



UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Implementation of International Merchandise Trade Statistics,  
Concepts and Definition 2010 (IMTS 2010)**

**Report on the Results  
of the UNSD Questionnaire  
on the plans of IMTS 2010 implementation**

**United Nations, New York**

**September 2010**

## Introduction

The United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-first session held on 23-26 February 2010 adopted the revised and new recommendations as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010* (IMTS 2010) and endorsed the outline of an implementation programme, including the preparation of the revised IMTS Compilers Manual and continued technical assistance activities. Further, the Statistical Commission highlighted the importance of strengthening the institutional arrangements in countries.

In a letter of 28 May 2010 the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) informed countries about the new recommendations and strongly encouraged them to establish efficient and coordinated institutional arrangements and action plans to ensure a speedy implementation of IMTS 2010 in accordance with each country's circumstances and priorities.

To better assess the needs and plans of countries, UNSD requested countries to complete a brief questionnaire on the implementation of the new recommendations and to return it by 1 July 2010. Specifically, the questionnaire (see Annex 1) aimed to assess the status of discussion in countries regarding the implementation of IMTS 2010, to identify and assess the factors critical for the implementation and to inquire what materials and assistance is considered most important.

By the end of August 2010 a total of 100 countries replied to the questionnaire, 28 developed and 72 developing and transition countries (see Annex 2 for list of countries).<sup>1</sup> Countries provided a total of 43 comments. UNSD is very grateful to all countries which replied to this questionnaire and which provided additional comments.

UNSD will take the results of the questionnaire into account in its activities for the implementation of IMTS 2010 and share and discuss them with its partner organizations on international and regional level. A summary of the results is shown in Annex 3.

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<sup>1</sup> There is no established convention for the designation of “developed” and “developing” countries or areas in the United Nations system. In common practice, Japan in Asia, Canada and the United States in northern America, Australia and New Zealand in Oceania, and Europe are considered “developed” regions (see <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Data/RegionalGroupings.htm> for details).

## Results of the questionnaire

### Awareness and plans for implementation

Regarding the question whether the implementation of IMTS 2010 has already been discussed in their office, almost two thirds of countries (63 percent) replied with yes. Only 33 percent indicated that IMTS 2010 implementation was discussed with other agencies such as customs and the central bank, but 47 percent wanted to do so in the near future. The rate of countries that had discussed IMTS 2010 implementation in their office was much higher for developed (82 percent) than developing and transition countries (56 percent).

Almost a third of countries (32 percent) expect to implement most of the new recommendations for the reporting year 2011 and another third (34 percent) for the reporting year 2012. Interestingly, while more developed than developing and transition countries expect implementation to take place for the reporting year 2011 (36 percent vs. 31 percent), the percentage of countries that expect a late implementation (for the reporting year 2013 or later) is much higher for developed than developing and transition countries (25 percent vs. 8 percent).

### Implementation, materials and support

*Critical factors for implementation.* An overwhelming majority of developing and transition countries considered each of the four questioned factors as critical for IMTS implementation, giving highest ratings of importance (rated 5 or 4 out of 5). For instance, 89 percent of developing and transition countries considered cooperation with other agencies involved of high importance (5 or 4). The other factors, namely guidance on how to implement the recommendations, the mobilization of the required resources and raising awareness, were rated equally high.

By contrast, not one of the four factors was considered of high importance by a majority of developed countries. Most strikingly, none of the developed countries considered raising awareness as being of very high importance (5).

*Materials and support.* 83 percent of countries viewed the availability of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual as being of high importance (5 or 4) for their office. This view was prevalent among all countries but was much stronger among developing and transition countries (88 percent) than developed countries (71 percent). Translation of IMTS 2010 into other (other than English) official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish) was viewed as being very important (5) by 46 percent of developing and transition and only by 11 percent of developed countries.

The availability of additional information resources such as website, knowledgebase and hotline was considered by 73 percent of countries as being of high importance (rated 5 or 4). However, this view was stronger among developing and transition countries (76 percent) than developed countries (64 percent). Further, 70 percent of developing and transition countries viewed E-learning as being of high importance, whereas this rate was only 32 percent among developed countries.

The overwhelming majority of developing and transition countries considered technical assistance activities such as workshops and study visits of high importance (5 or 4) for the implementation of IMTS 2010, with 89 percent for workshops and 85 percent for study visits. For developed countries technical assistance activities are far less important: 32 percent viewed workshops as being of high importance and only 18 percent considered study visits as being of high importance.

### **Analysis of comments**

In their comments several developed countries (member countries of the European Union) pointed out as critical factor that the implementation of IMTS 2010 is dependent on the respective EU legislation and the requirements of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), which can also differ from some of the international recommendations. Further, several developed countries indicated that the burden on businesses can be an important obstacle for implementation, even if certain new data items are desirable from a statistical point of view.

Several developing and transition countries pointed out that advocacy (raising awareness) and interagency cooperation are critical factors for implementation; however also the burden on respondents and the need for training of data producers (and users) were viewed as critical factors. The need for capacity building and financial assistance, in particular for upgrading the existing IT systems (including at Customs) was also pointed out.

Developing and transition countries made numerous comments on how to better support IMTS implementation in countries. It was indicated that countries need support for addressing practical difficulties. The study of best practices and exchange of experiences were mentioned. 'In country' hands-on training, training on the job, study visits and training for trainers at customs were all viewed as important. Several countries mentioned the need for an expert consultant either to visit or to be available via correspondence. Concerning workshops, it was indicated that other agencies/ data providers (i.e. customs) should be included. The need to combine different forms of training and to have a training plan were mentioned as well.

## Annex 1: UNSD Questionnaire on the plans of IMTS 2010 implementation

The questionnaire aims to assess the status of discussion in countries regarding the implementation of IMTS 2010, to identify and assess the factors critical for the implementation and inquires what materials and assistance is considered most important.

*[A summary of what's new in IMTS 2010: Clarifications and amendments of the core concepts, i.e. regarding goods for processing; new chapters on data compilation strategies and data quality and metadata, thereby giving better and comprehensive guidance to compilers; it is recommended to compile mode of transport as new data item and include the customs procedure codes in the dataset for statistics; countries are encouraged to compile imports on FOB basis (in addition to CIF) and country of consignment for export; further, countries are encouraged to identify re-exports and reimports, trade between related parties as well as trade in goods for processing where no change of ownership takes place; the linking of business and trade statistics has been identified as new and promising area important for both data compilation and analytical purposes; a detailed description of the relationship to the sixth edition of the Balance-of-Payment Manual has been added.]*

### Please provide your contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country: \_\_\_\_\_

### Awareness and plans for implementation

**Question 1:** Has the implementation of IMTS 2010 been already discussed?

- a) within your office? YES  NO   
 b) with other agencies such as customs and the central bank? YES  NO  Not applicable   
 c) If NO, do you plan to have discussions with other agencies in the near future? YES  NO

**Question 2:** For what reporting year do you expect to implement most of the new recommendations?

2011  2012  2013 or later  Not applicable

### Critical factors for implementation, materials and support

**Question 3:** Please evaluate critical factors for implementation according to their importance for your office - 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest importance.

- |  | (highest) 5              | 4                        | 3                        | 2                        | 1 (lowest)               |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Raising awareness                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Mobilization of required resources                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Cooperation with involved agencies                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Guidance on how to implement the recommendations. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Other, please specify:                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |

**Question 4:** Please evaluate materials and support according to their importance for your office - 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest importance.

- |   | (highest) 5              | 4                        | 3                        | 2                        | 1 (lowest)               |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Translation of IMTS 2010 into official UN languages<br>(Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Publication of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Availability of additional information resources:  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| a. Website, knowledgebase, support hotline  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. E-learning   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Other, please specify:   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 4. Technical assistance   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| a. Regional workshops   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Study visits in other countries  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Other, please specify:   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |

## **Annex 2: List of countries that replied to the questionnaire.**

Armenia	Maldives
Australia	Malta
Austria	Mauritius
Azerbaijan	Mexico
Bahamas	Republic of Moldova
Belarus	Mongolia
Belgium	Mozambique
Belize	Myanmar
Bhutan	Nauru
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Netherlands Antilles
Bosnia and Herzegovina	New Caledonia
Brazil	New Zealand
Bulgaria	Norway
Burundi	Occupied Palestinian Territory
Cambodia	Pakistan
Cameroon	Papua New Guinea
Canada	Paraguay
China	Peru
China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	Philippines
Chile	Poland
Côte d'Ivoire	Portugal
Croatia	Rwanda
Cuba	Romania
Czech Republic	Russian Federation
Denmark	Samoa
Dominica	Senegal
Ecuador	Serbia
Egypt	Slovakia
Estonia	Slovenia
Finland	South Africa
Gambia	Spain
Germany	Sri Lanka
Hungary	Sudan
Indonesia	Suriname
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Swaziland
Ireland	Sweden
Israel	Switzerland
Italy	Syrian Arab Republic
Jamaica	United Republic of Tanzania
Jordan	Thailand
Kazakhstan	Timor-Leste
Kenya	Togo
Kuwait	Turkey
Latvia	Uganda
Lithuania	Ukraine
Luxembourg	United Kingdom
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	United States of America
Madagascar	Viet Nam
Malawi	Yemen
Malaysia	Zimbabwe

### Annex 3: Summary of results of UNSD Questionnaire on the plans of IMTS 2010 implementation

Awareness and plans for implementation - Question 1: Has the implementation of IMTS 2010 been already discussed?								
Question (for exact question see Annex 1)	Countries*	Yes	No	N/A	No reply			
Q1.a within your office?	All (100)	63%	35%	0%	2%			
Q1.b with others agencies?	All (100)	33%	56%	10%	1%			
Q1.c If No, do you plan to do so in the near future?	All (100)	47%	13%	0%	40%			
Q1.a within your office?	Developed (28)	82%	14%	0%	4%			
Q1.b with others agencies?	Developed (28)	50%	32%	18%	0%			
Q1.c If No, do you plan to do so in the near future?	Developed (28)	14%	25%	0%	61%			
Q1.a within your office?	Developing and trans.** (72)	56%	43%	0%	1%			
Q1.b with others agencies?	Developing and trans.** (72)	26%	65%	7%	1%			
Q1.c If No, do you plan to do so in the near future?	Developing and trans.** (72)	60%	8%	0%	32%			
Awareness and plans for implementation - Question 2: When do you expect to implement most of the new recommendations?								
Question (for exact question see Annex 1)	Countries*	2011	2012	2013+	N/A	No reply		
Q2 Reporting year?	All (100)	32%	34%	13%	14%	7%		
Q2 Reporting year?	Developed (28)	36%	14%	25%	18%	7%		
Q2 Reporting year?	Developing and trans.* (72)	31%	42%	8%	13%	7%		
Critical factors for implementation, materials and support - Question 3: Please evaluate critical factors for implementation according to the importance for your office - 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest importance								
Question (for exact question see Annex 1)	Countries*	Ranking (5 highest and 1 lowest)					No reply	Comments
		5	4	3	2	1		
Q3.1 Raising awareness	All (100)	36%	24%	15%	11%	8%	6%	
Q3.2 Mobilization of required resources	All (100)	42%	27%	14%	9%	4%	4%	
Q3.3 Cooperation with involved agencies	All (100)	53%	22%	12%	6%	3%	4%	
Q3.4 Guidance on how to implement the recom.	All (100)	49%	18%	17%	8%	3%	5%	
Q3.5 Other, please specify (comments)	All (100)							17%
Q3.1 Raising awareness	Developed (28)	0%	25%	14%	25%	21%	14%	
Q3.2 Mobilization of required resources	Developed (28)	18%	18%	18%	25%	11%	11%	
Q3.3 Cooperation with involved agencies	Developed (28)	14%	25%	25%	18%	7%	11%	
Q3.4 Guidance on how to implement the recom.	Developed (28)	14%	14%	32%	21%	7%	11%	
Q3.5 Other, please specify (comments)	Developed (28)							29%
Q3.1 Raising awareness	Developing and trans.** (72)	50%	24%	15%	6%	3%	3%	
Q3.2 Mobilization of required resources	Developing and trans.** (72)	51%	31%	13%	3%	1%	1%	
Q3.3 Cooperation with involved agencies	Developing and trans.** (72)	68%	21%	7%	1%	1%	1%	
Q3.4 Guidance on how to implement the recom.	Developing and trans.** (72)	63%	19%	11%	3%	1%	3%	
Q3.5 Other, please specify (comments)	Developing and trans.** (72)							13%
Critical factors for implementation, materials and support - Question 4: Please evaluate materials and support according to their importance for your office - 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest importance								
Question (for exact question see Annex 1)	Countries*	Ranking (5 highest and 1 lowest)					No reply	Comments
		5	4	3	2	1		
Q4.1 Translation of IMTS 2010 into (UN) languages	All (100)	36%	4%	2%	5%	45%	8%	
Q4.2 Publication of updated Compilers Manual	All (100)	65%	18%	10%	4%	0%	3%	
Q4.3.a Website, knowledgebase, support hotline	All (100)	48%	25%	15%	4%	5%	3%	
Q4.3.b E-Learning	All (100)	34%	26%	16%	9%	10%	5%	
Q4.3.c Other, please specify (comments)	All (100)							4%
Q4.4.a Regional workshops	All (100)	57%	16%	11%	5%	9%	2%	
Q4.4.b Study visits in other countries	All (100)	46%	20%	11%	7%	13%	3%	
Q4.4.c Other, please specify (comments)	All (100)							19%
Q4.1 Translation of IMTS 2010 into (UN) languages	Developed (28)	11%	11%	0%	0%	71%	7%	
Q4.2 Publication of updated Compilers Manual	Developed (28)	32%	39%	14%	11%	0%	4%	
Q4.3.a Website, knowledgebase, support hotline	Developed (28)	25%	39%	18%	7%	7%	4%	
Q4.3.b E-Learning	Developed (28)	7%	25%	25%	18%	21%	4%	
Q4.3.c Other, please specify (comments)	Developed (28)							0%
Q4.4.a Regional workshops	Developed (28)	11%	21%	25%	11%	29%	4%	
Q4.4.b Study visits in other countries	Developed (28)	4%	14%	29%	14%	36%	4%	
Q4.4.c Other, please specify (comments)	Developed (28)							4%
Q4.1 Translation of IMTS 2010 into (UN) languages	Developing and trans.** (72)	46%	1%	3%	7%	35%	8%	
Q4.2 Publication of updated Compilers Manual	Developing and trans.** (72)	78%	10%	8%	1%	0%	3%	
Q4.3.a Website, knowledgebase, support hotline	Developing and trans.** (72)	57%	19%	14%	3%	4%	3%	
Q4.3.b E-Learning	Developing and trans.** (72)	44%	26%	13%	6%	6%	6%	
Q4.3.c Other, please specify (comments)	Developing and trans.** (72)							6%
Q4.4.a Regional workshops	Developing and trans.** (72)	75%	14%	6%	3%	1%	1%	
Q4.4.b Study visits in other countries	Developing and trans.** (72)	63%	22%	4%	4%	4%	3%	
Q4.4.c Other, please specify (comments)	Developing and trans.** (72)							25%

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\*\*Developing and transition countries.