

*UNSD-ECLAC Workshop on International Trade Statistics*

**Implementation of IMTS 2010 and a new vision for trade statistics**

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**Item 15:**

**Data compilation strategies:  
customs and non customs data sources;  
Institutional arrangements**

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# IMTS 2010, Chapter VIII: Data compilation strategies

## A. Data sources

1. Use of customs records
2. Use of non-customs records
3. Comparison of customs and non-customs data sources

## B. Institutional arrangements

- *This is a newly added chapter, previously covered in IMTS Compilers Manual*

# A. Data sources

- Countries are **encouraged** to review their current data compilation practices and to develop a long term strategy to deal with the emerging issues to ensure uninterrupted availability of high quality and timely trade statistics

## I. Use of customs records

- **Customs records as preferred data source:** It is **recommended** that statisticians use the customs records as the main and normally preferred data source since those records reflect the physical movement of goods across borders, which international merchandise trade statistics aims to record, and, in general, are reliable, detailed and readily available in most countries. (para. 8.2 – New recommendation)
- **Close cooperation with customs experts:** It is **recommended** that statisticians closely cooperate with customs experts in order to correctly allocate customs procedure codes and associated trade transactions according to the general or the special trade system. (para. 8.4 – New recommendation)

# A. Data sources

## I. Use of customs records (cont.)

- **Access to customs procedure information:** It is **recommended** that information about the customs procedures applied to individual transactions be part of the dataset provided by customs to the agency responsible for the compilation of IMTS ([para. 8.6 – New recommendation](#))
- **Access to accompanying information:** Compilers should gain access to and use the additional information available at Customs, such as the commercial invoice, transport documents, import licenses and certificate of origin that is usually accompanying the customs declaration (as required and as permitted by law). ([para.8.7](#))
- **Awareness of customs recording coverage and additional information:** Compilers should be aware of the coverage of the customs recording (e.g., electricity, airplanes) and use additional data sources as required (including conducting surveys) but be also aware if the customs authorities might also have information about transactions of goods outside the customs territory, for example, about goods entering and leaving free zones. ([para. 8.8](#))

# A. Data sources

## 2. Use of non customs records

- **Use additional sources as necessary:** It is **recommended** that customs based data be supplemented with information obtained from other sources, as necessary, to ensure full coverage of international merchandise trade statistics.
- It is **recommended** to use **non-customs sources as substitutes for available customs records only if they provide a cost effective way to improve quality of trade statistics.** (e.g., Foreign shipping manifests; Enterprise surveys; Reporting by enterprises; Currency exchange records and records of monetary authorities; Aircraft and ship registers; Parcel post and letter post records; Reports from commodity boards) ([para. 8.9 – New recommendation](#))
- **Integrated approach to economic statistics:** In the case of the use of non-customs data sources such as enterprise surveys it is **recommended** that countries take an integrated approach to data collection and make use of business registers and enterprise identification numbers in order to obtain the required information with minimal costs and burden on enterprises. (Important for satisfying additional data requirements) ([para. 8.11 – New recommendation](#))

# A. Data sources

## 3. Comparison of customs and non customs data sources

- Specific problems to be aware of (para. 8.12):

### **Customs records:**

- May not provide full coverage for all transactions
- May not be subject to adequate statistical quality control at customs
- Might not be made available to statistics compilers in a comprehensive and unrestricted manner

### **Non-customs data sources:**

- May increase the burden on data provider and compilers
- May lack consistent classification (e.g., of goods, countries)
- May suffer from under-coverage (e.g., non-response in surveys)
- May not follow recommended standards on valuation, time of recording and partner country attribution

# A. Data sources

## 3. Comparison of customs and non customs data sources

- Reconciliation and integration of customs and non-customs data (para. 8.13):
  - Includes adding non-customs to the customs data and substituting non-customs for the customs data
  - Merging and crosschecking data collected from customs and non-customs sources is complex and time-consuming
  - Compilers need to be aware of the conceptual and practical difficulties in reconciling and integrating data from different sources

## B. Institutional arrangements

- It is **recommended** that countries consider the establishment of the institutional arrangements necessary to ensure the compilation of high quality trade statistics as a matter of high priority and periodically review their effectiveness (para. 8.17 – New recommendation)
- Compilation of IMTS is based on statistical and other applicable national laws and regulations (para. 8.14)

**Importance of laws and regulations concerning the data sources for IMTS (in terms of their contents and availability)**

“In particular, customs records, the main data source for IMTS, are subject to **customs laws and regulations**”



## B. Institutional arrangements

- **Effective institutional arrangements** are usually characterized by:
  - a) the designation of only one agency responsible for the dissemination of official trade statistics,
  - b) a clear definition of the rights and responsibilities of all agencies involved,
  - c) the establishment of formalized working arrangements between them including agreements on holding inter-agency working meetings as needed and on the access to micro data that those agencies collect.
- The **formal arrangements should be complemented by informal agreements** between the involved agencies and institutions as required. (para. 8.16)

## B. Institutional arrangements

- ***The national agency responsible for the overall compilation and dissemination of IMTS***
  - should, whenever appropriate, actively participate in the discussion of national legislation or relevant administrative regulations
  - in order to establish a solid foundation for the high quality and timeliness of trade statistics. (para. 8.14)
- ***Whatever the institutional arrangement, the national agency responsible for the overall IMTS compilation***
  - should periodically review the definitions, methods and the trade statistics themselves
  - to ensure that they are compiled in accordance with the recognized international methodological guidelines, are of high quality, and are available to users in a timely fashion. (para. 8.18)

# Additional guidance in IMTS 2010 - CM

## Part I: Legal framework and data sources

Chapter 1 - Legal framework

Chapter 2 - Customs declarations and related  
customs records

Chapter 3 - Non-customs administrative sources

Chapter 4 - Enterprise surveys

# Additional guidance in IMTS 2010 - CM

## Part II: Data compilation

Chapter 5 - Institutional arrangements

Chapter 7 - Integration of data from different  
sources

# Additional guidance in IMTS 2010 - CM

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Thank you for your  
attention