

Irving Fisher Committee on  
Central Bank Statistics



## Fintech classification issues

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# Fintech and Statistics

**Four years ago**, on the 7th meeting of the Arab Statistics Initiative, I gave an overview: "Towards monitoring financial innovation". We observed:

- **Fintech** activity generated **data gaps** in central bank statistics.
- Fintechs were increasingly important for **financial stability and payment systems**.
- Internationally comparable **information on fintech were lacking in official statistics**. To understand innovation, **qualitative information of fintech activity**, information on **evolving structures**, and **harmonised time series** are needed.
- 2018-2020 **Working Group on Fintech Data**: More than 20 participating central banks, plus the IMF
  - Important preparatory work for **fintech-related recommendations of the G20 DGI**
  - Conceptual foundations for '**making statistics see**' – **work on classifications**
  - IFC report #12: [Towards monitoring financial innovations in central bank statistics](#) and
  - IFC report #10 [Central banks and fintech data issues](#)
- The **IFC sent two letters to the UNSD** regarding the **treatment of fintech activities in the ISIC**.

## Ongoing work

What has happened since then?

- **G20 DGI-3** co-ordinates world-wide statistical work on
  - Fintech credit (Rec 10), led by the FSB
  - Digital money (Rec 11), led by the IMF
  - Fintech enabled financial inclusion (Rec 12), led by the IMF and the World Bank
- Update of **international Standards (SNA and BPM)**
- Ongoing revision of **classifications** of
  - activities
  - products



Topic of my talk today

## Ongoing work

- **Without appropriate classification**, statistics cannot “see”. Classifications act as **lenses on reality**, they help turning a mass of data to useful statistical information.
- **Periodically**, the major classifications on activities and products **are revised**. This requires lots of **co-ordination**. The currently ongoing revision is almost finished.
- Classifications on **activities** (also used to classify companies) and **products**
- **Levels:** world-wide, supra-national and national
- For each country, **a specific set of classifications** will govern statistical work

IFC, ECB, Banco de España, and Deutsche Bundesbank have been actively engaged the ongoing classification work.

# The revision and its dimensions

Level	Classification of Activities	Classification of Products
World	<b>International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)</b> , maintained by UNSD	<b>Central Product Classification (CPC)</b> , maintained by UNSD
Large Economic Areas	For example the <b>Nomenclature Statistique des Activités Économiques dans la Communauté Européenne (NACE)</b> , maintained by Eurostat	For example the <b>Statistical classification of products by activity (CPA)</b> , maintained by Eurostat
Single countries, to take account of national specificities	For example the <b>Klassifikation der Wirtschaftszweige (WZ)</b> in Germany, or the <b>Clasificación Nacional de Actividades Economicas (CNAE)</b> in Spain, maintained by the respective National Statistical Institutes of the two countries	

Very tight co-operation!

National classifications depend on higher levels

## Overview of results

- ISIC and NACE: Fintech does not offer any new services, only new means of producing known services. Thus the current **structure** does not need to be adapted.
- However, the **explanations** will take account of Fintech. Why is this important? To make sure that fintech activities are captured, assessed and represented in a way that is consistent over space (jurisdictions) and time.
- The structure of the more detailed product classifications **will be adjusted to capture novel developments**, such as crypto assets, consumer credit platforms and payment services (digital wallets, mobile money).
- Some of the **more detailed national classification structures** will also take fintech activities on board.
- This paves the way to **further adjustments** of ISIC and NACE structure in the future.

## Fintech in NACE

**All major fields of fintech now included in the explanations,** mostly of financial services:

- Digital payment services, peer-to-peer payment services
- Debt- and equity-based crowd-funding
- Donation-based funding (considered non-financial)
- Crypto assets with and without corresponding liability:
  - Issuing, validation and mining, trading, exchanges and brokerage
- Tokenisation of digital assets, including security token offerings, initial coin offerings
- Digital (currency) wallets
- Robo-advisory services
- Consumer credit intermediation (credit platforms)
- Quasi-banking = banking-like services without a banking license, in co-operation with a licensed bank

## Fintech in CPA

In CPA, fintech **enters also in the structure**. The latest draft has

- Credit granting services other than by monetary institutions:
  - inter-industry (64.92.01)
  - consumer credits (64.92.02)
  - residential mortgage (64.92.03)
  - non-residential mortgage credit granting services (64.92.04)
  - commercial non-mortgage (64.92.05)
- Services of mobile money operators and digital wallets utilizing financial information (66.19.13)
- Issuing services of crypto-assets with (64.99.04) and without (63.10.32) a corresponding liability
- Crypto-assets without a corresponding liability as a product (63.10.31)



## Fintech in national classification structures

National classification structures may have an additional layer of detail, eg

- Germany, "*Klassifikation der Wirtschaftszweige, Ausgabe 2025 (WZ 2025)*": explicit entries for
  - Factoring companies (WZ 64.92.1)
  - Processing of payments and other financial transactions (WZ 66.19.1)
  - Intermediation of credits (credit platforms) (WZ 66.19.2)
- Spain, "*Clasificación Nacional de Actividades Economicas (CNAE)*":
  - Crowdfunding platform activities (CNAE 66.13)

## A case study: crypto assets (1)

- Crypto assets with a corresponding liability are **financial instruments** – cryptography is simply a special way of encoding a financial contract. Issuing and trading of such crypto assets with a corresponding liability is classified as a **financial service**.
- Crypto assets that have no corresponding liability (CAWCL) are not regarded as financial instruments. This is the case of **Bitcoin, Ethereum** and other so-called “**crypto-currencies**”. Upcoming revised international standards (SNA and BPM) regard them as “**non-produced, non-financial**”.

## A case study: crypto assets (2)

- **Activity classification:**

- NACE classifies the **issuing of CAWCL as non-financial** (63.10). Issuing CA with corresponding liabilities is financial (64.99).
- Similar **brokerage of crypto assets**: brokerage of CA for CA with corresponding liabilities is financial (66.12), brokerage of CAWL is not (82.99)
- **Crypto exchanges** are always financial (66.11).

- **Product classification:**

- The latest draft of the CPA revision has a **separate position** for CAWCL (63.10.31).
- A certain tension with the notion that CAWCL are non-produced and non-financial

Classification work is an **ongoing process -- always...!**

## References

- [Central Product Classification \(CPC\)](#), Eurostat, under revision
- [Clasificación Nacional de Actividades Económicas \(CNAE\)](#), under revision
- [International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities \(ISIC\)](#), revision disseminated (forthcoming UN publication)
- Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics, IFC Report No 10: [IFC report on Central banks and fintech data issues \(bis.org\)](#), 2020 Survey conducted by the Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics (IFC)
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- [Klassifikation der Wirtschaftszweige \(WZ\)](#), revised structure published, explanations in progress
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