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Task Team International Trade Statistics Progress Update

UNCEBTS –24 June 2025

Brief overview of activities (2024/2025)

- On-going revision of trade statistics manuals (IMTS and MSITS)
- Document with the expected summary of changes was prepared to the UNSC (2025)
- The Handbook on Integrating Business and Trade Statistics (HIBTS) was endorsed by the UNSC (2025) – presented in the side-event on the activities of the UNCEBTS
- Developing the on-line repository on country practices (HIBTS)
- Drafting the 2nd volume of Manual on Principal Indicators on Business and Trade Statistics (MPIBTS) and Global consultation (March/April 2025)
- Development of the trade data tools

Summary and plan in 2025

- In-person/hybrid meeting in Marrakesh (Morocco) (6-9 May 2025)
- Monthly virtual meetings
- Finalizing the revision of trade statistics manuals (IMTS and MSITS) and prepare for global consultation:
 - **IMTS: July 2025**
 - **MSITS: September 2025**
- Finalizing MPIBTS for endorsement by the UNSC in 2026
- Completing the Handbook on Integrating Business and Trade Statistics (HIBTS), which will include a new subchapter focused on Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) and household-level trade (inputs from UNSC meeting)
- Developing a way forward in advancing the globalization workstream: explore work on Large Case Units (LCUs) with the broader UNCEBTS (cross-task team focus group complemented by experts from SNA and BOP communities)

Summary and plan in 2025

- Continue work on bilateral asymmetries, with the possibility of having a new domain in the Global online repository
- Revise SITC at the 3-digit level, with the support of the SITC focus group
- Work on updating SDMX to reflect changes in the new manuals
- The TT-ITS will continue to bring innovation through the use of digital tools, e-learning materials and maintaining the online global repository of country practices.
- Start preparing compilation guidance and coordinating technical assistance for the revised trade statistics manuals moving forward. A meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics (ITS) is requested to better coordinate technical assistance among international organizations, with WTO and OECD serving as the secretariat.
- The Compilers Manuals, viewed as core capacity-building tools, are expected to begin development soon. Drafting will be a multi-year effort, and a targeted, regionally focused approach is recommended for outreach and engagement.

Agenda of the Marrakesh meeting (6-9 May 2025):

The meeting agenda included:

- Highlights of finalized macro-economic manuals and their potential impacts on trade manuals
- Results of Global Consultation on Manual on the Principal Indicators for Business and Trade Statistics (MPIBTS, Vol 2)
- The SITC revision GN. V17
- Globalization work stream - Large Case Units
- ICBT and Household Trade in Handbook on Integrating Business and Trade Statistics
- MSITS and IMTS chapter review
- MSITS/IMTS Cross-Cutting Chapters
- Global Consultations
- TT work programme in 2025

Main issues:

The manuals' chief editors and chapter leads led discussions on the major changes from the 2010 editions of the manuals:

- alignment with other statistical standards such as the System of National Accounts 2025 (SNA 2025) and Balance of Payments Manual, Revision 7;
- conceptual frameworks and visualization of key concepts;
- terminology and definitions;
- and cross-cutting issues between the IMTS and SITS manuals.

Main agreements:

The TT-ITS broadly reached agreement on the recommendations and encouragements on:

- space transport as a new mode of transport;
- nature-of-transaction codes in IMTS;
- Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT);
- the inclusion of informally or illegally conducted legal goods in IMTS;
- compilation of SITS by mode of supply and foreign affiliate trade statistics (FATS);
- volume measures for SITS;
- SITS by gender.

Further discussions addressed outstanding questions and how best to present and prioritize the recommendations and encouragements to compilers.

MSITS drafting:

- New outline considered
 - Chapter 2 – Conceptual Framework
 - Chapter 3 – International Trade in Services on a BOP basis
 - Chapter 4 – Foreign Affiliate Trade Statistics (FATS) and Commercial Presence
 - Chapter 5 – Modes of Supply
 - Chapter 6 – Quantitative indicators for trade in services
- Clarifications on terminology, international services coverage and data sources
- Clarification of the measurement framework
- Conceptual framework:
 - Dimensions, comparison and contrast of the conceptual framework of MSITS with related frameworks
 - MSITS should be overarching, with BOP and GATS being covered

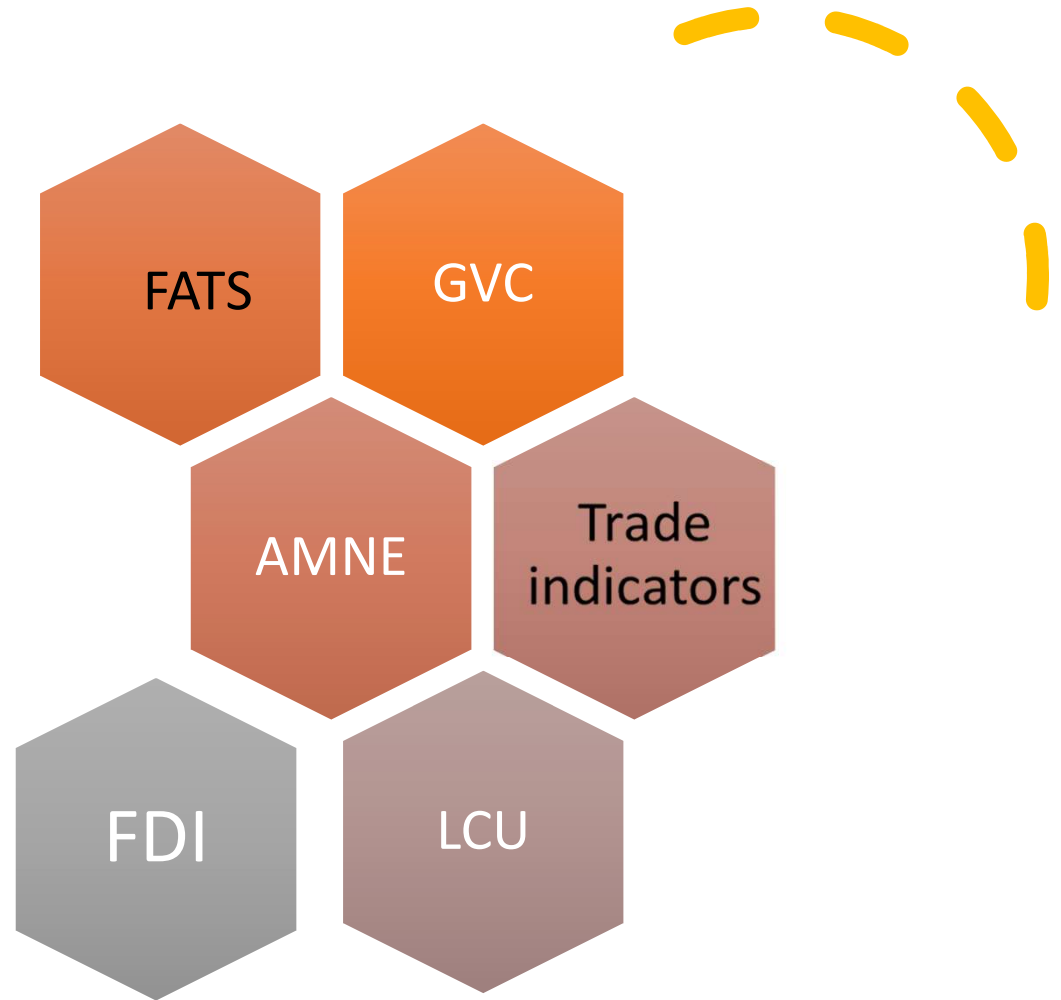
IMTS drafting:

- Harmonization of terminology
- IMTS and MSITS: boundary and comparisons from the conceptual point of view
- Expanding the scope of cross-border movement by including goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country illegally
- Cross-border principle versus change of ownership
- New topics covered:
 - Globalization
 - ICBT
 - Quasi-transit trade
 - Bilateral asymmetries
 - Record invoice values
 - TIC – Trade by invoicing currency (encouragement)

Volume 2 of the Manual on Principal Indicators for Trade Statistics (MPITS):

- Based on the global consultation (March-April 2025), the feedback regarding the adequacy of the proposed indicators in meeting user needs for detailed high-quality trade-related analysis was very positive
- Some suggestions and concerns received about specific indicators and chapters are being considered, with the aim to refine the manual's content based on these insights
- Alignment between the manual's indicators and the Sustainable Development Goals is being improved
- Importance of maintaining up-to-date classifications for each indicator and ensuring continued coordination between relevant organizations to keep the categories relevant
- Questions were also raised about developing indicators to measure resilience to global shocks, with the response indicating that such resilience may be best captured through a multi-dimensional or grouped set of indicators
- Finalization in 2025; endorsement by the UNSC in 2026

Emerging topics in
the area of the TT-
ITS:



LCU – Issue note

The TT-ITS has considered proposals to advance work on LCUs in its May 2025 meeting:

- Explore the creation of a cross-task team focus group with the relevant Task Teams under the UNCEBTS complemented by experts from the existing groups on national accounts and balance of payments
- Consider drafting a Guideline on LCUs, given the current lack of guidance at the global level
- Add country examples on LCUs to the UNCEBTS Global Repository of Practices for Business and Trade Statistics
- Conduct a global assessment of current LCU practices, including the collection of case studies to be added to the Global Repository
- Develop educational materials, including e-learning courses, to build capacity
- Enhance linkages with ongoing work by UNSD/OECD through MEIP and by other entities

Thank you!

UNCEBTS – 24 June 2025

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