

Second meeting of the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

3-6 November 2009, New York

Agenda item 21: Implementation of IMTS 2010 and EG-IMTS work program 2010-2012



Presentation by Vladimir Markhonko
Chief, International Trade Statistics Branch
Trade Statistics Branch, United Nations Statistics Division
E-mail: markhonko@un.org

I. Introduction: finalization of the draft IMTS2010 and related activities

- 1) UNSD will finalize and submit the draft IMTS2010 by the end of December 2009.
- 2) After UNSC approval UNSD will finalize the text of IMTS2010 by March 2010 and post it on its website.
- 3) UNSD will inform countries about the Commission's actions and will encourage them to begin planning the IMTS2010 implementation as soon as possible.
- 4) UNSD will review the status of the implementation several years later and report its findings to the Commission.
- 5) International and regional organizations are asked to support countries in their implementation activities by providing necessary technical materials, training and advocacy.

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

- The 39th Session of the UNSC in 2008 endorsed the multi-year strategy for updating the Commission's recommendations for international merchandise trade statistics and for their implementation.

The draft action plan contains the following elements:

1. **Preparation of an updated version of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual***
2. ***Improving collection and dissemination of the IMTS metadata including descriptions of countries statistical territories***
3. ***Technical assistance to developing and transitional countries***
4. ***Further enhancements in the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade)***
5. ***Continued methodological work and related research agenda***

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

1. Preparation of an updated version of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual*

- 1) *Cornerstone of UNSD's action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010*
- 2) *Will contain further and more detailed explanation of certain recommendations and provide practical guidance for compilers by describing good/best practices applicable under different circumstances.*
- 3) *Detailed outline of the scope and structure of the Manual and a work plan for its update will be developed after the Commission's adoption of IMTS2010*
- 4) *UNSD will ask the EG-IMTS to review the detailed outline for an updated Compilers Manual in the second quarter of 2010.*
- 5) *One option for structuring the Compilers Manual is to follow the sequence of the recommendations and encouragements contained in IMTS2010*

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

1. Preparation of an updated version of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual*

following topics and ideas need to be taken into account:

- *additional explanation regarding the general and specific guidelines on coverage focusing on data sources and data compilation strategies*
- *information on analytical classifications and correlations should be updated and amended as required;*
- *examples of the calculation of the statistical value using invoice prices and information about additional cost items incurred by traders under the agreed terms of delivery and the valuation of specific categories of goods should be provided;*
- *good practices in the compilation or estimation of imports FOB should be well elaborated, including the description of data sources and compilation procedures;*
- *approaches to the improvement of the quality of quantity data and quantity data estimation need to be discussed;*
- *the application of partner attribution in a number of special cases should be discussed and illustrated with examples; the issue of the application of a standard country nomenclature could be further discussed;*

Continued on next page...

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

1. Preparation of an updated version of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual*

following topics and ideas need to be taken into account:

- vii. *there is a need for a separate chapter on good practices in the compilation of data by mode of transport which should also address data quality concerns;*
- viii. *examples of the efficient use of non-customs data sources and merging non-customs data with the customs records should be provided, highlighting advantages and limitations of these sources; further, data compilation for IMTS as part of an integrated approach to economic statistics as well as the issue of data collection for free zones will be discussed;*
- ix. *good practices in quality assessment and quality assurance should be described;*
- x. *issues of compilation and dissemination of metadata should be discussed;*
- xi. *information and guidance on the calculation of external trade indices should be provided;*
- xii. *good practices concerning the seasonal adjustment of trade data should be provided.*

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

2. Improving collection and dissemination of the IMTS metadata including descriptions of countries statistical territories

- 1) UNSD plans to collect and disseminate metadata in a more regular and comprehensive way as part of its data collection activity.
- 2) Currently metadata available in (i) UNSD questionnaire on county practices, (ii) UN Comtrade explanatory notes and (iii) the UNSD publication *Statistical territories of the World for Use in IMTS*.
- 3) *Statistical territories of the World for Use in IMTS*: results of a survey in 1999 regarding the statistical territory, including questions on the membership in a customs union.
- 4) UNSD plans to review its practices in collection and dissemination of country's metadata so that all information is provided together with the data itself

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

3. Technical assistance to developing and transitional countries

- UNSD plans to conduct a series of regional workshops for developing and transitional countries which will focus on the contents of the new recommendation and the practical issues of their implementation.
- For 2010 and 2011 activities (predominately workshops) for the following regions are tentatively planned:
 - South-East Asia (5 countries)
 - Sub-Saharan Africa
 - CIS and Central Asia
 - Asia and the Pacific
 - North Africa and Middle East
- In previous years UNSD conducted workshops to support the implementation (but also the update) of the current recommendations at a rate of about two per year. For details on past technical assistance activities see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/workshops_imts.htm

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

4. Further enhancements in the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade)

- 1) UNSD will request and advocate the delivery of data according to the new recommendations
- 2) UNSD will put increased emphasis on obtaining comprehensive metadata.
- 3) It is planned that the UN Comtrade will be able to accommodate and disseminate data according to the new recommendations starting with data of the reporting year 2010 received in 2011.
- 4) The following data items/ fields will have to be added:
 - Mode of transport
 - Second value for imports FOB
 - Second partner country (Country of consignment)

II. Draft action plan for the implementation of IMTS2010

5. Continued methodological work and related research agenda

There are several issues which will require significant further work and/ or which do not fit into the scope of the Compilers Manual. These include, for example,

1. Addressing global imbalances / reconciliation studies;
2. Linking trade and business statistics/ integrated approach to economic statistics;
3. Relationship BOP and Merchandise Trade Statistics;
4. Interpretation of trade data/ value added chain;
5. Automated data transfer;
6. Good practices in compilation of the external trade indices and various analytical indicators.

III. Proposed EG-IMTS work programme for 2010-2012

Work Programme item	Timetable
2010	
Review and endorsement of IMTS-CM outline	Q2 2010
Review and endorsement of a questionnaire on country practices on IMTS index numbers	Q4 2010
1 st virtual meeting on IMTS-CM	Q4 2010
2011	
2 nd virtual meeting on IMTS-CM	Q2 2011
Virtual meeting on UN Comtrade (data and metadata)	Q3 2011
EG-IMTS meeting to review and endorse the provisional draft of the revised IMTS-CM	Q4 2011
2012	
EG-IMTS meeting on good practices in the compilation of IMTS index numbers	Q2 2012

Thank you for your attention!