



SPECIAL FEATURE: GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF USE/MAINTENANCE OF BUSINESS REGISTERS

Along with an economic census conducted every five to ten years and a programme of regular economic surveys, the Statistical Business Register (SBR) is an essential part of a country's statistical infrastructure for the compilation of official economic statistics. It is directly related to the implementation of the recommendations for the System of National Accounts 2008, the International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics 2008, and the Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-second session in 2011. SBRs not only provide the sampling frame for business surveys, but constitute the backbone of the integration and coordination of all activities and processes related to the collection, compilation and dissemination of economic statistics.

In 2013, UNSD conducted a global assessment with the objective of assessing

the current status of SBR programmes across all countries, and to better understand their challenges and gaps. The survey questionnaire was sent out to more than 200 administrations. In total, 116 administrations responded to the questionnaire, 32 OECD countries and 84 non-OECD countries.

The questionnaire covered different issues such as legal framework and institutional arrangements, dissemination, identification systems, data sources and update protocols, data verification and validation and analytical products and applications. The questionnaire identified a number of interesting results regarding the current state of SBR programmes, such as:

- ◆ There is a high level of awareness with respect to the protection of confidentiality, as evidenced by the high percentage of countries having a le-

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DATABASES AND PUBLICATIONS:

2012 INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS YEARBOOK (ITSY), VOL. I – TRADE BY COUNTRY – AVAILABLE ONLINE

2012 ITSY Volume I, trade by country, presents detailed data for a total of 174 countries (or areas) with the 2012 data on imports and exports by commodity and trading partner provided for 100 countries (areas), representing approximately 83% of world trade of 2012. All tables of Volume I are made available electronically shortly after the completion of the manuscript. Beginning with the 2008 edition Volume I is published in a redesigned format in respect to the presentation of data for individual countries with the aim to provide a more analytical and condensed view of a country's

trade performance (country trade profile). All world and country tables of Volume I are made available electronically on <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/WorldTables.aspx?y=2012> and <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPagesNew.aspx?y=2012> respectively.

World Table A (Total imports and exports by regions and countries or areas) in the yearbook showed that the total value of world trade reached U.S. dollars 18.5 trillion in 2012, measured in terms of

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2012 INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS YEARBOOK (ITSY), VOL. I – TRADE BY COUNTRY – AVAILABLE ONLINE

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All parts and tables of the Yearbook are available online:

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



exports valued FOB at the border of the exporting country. This is an increase of 3 percent compared with the previous year during which trade rose by 19 percent. The biggest exporter in 2012 with exports of U.S. dollar 2,049 billion was China, followed by the United States with U.S. dollar 1,547 billion and Germany with U.S. dollar 1,410 billion. The United States was the biggest importer with imports of U.S. dollar 2,335 billion in 2012 which resulted in a trade deficit of U.S. dollar 788 billion, while Germany and China recorded trade surpluses of U.S. dollar 242 billion and 231 billion respectively. In 2012 developed economies of Asia-Pacific, Europe and

North America were the destination of 53% of world exports (USD 9.8 trillion) and the origin of 49% of world exports (9.1 trillion).

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. In addition, for more detailed information users are requested to refer to the introduction.

ANALYTICAL TRADE TABLES PUBLISHED IN THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF STATISTICS

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>

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, 2013	June 2013
T 19	Indicators on fuel imports, developed economies	1st quarter, 2013	June 2013
T 35	Total imports and exports by regions and countries or areas	March 2013	June 2013
T 36	Total imports and exports: value, volume and unit value/price	March 2013	June 2013
T 37	Trade indices for countries in U.S. dollars	4th quarter 2012	April 2013
T 38	External trade conversion factors by countries	1st quarter, 2013	June 2013
T 39	Trade indices for regions in U.S. dollars	4th quarter 2012	May 2013
T 40	Manufactured goods exports: unit values, volume indices and value	1st quarter, 2013	June 2013

PROGRESS MADE ON UN COMTRADE UPGRADE

During the year 2013, UNSD continues to develop the new UN Comtrade processing and dissemination applications (UN Comtrade Plus). The first beta of processing application has been released internally as test platform over the summer. The upgrade will integrate trade in services, monthly merchandise trade, and annual

commodity data into a consolidated processing application that can efficiently process the increasing amount of information available. Innovative data quality checks will be added to the application and data collection is streamlined by allowing data providers to upload data directly into the

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

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

International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010) available at

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pubs/gesgrid.asp?id=449>

All previous newsletters are available online at:

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

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONSUMPTION, 14 – 17 MAY 2013, ROSEAU, DOMINICA

UNSD organized, in close collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat, a training workshop on compilation issues of Travel and Tourism Statistics for the Caribbean countries from 14 to 17 May 2013 in Roseau, Dominica, which was hosted by the Central Statistical Office of Dominica.

The agenda of the workshop covered topics such as: the trade in services and tourism

statistics and their role in the statistical system, travel and tourism compilation including measuring employment, related classification and data quality and metadata and also tourism satellite accounts.

Further information is available at

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/workshops/Dominica%202013/default.htm>

REGIONAL SEMINAR ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS, 22 – 26 APRIL 2013, RABAT, MOROCCO

As part of statistical capacity building work programme, UNSD in cooperation with l'Office des Changes, Département des Statistiques des Echanges Extérieurs (OC) of Morocco organized International Merchandise Trade Statistics workshop in Morocco from 22 to 26 April 2013 in Rabat. The participants came from countries in North Africa and West Africa. The aim of the workshop was to build capacity in order to implement new recommendations of IMTS 2010 including the provision of new data items for international reporting to UN Comtrade.

The focus of the workshop was on the updated and new recommendations for IMTS as contained in IMTS 2010 and their implementation on the countries of Northern and Western Africa. Particular attention was given to the recommendations that provide additional information from trade statistics and that aim at its further development. In addition, the workshop discussed how countries can increase relevancy of trade statistics by linking them with other economic statistics such as business statistics or national accounts.

The following items were discussed in the meeting:

- ◆ The UN Statistics Commission report on international statistics and economic globalization and the creation of Friends of the Chair group on internationalizations. The group aims to establish the future role of trade statistics in the framework integrated economic statistics
- ◆ Results and lessons-learned from the OC-EU (Morocco-France) Twinning project in general and reconciliation studies between EU and Morocco
- ◆ Overview of recommendations and encouragements in IMTS2010
- ◆ Scope of trade statistics (inclusion and exclusion), trade system and time of recording
- ◆ Commodity classifications and quantity information
- ◆ New data items for international reporting: second partner country (country of consignment in case of imports), mode of transport, imports FOB and principal customs procedures codes (direct exports and imports, re-exportation, re-importation, imports for inward processing, exports after inward processing, exports for outward processing and imports after outward processing).
- ◆ Data compilation strategies and institutional arrangements
- ◆ Linking trade and business statistics: implementation challenges
- ◆ Data quality, metadata and quality reports
- ◆ Data dissemination issues: accuracy vs. timeliness
- ◆ Trade indices and seasonal adjustment related compilation issues
- ◆ UN Comtrade and the analytical use of trade statistics

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF USE/MAINTENANCE OF BUSINESS REGISTERS

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gal framework in place to regulate this issue. However, many countries face significant challenges to make SBR data available to external users for statistical purposes.

- ◆ Securing access to administrative data sources is one aspect for which the existing legal framework for the maintenance of SBRs is often lagging behind, particularly in developing countries. This situation is likely related to various reasons, including the fact that administrative sources in developing countries are often less abundant, have incomplete coverage of the target population of businesses, or are inadequately classified according to economic activity or size.
- ◆ Only around two-thirds of the countries in the sample indicate that it is possible

to cross-link the identity number for statistical units with external identity numbers used in other sources. The percentage of countries that can cross-link identity number for statistical units with external identity numbers is extremely low in developing countries, which is a major obstacle for linking the business registers with other data sources.

- ◆ Most OECD countries compile business demographic indicators based on their SBR data, while this share is only 52 per cent among non-OECD countries.
- ◆ The complete results from the questionnaire will be published in the “Report on global status of statistical business registers programmes”, which is planned to be finalized and published by the end of 2013.

Visit our online knowledgebase:



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

PROGRESS MADE ON UN COMTRADE UPGRADE

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processing application (thus reducing the use of email as data exchange platform).

When the new global trade SDMX (standardized data and metadata format / layout) is agreed upon and released, it is foreseen that the system will accept data in SDMX version 2.1 for expedited processing. In addition to data items in IMTS 2010 and MSITS 2010, the system will be forward looking and ready to accept additional items resulting from the linking trade and business statistics, when it becomes available. A first prototype of the dissemination system will be available in early 2014. And with the release of the prototype, we will also actively engage users with surveys to

better understand the features they most desire in the upgraded system.

Over the past few years the use of UN Comtrade has grown very quickly, a testament to its importance to the data and the interest of the community at large. Therefore, in order to better serve our users, we initiated a major hardware upgrade moving all of our servers to the new UN data center in Valencia, Spain. The new servers will come online on 18 December 2013 and it is expected that users will experience faster response time.

To learn more about activities of the Statistics Division on trade statistics, please visit:

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

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Trade Statistics Newsletter is a semiannual 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: Kenneth Iversen and Markie Muryawan.

Contact: United Nations Statistics Division, International Merchandise Trade Statistics Section, New York, NY 10017, USA, Email address: comtrade@un.org or visit our website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/default.htm>.