



Workshop on Trade in Services Statistics

Organized jointly by UNECLAC and UNSD in Cooperation with WTO

Concept Note

Background

Economic globalization facilitated by the adoption of digital technology has accelerated international trade in services. Recently, the Covid-19 pandemic is also impacting the international trade in services in many ways. For example, international travel is being negatively impacted while personal, cultural and recreational services powered by telecommunication services may be experiencing an increased demand. The changing patterns and dynamics of international trade present new measurement challenges, but also new opportunities for international trade statistics in services to use non-traditional in addition to traditional data sources and methods.

In addition to travel and transportation, which are very important within the Latin America and the Caribbean, there are services such as telecommunications and other business services that show high growth and no lesser participation (6% and 19%, respectively). In the case of telecommunications services in Brazil have increased by 320% between 2010 and 2019, and 140% in Costa Rica. In the case of other business services Costa Rica shows a growth of 164% between 2010 and 2019 and Colombia 146%, reaching a share of 36% and 16% in their total services exports, respectively. The figures indicate the need for measurement of international trade statistics in services as part of overall family of economic statistics and as a consequence the need for technical assistance.

In fact, the demand for technical assistance in the compilation of Trade in Services Statistics was strong even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The December 2005 WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, Annex C , para.10 referred to the need for capacity building in Trade in Services Statistics. In particular, the declaration states that WTO, inter alia, should provide targeted technical assistance: "... such assistance should be provided on, inter alia, compiling and analyzing statistical data on trade in services, [and] assessing interests in and gains from services trade ". The United Nations Statistical Commission in its 2010 report also "encouraged all relevant international agencies and the United Nations regional commissions, especially members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics, to contribute to the implementation of the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010 (MSITS2010), and recognized the efforts of the International Monetary Fund in capacity-building with regard to Balance-of-Payments Statistics; and recognized that training is particularly important in Trade in Services Statistics because of its methodological complexity."

Past and Related Activities

Based on several requests received from the member States and national statistical authorities for Trade in Services Statistics, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO) are organizing jointly e-Learning courses on Statistics of International Trade in Services on an annual basis. The latest e-Course was organized from 21 September to 30 October 2020¹ which were attended by more than 750 participants from 140 countries.

This Workshop is a targeted follow-up, organized jointly by the UNECLAC and UNSD in cooperation with WTO. The main goal of the Workshop is to assist the countries gain better understanding of the concepts and definitions of the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010 (MSITS 2010) especially on selected topics such as digital trade and their applications to selected categories of Trade in Services.

Objectives of the Workshop

Two main objectives of the Workshop include supporting countries in:

- 1) further advancing the implementation of MSITS 2010 recommendations especially for selected categories of Trade in Services, and
- 2) enhancing capacities to produce high quality data and meet an increased demand for timely and relevant data for policy needs in the Decade of Action and era of Covid-19 pandemic; addressing directly the aims of Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Workshop will include presentations on conceptual and methodological issues, data sources, collection and compilation, country practices, and round-table discussions especially regarding challenging categories like Travel, Construction Services, Insurance and Pension Services, and regarding Mode of Supply and Foreign Affiliates Statistics.

Participants

Primary target beneficiaries of the Workshop include compilers and producers of data and Statistics of International Trade in Services:

- 1) Statistical Officers for Trade in Services
- 2) Balance of Payment Statisticians
- 3) National Accountants
- 4) Business statisticians

Secondary target beneficiaries of the Workshop include users of data and Statistics of International Trade in Services:

- 5) Ministries (Tourism, Trade, Economy, Finance)
- 6) Other industry players (economists, lawyers, etc.)

¹ https://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/events/2020/2020_SCIS/default.asp

Organization

The workshop will be virtually conducted in a form of a Webinar on the WebEx platform. Simultaneous two-way translation of English to Spanish, and Spanish to English will be provided.

Contact

For further information regarding the workshop, please contact Ms. Paula Fuenzalida, ECLAC (E-mail: paula.fuenzalida@un.org)