TECHNICAL REPORT

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Improving Estimates of Gross Domestic Product (February 20–March 3, 2023)

APRIL 2023

Prepared By

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Executive Summary

1. **A Technical Assistance (TA) mission was conducted by STA for the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC) to the Cayman Islands during February 20–March 3, 2023,** to provide advice to the Economics and Statistics Office (ESO) on compiling improved estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and reviewing the data sources for compiling institutional sector accounts (ISA), in line with relevant *System of National Accounts 2008* (*2008 SNA*) recommendations. The improved estimates will improve the understanding of the Cayman Islands economy. This development will also help Cayman Islands meet the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standards requirements.

2. **Following rebasing of GDP for reference year 2015, estimates of GDP by economic activities (GDP-P) and GDP by expenditure (GDP-E) and GDP by income (GDP-I) were benchmarked to the new base year.** The last rebasing exercise was conducted using the Supply and Use Tables (SUT) framework. All three GDP measures are compiled annually and GDP by production activities (GDP-P) and by expenditure components (GDP-E) are both compiled in current and constant prices. The GDP estimates are led by the production approach with the expenditure measure aligned via a statistical discrepancy.

3. **The compilation of GDP-E relies heavily on the use of trade data since the majority of goods are imported into the Cayman Islands.** The ESO has developed an excellent system for processing trade data, ensuring maximum use of the data. The system is also future proofed for rebasing - by ensuring that regular data processing maps to all the product codes used in the SUT.

4. **The ESO has fully documented the data sources and methods used to compile all three measures of GDP.** The approaches for GDP-P and GDP-E were reviewed during this mission. The trade data are processed at the unit level and there are some enhancements that could be made to the processing to improve the efficiency and quality, which are detailed in this mission report.

5. **In terms of the specific methodology used for GDP-E, the methods used by the ESO are aligned with the *2008 SNA*.** In reviewing the data sources and methods, the mission identified a small number of improvements that could be made to the deflators used for service sector products.

6. **For GDP-P, the ESO conduct an Annual National Accounts Survey (ANAS) which is the main data source for compiling the production measure estimates.** The survey forms strike the right balance in terms of the number of questions and detail required for national accounts, without being too onerous on survey respondents.

7. **One activity flagged by the ESO as an area for improvement was the measurement of construction value added.** The deflators used currently measure the major inputs to the construction activity but do not cover the labour inputs. After reviewing the available options, improvements to the deflation method were identified.

8. **The ESO has expressed an interest in developing ISAs for the Cayman Islands.** At present some high-level balancing items are published by the ESO at the total economy level. This mission provided training on the units and sector groupings as well as the sequence of accounts. This information was used as the basis of evaluating data availability in the Cayman Islands against the framework.

9. **The detail at which GDP-P and GDP-I are compiled mean that transforming the data to an institutional sector basis is feasible.** However, beyond these accounts, significant research,

development, and analysis will be needed. It is worth noting that at present there is no user requirement for ISA in the Cayman Islands, and the ESO should focus on what is feasible in this area.

10.   **Given the importance of tourism in the Cayman Islands, the ESO is keen to develop a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) for the country.** This mission compiled a presentation on the TSA framework, highlighting the key features, data requirements, practical implementation steps as well as a view of what similar countries in the region have achieved. This was presented to the ESO and colleagues from the Department of Tourism (DoT) and the Ministry of Tourism (MoT). The meeting was very productive, and the DoT have committed to collaborating fully with the ESO to take this work forward. Across the two departments, the main data sources are available to develop a TSA, but this will require technical assistance.

11.   **Finally, the ESO has started work on the next rebasing of the national accounts.** The last rebasing was undertaken for the reference year 2015 and published in 2018. For rebasing, since the ANAS is collected each year, the only other major survey needed is the Household Budget Survey (HBS). Fieldwork on that survey has already started and will run for 12 months from February 2023. In addition, the ESO use an enhanced ANAS for rebasing, which will be sent out in April 2024 to collect data for 2023. Once the data sources are finalised, the process of compiling the SUT for 2023 can commence. Based on current plans, the ESO anticipate publishing rebased results at the end of 2026.

12.   **To support progress towards the above objectives, the mission recommended the following priority recommendations to improve the Cayman Islands' national accounts:**

TABLE 1. Priority Recommendations

Target Date	Priority Recommendation	Responsible Institutions
December 2023	*ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of specific aspects of GDP-E*	ESO
December 2023	*ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of the construction industry.*	ESO
June 2024	*ESO and DoT to engage a technical expert to assist in the compilation of the Tourism Satellite Account*	ESO/DoT

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

2008 SNA	*System of National Accounts 2008*
ANAS	Annual National Accounts Survey
BEC	Broad Economic Category
BoP	Balance of Payments
CARTAC	IMF's Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government
COICOP.	Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DoT	Department of Tourism
EBOPS	Extended Balance of Payments Services
ESO	Economics and Statistics Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPE	Gross Domestic Product by expenditure approach
GDPI	Gross Domestic Product by income approach
GDPP	Gross Domestic Product by production approach
GFCE	Government Final Consumption Expenditure
GFCF	Gross Fixed Capital Formation
GFS	Government Financial Statistics
HBS	Household Budget Survey
HFCE	Household Final Consumption Expenditure
HS	Harmonised System
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPD	Implied Price Deflator
ISA	Institutional Sector Accounts
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
NPISH	Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households
PPI	Producer Price Index

SNA	System of National Accounts
STA	IMF Statistics Department
SUT	Supply and Use Tables
TA	Technical Assistance
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account

Section I. GDP by Expenditure Components

13.   **The ESO compiles GDP-E in current and constant prices on an annual basis.** Due to higher quality data sources used in the production measure, GDP-P is used to lead the headline GDP estimate and a statistical discrepancy is used to align GDP-E. Typically, the statistical discrepancy is within two per cent of the production measure.

14.   **All the main transactions of GDP-E are explicitly measured despite major data challenges in the Cayman Islands because no income tax, corporate income tax, or VAT being levied on the island.** The key data source used by the ESO is the merchandise trade data since most goods are imported.

15.   **The trade data are used extensively in the expenditure measure using data supplied by the External Sector team in the ESO.** The System of National Accounts Unit have created a system that uses the unit level trade data to generate results for imports of goods, exports of goods, household final consumption expenditure (HFCE) and gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), excluding buildings and civil construction. The main processing steps involve mapping the native Harmonized System (HS) codes to the Classification of Individual Consumption by Product (COICOP), the SUT product codes and the final uses via the Broad Economic Categories (BEC). Using the importing unit, the SNA unit also distinguishes between goods for direct purchases or bought by a distributor. Goods through the distributive trade have margin applied based on data from GDP-P estimates to arrive at purchasers 'prices.

16.   **Whilst the SNA unit has developed an excellent system for processing trade data (which is also future proofed for rebasing), two key issues were identified:**

- The type of importer relies on the trading name of the company, which is not consistently recorded in the trade data. Hence a unique ID for each establishment would help make the data processing more efficient.

- The quality of the product coding could also be improved. Due to tax on imports for most products being levied at 22 percent, not all products are coded precisely. As a result, an approach to compare the HS code with an automated coding tool (based on the description of the goods) could be a useful improvement to the accuracy of product coding.

17.   **A similar multi-coding approach is applied to the trade in services data, sourced from the Balance of Payments (BoP).** Whilst, the services data are natively coded to the Extended Balance of Payments Services (EBOPS) classification, the SNA unit also maps the codes to COICOP and the SUT product codes.

18.   **This mission reviewed the methods used for compiling GDP-E and concluded that the majority of methods are aligned well with SNA standards.** The SNA unit makes the maximum use of the data available in the Cayman Islands. A detailed assessment of the methods used across the GDP-E transactions is presented in Appendix I. This mission identified several deflator improvements for GDP-E as set out in the table below.

TABLE 2. Possible GDP-E Deflation Improvements

Transaction	Suggested Improvements
HFCE	For imported services, some specific services may be better deflated using specific US Producer Price Index (PPI) for services (in areas covering professional services)
GFCE	The preferred measure for individual services in constant prices is to use output indicators; however, as this only covers 2 percent of GDP-E, it would be a low priority
GFCF	For computer software and databases, investigate using the US PPI for services covering this product
Imports of Goods	For business-to-business specific products, sourcing specific US PPIs would represent an improved method
Imports of Services	Investigate using specific US PPI for services to deflate relevant components

Recommended action:

▪ ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of GDP-E

Section II. GDP By Production Activities

19.   **GDP-P is the leading measure in the Cayman Islands and is compiled on an annual basis in current and constant prices.** The SNA unit has developed a comprehensive inventory of methods that explain the full data sources and methods used to measure GDP-P. Data are compiled across 155 industries with most of the current price data sourced from the ANAS. The SNA unit is generally content with the methodology used and the documentation was reviewed in this mission.

20.   **The one area noted by the SNA unit as needing improvement was the methodology for compiling construction.** This was reviewed during the mission and improvements were identified. Construction is broken down into five separate components and the current price data is mainly sourced via the ANAS. Separate deflation methods have been compiled based on measuring the inputs to the construction outputs. However, the current deflators only measure physical inputs and not labour inputs. As a result, a consumer price index (CPI) component that covers the labour costs of construction activities is proposed as a component to be included. Full details can be found in Annex II.

Recommended action:

▪ ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of the construction industry

Section III. Institutional Sector Accounts

21.   **Alongside compiling the three measures of GDP, the ESO also compile total economy estimates of gross national income, savings and net lending/borrowing.** The ESO wished to expand this analysis and wanted to assess the feasibility of compiling ISAs.

22.   **This mission provided training on the principles of units and sectors as well as the sequence of accounts.** In terms of assessing the feasibility of compiling data on an institutional basis, the mission considered three main issues: how to map from the GDP by industry basis to institutional sectors, the potential level of institutional sector detail and the data sources available for the other transactions, and the data on assets required in the framework. These areas will dictate what elements within the sequence of accounts are possible in practice.

23.   **Whilst the SUT framework for 2015 was published at a high level, it was compiled at a much more detailed level.** The SUT compilation tables comprised 150 industries and 159 products. Within this breakdown, private and public provision of services such as health and education were split out. Each industry was reviewed and allocated to a predominant institutional sector. In most cases, the mapping was on a one-to-one basis. This mapping can be used to provide a bridging table to the institutional sector accounts.

24.   **This information is central to deciding the level of detail at which to compile the institutional sector accounts.** Given that the Cayman Islands economy is dominated by financial services, as well as a significant proportion of foreign-owned corporations, the SNA unit needs to produce an agreed institutional sector breakdown. This should reflect the realistic availability of data, as well as the analytical requirements.

25.   **The final key area looked at was the data sources needed to populate the sequence of accounts.** Aside from the general link between the SUT and GDP frameworks, the remaining transactions and assets were reviewed against possible data sources in the Cayman Islands. In most cases, data are available at the total economy level, but research will be needed to investigate whether the data is either available on a sectorized basis or can be sectorized using other methods. A full list of transactions and detail of data availability and areas to research can be found in Annex III.

26.   **Based on the current known data availability, compiling at least the production and generation of income accounts is possible.** The phased approach to implementing the SNA was demonstrated to the SNA unit and how the institutional sector accounts can be built up and expanded over time. However, given the lack of user need in this output, the ESO should only focus on what is actually feasible, given the resource limits.

Recommended actions:

- ESO to finalise the mapping file for bridging GDP and SUT tables to sectors.
- ESO to agree on a plausible sector level based on the availability of data.
- ESO to research the data sources for populating the sequence of accounts to determine the possible scope of compiling institutional sector accounts.

Section IV. Tourism Satellite Accounts

27.   **Alongside the financial sector, tourism plays an important role in the Cayman Islands economy.** However, aside from standalone indicators, to date no attempt has been made to compile a TSA. This is an area the ESO is keen to take forward. This mission presented a summary of an approach for developing and implementing a TSA for the Cayman Islands. It provided an overview of the TSA framework, the major data sources needed to compile it, the practicalities to consider, and an analysis of what other countries in the region have developed.

28.   **The presentation was used to host a meeting between the ESO, MoT and DoT. The DoT noted that this is an area they are extremely interested in and committed to cooperating fully with the ESO on this project.** The TSA can demonstrate the full impact of tourism on the Cayman Islands as well as for generating metrics and targets for the DoT.

29.   **Within the Cayman Islands, the main data sources for compiling a TSA are available.** The 2015 SUT contains the detailed product-level information to map to the TSA, although it is out of date. The next SUT is planned for the reference year 2023. Alongside the core SUT data, the Cayman Islands also have an ANAS, Labour Force Survey, HBS and Visitor Exit Survey.

30.   **The visitor exit survey questionnaire was reviewed as part of this mission and it meets the detailed requirements of the TSA.** The survey form covers expenditure across the range of required products, accommodation, the purpose of visit, length of stay as well as demographic information. The form is used for both air arrivals and cruise ship visitors.

31.   **Going forward, the ESO and DoT need to work together to take this project forward.** Some important areas to consider and agree on are the suitability of data sources, identification of data gaps, which reference period to target, the level of detail to compile the data, which tables of the TSA to aim for and which categories of tourism to include. One of the fundamental items to agree on is the definition of tourism in the context of the Cayman Islands.

32.   **To succeed, the TSA project will need to be properly resourced and carefully planned, but it will also need support from a technical expert.** It is advised to engage a technical expert as soon as feasible, so they can be involved in the initial planning phases.

Recommended actions:

▪   ESO and DoT to review definitions, classifications and scope for the TSA

▪   ESO and DoT to start the planning process for compiling TSA

▪   ESO and DoT to engage a technical expert to assist in the compilation of the TSA

Section V. Strategic Issues

33.   **The ESO has started the rebasing process of the national accounts for the reference year 2023.** The last rebasing was carried out for the reference year 2015. The pandemic delayed the population census, which in turn delayed the HBS. As a result, the ESO also delayed their plans to rebase. As the ESO carry out a detailed ANAS each year, the only major data source required for rebasing is the HBS.

34.   **The data collection for the HBS has already started and the fieldwork will run for twelve months from February 2023.** The HBS will sample 2400 households in the Cayman Islands at a rate of 200 per month. Household expenditure data will be classified to the new COICOP 2018 classification and will also be used to rebase the CPI.

35.   **Whilst the ANAS is carried out each year, for rebasing a more detailed survey instrument is used to collect additional detail.** Data collection will run from April to June 2024 and will sample approximately 4,100 organisations. Of which 30 percent of the sample will receive the expanded questionnaire required for the SUT framework. It is also worth noting that the ESO maintain an up-to-date business register for the ANAS.

36.   **After the results of the major data sources are available, a SUT for 2023 will be compiled and balanced.** As noted earlier, the SNA unit has an excellent system that can easily produce the other detailed key inputs for rebasing. Based on current plans, the ESO anticipate publishing rebased national accounts (including backcasts of GDP) by the end of 2026.

37.   **The mission also provided an update to the SNA unit on developments of the new revision of the SNA as well as progress on the activity and product classifications.** Key areas relevant to the Cayman Islands were highlighted for information. Implementation of the new standards is still several years away but should be factored into future rebasing plans to ensure the exercises coincide.

Recommended action:

- ESO to regularly monitor progress on the rebasing timetable

Section VI. Detailed Technical Assessment and Recommendations

The following table sets out the actions agreed upon with the ESO for improving the national accounts estimates.

TABLE 3. Detailed Recommendations

Priority	Action/Milestone	Target Completion Date
Outcome: **Data are compiled and disseminated using the latest manual/guide**		
H	ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of GDP-E	December 2023
H	ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of the construction industry	December 2023
M	ESO to finalise the mapping file for bridging GDP and SUT tables to sectors	June 2024
M	ESO to agree a plausible sector level based on the availability of data	June 2024
L	ESO to research the data sources for populating the sequence of accounts to determine the possible scope of compiling institutional sector accounts	December 2024
H	ESO and DoT to start the planning process for compiling TSA	June 2024
H	ESO and DoT to engage a technical expert to assist in the compilation of the TSA	June 2024

M	ESO and DoT to review definitions, classifications and scope for the TSA	December 2024
M	ESO to regularly monitor progress on the rebasing timetable	December 2023
H	ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of GDP-E	December 2023
H	ESO to review the recommendations to improve the deflation of the construction industry	December 2023
M	ESO to finalise the mapping file for bridging GDP and SUT tables to sectors	June 2024

Section VII. List Of Officials Met During the Mission

Name	Institution
Adolphus Laidlow	Director of Economic & Statistics Office
Selburn Christian	Senior Statistician, System of National Accounts Unit, ESO
Joseph Anderson	Statistician 1 (GDPE), System of National Accounts Unit, ESO
O'Dayne Plummer	Statistician 1 (GDPP), System of National Accounts Unit, ESO
Francine Wright	Statistical Officer 1, System of National Accounts Unit, ESO
Ron Farier	Senior Statistician, External Sector Statistics Unit, ESO
Ralston Henry	Senior Economist, ESO
Stran Bodden	Chief Officer, Ministry of Tourism & Transport
Eldon Chisholm	Policy Advisor, Ministry of Tourism & Transport
Rosa Harris	Director of Tourism, Department of Tourism
Gail Henry	Deputy Director, Department of Tourism
Marzeta Bodden	Deputy Director, Product Development, Department of Tourism

Name	Institution
Kimberley McLean	Deputy Director, Finance & Administration, Department of Tourism
Ricardo Smith	Manager, E-Business & Market Research (Acting), Department of Tourism

Appendices

APPENDIX I. SUMMARY OF TRAINING PROVIDED IN MISSION

The following training was provided in this mission:

Topic	Areas Covered
GDP-E Overview and Assessment	- Overview of the expenditure approach to GDP - Description of the data sources and methods used in the Cayman Islands - Outline of suggested improvements
Units and Sectors	- Overview of the units used in the System of National Accounts - Overview of the institutional sectors - Activities and producing units
Institutional Sector Accounts	- Overview of the broad principles of the sector accounts - The main balancing items described in the framework - The current accounts, accumulation and balance sheets - Analysis of the data coverage in the Cayman Islands - The SNA milestones for implementing the full framework
Tourism Satellite Accounts	- Overview of the TSA framework - Tables compiled in the framework - Data sources required to compile TSA and analysis of data available in the Cayman Islands - Practicalities for implementing a TSA - Other countries approach in the Caribbean
Overview of SNA 2025 Update	- Outline of the timetable and update process - Overview of the broad topics being covered
Overview of ISIC Rev 5	- Outline of the timetable - Description of the key changes
Construction Output	- Analysis of the current methods being employed in the Cayman Islands - Overview of the methods used in the UK - Outline of the available international guidance in this area

APPENDIX II. SUMMARY OF GDP-E METHODOLOGY

This Annex provides an overview of the data sources and methods used to compile GDP-E in the Cayman Islands. The *SNA* unit have also produced a detailed methodological guide which is currently in draft.

Household Final Consumption Expenditure

HFCE is compiled using three different methods outlined in the table below.

Method	Current Price Method	Constant Price Method
Imported Goods	Trade in goods imports data by COICOP	Detailed CPI series
Imported Services	BoP imports of services by COICOP	GDP-P implied price deflators (IPD)/US CPI
Local Goods and Services	GDP-P indicators	GDP-P gross output at constant price

General Government Final Consumption Expenditure

1.   For government final consumption expenditure (GFCE), the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) from the various Ministries and Departments, used in the GDPP compilation are used. Using the same approach as the trade data, GFS data are coded to multiple classifications, in this case SUT codes and Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG). The GDP-E method uses the relevant industries from GDP-P to compile GFCE. GFCE in constant prices uses gross value added by industry data together with the intermediate consumption data deflated by relevant CPI's or GDP-P IPDs.

Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households Final Consumption Expenditure

2.   Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) are compiled using the same approach as GFCE. Specific industries from GDP-P are used to compile results.

Gross Capital Formation

3.   Gross fixed capital formation is compiled using a combination of production and import indicators. For imported capital goods, trade data are used to extrapolate the current price data and deflated by specific US PPIs to calculate constant price results. The remaining non-financial assets are calculated using a range of different methods which are all sound.

4.   Changes in inventories and valuables are calculated using recommended methods. Changes in inventories are compiled from data from the Annual Business Survey, whilst valuables are compiled for non-monetary gold via trade data.

Imports and Exports

5.   Net exports are compiled using the external trade data. The table below summarises the data sources and methods.

Method	Current Price Method	Constant Price Method
Imports of Goods	Trade in goods imports data by COICOP	Detailed CPI series
Imports of Services	Imports of services from BoP by COICOP	Detailed GDP-P IPD / US CPI series
Exports of Goods	Trade in goods exports data by COICOP	Detailed CPI series
Exports of Services	Exports of services from BoP by COICOP	Detailed IPD from GDP-P

APPENDIX III. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY DEFLATORS

The following table sets out the deflators currently used to deflate the components of the construction industry. Suggested improvements are provided in the table below.

SIC	Industry	Current Deflator	Proposed Deflator
41001	Building Construction	US PPI for construction items (i.e., cement, iron & steel, sand & gravel, and structural metal products)	Include CPI services for maintenance & repair of dwelling to measure labour inputs
42101	Road Construction	US PPI for road construction inputs (Asphalt paving mixtures & blocks).	As 41001
42200	Construction of Utility Projects	CPI for plumbing	As 41001
43200	Building Installation	CPI services for maintenance & repair of dwelling.	No change
43903	Renting of Construction or Demolition Equipment (with Operator)	CPI for fuel & lubricant US PPI for Construction equipment rental and leasing US PPI-Commercial machinery repair & maintenance	As 41001

The following table sets out the transactions required under each account in the Institutional Sector Accounts. Only new transactions are noted where applicable in each subsequent account.

Account	Transaction	Data Sources
Production Account	Output	Data mapped from industry (GDP-P)
	Intermediate Consumption	Data mapped from industry (GDP-P)
	Taxes on products	Only required at total sector level
	Subsidies on products	Only required at total sector level
Generation of Income Account	Compensation of employees	Data mapped from industry (GDP-I)
	Other taxes on production	Data on licenses and work permits (i.e. the portion treated as taxes) to be allocated to sector
	Other subsidies on production	To be investigated
Allocation of Primary Income Account	Property Income	To be investigated
Secondary Distribution of Income Account	Current taxes on income and wealth	Not applicable in the Cayman Islands
	Social benefits and contributions	To be investigated
	Other current transfers	To be investigated
Use of Disposable Income Account	Change in pension entitlements	To be investigated
	Final consumption expenditure	Available from GDP-E
Redistribution of income in kind account	Social transfers in kind	Available from GDP-E – split of individual and collective consumption
Use of adjusted disposable income account	Actual final consumption expenditure	Derived
Capital Account	Gross fixed capital formation	Available at the total economy level from GDP-E – detail to be investigated
	Changes in inventories	Available at the total economy level from GDP-E – detail to be investigated
	Valuables	Available at the total economy level from GDP-E – detail to be investigated
	Non-produced assets	To be investigated
	Capital transfers	To be investigated

Account	Transaction	Data Sources
Financial Account	Monetary gold and SDRs	Gold should be available from monetary authority – no SDRs for the Cayman Islands
	Currency and deposits	Total data available at total economy level – detail to be investigated
	Debt securities	To be investigated
	Loans	To be investigated
	Equity & Investment funds	To be investigated
	Insurance, pension and standardized guarantee schemes	To be investigated
	Financial derivatives and employee stock options	To be investigated
	Other accounts receivable/payable	To be investigated