

Project 06/07K: Strengthening the Development of International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) and the compilation of e-commerce in Member Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Workshop on the compilation of IMTS and the application of methodological concepts

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Feedback from Country Missions (UNSD)



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Main Conclusions

- 1) From meetings with Customs
- 2) Regarding relationship between Statistics and Customs
- 3) From meetings with Statistics

Main Conclusions

From meetings with Customs

1. In many countries projects for modernization of Customs administration (automation) are underway (GCC countries but not only) – at least partially the result of intentions to join the Kyoto Convention
2. Despite modernization paper declaration still used for part of trade
3. GCC standardized Customs declaration
4. Statistics requirements are taken into account to very different degrees; in some countries exclusive focus on control and fiscal functions
5. Often extensive validation of declaration and cross-checking with other documentation but again often focus on control and fiscal function (for example focus on imports)
6. Customs in general very well aware of the for Customs relevant concepts and definitions; although to less extend how these concepts and definitions are relevant for statistics

Main Conclusions

Regarding relationship between Statistics and Customs

In general: In some countries excellent cooperation – in other countries
Statistics is re-entering information from copy for statistics

1. Instead of gaining from customs modernization relationship remains static – even statistics might lose access to data
2. In many countries cooperation is mostly limited to data exchange (such as file on CD-ROM)
3. Usually no coordination of validation procedures or feedback
4. In some countries Statistics not fully satisfied with data received from customs

Main Conclusions

From meetings with Statistics

(besides issue of cooperation with customs)

- In a number of countries very good/ best practices present;
- Overall good data availability;

But..

- In some countries only very few specialized staff working on trade statistics – in addition, often split between IT and substantive staff
- Often no strong knowledge how IMTS concepts and definitions are applied at Customs
- Often no automated data validation – instead validation by experience (lack of IT use)
- Lack of timeliness in a few of countries in particular considering Central Bank/BOP requirements
- Improvement of IMTS priority in a number of countries

Main Conclusions

From meetings with Statistics - specific issues

- Coverage: ships and aircraft, financial leasing, gold and other goods carried by travellers, oil & gas reported separately
- Trade system: Special vs. General system often not fully clear, issue of free zones
- Data validation
- Time series maintenance, Correspondence tables
- Dealing with quantity information
- Index calculation
- Effects of Customs Union (GCC)
- Relationship to BOP/National Accounts Compilation

» Thank you for
your attention