

Workshop for Developing Countries on the Revision of
the International Recommendations for International
Merchandise Trade Statistics
Bangkok, 9-12 September, 2008

Data sources

(Use of non-customs sources; Data compilation strategies and
promotion of an integrated approach to economics statistics)



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Why use non-customs sources?

No Border Crossing

- Change of ownership (Vessels, Aircrafts)
- Deep Sea Fishing
- Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage

No/incomplete *Customs Coverage*

- Free Zones
- Informal Cross Border Trade
- Goods for military use
- Electricity, Oil, Gas, Water
- Parcel and letter post
- Trade between members of Customs Union
- Other important commodities (example uranium, rice, oil, etc)

Use of non-customs data source and data compilation strategies

1. Current recommendation(s)

In a growing number of cases, full coverage of international merchandise trade statistics cannot be achieved by use of customs records only, either because the relevant transactions are no longer subject to customs controls or customs surveillance, or because the record keeping may not be adequate from the statistical point of view. It is recommended that in such cases, other sources be used.

For instance, the member States of the European Union have developed, for the purposes of intra-Union merchandise trade statistics, a data collection system relying on monthly reporting by enterprises.

Refer to IMTS, Rev.2, para. 12.

2. Result from the 2006 NCDP Questionnaire

Question 2.01 :	Yes	No	N/A
Are customs declarations the main source of data?	88.4	9.1	2.5
Question 2.02 – 2.07: Do you use the following as additional sources of data:	Yes	No	N/A
Administrative records associated with taxation	29.7	62	8.3
Enterprise surveys	26.4	63.6	10
Aircraft and ship registers	23.1	68.5	8.4

Even though customs declarations are still the main source of data, the importance of non-customs data sources is increasing due to:

- absence in customs documentation of some statistically important information
- the facilitation of customs formalities, elimination of tariff measures and elimination of customs documents altogether among members of customs unions

3. Result from world wide consultations

Question 12(a): Do you agree to include a new recommendation on the use of non-customs sources and data compilation strategies in the context of a diminishing role of customs declarations, the promotion of an integrated approach to economic statistics and the needs for analysis of globalization?	Yes	No	No Op.	N/A
Total of 110 replies	75	13	11	2
Developed (34)	79	15	6	0
Developing and transitional (76)	72	12	13	3
Question 12(b): Do you agree to address explicitly the issue of valuation and time of recording in the case of non-customs records?	Yes	No	No Op.	N/A
Total of 110 replies	76	8	15	1
Developed (34)	71	12	18	0
Developing and transitional (76)	79	7	13	1

4. UNSD observation of wwc result

There is very strong support for both parts of this proposal (75% and 76% vs. no-answers 13% and 8%, respectively). The comments of countries center on the relationship and differences between customs and other data sources with some countries raising issues of data quality and collection of non-customs sources.

There is not much difference on this question between developing/transitional and developed countries.

5. Selected comments (from total of 48 comments)

- “Enterprise surveys are a reliable source of data but it is very expensive (both for NSO and enterprises). Such surveys should be recommended only in limited cases.”
- “This is very relevant for the present time if countries should adopt the general trade system of compilation as recommended.”
- Informal Cross Border Trade has gained prominence in most Africa countries. It's contribution to overall official merchandise trade recorded by customs lie in the region of 20-50%.

Possible issues for discussion

Feasibility of using non-customs sources

- Are non-customs sources available (aggregated or detailed data) to IMTS data compilers? It may need to pursue further arrangements with other parties.
- How to assess quality of available non-customs sources?
- How difficult to merge or integrate customs and other non-customs data?
- Does IMTS compilers have resources for enterprise surveys?

Adjustment

- If using non-customs sources are not feasible, do you adjust trade figures in order to have complete coverage?
- If yes, what method of adjustment do you use?

Thank you for your attention