

Accounting for Africa between Bottom and Top: social accounting frameworks for epidemics and revival

The SAFER social accounting framework programme has three aims:

1. Developing African capacity to measure the economy and society, especially the informal
2. Measuring the holistic, society-wide economic role of health and caring, with attention to epidemics including HIV
3. Working with people so the research makes a difference on the ground and in the air, as well as in academic, policy and business circles.

This paper spans the very large continent-wide Social Accounting framework in Pillar One and the first-ever quantified socio-economic model of an apartheid-era Township in Pillar Three. Within the structural envelope of almost all previous tabular and classification systems used for SAMS across the continent, we investigate meaningful models and meta-analysis for plugging gaps between intergovernmental data downwards, street surveys upwards, and national statistical institutes in-between.

The programme creates and applies tools to interpolate, extrapolate, and translate:

- across the supply and use of products in industries and societies
- geographically across jurisdictions, localities, regions and countries
- temporally between sporadic surveys and the present.

From the top down we use extant globally coordinated data and estimates from intergovernmental institutions', WIOD and GTAP, and trade from Comtrad and its diaspora. We update using 'nowcasting' techniques, some theoretically agnostic and some drawing on straightforward models with theoretical underpinnings, such as AIDS and KLEMS. We disaggregate by successively partitioning the prior estimates on the basis of both product and place/jurisdiction – going back to question the prior estimates where that is indicated.

The research philosophy is one of early exposure to encourage constructive criticism. In 2019 we will publish informal drafts of a 'continental' African SAM, and of a SAM for South Africa disaggregated by region and settlement type. These link to a SAM of Sharpeville, engaging locals and fostering economic development in a place originally designed to be economically barren.

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