



CONCEPT NOTE OF E-LEARNING COURSE ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS

Organized by UNSD, UNCTAD, in cooperation with WTO

16 March – 24 April 2020

I. BACKGROUND:

The development of a sound statistical system is key to the implementation of evidence-based policies and to the emergence of an open and unbiased dialogue between stakeholders and policy makers. As a consequence, it is an essential tool of both economic performance and social cohesion.

This is all the more true when trade negotiations are under way and when countries have to understand and precisely assess their offensive and defensive interests in this context. In such a situation, public authorities have to define a global strategy and to translate this approach into specific negotiating positions. Statistics are a key tool in this process. They facilitate the understanding and sharing of a diagnostic of the current situation and a clear understanding of national interests among all national stakeholders.

While internationally agreed statistical definitions, concepts and methodologies regarding trade in goods statistics are long established, there are still many implementation challenges especially regarding institutional coordination, quality assurance, compilation, dissemination, and also in new areas of work. Furthermore, it is important to promote and share best practices among partners, including with new colleagues in both developed and developing statistical systems in this area of work.

This course comes as a response to several demands for technical assistance in the compilation of International Merchandise Trade Statistics and addresses directly the aims of Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This course has been developed and produced jointly by UN Statistics Division, UNCTAD, and the World Trade Organization. It has also benefited from the close collaboration of the Inter-Agency Task Force on 'Statistics of International Trade and Services'.

II. OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

The global objective of the e-learning course is to provide more easily accessible and rather complete training material for those involved in the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of International Merchandise Trade Statistics

The main goals are to enhance statisticians' ability to apply the most recent internationally agreed recommendations on IMTS, define best possible data sources, set up adequate (or enforce existing) collection systems, and enhance statistics compilation processes. Furthermore, the course would communicate the importance of quality, metadata, timely dissemination, and links to economic analysis and national policy objectives. The project would guide trainees on how to better use the internationally available guidance, especially the IMTS Concepts and Definitions 2010 and the related Compilers Manual.

III. PROGRAMME OUTLINE:

Each module includes interactive assessments and links to communication tools for online interaction. Every module will consist of PowerPoint presentations with video a participant's manual, a forum, tests and case studies. Participants should spend between 3 to 4 hours per week to study the material and participate in the forums.

The 6 distance learning modules are:

- Module 1 – Conceptual Framework
- Module 2 – Institutional Arrangements
- Module 3 – Production and Compilation
- Module 4 – Metadata and Quality
- Module 5 – Dissemination and Analysis
- Module 6 – New Areas of Work

The course will be conducted through TrainForTrade's distance training platform. In this platform participants will have access to manuals, to multimedia presentations, to module exams, opinion surveys and forums created for each module for discussions with the instructor and other participants.

IV. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

To be able to participate in the course participants need:

- A computer (tablet or smartphone) with headphones or loudspeakers, a browser (Chrome, Firefox or Safari) and Acrobat Reader.
- Internet access
- A valid E-mail address

V. TARGET POPULATION:

Primary Target

Primary target are trade data compilers from (depends on countries):

- National Statistical Office (NSO)
- Central Bank
- Ministry of Trade
- Customs Administration

Secondary Target

- Trade negotiators
- Trade statisticians
- Trade analysts / Economist (reporting indicators)

From

- Ministries of Foreign affairs, Agriculture, Transport, Energy, etc.
- Chamber of Commerce, Industry
- NGOs
- Academics