

# Country experience: Austria (Chapter 3)

## Country experience: Austria

3.19. **Statistics on resident/non-resident transactions in services** In Austria, Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB) is legally responsible for compiling and disseminating resident/non-resident trade in services statistics (Foreign Exchange Act 2004, section 6 (1)). In order to keep the cost of data compilation low, both for reporting and producing statistics, OeNB opted to cooperate closely with Statistics Austria. The two institutions have signed a basic framework agreement on the basis of international and/or national legislation, to guide their cooperation in all fields of statistics related to the economy of Austria. The basic principle of cooperation governing the determination of specific areas of activity is that each institution concentrates on its respective expertise and data access. The agreement defines the compilation of services trade statistics as an area of "intensive cooperation", as OeNB and Statistics Austria work jointly on a single statistical product, in contrast to areas of "vital interest", in which one party is responsible for data production and the other is a principal user of the data. The details of cooperation in this area are laid down in an individual service contract which calls for one institution to provide input for a statistical product for which the other institution bears the legal obligation and responsibility. The contract specifies: (a) individual production stages, dates and interfaces; (b) classifications, revisions and quality measures; (c) access to non-published data (d) the use and reconciliation of existing registers and administrative data; (e) the evaluation of new statistical, technical, financial and legal requirements; and (f) coordination of the stance to be taken in national, European Union and international bodies.

3.19. **FATS** In contrast to resident/non-resident trade in services statistics, the national statistical office is responsible for compiling and disseminating FATS in Austria. Those statistics are compiled in close cooperation with the OeNB, which has a service provider contract with the statistical office. Concerning inward FATS, OeNB determines which enterprises are foreign-controlled and the statistical office collects the respective variables as part of the structural business statistics. Concerning outward FATS, the respective variables are collected by OeNB as part of the survey on FDI. Through such an approach, FATS can be compiled with a minimal additional reporting burden for enterprises in Austria.

3.20. In addition to regular information sharing in the course of statistics production, OeNB and Statistics Austria have set up a committee consisting of at least two higher voting members of each institution. The committee meets at least once each quarter to monitor joint activities and recommend enhancements. It further initiates extensions and updates to the existing areas of cooperation, including the prolongation of and amendments to the basic cooperation framework agreement.

3.21. With the introduction of direct reporting in compiling external statistics, OeNB also initiated close cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce of Austria to support contacts with the business sector. The two institutions decided to enter into a basic cooperation framework agreement whose main focus is to enhance efficiency in producing and disseminating up-to-date and relevant statistical information. On the one hand, OeNB aims to minimize the cost of statistical production, including the cost of data reporting by both enterprises and the OeNB, by making the utmost use of administrative and register information. On the other hand, OeNB makes efforts to disseminate easily accessible and detailed statistical information to reduce the cost of accessing data. The Chamber of Commerce assists OeNB in fulfilling its tasks by supporting communication with enterprises in various ways, including offering access to internal media and events and arguing for the importance of statistical information in general. At the same time, the Chamber of Commerce fosters the use of administrative and existing statistical information to keep reporting obligations to a minimum and advocates the simplification of reports, including through the use of electronic media.

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