entity is not subject to control. When regulation is so tight as to effectively dictate how the entity performs its business, then it could be a form of control. If an entity retains unilateral discretion as to whether it will take funding from, interact commercially with, or otherwise deal with a public sector entity, the entity has the ultimate ability to determine its own corporate policy and is not controlled by the public sector entity.
- g. *Control by a dominant customer.* If all of the sales of a corporation are to a single public sector customer or a group of public sector customers, there is clear scope for dominant influence. The presence of a minority private sector customer usually implies an element of independent decision-making by the corporation so that the entity would not be considered controlled. In general, if there is clear evidence that the corporation could not choose to deal with non-public sector clients because of the public sector influence, then public control is implied.
- h. *Control attached to borrowing from the government.* Lenders often impose controls as conditions of making loans. If the government imposed controls through lending or issuing guarantees that are more than would be typical when a healthy private sector entity borrows from a bank, control may be indicated. Similarly,

control may be implied if only the government was prepared to lend.

Although a single indicator could be sufficient to establish control, in other cases, a number of separate indicators may collectively indicate control. A decision based on the totality of all indicators must necessarily be judgmental in nature but clearly similar judgements must be made in similar cases.

Control by a non-resident unit

- 4.81 In general, a non-resident unit controls a resident corporation if the non-resident unit owns more than 50 per cent of the equity of the corporation. Branches of non-resident corporations are by their nature always under foreign control. However, control may also be possible with a holding of less than half the equity if the non-resident unit can exercise some of the powers just described as indicating possible control by government, for example the control of the board or other governing body, control of the appointment and removal of key personnel, control of key committees of the corporations and so on.
- 4.82 Within the balance of payments, a distinction is made between corporations where over 50 per cent of the equity is held by non-residents and those corporations where between 10 and 50 per cent of the equity is held abroad. All corporations with foreign holdings of 10 per cent or more are described as foreign direct investment enterprises and special treatment of their earnings is applied. Further details on this are given in chapters 7 and 26. It is important to note, however, that while all foreign controlled corporations are foreign direct investment enterprises, the reverse is not true, for example even a publicly controlled corporation may be a foreign direct investment enterprise if, in addition to government controlling half of the equity, a further 10 per cent is owned by a non-resident.

C. Non-profit institutions

- 4.83 ***Non-profit institutions are legal or social entities, created for the purpose of producing goods and services, whose status does not permit them to be a source of income, profit or other financial gain for the units that establish, control or finance them.*** In practice, their productive activities are bound to generate either surpluses or deficits but any surpluses they happen to make cannot be appropriated by other institutional units. The articles of association by which they are established are drawn up in such a way that the institutional units that control or manage them are not entitled to a share in any profits or other income they receive. For this reason, they are frequently exempted from various kinds of taxes.
- 4.84 NPIs may be created by households, corporations, or government but the motives leading to their creation are varied. For example, NPIs may be created to provide services for the benefit of the households or corporations who control or finance them; or they may be created for charitable, philanthropic or welfare reasons to provide

goods or services to other persons in need; or they may be intended to provide health or education services for a fee, but not for profit; or they may be intended to promote the interests of pressure groups in business or politics; etc.

1. The characteristics of NPIs

- 4.85 The main features of NPIs may be summarized as follows:
- a. Most NPIs are legal entities created by process of law whose existence is recognized independently of the persons, corporations or government units that establish, finance, control or manage them. The purpose of the NPI is usually stated in the articles of association or similar document drawn up at the time of its establishment. In some countries, especially developing countries, an NPI may be an informal entity whose existence is recognized by society but does not have any formal legal status; such NPIs may be created

for the purpose of producing non-market goods or services for the benefit of individual households or groups of households.

- b. Many NPIs are controlled by associations whose members have equal rights, including equal votes on all major decisions affecting the affairs of the NPI. Members enjoy limited liability with respect to the NPI's operations.
 - c. There are no shareholders with a claim on the profits or equity of the NPI. The members are not entitled to a share in any profits, or surplus, generated by the productive activities of the NPI, such profits being retained within the NPI.
 - d. The direction of an NPI is usually vested in a group of officers, executive committee or similar body elected by a simple majority vote of all the members. These officers are the counterpart of the board of directors of a corporation and are responsible for appointing any paid managers.
 - e. The term "non-profit institution" derives from the fact that the members of the association controlling the NPI are not permitted to gain financially from its operations and cannot appropriate any surplus that it may make. It does not imply that an NPI cannot make an operating surplus on its production.
- 4.86 In some countries NPIs are subject to preferential tax treatment, possibly to exemption from income tax, but this is not necessarily so and is not a determining factor in the identification of an NPI.
- 4.87 As in the case of producer units owned by government units, it is important to distinguish between NPIs engaged in market and non-market production as this affects the sector of the economy to which an NPI is allocated. NPIs do not necessarily engage in non-market production.

2. NPIs engaged in market production

- 4.88 Market producers are producers that sell most or all of their output at prices that are economically significant, that is, at prices that have a significant influence on the amounts the producers are willing to supply and on the amounts purchasers wish to buy. Schools, colleges, universities, clinics, hospitals, etc. constituted as NPIs are market producers when they charge fees that are based on their production costs and that are sufficiently high to have a significant influence on the demand for their services. Their production activities must generate an operating surplus or loss. Any surpluses they make must be retained within the institutions as their status prevents them from distributing them to others. On the other hand, because of their status as "non-profit institutions" they are also able to raise additional funds by appealing for donations from persons, corporations or government. In this way, they may be able to acquire assets that generate significant property income in addition to their revenues from fees, thereby enabling them to charge fees below average costs. However, they must continue to be treated as market producers so long as their fees are determined mainly by their costs of production and are high enough to have a significant

impact on demand. Such NPIs are not charities, their real objective often being to provide educational, health or other services of a very high quality using their incomes from endowments merely to keep down somewhat the high fees they have to charge.

Market NPIs serving enterprises

- 4.89 Some market NPIs restrict their activities to serving a particular subset of other market producers. Most market NPIs serving enterprises are created by associations of the enterprises whose interests they are designed to promote. They consist of chambers of commerce, agricultural, manufacturing or trade associations, employers' organizations, research or testing laboratories or other organizations or institutes that engage in activities that are of common interest or benefit to the group of enterprises that control and finance them. The NPIs often engage in publicity on behalf of the group, lobby politicians or provide advice or assistance to individual members in difficulty for one reason or another. The NPIs are usually financed by contributions or subscriptions from the group of enterprises concerned. The subscriptions are treated not as transfers but as payments for services rendered and these NPIs are, therefore, classed as market producers. However, as explained below, when chambers of commerce or similar organizations intended for the benefit of enterprises are controlled by government units, they are classified as non-market NPIs and allocated to the general government sector.

3. NPIs engaged in non-market production

- 4.90 The majority of NPIs in most countries are non-market rather than market producers. Non-market producers are producers that provide most of their output to others free or at prices that are not economically significant. Thus, NPIs engaged mainly in non-market production may be distinguished not only by the fact that they are incapable of providing financial gain to the units that control or manage them, but also by the fact that they must rely principally on funds other than receipts from sales to cover their costs of production or other activities. Their principal source of finance may be regular subscriptions paid by the members of the association that controls them or transfers or donations from third parties, including government or from property income.
- 4.91 NPIs engaged mainly in non-market production are divided into two groups: those NPIs controlled by government and those that are not. The former are included in the general government sector. The latter are described as "non-profit institutions serving households" (NPISHs) and constitute a separate sector in the SNA.

Government control of non-profit institutions

- 4.92 Control of an NPI is defined as the ability to determine the general policy or programme of the NPI. All NPIs allocated to the general government sector should retain their identity as NPIs in statistical records, to facilitate analysis of the complete set of NPIs. To determine if an NPI is controlled by the government, the following five indicators of control should be considered:

- a. *The appointment of officers.* The government may have the right to appoint the officers managing the NPI either under the NPI's constitution, its articles of association or other enabling instrument.
- b. *Other provisions of enabling instrument.* The enabling instrument may contain provisions other than the appointment of officers that effectively allow the government to determine significant aspects of the general policy or programme of the NPI. For example, the enabling instrument may specify or limit the functions, objectives and other operating aspects of the NPI, thus making the issue of managerial appointments less critical or even irrelevant. The enabling instrument may also give the government the right to remove key personnel or veto proposed appointments, require prior approval of budgets or financial arrangements by the government, or prevent the NPI from changing its constitution, dissolving itself, or terminating its relationship with government without government approval.
- c. *Contractual agreements.* The existence of a contractual agreement between a government and an NPI may allow the government to determine key aspects of the NPI's general policy or programme. As long as the NPI is ultimately able to determine its policy or programme to a significant extent, such as by being able to renege on the contractual agreement and accept the consequences, by being able to change its constitution or dissolve itself without requiring government approval other than that required under the general

regulations, then it would not be considered controlled by government.

- d. *Degree of financing.* An NPI that is mainly financed by government may be controlled by that government. Generally, if the NPI remains able to determine its policy or programme to a significant extent along the lines mentioned in the previous indicator, then it would not be considered controlled by government.
- e. *Risk exposure.* If a government openly allows itself to be exposed to all, or a large proportion of, the financial risks associated with an NPI's activities, then the arrangement constitutes control. The criteria are the same as in the previous two indicators.

A single indicator could be sufficient to establish control in some cases, but in other cases, a number of separate indicators may collectively indicate control. A decision based on the totality of all indicators will necessarily be judgmental in nature.

NPIs serving households (NPISHs)

- 4.93 *Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs) consist of non-market NPIs that are not controlled by government.* They provide goods and services to households free or at prices that are not economically significant. Most of these goods and services represent individual consumption but it is possible for NPISHs to provide collective services.

D. The non-financial corporations sector and its subsectors

- 4.94 *Non-financial corporations are corporations whose principal activity is the production of market goods or non-financial services.* The non-financial corporations sector is composed of the following set of resident institutional units:
- a. All resident non-financial corporations (as understood in the SNA and not just restricted to legally constituted corporations), regardless of the residence of their shareholders;
 - b. The branches of non-resident enterprises that are engaged in non-financial production on the economic territory on a long-term basis;

- c. All resident NPIs that are market producers of goods or non-financial services.

- 4.95 Some non-financial corporations or quasi-corporations may have secondary financial activities: for example, producers or retailers of goods may provide consumer credit directly to their own customers. As explained more fully below, such corporations or quasi-corporations are nevertheless classified as belonging in their entirety to the non-financial corporate sector provided their principal activity is non-financial. Sectors are groups of institutional units, and the whole of each institutional unit must be classified to one or other sector of the SNA even though that unit may be engaged in more than one type of economic activity.

Table 4.1: Subsectors of the non-financial corporations sector

Non-financial corporations	NPIs	FPIs
Public non-financial corporations	Public non-financial NPIs	Public non-financial FPIs
National private non-financial corporations	National private non-financial NPIs	National private non-financial FPIs
Foreign controlled non-financial corporations	Foreign controlled non-financial NPIs	Foreign controlled non-financial FPIs
Total non-financial corporations	Total non-financial NPIs	Total non-financial FPIs

4.96 Two classification criteria are used to subsector the non-financial corporations sector. One criterion is to show NPIs separately from other units in the sector. These units other than NPIs may be described as for profit institutions (FPIs). The second criterion is that of control to show:

- a. Public non-financial corporations,
- b. National private non-financial corporations, and
- c. Foreign controlled non-financial corporations.

The criteria for control of corporations and NPIs by government and non-resident units are described in detail in

section B. Corporations controlled by non-resident units are described as being foreign controlled.

4.97 The full subsectoring of the non-financial corporations sector can be seen as a two-way table as shown in table 4.1. The exact form of presentation of the subsectors will depend on both analytical and statistical considerations. It may be that the number of NPIs is such that some control categories are empty or sufficiently sparse that the detail cannot be shown for reasons of confidentiality. At the least, though, it is useful, and should be feasible, to distinguish the entries for the left-most column and bottom row of table 4.1.

E. The financial corporations sector and its subsectors

4.98 *Financial corporations consist of all resident corporations that are principally engaged in providing financial services, including insurance and pension funding services, to other institutional units.* The financial corporations sector is composed of the following set of resident institutional units:

- a. All resident financial corporations (as understood in the SNA and not just restricted to legally constituted corporations), regardless of the residence of their shareholders;
- b. The branches of non-resident enterprises that are engaged in financial activity on the economic territory on a long-term basis;
- c. All resident NPIs that are market producers of financial services.

The production of financial services is the result of financial intermediation, financial risk management, liquidity transformation or auxiliary financial activities. Because the provision of financial services is typically subject to strict regulation, it is usually the case that units providing financial services do not produce other goods and services and financial services are not provided as secondary production.

4.99 One form of financial innovation has seen a substantial growth in activity of a kind traditionally carried out by, or through, financial corporations but that may also be done directly by non-financial enterprises themselves. For example, there is a tendency in some countries for producers or retailers of goods to provide consumer credit directly to their customers. Another example is the tendency for non-financial enterprises in some countries to raise funds themselves by selling their own obligations directly on the money or capital markets. However, the enterprise as a whole must continue to be classified as non-financial provided that:

- a. A non-financial enterprise does not create a new institutional unit, such as a subsidiary corporation, to carry out the financial activity; and
- b. The financial activity remains secondary to the principal activity of the enterprise.

4.100 The same principle applies to the subsectoring of financial corporations. For example, many central banks also engage in some commercial banking. However, as a single institutional unit, the central bank as a whole, including its commercial banking activities, is classified in the subsector "central banks". For the same reason, central bank or monetary authority-type functions carried out by agencies within the central government that are not separate institutional units from government are not allocated to the central bank subsector. (This is discussed further in the following section and in chapter 22.)

4.101 Financial corporations can be divided into three broad classes namely, financial intermediaries, financial auxiliaries and other financial corporations. *Financial intermediaries are institutional units that incur liabilities on their own account for the purpose of acquiring financial assets by engaging in financial transactions on the market.* They include insurance corporations and pension funds. *Financial auxiliaries are institutional units principally engaged in serving financial markets, but do not take ownership of the financial assets and liabilities they handle. Other financial corporations are institutional units providing financial services, where most of their assets or liabilities are not available on open financial markets.*

4.102 The financial corporations sector can be divided into nine subsectors according to its activity in the market and the liquidity of its liabilities. These nine subsectors are shown in table 4.2 and each is described later in this section. Subsector 6 corresponds to financial auxiliaries; subsector 7 corresponds to other financial corporations. All the other subsectors are financial intermediaries of one sort or another.

4.103 As well as being subsectored according to the nature of the financial activity being undertaken, the financial corporations sector can also be subsectored in the same manner as the non-financial corporations sector to show the difference between NPIs and FPIs and to show which units are subject to public control, which are national private corporations and which are foreign controlled. Thus in principle each of the rows in table 4.2 may be further disaggregated in the manner of table 4.1 though it is unlikely that all possible cross-classifications exist and a compressed subsectoring based on local circumstance and particular analytical interest may be sufficient.

1. Central bank

4.104 *The central bank is the national financial institution that exercises control over key aspects of the financial system.* In general, the following financial intermediaries are classified in this subsector:

- a. The national central bank, including where it is part of a system of central banks.
- b. Currency boards or independent currency authorities that issue national currency that is fully backed by foreign exchange reserves.
- c. Central monetary agencies of essentially public origin (for example, agencies managing foreign exchange or issuing bank notes and coin) that keep a complete set of accounts but are not classified as part of central government. Supervisory authorities that are separate institutional units are not included with the central bank but are included with financial auxiliaries.

As long as the central bank is a separate institutional unit, it is always allocated to the financial corporations sector even if it is primarily a non-market producer.

2. Deposit-taking corporations except the central bank

4.105 *Deposit-taking corporations except the central bank have financial intermediation as their principal activity. To this end, they have liabilities in the form of deposits or financial instruments (such as short-term certificates of deposit) that are close substitutes for deposits.* The

liabilities of deposit-taking corporations are typically included in measures of money broadly defined.

4.106 In general, the following financial intermediaries are classified in this subsector:

- a. Commercial banks, “universal” banks, “all-purpose” banks;
- b. Savings banks (including trustee savings banks and savings and loan associations);
- c. Post office giro institutions, post banks, giro banks;
- d. Rural credit banks, agricultural credit banks;
- e. cooperative credit banks, credit unions; and
- f. Specialized banks or other financial corporations if they take deposits or issue close substitutes for deposits.

3. Money market funds (MMFs)

4.107 *Money market funds (MMFs) are collective investment schemes that raise funds by issuing shares or units to the public. The proceeds are invested primarily in money market instruments, MMF shares or units, transferable debt instruments with a residual maturity of not more than one year, bank deposits and instruments that pursue a rate of return that approaches the interest rates of money market instruments. MMF shares can be transferred by cheque or other means of direct third-party payment.* Because of the nature of the instruments the schemes invest in, their shares or units may be regarded as close substitutes for deposits.

4. Non-MMF investment funds

4.108 *Non-MMF investment funds are collective investment schemes that raise funds by issuing shares or units to the public. The proceeds are invested predominantly in financial assets, other than short-term assets, and in non-financial assets (usually real estate).* Investment fund shares or units are generally not close substitutes for deposits. They are not transferable by means of cheque or direct third-party payments.

Table 4.2:Subsectors of the financial corporations sector

1. Central Bank
2. Deposit-taking corporations except the Central Bank
3. Money market funds (MMF)
4. Non-MMF investment funds
5. Other financial intermediaries except insurance corporations and pension funds (ICPF)
6. Financial auxiliaries
7. Captive financial institutions and money lenders
8. Insurance corporations (IC)
9. Pension funds (PF)

5. Other financial intermediaries, except insurance corporations and pension funds (ICPFs)

4.109 *Other financial intermediaries except insurance corporations and pension funds consist of financial corporations that are engaged in providing financial services by incurring liabilities, in forms other than currency, deposits or close substitutes for deposits, on their own account for the purpose of acquiring financial assets by engaging in financial transactions on the market.* It is a feature of a financial intermediary that transactions on both sides of the balance sheet are carried out in open markets.

4.110 In general, the following financial intermediaries are classified in this subsector:

- a. Financial corporations engaged in the securitization of assets;
- b. Security and derivative dealers (operating on own account);
- c. Financial corporations engaged in lending, including the finance associates of retailers, who may be responsible for financial leasing and both personal or commercial finance;
- d. Central clearing counterparties. These organizations provide clearing and settlement transactions in securities and derivatives. Clearing relates to identifying the obligations of both parties to the transaction, while settlement is the exchange of the securities or derivatives and the corresponding payment. The central clearing counterparties involve themselves in the transaction and mitigate counterparty risk;
- e. Specialized financial corporations that provide:
 - Short-term financing for corporate mergers and takeovers;
 - Export/import finance;
 - Factoring services;
 - Venture capital and development capital firms.

6. Financial auxiliaries

4.111 *Financial auxiliaries consist of financial corporations that are principally engaged in activities associated with transactions in financial assets and liabilities or with providing the regulatory context for these transactions but in circumstances that do not involve the auxiliary taking ownership of the financial assets and liabilities being transacted.*

4.112 In general, the following financial auxiliaries are classified in this subsector:

- a. Insurance brokers, salvage and claims adjusters (whether employed by the insurance company, an independent adjuster or a public adjuster employed by the policyholder), insurance and pension consultants;
- b. Loan brokers, securities brokers, investment advisers, etc.;
- c. Flotation corporations that manage the issue of securities;
- d. Corporations whose principal function is to guarantee, by endorsement, bills and similar instruments;
- e. Corporations that arrange derivative and hedging instruments, such as swaps, options and futures (without issuing them);
- f. Corporations providing infrastructure for financial markets;
- g. Managers of pension funds, mutual funds, etc. (but not the funds they manage);
- h. Corporations providing stock exchange and insurance exchange;
- i. Foreign exchange bureaux;
- j. Non-profit institutions recognized as independent legal entities serving financial corporations;
- k. Head offices of financial corporations that are principally engaged in controlling financial corporations or groups of financial corporations but that do not themselves conduct the business of financial corporations;
- l. Central supervisory authorities of financial intermediaries and financial markets when they are separate institutional units.

7. Captive financial institutions and money lenders

4.113 *Captive financial institutions and money lenders consist of institutional units providing financial services, where most of either their assets or liabilities are not transacted on open financial markets.* It includes entities transacting within only a limited group of units (such as with subsidiaries) or subsidiaries of the same holding corporation or entities that provide loans from own funds provided by only one sponsor.

4.114 In general, the following financial corporations are classified in this subsector:

- a. Units which are legal entities such as trusts, estates, agencies accounts or brass plate companies.
- b. Holding corporations that hold only the assets (owning controlling-levels of equity) of a group of subsidiary corporations and whose principal activity is owning the

group without providing any other service to the enterprises in which the equity is held, that is, they do not administer or manage other units.

- c. SPEs or conduits that qualify as institutional units and raise funds in open markets to be used by their parent corporation.
- d. Units which provide financial services exclusively with own funds, or funds provided by a sponsor to a range of clients and incur the financial risk of the debtor defaulting, including
 - Moneylenders.
 - Corporations engaged in lending (for example providing student loans, import/export loans) from funds received from a sponsor such as a government unit or non-profit institution.
 - Pawnshops that predominantly engage in lending.

8. Insurance corporations (ICs)

4.115 *Insurance corporations consist of incorporated, mutual and other entities whose principal function is to provide*

life, accident, sickness, fire or other forms of insurance to individual institutional units or groups of units or reinsurance services to other insurance corporations.

Captive insurance is included, that is, an insurance company that serves only its owners. Deposit insurers, issuers of deposit guarantees and other issuers of standardized guarantees that are separate entities and act like insurers by charging premiums and have reserves, are classified as insurance corporations.

9. Pension funds (PFs)

4.116 Pension liabilities arise when an employer or government obliges or encourages members of households to participate in a social insurance scheme that will provide income in retirement. The social insurance schemes may be organized by employers or by government, they may be organized by insurance corporations on behalf of employees or separate institutional units may be established to hold and manage the assets to be used to meet the pensions and to distribute the pensions. *The pension fund subsector consists of only those social insurance pension funds that are institutional units separate from the units that create them.*

F. The general government sector and its subsectors

1. Government units as institutional units

4.117 Government units are unique kinds of legal entities established by political processes that have legislative, judicial or executive authority over other institutional units within a given area. Viewed as institutional units, the principal functions of government are to assume responsibility for the provision of goods and services to the community or to individual households and to finance their provision out of taxation or other incomes, to redistribute income and wealth by means of transfers, and to engage in non-market production. In general terms:

- a. A government unit usually has the authority to raise funds by collecting taxes or compulsory transfers from other institutional units. In order to satisfy the basic requirements of an institutional unit in the SNA, a government unit, whether at the level of the total economy, a region or a locality, must have funds of its own either raised by taxing other units or received as transfers from other government units and the authority to disburse some, or all, of such funds in the pursuit of its policy objectives. It must also be able to borrow funds on its own account;
- b. Government units typically make three different kinds of final outlays:

- The first group consists of actual or imputed expenditures on the free provision to the community of collective services such as public administration, defence, law enforcement, public health, etc. that are organized collectively by government and financed out of general taxation or other income;

- The second group consists of expenditures on the provision of goods or services free, or at prices that are not economically significant, to individual households. These expenditures are deliberately incurred and financed out of taxation or other income by government in the pursuit of its social or political objectives, even though individuals could be charged according to their usage;

- The third group consists of transfers paid to other institutional units, mostly households, in order to redistribute income or wealth.

4.118 Within a single territory there may be many separate government units when there are different levels of government, specifically central, state or local governments. In addition, social security funds also constitute government units. These different kinds of government units are described later when the subsectoring of the general government sector is explained.

Government units as producers

4.119 The fact that governments choose to supply not only collective services but also many goods and individual services free, or at prices that are not economically significant, to households or other units does not necessitate that they produce them themselves. Even in the case of most collective services, or so-called “public goods”, governments are obliged only to assume responsibility for organizing and financing their production. They are not obliged to produce them. However, government units do usually engage in a wide range of productive activities in practice, covering not only collective services but also many other goods and individual services. Because it is largely a matter of political choice, the range of goods and services produced by government units varies greatly from one country to another. Apart from some collective services such as public administration and defence, it is therefore difficult to categorize certain types of production, such as the production of education or health services, as intrinsically governmental, even though they are often produced by government units.

4.120 When a government unit wishes to intervene in the sphere of production it has three options:

- a. it may create a public corporation whose corporate policy, including pricing and investment, it is able to control;
- b. it may create an NPI that it controls;
- c. it may produce the goods or services itself in an establishment that it owns but that does not exist as a separate legal entity from the government unit itself.

4.121 However, a government establishment, or group of establishments engaged in the same kind of production under common management, should be treated as a quasi-corporation if the following three criteria hold:

- a. the unit charges prices for its outputs that are economically significant;
- b. the unit is operated and managed in a similar way to a corporation; and
- c. the unit has a complete set of accounts that enable its operating surpluses, savings, assets and liabilities to be separately identified and measured.

Such quasi-corporations are market producers that are treated as separate institutional units from the government units that own them. They are classified, sectored and subsectored in the same way as public corporations.

4.122 In order to be treated as a quasi-corporation the government must allow the management of the enterprise considerable discretion not only with respect to the management of the production process but also the use of funds. Government quasi-corporations must be able to maintain their own working balances and business credit and be able to finance

some or all of their capital formation out of their own savings, depreciation reserves or borrowing. The ability to distinguish flows of income and capital between quasi-corporations and government implies that their operating and financing activities are not fully integrated with government revenue or finance statistics in practice, despite the fact that they are not separate legal entities.

4.123 Producer units of government that cannot be treated as quasi-corporations, like all unincorporated enterprises that cannot be separated from their owners, remain in the same institutional unit as the owner, in this case within the general government sector. They are likely to consist largely, or entirely, of non-market producers: that is, producers most or all of whose output is supplied to other units free, or at prices that are not economically significant. In addition to providing non-market goods or services to the general public, such units may include government producers supplying non-market goods or services to other government units for purposes of intermediate consumption or gross fixed capital formation: for example, munitions factories, government printing offices, transport agencies, computer or communications agencies, etc. However, it is possible for an unincorporated enterprise within a government to be a market producer. The example often quoted is that of a bookshop within a museum.

Social security schemes and social security funds

4.124 Social security schemes are social insurance schemes that cover the community as a whole or large sections of the community and are imposed and controlled by government units. The schemes cover a wide variety of programmes, providing benefits in cash or in kind for old age, invalidity or death, survivors, sickness and maternity, work injury, unemployment, family allowance, health care, etc. There is not necessarily a direct link between the amount of the contribution paid by an individual and the benefits he or she may receive.

4.125 When social security schemes are separately organized from the other activities of government units and hold their assets and liabilities separately from the latter and engage in financial transactions on their own account, they qualify as institutional units that are described as social security funds. However, institutional arrangements in respect of social security schemes differ from country to country and in some countries they may become so closely integrated with the other finances of government as to bring into question whether they should be treated as separate institutional units.

4.126 The amounts raised, and paid out, in social security contributions and benefits may be deliberately varied in order to achieve objectives of government policy that have no direct connection with the concept of social security as a scheme to provide social benefits to members of the community. They may be raised or lowered in order to influence the level of aggregate demand in the economy, for example. Nevertheless, so long as they remain separately constituted funds, they must be treated as separate institutional units in the SNA.

2. The general government sector

4.127 The general government sector consists of the following groups of resident institutional units:

- a. All units of central, state or local government (as described immediately below);
- b. All non-market NPIs that are controlled by government units.

The sector also includes social security funds, either as separate institutional units or as part of any or all of central, state or local government. The sector does not include public corporations, even when all the equity of such corporations is owned by government units. Nor does it include quasi-corporations that are owned and controlled by government units. However, unincorporated enterprises owned by government units that are not quasi-corporations remain integral parts of those units and, therefore, must be included in the general government sector.

3. Subsectors of the general government sector

4.128 A full subsectoring of the general government would allow for both NPIs and social security funds to be distinguished for each of central, state and local government. In practice, though, it is usual to show all social security funds together as one subsector or to merge them all with their appropriate level of government and not show social security funds by level of government separately. Further, NPIs may be shown as an “of which” item for general government as a whole or for central, state and local government individually.

4.129 The first method of subsectoring general government is as follows:

- a. Central government;
- b. State government;
- c. Local government;
- d. Social security funds;

where it is understood that each of the subsectors a, b and c include NPIs but exclude social security funds at that level of government.

4.130 The second method of subsectoring general government is as follows:

- a. Central government;
- b. State government;
- c. Local government;

where it is understood that each of the subsectors a, b and c include both NPIs and social security funds at that level of government.

4.131 Under either method of subsectoring, NPIs should be shown as an “of which” heading under the appropriate level of government.

4.132 The choice between the two methods of subsectoring depends mainly on the size, or importance, of social security funds within a country and on the way in which they are managed.

4.133 In some countries there may not exist a proper intermediate level of government between central and local government, in which case the subsector “state government” is not distinguished. In others there may be more than two levels of government below the central government. In that case, the lower levels should be aggregated with state or local government as appropriate.

Central government

4.134 The central government subsector consists of the institutional unit or units making up the central government plus those non-market NPIs that are controlled by central government.

4.135 The political authority of central government extends over the entire territory of the country. Central government has therefore the authority to impose taxes on all resident and non-resident units engaged in economic activities within the country. Its political responsibilities include national defence, the maintenance of law and order and relations with foreign governments. It also seeks to ensure the efficient working of the social and economic system by means of appropriate legislation and regulation. It is responsible for providing collective services for the benefit of the community as a whole, and for this purpose incurs expenditures on defence and public administration. In addition it may incur expenditures on the provision of services, such as education or health, primarily for the benefit of individual households. Finally, it may make transfers to other institutional units, namely to households, NPIs, corporations and other levels of government.

4.136 Central government is a large and complex subsector in most countries. It is generally composed of a central group of departments or ministries that make up a single institutional unit plus, in many countries, other institutional units. The departments may be responsible for considerable amounts of expenditure within the framework of the government’s overall budget, but often they are not separate institutional units capable of owning assets, incurring liabilities, engaging in transactions, etc., independently of central government as a whole.

4.137 The departments of central government are often deliberately dispersed geographically and located in different parts of the country, but they nevertheless remain parts of a single institutional unit. Similarly, if the central government maintains branch offices or agencies in different parts of the country to meet local needs, including military bases or installations that serve national defence

- purposes, these must also be counted as parts of a single institutional unit for central government.
- 4.138 In addition to government departments and ministries, there may be agencies of central government with separate legal identity and substantial autonomy; they may have discretion over the volume and composition of their expenditures and may have a direct source of revenue such as earmarked (“hypothecated”) taxes. Such agencies are often established to carry out specific functions such as road construction or the non-market production of health or education services. These should be treated as separate institutional units if they maintain full sets of accounts but are part of the central government subsector if the services they produce are non-market and if they are controlled by central government.
- 4.139 In some countries, the central government may include units that engage in financial transactions that in other countries would be performed by central banks. In particular, units of central government may be responsible for the issue of currency, the maintenance of international reserves and the operation of exchange stabilization funds, and also transactions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). When the units in question remain financially integrated with central government and under the direct control and supervision of central government, they cannot be treated as separate institutional units. Moreover, whatever monetary authority functions are carried out by central government are recorded in the government sector and not the financial corporations sector. However, because of the analytical importance that is attached to obtaining accounts covering the monetary authorities as a whole, and in order to provide links with other statistical systems, such as the *BPM6*, the *GFSM2001* and the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual* (International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2000, known as *MSFM*), it is recommended that the transactions of central government agencies carrying out monetary authority and deposit-taking functions should be separately identified, so that they can be combined with those of the central bank and other deposit-taking corporations in special tabulations if desired.
- 4.142 A state government usually has the fiscal authority to levy taxes on institutional units that are resident in, or engage in economic activities or transactions within, its area of competence (but not other areas). In order to be recognized as an institutional unit it must be able to own assets, raise funds and incur liabilities on its own account. It must also be entitled to spend or allocate some, or possibly all, of the taxes or other income that it receives according to its own policies, within the general rules of law of the country, although some of the transfers it receives from central government may be tied to certain specified purposes. It should also be able to appoint its own officers, independently of external administrative control. On the other hand, if a regional unit is entirely dependent on funds from central government, and if the central government also dictates the ways in which those funds are to be spent at the regional level, it should be treated as an agency of central government rather than as a separate institutional unit.
- 4.143 State governments, when they exist, are distinguished by the fact that their fiscal authority extends over the largest geographical areas into which the country as a whole may be divided for political or administrative purposes. In a few countries more than one level of government exists between the central government and the smallest governmental institutional units at a local level; in such cases, for purposes of sectoring within the SNA, these intermediate levels of government are grouped together with the level of government, either state or local, with which they are most closely associated.
- 4.144 State governments may own, or control, corporations in the same way as central government. Similarly, they may have units that engage in market production, in which case the relevant producer units should be treated as quasi-corporations whenever their operations and accounting records justify this.

Local government

- State government**
- 4.140 The state government subsector consists of state governments that are separate institutional units plus those non-market NPIs that are controlled by state governments.
- 4.141 State governments are institutional units exercising some of the functions of government at a level below that of central government and above that of the governmental institutional units existing at a local level. They are institutional units whose fiscal, legislative and executive authority extends only over the individual “states” into which the country as a whole may be divided. Such “states” may be described by different terms in different countries. In some countries, especially small countries, individual states and state governments may not exist. However, in large countries, especially those that have federal constitutions, considerable powers and responsibilities may be assigned to state governments.
- 4.145 The local government subsector consists of local governments that are separate institutional units plus those non-market NPIs that are controlled by local governments. In principle, local government units are institutional units whose fiscal, legislative and executive authority extends over the smallest geographical areas distinguished for administrative and political purposes. The scope of their authority is generally much less than that of central government or state governments, and they may, or may not, be entitled to levy taxes on institutional units resident in their areas. They are often heavily dependent on grants or transfers from higher levels of government, and they may also act as agents of central or regional governments to some extent. However, in order to be treated as institutional units they must be entitled to own assets, raise funds and incur liabilities by borrowing on their own account; similarly, they must have some discretion over how such funds are spent. They should also be able to appoint their own officers, independently of external administrative control. The fact that they may also act as agents of central or state governments to some extent does not prevent them from being treated as separate institutional units provided they are also able to raise and spend some funds on their own initiative and own responsibility.

4.146 As they are the government units that are in closest contact with the institutional units resident in their localities, they typically provide a wide range of services to local residents, some of which may be financed out of transfers from higher levels of government. The same rules govern the treatment of the production of goods and services by local government units as are applied to central and state governments. Units such as municipal theatres, museums, swimming pools, etc., that supply goods or services on a market basis should be treated as quasi-corporations whenever the appropriate accounting information is available and classified to the non-financial corporations sector. Other units supplying goods and services on a market basis are treated as unincorporated enterprises within local government. Units supplying services such as education or health on a non-market basis remain an integral part of the local government unit to which they belong.

Social security funds

4.147 The social security funds subsector consists of the social security funds operating at all levels of government.

4. The alternative method of subsectoring

4.148 The alternative method of subsectoring the general government sector is to group the social security funds

operating at each level of government with the corresponding government units and government controlled and financed NPIs at that level of government. The two alternative methods of subsectoring are designed to accommodate different analytical needs. The decision as to which method is more appropriate in a given country cannot be made a priori. It depends on how important social security funds are and on the extent to which they are managed independently of the government units with which they are associated. If the management of social security funds is so closely integrated with the short- or medium-term requirements of the government's general economic policy that contributions and benefits are deliberately adjusted in the interests of overall economic policy, it becomes difficult, at a conceptual level, to draw any clear distinction between the management of social security and the other economic functions of government. Alternatively, in some countries, social security funds may exist in only a very rudimentary form. In either of these circumstances it is difficult to justify treating social security funds as a separate subsector on a par with central, state and local government, and it is more appropriate to use the alternative method of subsectoring in which they are grouped with the corresponding government units at each level of government. This is the approach generally favoured in the *GFSM 2001*.

G. The households sector and its subsectors

1. Households as institutional units

4.149 For the purposes of the SNA, a household is defined as a group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food. In general, each member of a household should have some claim upon the collective resources of the household. At least some decisions affecting consumption or other economic activities must be taken for the household as a whole.

4.150 Households often coincide with families, but members of the same household do not necessarily have to belong to the same family so long as there is some sharing of resources and consumption. Households may be of any size and take a wide variety of different forms in different societies or cultures depending on tradition, religion, education, climate, geography, history and other socio-economic factors. The definition of a household that is adopted by survey statisticians familiar with the socio-economic conditions within a given country is likely to approximate closely to the concept of a household as defined in the SNA, although survey statisticians may add more precise, or operational, criteria within a particular country.

4.151 Domestic staff who live on the same premises as their employer do not form part of their employer's household even though they may be provided with accommodation

and meals as remuneration in kind. Paid domestic employees have no claim upon the collective resources of their employers' households and the accommodation and food they consume are not included with their employer's consumption. They should therefore be treated as belonging to separate households from their employers.

4.152 Persons living permanently in an institution, or who may be expected to reside in an institution for a very long, or indefinite, period of time are treated as belonging to a single institutional household when they have little or no autonomy of action or decision in economic matters. Some examples of persons belonging to institutional households are the following:

- a. Members of religious orders living in monasteries, convents or similar institutions;
- b. Long-term patients in hospitals, including mental hospitals;
- c. Prisoners serving long sentences;
- d. Persons living permanently in retirement homes.

4.153 On the other hand, persons who enter hospitals, clinics, convalescent homes, religious retreats, or similar institutions for short periods, who attend residential schools, colleges or universities, or who serve short prison

sentences should be treated as members of the individual households to which they normally belong.

- 4.154 The residence of individual persons is determined by that of the household of which they form part and not by their place of work. All members of the same household have the same residence as the household itself, even though they may cross borders to work or otherwise spend periods of time abroad. If they work and reside abroad so long that they acquire a centre of economic interest abroad, they cease to be members of their original households.

2. Unincorporated enterprises within households

- 4.155 As noted in the introduction, households are unlike corporations in that they undertake final consumption. However, like corporations, they may also engage in production. Household unincorporated market enterprises are created for the purpose of producing goods or services for sale or barter on the market. They can be engaged in virtually any kind of productive activity: agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, retail distribution or the production of other kinds of services. They can range from single persons working as street traders or shoe cleaners with virtually no capital or premises of their own through to large manufacturing, construction or service enterprises with many employees.

- 4.156 Household unincorporated market enterprises also include unincorporated partnerships that are engaged in producing goods or services for sale or barter on the market. The partners may belong to different households. When the liability of the partners for the debts of the enterprises is unlimited, the partnerships must be treated as unincorporated enterprises and remain within the household sector since all the assets of the household, including the dwelling itself, are at risk if the enterprise goes bankrupt. However, unincorporated partnerships with many partners, such as some large legal, accounting or architectural firms, are likely to behave like corporations and should be treated as quasi-corporations assuming complete sets of accounts are available for the partnerships. Partnerships whose partners enjoy limited liability are effectively separate legal entities and, as already noted, are treated as corporations.

- 4.157 An unincorporated enterprise can only be treated as a corporation if it is possible to separate all assets, including financial assets down to the level of cash, into those that belong to the household in its capacity as a consumer from those belonging to the household in its capacity as a producer.

3. The household sector and its subsectors

- 4.158 The household sector consists of all resident households. There are many useful ways in which the households sector may be subsectored and statistical agencies are advised to give due consideration to the various possibilities. More than one method may be adopted if there is a demand for different breakdowns of the households sector from different users, analysts or policymakers.

- 4.159 The SNA has to be applied flexibly, not rigidly. In order to implement any of the possible methods of subsectoring the households sector suggested below, individual countries are obliged to make their own decisions about what they consider to be the most relevant classification. Thus, the fact that a specific, detailed classification according to a criterion of interest is proposed here should not be interpreted as implying that the characteristics proposed are necessarily or always the most important for purposes of economic analysis and policymaking.

Subsectoring according to income

- 4.160 Households may be grouped into subsectors according to the nature of their largest source of income. For this purpose, the following types of household income need to be distinguished:

- a. Income accruing to the owners of household unincorporated enterprises with paid employees (employers' mixed income);
- b. Incomes accruing to the owners of household unincorporated enterprises without paid employees (own-account workers mixed income);
- c. Compensation of employees;
- d. Property and transfer incomes.

- 4.161 Households are allocated to subsectors according to which of the four categories of income listed above is the largest for the household as a whole, even if it does not always account for more than half of total household income. When more than one income of a given category is received within the same household, for example, because more than one member of the household earns compensation of employees or because more than one property or transfer income is received, the classification should be based on the total household income within each category. The four subsectors are described as follows:

- a. Employers;
- b. Own-account workers;
- c. Employees;
- d. Recipients of property and transfer incomes.

- 4.162 The fourth subsector, households for which property and transfer incomes make up the largest source of income, constitutes a heterogeneous group and it is recommended that it should be divided into three further subsectors when possible. These subsectors are defined as follows:

- Recipients of property incomes;
- Recipients of pensions;
- Recipients of other transfer incomes.

Subsectoring according to characteristics of a reference person

- 4.163 Other methods of subsectoring usually require a reference person to be identified for each household. The reference person is not necessarily the person that other members of the household regard as the “head of the household”, as the reference person should be decided on grounds of economic importance rather than age or seniority. The reference person should normally be the person with the largest income although the reference person could also be the person who makes the major decisions with regard to the consumption of the household.
- 4.164 Once a reference person has been identified, it is possible to group households into subsectors on the basis of the reference person’s characteristics. For example, subsectors may be defined according to:
- Occupation of the reference person;
 - Industry, if any, in which the reference person works;
 - Educational attainment of the reference person;
 - Qualifications or skills possessed by the reference person.

Each of the criteria listed above provides its own possible scheme of subsectoring. It would also be possible to group households into subsectors according to the main income of the reference person if, for some reason, it was not possible to group on the basis of the largest income received by the household. For this purpose, the same income categories may be used as those recommended for the household’s largest income.

Subsectoring according to household size and location

- 4.165 Finally, it may be noted that households may be subsectored using criteria that apply to the household as a whole. For example, subsectors may be defined according to:
- Size of the total income of the household;
 - Size of the household as measured by number of persons;
 - Type of area in which the household is located.

The last criterion enables households living in agricultural, urban or metropolitan areas to be distinguished from each other, or from households located in different geographical regions.

H. The non-profit institutions serving households sector

- 4.166 Previous sections have explained that NPIs are allocated to the corporations sectors when they are engaged in market production and to the general government sector if they are engaged in non-market production but subject to government control. The remaining NPIs are termed non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). All provide goods and services free or at prices that are not economically significant.
- 4.167 One type of NPISHs consists of those that are created by associations of persons to provide goods or, more often, services primarily for the benefit of the members themselves. The services are usually provided free, being financed by regular membership subscriptions or dues. They include NPISHs such as professional or learned societies, political parties, trades unions, consumers’ associations, churches or religious societies, and social, cultural, recreational or sports clubs. They do not include bodies serving similar functions that are controlled by government units. Religious institutions are treated as NPISHs even when mainly financed by government units if this majority financing is not seen as empowering control by government. Political parties in countries with one-party political systems that are controlled by government units by means of providing the necessary finance are included in the general government sector.
- 4.168 In some communities, NPISHs may be found that do not possess any legal status or formal articles of association.

They should be treated as NPISHs when they perform the same kinds of functions as the societies, political parties, trades unions, etc., described above, even if they are not legally constituted as NPISHs. However, when groups of households collaborate on communal construction projects (such as construction of buildings, roads, bridges, ditches, dykes, etc.), they should be treated as informal partnerships engaged on own-account construction rather than NPISHs. NPISHs should normally have a continuing role to play and not be deemed to be created for single projects of limited duration.

- 4.169 A second type of NPISH consists of charities, relief or aid agencies that are created for philanthropic purposes and not to serve the interests of the members of the association controlling the NPISH. Such NPISHs provide goods or services on a non-market basis to households in need, including households affected by natural disasters or war. The resources of such NPISHs are provided mainly by donations in cash or in kind from the general public, corporations or governments. They may also be provided by transfers from non-residents, including similar kinds of NPISHs resident in other countries.
- 4.170 The third type of NPISHs consist of those that provide collective services, such as research institutions that make their results freely available, environmental groups, etc. These are less common than the first two types of NPISHs

and may not always be significantly represented in a country.

4.171 If the number or size of NPISHs funded from abroad is significant, it maybe useful to disaggregate NPISHs into those that are mainly funded domestically and those that are mainly funded from abroad.

I. The rest of the world

4.172 For purposes of the SNA, *the rest of the world consists of all non-resident institutional units that enter into transactions with resident units, or have other economic links with resident units*. It is not a sector for which complete sets of accounts have to be compiled, although it is often convenient to describe the rest of the world as if it were a sector. The accounts, or tables, for the rest of the world are confined to those that record transactions between residents and non-residents or other economic relationships, such as claims by residents on non-residents, and vice versa. The rest of the world includes certain institutional units that may be physically located within the geographic boundary of a country; for example, foreign enclaves such as embassies, consulates or military bases, and also international organizations.

institutional units of the countries in which they are located;

d. International organizations are created for various purposes including, among others, the following types of activities:

- The provision of non-market services of a collective nature for the benefit of their members;

- Financial intermediation at an international level, that is, channelling funds between lenders and borrowers in different countries.

1. International organizations

4.173 Certain international organizations have all the essential attributes of institutional units. The special characteristics of an “international organization” as this term is used in the SNA may be summarized as follows:

a. The members of an international organization are either national states or other international organizations whose members are national states; they thus derive their authority either directly from the national states that are their members or indirectly from them through other international organizations;

b. They are entities established by formal political agreements between their members that have the status of international treaties; their existence is recognized by law in their member countries;

c. Because they are established by international agreement, they are accorded sovereign status; that is, international organizations are not subject to the laws or regulations of the country, or countries, in which they are located; they are not treated as resident

4.174 Formal agreements concluded by all the member countries of an international organization may sometimes carry the force of law within those countries.

4.175 Most international organizations are financed wholly or partly by contributions (transfers) from their member countries, but some organizations may raise funds in other ways such as borrowing on financial markets or by subscriptions to the capital stock of international organizations and lending by member countries. For purposes of the SNA, international organizations are treated as units that are resident in the rest of the world.

2. Central banks of currency unions

4.176 The central bank of a currency union is treated as a special kind of international organization. The members of the international organization of which the central bank is part are the governments or the national central banks of the countries in the currency union. The central bank is treated as being non-resident in any of the member countries of the currency union but is resident in the currency area as a whole. More on the treatment of currency and economic unions can be found in appendix 3 of *BPM6*.