



International Trade Statistics

Newsletter

SPECIAL FEATURE:

ENDORSEMENT OF THE REVISED IMTS COMPILERS MANUAL - DRAFT VERSION NOW AVAILABLE

International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual, Revision 1 (IMTS 2010-CM) was officially endorsed for use by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 43rd session from 28 February to 2 March 2012. It was prepared during less than two years after adoption of the new recommendations for merchandise trade statistic (IMTS 2010). It is available in its draft version at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>.

The revision of the IMTS Compilers Manual is a cornerstone of UNSD's action plan for the implementation of IMTS 2010. The Manual contains further and more detailed explanation of certain recommendations and provides practical guidance for compilers by describing good or best practices applicable under different circumstances, in particular in respect to the compilation of the new

data fields for merchandise trade statistics.

The overall structure of the new IMTS Compilers Manual is largely similar to the structure of the original Compilers Manual of 2004 with updates needed (i) to incorporate guidance on the implementation of new recommendations and encouragements contained in IMTS 2010, and (ii) to reflect new or updated country practices. The IMTS Compilers Manual follows the logic of the data compilation process starting with the legal framework and data sources (Part I). Then, it covers the overall compilation process (Part II) followed by compilation issues regarding specific data items (Part III) and specific categories of goods (Part IV). Dissemination issues are covered in the final parts Metadata and dissemination (Part V) and External trade indices and seasonally adjusted data (Part VI).

LAUNCH OF UN MONTHLY COMTRADE

UN Monthly Comtrade (beta version), a new application for detailed monthly merchandise trade data was released by the United Nations Statistics Division to the public for further testing during the 43rd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which took place from 28 February to 2 March 2012. It provides detailed monthly merchandise trade data by commodity (6-digit of HS) and partner country. For access please go to <http://comtrade.un.org/monthly>.

The impact of the financial crises on global trade highlighted the need for short term analysis of specific trade flows. In this respect, many countries already release detailed monthly trade data, but these data are not readily available at the global level and in the same

standardized way as the annual data. To meet this user demand and to enhance the policy relevance and analytical value of the internationally available trade data, UNSD initiated the collection, storage and dissemination of detailed (6-digit level of HS) monthly data as part of its regular work programme and requested countries in April 2010 to (i) make available detailed trade data for each of the first three months of 2010 for testing purposes and (ii) supply such detailed trade data on a regular basis beginning with data for January 2011.

Many countries responded positively to this initiative and UNSD is very grateful to all countries that initially provided their data and now make it available to

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LAUNCH OF UN MONTHLY COMTRADE

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UNSD on a regular basis. Based on the data received, UNSD established a pilot processing and dissemination system and now processes a selected list of countries on a regular basis. For monthly data UNSD will initially cover only major economies and aims at achieving some regional representation, based on the availability of monthly

data in countries (or areas). Dissemination of the monthly trade data with the same quality and functionality as in the existing UN Comtrade system of annual data is expected to become available to the general public through the upgraded UN Comtrade in the second half of 2014. Please see the flier for UN Monthly Comtrade on page 6.

To access the UN Monthly Comtrade database, please visit

[http://
comtrade.un.org/
monthly](http://comtrade.un.org/monthly)

 **UN comtrade**
<http://comtrade.un.org>

The analytical trade tables are published in the



**UN Monthly
Bulletin of Statistics (MBS)**

They are also available online at [http://
unstats.un.org/unsd/
trade/imts/
analyticaltradetables.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/analyticaltradetables.htm)

DATABASES AND PUBLICATIONS:

ANALYTICAL TRADE TABLES PUBLISHED IN THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF STATISTICS

The following analytical tables on international merchandise trade statistics have been updated since the last issue of this newsletter. They are published in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (MBS) and are also available online at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/analyticaltradetables.htm>.

Table	Description	Latest data	Published
T 18	Fuel imports, developed economies: unit values, volume indices and value	1st quarter, 2012	June 2012
T 19	Indicators on fuel imports, developed economies	1st quarter, 2012	June 2012
T 35	Total imports and exports by regions and countries or areas	March 2012	June 2012
T 36	Total imports and exports: value, volume and unit value/price	March 2012	June 2012
T 37	Trade indices for countries in U.S. dollars	4th quarter 2011	April 2011
T 38	External trade conversion factors by countries	1st quarter, 2012	June 2012
T 39	Trade indices for regions in U.S. dollars	4th quarter 2011	May 2012
T 40	Manufactured goods exports: unit values, volume indices and value	1st quarter, 2012	June 2012

2011 INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS YEARBOOK (ITSY), VOL. I - TRADE BY COUNTRY – AVAILABLE ONLINE

2011 ITSY, Volume I – Trade by Country presents detailed data for a total of 174 countries (or areas) with the 2011 data on imports and exports by commodity and trading partner provided for 92 countries (areas), which are representing approximately 79% of world trade of 2011. All tables of Volume I were made available electronically at <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/> on 14 June 2012, shortly after the completion of the manuscript.

The 2011 ITSY is being issued in two volumes which are prepared at different points in time during 2012. Volume I - Trade by Country is compiled early in 2012

(in May 2012) to allow for an advanced release of an overview of international merchandise trade in 2011 and for an early publication of the available 2011 country (area) data. Volume II – Trade by Commodity contains the detailed tables showing international trade in main commodity groups and is finalized approximately six months after the completion of Volume I as the preparation of those tables requires additional country data which, normally, become available later in the year. Volume II contains also updated versions of the two world trade tables published in Volume I.

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2011 INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS YEARBOOK (ITSY), VOL. I - TRADE BY COUNTRY – AVAILABLE ONLINE (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 2)

All parts and tables of the Yearbook are available online:

[http://
comtrade.un.org/pb/](http://comtrade.un.org/pb/)

The detailed information about the trade of particular countries by commodity and partner (values and quantities) contained in the tables and graphs for individual countries in Volume I and commodities in Volume II are taken from the publicly available database UN Comtrade (<http://comtrade.un.org/db/default.aspx>). Users are advised to visit UN Comtrade for any

additional and more current information as it is continuously updated.

The printed publication is expected to be made available by December 2012 the latest, its electronic (.pdf) version much earlier. Please contact the United Nations Sales and Marketing Section at E-mail: publications@un.org (Internet: <http://unp.un.org>).

COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES AND AGENCIES:

COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES AND AGENCIES – COMPILERS GUIDE FOR THE MANUAL ON STATISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES 2010 (CG MSITS 2010)

In March 2011, the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (TFSITS) requested UNSD to take the lead in developing a compilers guide for the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010 (CG MSITS)*. The main aim of the CG MSITS 2010 is to provide compilers of statistics of international trade in services practical advice on implementing the framework set forth in MSITS, including good country practices and pitfalls to avoid. The CG MSITS 2010 is expected to be finalized in 2013.

In November 2011, the TFSITS reviewed a draft annotated outline of the CG MSITS 2010. The UN Expert Group was established in early 2012 to assist in the drafting of the guide. The expert group consists of all Task Force members and national experts from developed and developing countries. Comments on the draft annotated outline were received during the first virtual meeting of the UN Expert Group in March 2012 and were then discussed more in-depth at the Special Session of the Task Force from 28 to 30 March 2012. There was an agreement that the CG MSITS 2010 would broadly consist of five main

parts: I) General Frameworks, including legal and institutional; II) Data Collection, including model questionnaires and technical issues; III) Data Compilation; IV) Data Dissemination; and V) Cross-Cutting Issues, including quality management and metadata. In July 2012, UNSD conducted a worldwide consultation, in which countries were requested to comment on the scope, structure, and content of the updated annotated outline.

Comments from the worldwide consultation serve to support the process of drafting chapters, the first set of which will be discussed in the second virtual meeting of the UN Expert Group and at the meeting of the Task Force in October 2012. A third virtual meeting on subsequent draft chapters will be held in early 2013. A full draft compilers guide will then be reviewed at a face-to-face meeting of the Expert Group, which is tentatively scheduled to take place in June 2013 in Geneva.

Further information about the drafting process and the work of the UN Expert Group is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/msits/CGmsits2010.htm>.

Information on International Trade in Services is available at

[http://unstats.un.org/
unsd/tradeserv/
default.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/default.htm)

REPORT FROM THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION

The UN Statistical Commission in its 43rd session from 28 February - 2 March 2012 took note of the Report of the Secretary General on international merchandise trade statistics which introduced the revised *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual, Revision 1* (IMTS 2010-CM) and hereby officially endorsed its use (see Statistical Commission, Report on the forty-third session (28 February-2 March 2012), Economic and Social Council, Official Records 2012, Supplement No. 4 (E/CN.3/2012/34)).

Further, during a side event UNSD's new application for the dissemination of de-

tailed monthly merchandise trade statistics (beta version) was launched: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2012/seminars/New_application_trade/default.html.

At a second side event titled "What is the value-added of official statistics in the measurement of trade" the role and challenges of trade statistics in measuring globalization were discussed: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2012/seminars/Trade_value_added/default.html.

UNSD-SACU WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS (IMTS 2010) IN THE MEMBER STATES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION (SACU), JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 12 - 15 JUNE, 2012

The purpose of this workshop on international merchandise trade statistics was to review the practices in the compilation of merchandise trade statistics and the implementation of the new and updated recommendations on merchandise trade statistics as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010) in the Member States of the Southern African Customs

Union (SACU) (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland), hereby also providing training and guidance to participants on how to improve their IMTS.

This workshop was the first activity of the SACU Action Plan for improving the collection, compilation and dissemination of trade data of SACU Member States. The workshop was conducted by UNSD in cooperation with the SACU Secretariat.

REGIONAL SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS FOR ARAB COUNTRIES, AMMAN, JORDAN, 12-14 JUNE 2012

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA) with the support of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), organized a Regional Seminar on International Trade Statistics to enhance the capacity of national statistical offices of Western Asian and North African countries to produce reliable and high quality trade statistics. The seminar gave an overview of the latest international recommendations

for trade statistics both for international merchandise trade statistics and for statistics of international trade in services. In addition, it gave special focus on the relation between recent discussions on global production and trade in value-added, and the future direction of trade statistics.

Further information about the seminar is available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/workshops/Amman/2012/default.htm>.

More information on IMTS international cooperation and assistance activities is available online:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/imts/intl_cooperation.htm

YOU HAVE ASKED US – OVERVIEW OF THE QUESTIONS COVERED SINCE 2005 – PART 2

All previous newsletters are available online at:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/newsletter.htm>

Since its first edition in January 2005, the newsletter on International Trade Statistics regularly contained answers to questions sent in by users of the trade statistics provided by the United Nations Statistics Division via its UN Comtrade database and related outputs and publications. A total of 39 questions have been replied to since 2005. The questions covered can be broken down into questions regarding general concepts for trade statistics, questions on partner country, questions on classification, questions on data and metadata and questions regarding

the functionality of UN Comtrade, although often those aspects cannot be strictly separated. The below table shows the questions that have been asked over time concerning data and metadata and the functionality of UN Comtrade and indicates in which issue of the newsletter they have been covered. One question concerned the usage of data. The previous edition of this newsletter provided the list of questions asked regarding general concepts for trade statistics, partner country and classification.

YOU HAVE ASKED US	Newsletter	
	Issue #	Date
Data and metadata		
Do you have total world exports/imports of specific items?	2	Apr-05
How can I find the total merchandise trade in a volumetric unit like m3?	5	Jun-06
Why are there differences between data reported by individual countries and EU25 reported data in Comtrade?	6	Sep-06
How is the annual exchange rate calculated to convert national currency to US dollars in UN Comtrade?	10	Sep-07
Why are quantity units not given at higher levels?	10	Sep-07
Have UN Comtrade data already been adjusted for inflation over the years?	11	Dec-07
How do I get world aggregate?	14	Sep-08
The aggregation of detailed level data does not always match higher level data. Why is it so?	18	Sep-09
Which exchange rate do you use to convert trade data reported in national currency into US Dollars?	19	Dec-09
Why China's reimports are so high? Reimports made up 8% of China's total imports in 2008. For some other countries with large re-import values, such as France, UK, Canada, Australia, and Thailand, reimports made up only 0.5-1.2% of total imports.	21	Jun-10
Where can I find metadata for individual countries?	25	Jun-11
UN Comtrade functionality/Technical questions		
How do I get world exports to and from various groups of countries, i.e. how do I aggregate partners and reporters?	5	Jun-06
When downloading data (Express selection, for example), is there a special code to select all countries? If I understand correctly, at the Reporter level there is none, but at the Partner level there is 0 and 'all'.	8	Mar-07
How can I obtain aggregate data for a specific group of countries, America for example?	17	Jun-09
How can I obtain data for a group of countries (not aggregated)?	17	Jun-09
How do I get the snapshot which provides charts that show top importing and exporting countries?	19	Dec-09
When accessing the UN Comtrade website using various browsers, certain graphical features do not seem to function properly. What could be the problem?	22	Sep-10
Usage of data		
I wish to use UN Comtrade information in a book on economics to be published in the US. Do I need permission and if so who do I contact?	16	Mar-09

(Launch of UN Monthly Comtrade, continued from page 2)

UN Monthly Comtrade (beta version) follows, compared with the annual data available on UN Comtrade (<http://comtrade.un.org>), highly simplified processing procedures. The processing of monthly data entails data standardization in respect to trade flow and partner information, conversion to U.S. dollars, and basic validation. Detailed metadata of all reporter countries (or areas) regarding trade system, valuation, and partner country attribution is made available. For further information please see the application under data release info (<http://comtrade.un.org/monthly>).

Table Title: Total Exports and Imports (growth rate in percent) as of 15 February 2012

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Area	Area	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sep 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012
World	Exports	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
World	Imports	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

New Application for Detailed Monthly Trade Statistics

COVERAGE, TIMELINESS AND DATA RELEASE

Currently UN Monthly Comtrade contains data of 50 reporting countries (or areas), starting with data for January 2010. The goal is to initially cover only major economies and to achieve some regional representation, based on the availability of monthly data in countries (or areas). Some countries provide their preliminary detailed merchandise trade data in the second month after the end of the reporting month (t+2 months) or even earlier. However, the majority of countries make their data available in the third month after the end of the reporting month (t+3 months). UNSD/DESA plans to release newly received data at the end of each month.

Table Title: Total Exports and Imports (growth rate in percent) as of 15 February 2012

All values are given as year growth rates in percent unless otherwise stated.

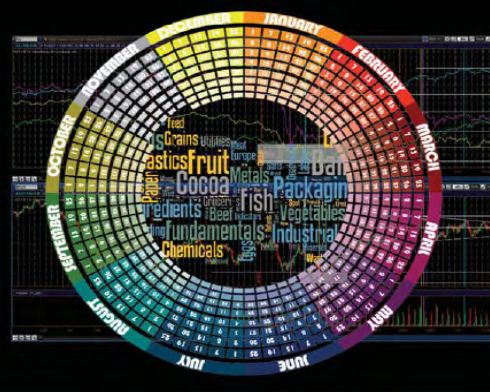
Area	Area	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sep 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012
EU countries	Exports	21.4	20.4	20.0	21.0	21.1	21.1	21.1	21.1	21.1	21.1	21.1	21.1
EU countries	Imports	22.1	21.1	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4	21.4
Coverage agreement	Exports	21.7	21.2	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9
China	Exports	24.9	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
China	Imports	27.7	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6
India	Exports	21.1	20.4	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2
Japan	Exports	12.9	12.2	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1
Japan	Imports	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1
United States	Exports	12.9	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1
United States	Imports	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1	12.1

DISCLAIMER

The data made available on UN Monthly Comtrade (beta version) have been provided by countries (or areas) or downloaded from their official websites. The data are provided as is, except for the required standardization of trade flow and partner information, as well as conversion to U.S. dollars. Hence, responsibility for the data themselves rests with the data source/provider and users are advised to visit the website of the data providers for further information and metadata.

UN Monthly Comtrade (beta version) is the first release of a monthly international merchandise trade statistics processing and dissemination system, developed by UNSD/DESA. As such, UNSD/DESA welcomes reports from users of any issues they may find, as well as any suggestions regarding additional features that should be available in the final version (please send your feedback to comtrade@un.org). However, UNSD/DESA cannot provide any guarantees for the ongoing or reliable operation of the current beta version. While some improvements will be implemented on an ongoing basis, a full version of a data processing and dissemination system for monthly merchandise trade data will only be implemented as part of the upgrade of the entire UN Comtrade system, which is scheduled to be completed by 2013/2014.

Use of UN Monthly Comtrade implies the recognition and acceptance of the limitations specified in the disclaimer and agreement with the UN Comtrade License Agreement.



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<http://comtrade.un.org/monthly>



United Nations Statistics Division
 Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UPCOMING EVENTS:

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS: IMPLEMENTATION OF IMTS 2010 AND A NEW VISION FOR TRADE STATISTICS, 1 – 5 OCTOBER 2012, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

This workshop is organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) of Costa Rica which is hosting this event. The focus of the workshop will be on the updated and new recommendations for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Con-*

cepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010) and their implementation within the countries of Latin America. Particular attention will be given to the elements of the recommendations that provide additional information and that aim at the further development of the merchandise trade statistics in countries (or areas). For further information please go to http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/workshops_imts.htm.

To learn more about upcoming and past IMTS workshops, please visit:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/workshops_imts.htm

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Trade Statistics Newsletter is a quarterly publication prepared by the International Merchandise Trade Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division – Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This Newsletter is not an official document of the United Nations nor does it express the official position of the United Nations. Editorial team: C. Sean Lovell and Matthias Reister.

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