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).\(^1\) 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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\(^1\) 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?Conte nt=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 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   2. Mobilization of required resources ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   3. Cooperation with involved agencies ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   4. Guidance on how to implement the recommendations. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   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 (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   2. Publication of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   3. Availability of additional information resources:
      a. Website, knowledgebase, support hotline ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
      b. E-learning ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
      c. Other, please specify: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
   4. Technical assistance:
      a. Regional workshops ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
      b. Study visits in other countries ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
      c. Other, please specify: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Annex 2: List of countries that replied to the questionnaire.

Armenia
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahamas
Belarus
Belgium
Belize
Bhutan
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Canada
China
China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Chile
Côte d'Ivoire
Croatia
Cuba
Czech Republic
Denmark
Dominica
Ecuador
Egypt
Estonia
Finland
Gambia
Germany
Hungary
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kuwait
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia

Maldives
Malta
Mauritius
Mexico
Republic of Moldova
Mongolia
Mozambique
Myanmar
Nauru
Netherlands Antilles
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Norway
Occupied Palestinian Territory
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Rwanda
Romania
Russian Federation
Samoa
Senegal
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Suriname
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic
United Republic of Tanzania
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Togo
Turkey
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States of America
Viet Nam
Yemen
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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question (for exact question see Annex 1)</th>
<th>Countries*</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1.a within your office?</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.b with others agencies?</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.c if No, do you plan to do so in the near future?</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.a within your office?</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.b with others agencies?</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.c if No, do you plan to do so in the near future?</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.a within your office?</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.b with others agencies?</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1.c if No, do you plan to do so in the near future?</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Awareness and plans for implementation - Question 2: When do you expect to implement most of the new recommendations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question (for exact question see Annex 1)</th>
<th>Countries*</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013+</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Reporting year?</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Reporting year?</td>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Reporting year?</td>
<td>Developing and trans. * (72)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question (for exact question see Annex 1)</th>
<th>Countries*</th>
<th>Ranking (5 highest and 1 lowest)</th>
<th>No reply</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.1 Raising awareness</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>36% 24% 15% 11% 8% 6%</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.2 Mobilization of required resources</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>42% 27% 14% 9% 4% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.3 Cooperation with involved agencies</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>53% 22% 12% 6% 3% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.4 Guidance on how to implement the recom.</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>49% 18% 17% 8% 3% 5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.5 Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.1 Raising awareness</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>0% 25% 14% 25% 8% 14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.2 Mobilization of required resources</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>18% 18% 18% 25% 11% 5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.3 Cooperation with involved agencies</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>14% 25% 25% 18% 7% 11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.4 Guidance on how to implement the recom.</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>14% 14% 32% 21% 7% 11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.5 Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.1 Raising awareness</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>50% 24% 15% 6% 3% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.2 Mobilization of required resources</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>51% 31% 13% 3% 1% 1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.3 Cooperation with involved agencies</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>68% 21% 7% 1% 1% 1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.4 Guidance on how to implement the recom.</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>63% 19% 11% 3% 1% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ3.5 Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question (for exact question see Annex 1)</th>
<th>Countries*</th>
<th>Ranking (5 highest and 1 lowest)</th>
<th>No reply</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.1 Translation of IMTS 2010 into (UN) languages</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>36% 4% 2% 5% 45% 8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.2 Publication of updated Compilers Manual</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>65% 18% 10% 4% 0% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 a Website, knowledgebase, support hotline</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>48% 25% 15% 4% 5% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 b E-Learning</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>34% 25% 16% 9% 10% 8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 c Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 a Regional workshops</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>57% 16% 11% 5% 9% 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 b Study visits in other countries</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td>46% 20% 11% 7% 13% 3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 c Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>All (100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.1 Translation of IMTS 2010 into (UN) languages</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>11% 11% 0% 0% 71% 7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.2 Publication of updated Compilers Manual</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>32% 30% 14% 11% 0% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 a Website, knowledgebase, support hotline</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>25% 39% 16% 7% 7% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 b E-Learning</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>7% 25% 25% 18% 21% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 c Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 a Regional workshops</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>11% 21% 25% 11% 29% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 b Study visits in other countries</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td>4% 14% 29% 14% 36% 4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 c Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>Developed (28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.1 Translation of IMTS 2010 into (UN) languages</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>46% 1% 3% 7% 35% 8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.2 Publication of updated Compilers Manual</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>78% 10% 8% 1% 0% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 a Website, knowledgebase, support hotline</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>57% 19% 14% 3% 4% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 b E-Learning</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>44% 20% 13% 6% 6% 6%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CQ4.3 c Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 a Regional workshops</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>75% 14% 6% 3% 1% 1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 b Study visits in other countries</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td>63% 22% 4% 4% 4% 3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ4.4 c Other, please specify (comments)</td>
<td>Developing and trans. ** (72)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Developing and transition countries.