

Morning Seminar on
Classifications related to Trade and Agriculture

ICT-Services, BEC and Guidelines by FAO

10 March 2016

8:15 - 9:30 am

Venue: Conference Room ??

United Nations, New York

The primary purpose of international statistical classifications is to provide a framework for the collection and analysis of data and for the presentation and comparison of official statistics at international level. Indeed, statistical classifications can be used to standardize statistical information, aggregate and disaggregate data sets in a meaningful way, and support policy and decision-making. They function as “international languages” for communicating in statistics.

In agricultural and rural statistics, the need for more meaningful international statistical classifications has increased dramatically in recent years. This is due, on one hand, to the increasing demand for new official statistics and the need to integrate data on agriculture, forestry and fisheries within national statistical systems (NSSs) and, on the other, the lack of country-level capacities to produce and report statistical information. In developing countries especially, this has generated a decline in the quantity and quality of agricultural and rural statistics. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has responded to this challenge by advancing its collaboration with other international organizations to better integrate agriculture into major international schemes, and by revising FAO’s classification system to enhance its relevance and ensure its compatibility with other international standards.

Services are becoming more tradable, and more traded, but the statistical system for classifying and capturing these international transactions lags behind. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are the main enabling factor. It is therefore crucial that policymakers gain the ability to characterize and quantify services imports and exports in more detail and with more precision than the current statistical system allows. Because of this, data improvements need to encompass both the trade generated by provision of ICT services (telecommunications services, IT system design, software development, and related tasks), *and* the remote provision of ICT-enabled services, such as human resource management, payroll, accounting, architectural design, research, editing, education, and so on.

The Classification of Broad Economic Categories (BEC) is an international product classification. Its main purpose is to provide a set of broad product categories that can be utilized for the analysis of trade statistics. This fifth revision of BEC is the outcome of a review process that spanned several years and resulted in a BEC structure that is more detailed than the previous version, responding to the need to have more relevant economic categories, to identify services in addition to goods, and to more clearly distinguish the end-use of products. The relation of the BEC to the analysis of global value chains is also highlighted in BEC Rev.5.

Organizer:
Organized by UNSD and UNCTAD

Chair and Panelists

Chair:

- ❖ Ralf Becker, United Nations Statistics Division

Panelists:

Agriculture related classifications

- ❖ Pietro Gennari, Statistics Division, FAO

Trade-related classifications

- ❖ Torbjörn Fredriksson, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- ❖ Ronald Jansen, United Nations Statistics Division