



DANE
Para tomar decisiones



Statistical Regulation, Planning, Standardization
and Normalization Division
(DIRPEN)

NOMENCLATURES AND CLASSIFICATIONS SYSTEM

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NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

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CAROLINA GUTIÉRREZ HERNÁNDEZ
Dissemination, Marketing and Statistical Culture

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**Statistical Regulation, Planning, Standardization and Normalization
Division (DIRPEN)**

Nelcy Araque García

Technical coordination

Jaime Andrés Aguirre Gasca

Technical team

Martha Helena Ariza Buitrago, María del Pilar Gómez Arciniegas, Sara Flórez Hincapié

Proofreading in Spanish

Sonia Marcela Naranjo Morales

Translation from Spanish

Ana Lucía Martínez Arias

Proofreading in English

Ximena Díaz Gómez

Layout, Design and Illustration

Julián González Muñoz

**Printed in Colombia by the Dissemination, Marketing and Statistical
Culture Division**

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PRESENTATION

The National Administrative Department of Statistics, DANE as the coordinator entity of the National Statistical System, NSS, works to strengthen and consolidate the NSS within the framework of the “Statistical Planning and Harmonization” project. The following processes are considered: production of strategic statistics; the generation, adaptation, adoption and dissemination of standards; the consolidation and harmonization of statistical information and connection of instruments, stakeholders, initiatives and products. These actions intend to improve the quality and respond to the increasing demand for statistical information.

In this context DANE, aware of the need and obligation to provide better products for its users, developed a standard presentation guide for methodologies. The aim of this guide is to contribute to the visualization and understanding of the statistical processes, allowing further analysis, control, replicability and evaluation. The documents are presented in a standard and comprehensive manner, facilitating the understanding of the main technical characteristics involved in the processes and sub-processes of each research, making them available for both specialized users and the general public.

These series of guides promote the transparency and credibility of the technical expertise of DANE, for a better understanding and use of statistical information, created according to the principles of coherence, comparability, integrity and quality of the statistics.

INTRODUCTION

DANE, as coordinator of the National Statistical System - NSS aims to strengthen the quality of official statistics¹ and the credibility of the producer of statistical information, guaranteeing this through the implementation of international standards.

The nomenclatures and classifications project carried out by DANE, has a regulatory nature that aids the comparability of economic, social, environmental and geographic information at the national, multinational and international levels. This project presents a systematically organized structure, based on references of relevant intergovernmental bodies that provide global guidelines for their adoption, adaptation and dissemination.

Nomenclatures and Classifications have different fields of application. As a result, there are economic classifications such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities – ISIC and the Central Product Classification – CPC; there are also social classifications such as the International Standard Classification of Occupations – ISCO, as well as environmental and geographical classifications.

For each classification a scope has been defined through a conceptual basis that establishes principles, definitions and classification rules as well as the statistical units on which measurements are made.

This paper consists of 6 parts, which describe the conceptual basis, objectives, usefulness, processes related to nomenclatures and classifications as well as a description of the different types of existing classifications and correlation tables.

¹ An official statistic is one that has been included in the National Statistical Plan (PEN for its acronym in Spanish), produced by DANE and other governmental institutions, in the development of its mission, and generated through the application of methodologies, norms, standards and processes of statistical and scientific nature (censuses, surveys, statistical use of administrative records and derived statistics); an official statistic meets the quality requirements of the NSS, and is required for the design, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans, programs and for decision-making concerning the social, economic, environmental, demographic and technological development of the country.

1. NOMENCLATURES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Nomenclatures and classifications are technical tools used to organize and categorize features of the economic and social reality. Its purpose is to guarantee the comparability of the information over time and space, contributing as well to the process of harmonization², normalization³ and standardization⁴.

Within the organizational structure of DANE, there is an interdisciplinary group expert in the classifications topic assigned to the Regulation, Planning, Standardization and Normalization Division (DIRPEN for its acronym in Spanish). Depending on the needs of the NSS, the group promotes the creation, adoption, adaptation, custody, management, harmonization and regulation of Nomenclatures and Classifications in order to guarantee the comparability of statistical information with respect to other countries and, at the same time, standardize the statistical information of the country.

DANE bases the Nomenclatures and Classifications work on “Reference Classifications”, which are international classifications valid in different countries. These classifications can be economic, social, political, among others; they are the product of international agreements, approved by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations or, depending on the subject area, other international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

² Harmonization: It is considered as a process that seeks a common agreement on how data should be handled; in such a way that the information produced can be easily interpreted and comparable at a supranational level.

³ Normalization: Also known as standardization. It is the activity that aims to establish provisions to be commonly and repeatedly used for real or potential problems, or to obtain an optimum level of order in a given context that can be technological, political or economic. It pursues three objectives:

1. Simplification: reduces models, keeping only the necessary elements.
2. Unification: enables interchangeability at the international level.
3. Specification: helps avoiding identification mistakes by creating a clear and precise language.

⁴ Standardization: It is understood as the introduction of a common set of standards (definitions, classifications, methods, indicators, etc.) that may be applied in the generation of national statistical information.

2. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

The definition of Classification is much broader than the definition of Nomenclature; although in practice these terms are often used interchangeably, they have fundamental differences.

Nomenclatures involve systematic naming of categories. A nomenclature is essentially a convention to describe observations.

A classification, in addition to describing observations, structures and codes them.

The United Nations defines classifications as a set of exhaustive, homogenous and mutually exclusive observations which can be assigned to one or more variables to be measured in the collection and/or presentation of data.

Therefore, a classification can be defined as:

A classification is an ordered set of related categories that systematically groups phenomena (economic, cultural or social) according to pre-established criteria and depending on the use of the classification.

Classifications are important infrastructure elements, due to the fact that they are involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in the collection of information, presentation of tables and analysis of results, and are used in the production of official statistics.

Nomenclatures and Classifications organize information meaningfully and systematically in a standard format, and are related to a topic, idea or specific event. The preparation of a classification requires the creation of an organized and well-described set of hierarchical categories grouped by criteria, principles, rules, definitions and a general and detailed structure identified by numeric and/or alphanumeric codes.

Classifications may be constructed as an input for the creation and implementation of regulatory policies of various types, as well as for the definition and standardization of concepts: job placement, education, public health and social, economic, cultural or natural phenomena.

The main features of a classification are:

- **Classifications group and organize information in a systematic and consistent manner.**
- **The development of classifications involves the creation of mutually exclusive categories, i.e., that do not overlap or duplicate.**
- **Classifications should be consistent in order to classify objects with similar characteristics in the same place, based on pre-established construction criteria.**
- **They must be comprehensive to accommodate the entire universe to be classified.**
- **Classifications translate codes to concepts.**

Among the different types of classifications, there are the statistical ones. They represent a subset used to organize and analyze the statistics of a particular country or nation; this type of classification provides a set of categories that can be assigned to a specific variable.

In general, the national statistical authority of a country is in charge of the collection and dissemination of official statistics; such authority is represented by the official institute or agency assigned to the central government; this function is associated with the responsibility for the development and use of nomenclatures and classifications. The lead agency is also responsible for carrying out all the inherent processes: planning of training activities for users, adapting updates or revisions of classifications, developing and maintaining correlation tables. In addition to this, agencies that have been named “custodians” of classifications must have a deep understanding of all the topics of the classifications, as well as develop a comprehensive network of collaboration and communication including producers and users of statistics.

At a national level, the entity responsible for the custody and the process of adoption, adaptation, maintenance, dissemination, and training of nomenclatures and classifications is DANE, which works on classifications of a different nature focused on specific topics.

3. IMPORTANCE AND USEFULNESS OF NOMENCLATURES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Nomenclatures and classifications are important because they help to strengthen the National Statistical System (NSS) as they are a standard that enables statistical information to be generated under the same parameter. This improves its quality in terms of consistency and comparability, thus helping to provide accurate and timely information. Nomenclatures and classifications are applicable to various fields of statistical study for which they must be standardized according to international references, allowing to properly structure the statistical data that meet the users' information needs.

International classifications provide a framework to guide the development of new derived classifications, that address statistical and non-statistical requirements of all economic sectors and institutions, as it is the case of some agencies that use them for tax purposes (e.g., tax agencies, finance secretariats, etc.).

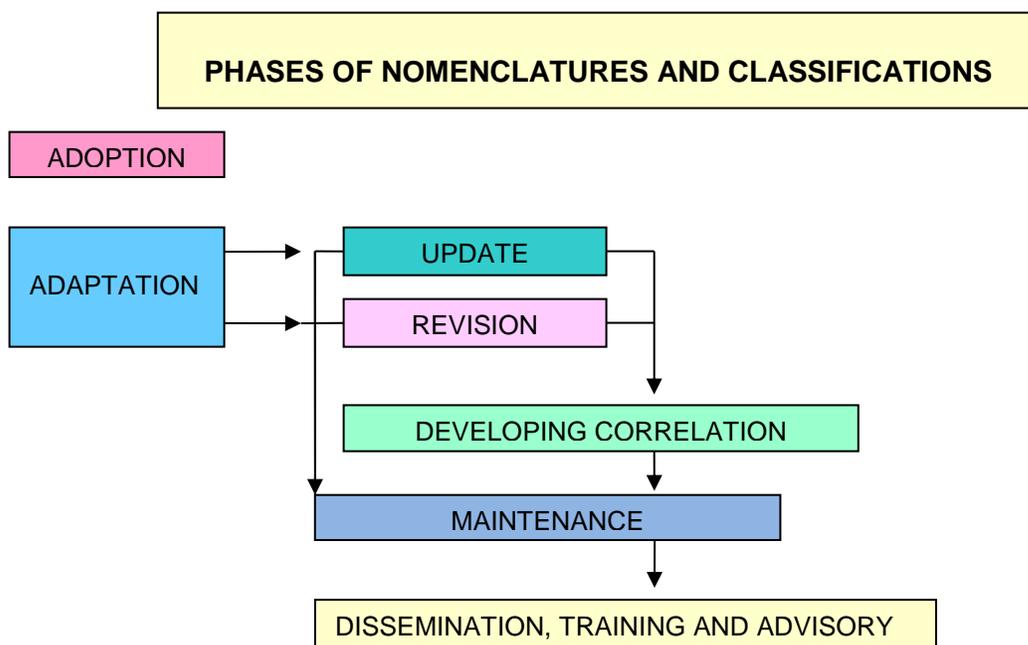
Given that political or customs unions, free trade zones and the global nature of foreign investment require statistics (especially socioeconomic statistics) to be expressed in the same language, Nomenclatures and Classifications play a key role in strengthening the statistical information produced and used in a country; their use by the statistical agencies promotes the coherence and efficiency of statistical systems at official levels.

4. PHASES

Phases refer to the processes carried out when building the nomenclatures and classifications system, which is the responsibility of the group ascribed to DIRPEN.

Except for the first one, the stages are interrelated creating a sequence. The Adoption phase is the only independent phase; because when a classification is adopted no other processes are carried out, for the international reference is received without making any modifications.

The interrelationship and sequence of the phases of nomenclatures and classifications are represented in the following figure:



Source: DANE

4.1 ADOPTION

The adoption of classifications is a process in which an international reference classification is received with no adaptations whatsoever to the specific context where it applies.

For the development of this process, specific information collection, processing and presentation requirements for which the use of the classification is necessary should be clearly specified. Subsequently, it is necessary to identify the existing classification(s), both at the national and international levels, in order to meet the information needs.

The classifications that were identified are then subject to evaluation so as to define which one is actually relevant. This evaluation is focused on aspects regarding the structure, conceptual base, operability and comparability among others.

4.2 ADAPTATION

This process consists of developing derived international classifications, i.e., adaptations. The adaptations follow the same criteria of the international benchmark in terms of its objectives and basic principles as well as in its relations with other nomenclatures or classifications related to other variables. They can be developed from two types of international benchmarks: an update such as ISIC Rev. 3.1 or a revision such as ISCO 2008.

The main difference between the international benchmark and an adaptation lies in the relative importance given to the various categories that are defined, as the Colombian adaptation should specifically reflect the economic and social structure of the country, giving more importance to the most relevant phenomena, specific to the national reality; for this reason, adaptations require rearranging categories of the international benchmark version (removal, subdivision, combination and inclusion of categories).

Adaptations are of a temporary nature (medium term), for two essential reasons: the first one has to do with changes in the productive structure of the country over time, and the second one, with the temporary nature of an international classification. As a result, they are subject to periodic reviews by DANE, either for changes in the economic behavior and development of the country or for changes in the international classifications, in order to comply with the principle of comparability.

4.2.1 Update

Classifications should be accurate, but also flexible to account for empirical changes in the phenomenon that they aim at classifying. In these cases, classifications must be reviewed and updated to reflect contemporary circumstances, but must also find a way to maintain comparability over time.

Updated classifications are those that have been adjusted to changes in structures and analytical needs, the development of new technologies and new divisions of labor among organizations, creating new types of economic activities, industries and occupations. Generally, the structure of the classification, the conceptual basis and boundaries between components remain unchanged to a large extent in the updates; it is intended to provide more detailed explanatory notes which allow a more accurate interpretation of the content and limits of a category.

4.2.2 Revision

A revision refers to a classification that replaces the previous classification. The conceptual and structural basis is usually reconsidered, as well as the similarity in criteria and scope. A revised classification must be different from an updated classification.

In the process of adapting an international revision, the structure of the classification may be subject to additions (breakdowns into more detailed categories) if the characteristics of the events recorded in it are insufficient to express the particularities of their behavior in the country.

4.3 DEVELOPING CORRESPONDENCE TABLES

An important task, responsibility of the Nomenclatures and Classifications team, is to develop correspondence tables between classifications of the same or a different nature.

Correlation or correspondence tables express the relationship between different classifications for purposes of homologation. This relationship allows showing the correspondence between the equivalent categories of classifications, in structure and content.

Correlation tables allow managing statistical series, facilitating the adoption and use of revised statistical classifications and the application of new classifications.

The most functional manner for representing a correlation is through a table. This enables identifying which of the classifications is taken as base and the direction of the relationships. The level of the correlation (for one, two, three or four digits, etc.) depends on the degree of detail required in the investigation, which may be limited by the availability of information.

4.4 MAINTENANCE

Maintenance refers to the process by which adjustments are made to adapted and/or updated versions of classifications, which do not correspond to international benchmarks, but to the use of the classification. These adjustments are mainly performed in the explanatory notes, through the inclusion, exclusion or reclassification of specific topics, as well as any inaccuracies in the terminology used. The structure of the classification is not affected in the maintenance.

4.5 DISSEMINATION, TRAINING AND ADVISORY

The main dissemination tool for nomenclatures, classifications and correlation tables, is magnetic media (e-mails, CDs, DANE's website, etc.). The classifications are disclosed to its users through these media.

In addition, there are publications in print media, especially used by officials of the Nomenclatures and Classifications Team and some internal or external users of the Classifications.

When the adaptation process of the Classifications has been completed, it is necessary to raise awareness among current and potential users on the fundamental aspects of the product.

In addition, awareness-raising and training processes are carried out according to the needs of users, given that the true value of the classifications is in its applicability in the production of information. These training processes are conducted through lectures, seminars, workshops and case studies, designing a work plan in line with the requested approach.

5. NOMENCLATURES AND CLASSIFICATIONS ADOPTED AND/OR ADAPTED BY DANE AND FOREIGN TRADE CORRELATION TABLES

The Nomenclatures and Classifications adopted and/or adapted by DANE are of different types, namely:

- Economic Classifications
- Social Classifications
- Geographical Classifications
- Environmental Classifications

The Nomenclatures and Classifications group also produces the Foreign Trade Correlation Tables, which are of vital importance for the comparability and harmonization of classifications that are subject to adaptation.

Each of the classifications adopted and adapted by DANE are described below, according to their type:

5.1 ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

5.1.1 International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)

It is a classification of economic activities in production processes, which classifies statistical units (local unit, establishments, companies, etc.) based on their main economic activity. The United Nations has published four revisions and one update of the ISIC. DANE, according to the characteristics of the Colombian economy, has made the respective adjustments. ISIC is the reference tool that provides a unique structure within which all economic activities are presented, showing the characteristics of the countries' different productive sectors. This enables comparability at all levels and guarantees the harmonization of information in order to consolidate a National Statistical System.⁵

In January 2012, DANE published the version 4 of ISIC following international recommendations; great importance has been given to some sectors that have had major

⁵ www.dane.gov.co

changes in recent years such as the Information Technology Sector (IT) and the Services Sector that was reorganized.

5.1.2 Central Product Classification (CPC)

It is a complete classification of products, which includes goods and services. The purpose of the CPC is to serve as an international standard in the collection and tabulation of various types of statistics that require detailed information on goods, services and assets; this includes manufacturing statistics, intermediate consumption, final consumption and capital formation statistics, domestic and foreign trade statistics, presentation of input-output tables or balance of payments, market and production chains analysis. It provides a national and international comparability framework and promotes harmonization between statistics from different sectors of the economy. DANE is currently adapting the CPC version 2.

5.1.3 Standard International Trade Classification (SITC)

It was designed to supply information on the compilation of statistics on international trade rather than as a basis for the country tariffs.

It is used internationally for the production of foreign trade statistics. The main purpose of this classification is to collect statistics on international trade of all goods subject to foreign trade, and to promote international comparability of foreign trade statistics.

5.2 SOCIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

5.2.1 International Standard Classification of Occupations adapted for Colombia (ISCO A.C.)

It is a system for organizing data and information on occupations that provides a framework for the analysis, aggregation and the description of the contents of labor, constituting an element of harmonization and statistical infrastructure; it can be considered as an indicative technical tool that describes the occupational structure of the country based on a selection of those jobs with similar tasks and characteristics presenting the most representative occupations.

ISCO-88 A.C. defines Occupation as “homogeneous categories of tasks that make up a set of jobs which have great similarity, commonly performed by a person in the past, present or future, according to the skills acquired by formal education or experience and

for which he/she receives an income in cash or in kind”. The adaptation for Colombia was structured within the framework of the ILO’s ISCO-88, where the classification criteria used are employment (type of work) and skill (qualification).

5.2.2 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

The ISCED classification is part of the international family of Economic and Social Classifications of the United Nations; it represents a reference classification that enables to organize educational programs and their respective certifications for their education levels and fields. Its development is the result of an international agreement formally adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO Member States.

ISCED has been designed as a framework that facilitates the classification of educational activities, as they are defined in the programs and certifications granted by these, in internationally agreed categories. Consequently, the basic definitions and concepts of ISCED were formulated so that they are universally valid and applicable to the full spectrum of educational systems regardless of the situation of a particular system.

5.2.3 National Occupational Classification (NOC)

It systematically organizes the existing occupations in the Colombian labor market.

Occupations are defined as a set of labor roles required in order to produce the same type of goods and services required by the production system, developing specific procedures, using particular technologies and applying common knowledge to a set of procedures.

5.2.4 Time Use

5.2.4.1 Classification of time-use Activities for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL for its acronym in Spanish)

The CAUTAL classification is an analytical framework on the behavior of persons regarding the activities they carry out and the amount of time spent in their completion. Its reference framework is the System of National Accounts 2008 that allows identifying, from the production boundary of the SNA, three major groups: productive activities within the production boundary of the SNA, carried out with paid work; productive activities outside of the SNA boundary but within the general boundary, carried out with unpaid work, including productive activities within own or others household; and non-productive or personal activities whose results only benefit the person that carries them out. These three sets describe the analytical categories used to organize activities that people carry out on a daily basis and are relevant for understanding the use of time.

5.2.4.2 International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS)

The project for an International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics has been conceived as a uniform classification of all the activities that the general population may spend time in over a 24-hour period. Its main purpose is to define a set of activities categories that can be used to produce meaningful statistics on time use. These statistics should be relevant both in relation to the wide range of objectives of national studies on the use of time as well as for comparative studies across countries and periods of time.

5.3 GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

5.3.1 Codification of the Political-Administrative Division (DIVIPOLA for its acronym in Spanish)

It is one of the tools for development plans, public administration, research and exchange of strategic statistical information generated by different entities at the national, regional or local level. It allows coding the territorial entities that identify points, lines or polygons representing, according to scale and purpose, the departments and the districts and municipalities within. It also identifies the municipal townships and population centers such as *corregimientos*⁶, hamlets and police inspections. It also helps to locate objects or phenomena, information sources, geo-statistical areas for statistical purposes, agricultural areas and various attributes data that characterize the elements of the universe of research.

DANE, according to the territorial dynamics of the country, must periodically update this codification, according to information provided by the municipal and departmental administrations. It represents the primary source on the administrative and political organization of the country.

⁶ According to definitions used for statistical purposes in DANE, *Corregimiento* refers to the division of a rural area of a municipality which includes a population core. It is considered in the Land Use Plan-POT (For its acronym in Spanish). This term also considers the population center that corresponds exclusively to the population cores with a concentration of at least 20 houses that are contiguous, terraced or adjacent to each other.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CLASSIFICATIONS

5.4.1 Classification of Environmental Protection Activities and Expenditure (CEPA 2000)

CEPA 2000 is a general, multipurpose and functional classification on environmental protection. It is used to categorize activities, but also products, expenditures and other operations. Often, the unit of classification is determined by the sources of statistical databases and by formats used in the presentation of results.

CEPA has been designed to classify operations and activities whose primary purpose is the protection of the environment. Management of natural resources (e.g. water supply) and the prevention of natural disasters (landslides, floods, etc.) are not included in CEPA. Such topics are covered in broader frameworks (e.g. SERIEE, SEEA 2000 or the OECD/Eurostat Environmental Goods and Services Industry Manual).

5.4.2 Statistical Classification of Waste Rev. 4

The EU Parliament and the European Council, through Council Regulation 849/2010/EC of 27 September 2010 amends regulation 2150/2002/EC of 25 November 2002, concerning statistics on waste⁷, which establishes a framework for the development of periodic community statistics on the generation, recovery and disposal of waste, excluding radioactive waste, from businesses and households and waste recycled in the same place where they were generated.

The objective is to monitor the implementation of waste policy, defining terms of waste and of waste management in order to guarantee comparability of the statistics supplied by the Member States.

5.4.3 Land Use Classifications

5.4.3.1 United Nations Land Use Classification

The Land Use Classification designed by the United Nations allows greater comparability. It presents mutually exclusive categories and a higher level of disaggregation of the Land topic (for different uses of land as well as for unused land) and a lower level of disaggregation for inland waters, coastal waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

⁷ European Parliament and Council of the European Union. Regulation 2150/2002/EC. 2002. P. 1.

5.4.3.2 Eurostat's Classification for Land Use Statistics

Eurostat's Classification for Land Use has mutually exclusive categories that include groups of man-made areas, utilized agricultural areas, forests, bush or herbaceous areas, surfaces with little or no vegetation and wet surfaces and surfaces under water, with the highest level of disaggregation of all Classifications for Land Use.

5.5 FOREIGN TRADE CORRELATION TABLES

Correlation tables allow comparability at the international, multinational and national levels, of different classifications that are subject to adaptation. Correlation tables are tools that link classifications and are important for the development and harmonization of international classifications.

The relationship between CPC - ISIC A.C. - SITC - SA is necessary to establish correlations between foreign trade analysis and domestic production, and in particular to determine at a detailed product level, how much their production and internal use depends on foreign trade (exports and imports) in a particular country.

Existing changes in trade between countries are reflected in the external tariff, which is a classification used as a basis to develop correlatives, according to the needs, parameters and characteristics of some investigations required for the measurement of foreign trade statistics in order to keep the continuity of statistical data series.

Economic classifications of goods and services are the basic components of foreign trade correlation tables. Economic activity classifications include: the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities Revision 2 DANE (DANE ISIC Rev.2), the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities Revision 3 adapted for Colombia (ISIC Rev.3 A.C.), the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities Revision 3.1 adapted for Colombia (ISIC Rev.3.1 A.C.) and the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities Revision 4 adapted for Colombia (ISIC Rev.4 A.C.).

Goods and services classifications include: Central Product Classification Version 1.0 adapted for Colombia Sections 0-4 Transportable Goods (CPC Ver.1.0 A.C.); National Accounts Nomenclature: Base 1994, Base 2000, Modified Base 2000 and New Base 2005. Foreign trade classifications: Classification by Economic Use or Destination (CUODE by its acronym in Spanish), Standard International Trade Classification Revision 3 (SITC Rev.3), Standard International Trade Classification Revision 2 (SITC Rev.2), Classification by Broad Economic Categories Revision 3 (BEC Rev.3).

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⁸ The translation of document titles is for reference purposes only.

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