

Workshop for Developing Countries on the Revision of
the International Recommendations for International
Merchandise Trade Statistics
Bogotá, 31 March - 3 April, 2009

Data sources

**(Use of non-customs sources; Data compilation strategies and
promotion of an integrated approach to economics statistics)
(Item 14)**



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Why use non-customs sources?

No Border Crossing

- Change of ownership (Vessels, Aircrafts)
- Deep Sea Fishing
- Bunkers, stores, ballast and dunnage

Transactions with no/incomplete Customs Coverage

- Free Zones
- Informal Cross Border Trade
- Goods for military use
- Electricity, Oil, Gas, Water
- Parcel and letter post
- Trade between members of Customs Union
- Other important commodities (example uranium, etc)

Use of non-customs data source and data compilation strategies

1. Current recommendation(s)

In a growing number of cases, full coverage of international merchandise trade statistics cannot be achieved by use of customs records only, either because the relevant transactions are no longer subject to customs controls or customs surveillance, or because the record keeping may not be adequate from the statistical point of view. It is recommended that in such cases, other sources be used.

For instance, the member States of the European Union have developed, for the purposes of intra-Union merchandise trade statistics, a data collection system relying on monthly reporting by enterprises.

Refer to IMTS, Rev.2, para. 12.

2. Result from the 2006 NCDP Questionnaire

Question 2.01 :	Yes	No	N/A
Are customs declarations the main source of data?	88.4	9.1	2.5
Question 2.02 – 2.07: Do you use the following as additional sources of data:	Yes	No	N/A
Administrative records associated with taxation	29.7	62	8.3
Enterprise surveys	26.4	63.6	10
Aircraft and ship registers	23.1	68.5	8.4

Even though customs declarations are still the main source of data, the importance of non-customs data sources is increasing due to:

- Some transactions are not recorded in customs documentation
- The facilitation of customs formalities, elimination of tariff measures and of customs documents altogether among members of customs unions

3. Result from the world wide consultation:

Question 12(a): Do you agree to <u>include a new recommendation on the use of non-customs sources and data compilation strategies</u> in the context of a diminishing role of customs declarations, the promotion of an integrated approach to economic statistics and the needs for analysis of globalization?	Yes	No	No Op.	N/A
Total of 115 replies	76	12	10	2
Developed (34)	79	15	6	0
Developing and transitional (81)	74	11	12	2
Question 12(b): Do you agree to address explicitly the issue of <u>valuation and time of recording in the case of non-customs records</u> ?	Yes	No	No Op.	N/A
Total of 115 replies	77	8	14	1
Developed (34)	71	12	18	0
Developing and transitional (81)	80	6	12	1

4. UNSD observation of the world wide consultation results

A large majority of countries support both parts of this proposal (76% and 77% vs. “No”-answers 12% and 8%, respectively).

Comments from 52 countries were received on this question:

- Countries describe their national practices and stress that non-customs sources are important and useful, in particular for obtaining information on the trade of special goods such as crude petroleum, natural gas, electricity, aircrafts, ships, so called shuttle trade and border trade.
- Countries agree that further guidance on the use (and limitations) of non-customs sources and data compilation strategies would be useful. In this context some stress the importance of an integrated approach to economic statistics. EU countries make reference to the Intrastat system.
- Besides valuation and time of recording, partner country attribution in the case of non-customs sources is identified as an additional issue.
- The view is expressed that recommendations to use non-customs sources should not imply neglecting improvements in customs recording.

5. Conclusions from the Virtual Meeting of EG-IMTS, Nov. 2008:

The Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics:

- Stressed that IMTS, Rev.3 should confirm that customs records remain the main and preferred data source for international merchandise trade statistics;
- Agreed that non-customs data sources should be recommended for use only if customs records are not available or clearly not adequate and that in such cases other administrative sources should be used as much as possible, in particular in order to avoid costly surveys;
- Proposed that IMTS, Rev.3 describes advantages and disadvantages of non-customs data sources briefly and that a more detailed discussion is provided in the Compilers Manual.

Possible issues for discussion

Feasibility of using non-customs sources

- Are non-customs sources available (aggregated or detailed data) to IMTS data compilers? There might be a need to pursue further arrangements with other parties.
- How to assess quality of available non-customs sources?
- How difficult is it to merge or integrate customs and other non-customs data?
- Does IMTS compilers have resources for enterprise surveys?

Thank you for your attention

Muchas Gracias