

Briefing Note

Task Team on International Trade Statistics

Background

In its 52nd session, United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed revising IMTS 2010 and MSITS 2010. Further, it welcomed the creation of a Task Team on International Trade Statistics (TT on ITS) under the UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics (UNCEBTS) on joint research agenda between business and international trade statistics to revise the trade-related standards. To move forward, this Note outlines the implementation plan and envisaged roles of UN agencies and countries.

UNCEBTS and TT on ITS

UNCEBTS is a country-led committee currently comprising five task teams a) Business Dynamics, Demography, and Entrepreneurship, b) Capacity Building, and Exhaustive Business Registers, c) Globalization and Digitalization, and d) Well-being and Sustainability, and e) International Trade Statistics. The UNSC52 (decision 7.f) welcomed the creation of a Task Team on International Trade Statistics to spearhead a joint research agenda on business and international trade statistics for the revision of the trade-related standards. It recommended that this new Task Team also work on the development of new trade-related business indicators, on the integration of international trade-related characteristics of businesses in the statistical business registers, and on the promotion of the e-learning training programme on international trade statistics in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.

The Committee and the Task Team need to take this work forward with the representation and active participation of countries from different regions and international agencies. Also, there is a need to coordinate the integration of the work programmes and working methods with the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics as recommended by the Friends of the Chair Group on economic statistics to avoid duplication of work and advance the active collaboration between countries and agencies.

The Task Team will comprise of statisticians, contributing to the development and implementation of new standards and methods, data programmes, and capacity building activities. It will also need to promote coordination, collaboration and integration of work programmes among different groups and international agencies. The Task Team will be led by Ms. Cristina Neves (INE Portugal) and Mr. Houssein Ouljour (Office des Changes Morocco). They have in-depth knowledge and extensive experience in international trade statistics in goods and services, including its integration with business statistics, in their respective countries.

Furthermore, to facilitate coordination and integration of the update of the international trade statistics manuals, it was agreed to categorize the research topics into the horizontal and vertical dimensions. The vertical integration of international trade statistics pertains to the upstream harmonization of international trade statistics with macroeconomic statistical frameworks, including BPM and SNA, and the downstream integration with the various data

sources, including customs', administrative, and survey data. National and international agencies have complementary knowledge and experience in sources, methods, and compilation practices on the upstream harmonization. The methods and practices for vertical integration are well-developed, but require a review to meet today's user requirements for further integrated and consistent cross border and related international trade statistics, and to consider the ongoing revision programs of the BPM and SNA. On the other hand, the horizontal integration is less developed and requires collaboration between the various Task Teams (TTs) of UNCEBTS, including the TTs on globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, extended business registers and capacity building as well as other groups like Wiesbaden Group and the Voorburg Group. The horizontal integration will benefit from the experience in UNCEBTS and its enterprise-centric approach, using SBR as the central coordinating tool for compilation purposes.

Trade Statistics Research Agenda

A preliminary, not exhaustive list of research items for revision of the IMTS 2010 and MSITS 2010 has been compiled. It is a comprehensive but not yet an exhaustive list, which incorporates the research agenda on digitalization, globalization, well-being and sustainability. Figure below shows the topics categorized by the need for vertical/horizontal integration.

Figure: Topics categorized by the need for vertical/horizontal integration.

