



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Meeting on compilation issues of IMTS 2010
Mexico City, 6 – 9 December 2011**

Item 3 Objectives and organization of the meeting

(Note by UNSD)

1. The purpose of this meeting is to assist the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in the finalization of the provisional draft of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual in light of previous discussions and country feedback. The report of this meeting will be submitted to a subsequent virtual meeting of the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS) scheduled for mid of December. The EG-IMTS will be requested to adopt the report and to endorse the draft revised compilation guidance for IMTS subject to amendments and clarifications as indicated in the report. Further, this meeting is requested to advice UNSD on the further implementation programme of the revised recommendations.

2. The draft has been developed in several stages in which the feedback of countries and the EG-IMTS was taking into account. At its first virtual meeting on the update of the IMTS Compilers Manual from 12 January to 28 February 2011 the EG-IMTS agreed on the overall structure and contents of the individual chapters as reflected in the annotated draft outline (see Annex for the chapter outline). A worldwide consultation on the updated draft annotated outline resulting from this first virtual meeting took place between March and May 2011. The second virtual meeting discussed the first set of draft chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 19 and 22 and the third meeting the second set of draft chapters 4, 11, 12, 14, 17, 20, 21, 27 and 28.¹ These chapters were drafted by UNSD and were prepared with assistance and input of many members of the EG-IMTS. The updated drafts of the first and second set as well as initial drafts of the remaining nine chapters (chapters 6, 7, 10, 15, 18, 23, 24, 25 and 26) have been combined into one single draft text. This draft text has been provided to participants two weeks before this meeting.

3. Leading up to and during the virtual meetings, it was pointed out to the experts that there is an urgent need to include more country practices, preferably from different regions of the world and participants were requested to provide examples and materials concerning their national practices to be shared in this Compilers Manual. The experts were also asked for their permission and agreement to share their practices and to specifically review the information describing practices in their country / organization which are already included in the initial draft chapters and to point out any concerns or how to further improve the description of the examples. Some experts provided

¹ The reports of the virtual meetings and the worldwide consultation are available on the UNSD website at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm>. These reports are part of the documentation of this meeting.

information on the practices in their countries as input to specific chapters or agreed to the use of existing information. Hence, the draft text already contains a number of country case studies but it needs to be stressed that for many chapters additional examples of countries are still required.

4. In light of the overall process it is not expected that the outline and contents of the draft IMTS Compilers Manual will be radically changed (please see also the note of UNSD on agenda item 10 and 18) unless there is a very good justification (e.g., clear logical inconsistency, factually wrong statements or some advice which, in view of the majority of the EG members, is not a good practice). However, it is expected that individual chapters will be significantly improved as result of this meeting. This meeting is intended to focus on making improvements to existing chapters, providing additional information and filling gaps and to overall give guidance on how to improve the text and the Manual. The meetings also seeks concrete proposals for country examples at indicated places in the draft manual and would like experts to commit to provide the exact wording of those examples, or provide existing texts which UNSD could summarize.

5. The subsequent virtual meeting of the EG-IMTS in December 2011 is expected to discuss and approve the report of the meeting and, based on this report, endorse the updated IMTS Compilers Manual, subjects to the comments and reservations indicated in the report. This endorsement will be understood as an overall agreement with the process and content of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual, and as an agreement that UNSD can finalize the Compilers Manual and its individual elements and paragraphs.

6. It should be pointed out that the Compilers Manual will contain further and more detailed explanation of certain recommendations in addition to providing practical guidance for compilers. The manual will encourage compilers to follow the provided good practices and may recommend specific solutions. To refer to such encouragements and recommendations we propose wording such as “it is good practice”, “countries are advised to” or “countries could”. The Compilers Manual will not introduce any new recommendations or encouragements in comparison to IMTS 2010. IMTS 2010 set the internationally agreed standard and the Compilers Manual gives additional guidance for their implementation and should be consistent with the recommendations and encouragements in IMTS 2010.

7. During the first half of 2012 UNSD will finalize the text, taken into account the results of this meeting and the subsequent virtual meeting in December 2011. Obviously, the text should be well structured, clear and concise and should avoid any potential misunderstandings. The text will be submitted to the UN editor but this editor will only focus on language and not on substance. The UN editor will not be familiar with the more technical language or technical terms. Hence, UNSD will be very glad to receive any textual comments in that respect during (or right after) this meeting.

8. Each agenda item will be introduced by UNSD and it is expected that the meeting will go through the updated IMTS Compilers Manual chapter by chapter and section by section. The agenda allocates on average about 30 minutes for each chapters. Some chapters are expected to require more discussion than others. Whereas we encourage experts to bring country examples as additions to the manual, we will not have time to discuss country practices in any detail. We also like to spend more time on chapters which have not yet been discussed in the virtual meetings, and spend less time on those which have.

ANNEX

Chapter outline of the updated
International Merchandise Trade Statistics Compilers Manual
(as of February 2011)

Part I Legal framework and data sources

- Chapter 1 Legal framework
- Chapter 2 Customs declarations and related customs records
- Chapter 3 Non-customs administrative and other sources
- Chapter 4 Enterprise surveys and other surveys

Part II Data compilation

- Chapter 5 Institutional arrangements
- Chapter 6 Statistical territory and organization of data collection
- Chapter 7 Integration of data from different sources
- Chapter 8 Data processing and database management
- Chapter 9 Data quality: assurance, measurement and reporting
- Chapter 10 Data compilation in the case of customs union
- Chapter 11 Integrating trade and business statistics

Part III Compilation of particular data items

- Chapter 12 Time of recording
- Chapter 13 Commodity classification
- Chapter 14 Valuation
- Chapter 15 Quantity measurement
- Chapter 16 Partner country
- Chapter 17 Mode of transport

Part IV Compilation of data on trade in selected categories of goods

- Chapter 18 Scope of IMTS
- Chapter 19 Goods for processing
- Chapter 20 Goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties
- Chapter 21 Electricity, gas, oil and water
- Chapter 22 Ships and aircraft
- Chapter 23 Other special cases (Goods acquired by all categories of travellers, Media, whether or not recorded, waste, fishing products, leased goods, returned goods)
- Chapter 24 Overview of data compilation for national accounts and balance of payment purposes

Part V Metadata and dissemination

- Chapter 25 Metadata
- Chapter 26 Dissemination

Part VI External trade indices and seasonally adjusted data

- Chapter 27 External trade indices
- Chapter 28 Seasonally adjusted data