



Regional Workshop on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS)

*Organized jointly by the Central Bank of El Salvador
and the United Nations Statistics Division*

San Salvador, El Salvador
23-25 October 2023

Concept note

1. Background

Between 2015 and 2016, the Central Bank of El Salvador (BCR) worked jointly on a South-South cooperation project with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), which included a regional workshop, observation visits to Paraguay and Mexico to learn about the functioning of international trade statistics systems and a technical assistance program to improve the quality of statistics.

International trade is an engine for boosting countries' economic growth. That is why statistical data on foreign trade are vital to promoting public policies that underpin this growth. That is the reason why there is a high demand for quality statistical information, which international organizations such as the UNSD support, through technical support, so that countries generate robust, quality and timely information.

In line with the above, the BCR, aware of the need for timely, quality statistical information consistent with the mission of generating and disseminating economic information for the formulation of public policies and contributing to the development of the country, based on the cooperation provided by the United Nations Department of Statistics, has worked steadily to improve the quality of statistics through the creation of an information system, the expansion of coverage, the dissemination of broader information and the development of new data visualization tools for the public.

Within these efforts, the creation of the information system called "System of International Merchandise Trade Statistics" has been fundamental since it has allowed greater efficiency in the generation of statistics. In 2017 the first stage of the project was completed and until 2020 worked on additional modules that allow the BCR to obtain more diverse information and make it available to the public.

2. Regional workshop

Following-up on the success of the UNSD- BCR collaboration regarding enhancing capacity for the production and dissemination of IMTS, the BCR and the UNSD are again undertaking joint efforts to organize this workshop that seeks to share the results of the development of El Salvador's foreign trade system, and experiences of the countries of the region in specific topics. The workshop will

also sensitize the planned revisions to the Trade Statistics Manuals and lay the foundations for countries to compile foreign trade statistics with the new methodology.

3. Objectives of the workshop

Five main objectives of the Workshop include:

- (a) Further advance the implementation of IMTS 2010 recommendations especially for scope and coverage, issues of bilateral asymmetries, quality and data comparability, data dissemination, analyses and uses, among others
- (b) Analyze topics of interest on the compilation of foreign trade statistics;
- (c) Creating a way to strengthen the generation of international merchandise trade statistics
- (d) Publicize El Salvador's International Merchandise Trade System and other experiences in this regard;
- (e) Discuss emerging issues on merchandise trade statistics, revision of the trade manuals.

4. Target audience

Primary target beneficiaries of the Workshop include representatives of Central Banks, National Statistical Offices, Customs Offices, Ministries of Trade and Industry, and others involved in the generation of international merchandise trade statistics in the Central America region. In particular, this includes statisticians, compilers, analysts, and data processors of merchandise trade statistics.

5. Organization

The Workshop will be facilitated by UNSD and Central Bank of El Salvador experts. The participation of experts from other international organizations could also be welcome and enhance the Workshop. Participation is in-person for maximum interaction in the discussion of complex issues. It will be in Spanish/English languages with simultaneous interpretations.

Contacts for further information regarding the workshop:

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