

# Workshop for Developing Countries on the Revision of the International Recommendations for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS)

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## **Institutional arrangements**

**Adding a recommendation on the need for establishing and  
maintaining necessary institutional arrangements**

**Promoting data exchange**



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# Institutional arrangements

## 1. Current recommendation(s)

IMTS, Rev.2 **contains no recommendation** regarding institutional arrangements required for the collection of basic information for the purpose of compiling IMTS. However, *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual (IMTS:CM)* describes various institutional frameworks (IMTS:CM, chapter 2) and indicates some desirable practices in this area. For example:

(IMTS:CM, Ch. 2, para 15) Compilers should establish a **working arrangement** with the organizations keeping records relevant to trade statistics (e.g., records of imports and exports of electrical energy, pipeline shipments of natural gas and crude oil, maintained by specialized governmental agencies). Compilers should also initiate, whenever appropriate, **modifications to national legislation or relevant administrative regulations** in order to establish a solid foundation for enhancing the quality and timeliness of trade statistics. This includes identifying governmental agencies involved in trade statistics and setting up a clear division of responsibility between them.

# Institutional arrangements

## 1. Current recommendation(s) - continued

(IMTS:CM, Ch. 2, para 22) The reliance by the statistical office on data from sources external to itself requires close cooperative relationships with all governmental departments and agencies involved. The statistical office and the customs agency - the largest data supplier - along with other source agencies, should establish a **memorandum of understanding** so that the roles and responsibilities of each party with regard to all aspects of the production and distribution of official statistics are clearly defined. The memorandum should be updated, as needed.

## 2. Result from the 2006 NCDP Questionnaire

Question :	Yes	No	N/A
Does your office have any memorandum of understanding or any similar working agreement with any of the mentioned agencies?	65.2	28.1	6.7
If you have working agreements with other agencies, does your office regularly meet or consult with these agencies before release of the trade statistics?	39.7	45.4	14.9

# Institutional arrangements

## 4. UNSD observation of wwc result

There is universal support (87%, with no-answers 2%) for this proposal. Comments stress the usefulness of this proposal. Some countries seem to suggest to rather provide good practices (as in the Compilers Manual) and not mandatory guidelines.

There is not much difference on this question between developing/transitional and developed countries.

## 5. Selected comments (from total of 43 comments)

- [...] good statistics requires good cooperation between the institutions involved and also a legal framework.
- We have found agreements between government stakeholders to be key to the continuing production of quality trade statistics
- We meet on a regular basis and have developed a strong and mutually beneficial relationship based on the MOU.

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## 5. Selected comments (from total of 57 comments)

- The recommendation must also clearly define the responsibilities of each institution and the limits
  - Sometimes, national offices of statistics do not have access to external trade statistics timely and in a good format.
  - Institutions that are primary data providers often do not consider how changes affect the production of statistics and cause problems in the statistical treatment when primary records are constantly modified.
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- [...] it should be 'noted' as ideas on how to facilitate cooperation rather than a mandatory approach.

# Institutional arrangements - promoting data exchange

- Internal data exchange - Specification of layout key and data fields
- External data exchange – Using data from trading partners
- Data exchange within a customs union

# Thank you for your attention