

# A. Purposes of institutional arrangements

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5.2. *Institutional arrangements.* Usually, several governmental bodies participate in the compilation of a country's official trade statistics. The most important governmental entities participating in IMTS compilation are national statistical offices, customs administrations, central banks, tax authorities, the ministry of trade and other specialized governmental bodies such as, e.g., commodity boards, trade development boards, etc. The institutional arrangements are understood as constituting a set of laws, regulations and agreements between the involved agencies on the division of the responsibilities in the collection, processing, compilation and dissemination of external trade statistics of a country. The mandates and the main areas of activity of those agencies are usually defined by national law which provides the foundation for the working out of detailed institutional arrangements.

5.3. *Purpose of institutional arrangements and international recommendation.* The purpose of institutional arrangements is to ensure that high-quality national trade statistics are put at the disposal of national and international users in a timely and convenient manner, and that the statistical process is carried out with the maximum possible efficiency. In order that these goals may be achieved, the details of the responsibilities of the involved agencies should be elaborated, agreed upon and documented. IMTS 2010 (para. 8.17), recommends that countries consider the establishment of the institutional arrangements necessary to ensure the compilation of high-quality trade statistics as a matter of high priority and periodically review their effectiveness.<sup>[2]</sup>

5.4. In particular, the establishment and maintenance of effective institutional arrangement is necessary to ensure that (a) the needs of all interested governmental agencies and the general public are taken into account, (b) the applicable international standards are followed by all involved agencies, (c) all available resources are used in the most effective way, (d) proper quality assurance procedures covering various aspects of data production and dissemination are developed and executed in a transparent manner and (e) public confidence in the disseminated data is assured, so that the statistics are used to the maximum extent possible.

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[2] When adopting the new recommendations for IMTS at its forty-first session in 2010, the Statistical Commission explicitly "requested that greater attention be given to the strengthening of institutional arrangements in countries to ensure that proper national coordination mechanisms exist for the compilation of high-quality international merchandise trade statistics; and also requested that cooperation with compilers of statistics on international trade in services, the balance of payments and national accounts be ensured". See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 4 (E/2010/24), chap. I, sect. B, decision 41/103, para. (d).