

Overview of National Balance Sheet Accounts

The **National Balance Sheet Accounts** (NBSA) are statements of the non-financial assets owned/used in the sectors of the economy and of the financial claims outstanding among the economic units in the sectors in the economy. They consist of the **National Balance Sheet** for the nation as a whole, as well as the underlying sector balance sheets.

At the core of the NBSA are assets and liabilities and the concepts of wealth and net worth. In nominal terms, wealth accumulates as the result of: economic and financial activity in the **Income and Expenditure Accounts** and **Financial Flow Accounts**, respectively; and, changes in the prices of assets and liabilities.

Sector Balance Sheets

The NBSA is an integrated set of balance sheets -- non-financial assets, financial assets, liabilities and net worth -- for the sectors of the economy. This comprises four major sectors of the economy: persons and unincorporated business, corporations, governments and non-residents. The non-resident sector is the detail on Canada's International Investment position. The corporate sector is broken down into a number of sub-sectors with the bulk of this detail comprising the balance sheets of the financial institutions, reflecting the importance of the financial system. The government sector assets and liabilities are available by level of government. In total, there are 30 unique sectors in the NBSA. Financial instruments covered include deposits, bonds, shares, short-term paper, trade accounts, consumer credit, mortgages etc. Users can access credit market debt of the sectors, gross and net debt of government sectors, the structure of household net worth, the composition of the assets of the large institutional investors to name some uses.

National Wealth; National Net Worth

Sector balance sheets excluding the non-resident sector can be aggregated to produce the **National Balance Sheet** (NBS).

National Wealth is defined as the sum of the non-financial assets in the economy. The standard measure is comprised of produced assets (residential structures, non-residential structures, machinery and equipment, consumer durable goods, inventories) and land. A broader measure of wealth is produced annually which includes the value of natural resources – specifically, timber and major deposits of subsoil assets.

National economies are either net creditor or net debtors, with respect to their financial position vis-à-vis the rest of the world. **National Wealth** adjusted for the net international investment position yields **National Net Worth**, and this measure is equivalent to net worth on the NBS.

Coverage

All traditional assets and liabilities are in scope. Major natural resources are measured, but for certain others (e.g., diamonds, fish stocks) estimates are yet to be developed. NBSA currently excludes certain intangible assets, such as research and development. Human capital is currently out of scope.

Valuation

Data are measured in nominal terms dollars, though real estimates of certain components of **National Wealth** will soon be available.

There are two sets of nominal NBSA data – a set at book values and a set at market values. Non-financial assets are at current values, in both sets. In the market value NBSA, tradable securities are estimated at market values.