C. Characteristics of effective institutional arrangements

3.8. Institutional arrangements should involve the key producers and users of the statistics and can be set up in different ways, depending upon each country's needs, priorities and resources. They should contribute to establishing appropriate channels of communication, as well as and mechanisms of coordination, to ensure efficiency in statistical production. Pre-existing institutional arrangements in related statistical domains (e.g. international merchandise trade and tourism statistics) should be taken into account and built upon, when possible.

3.9. As part of the BOP, resident/non-resident trade in services statistics are important to monetary policy analysis and, together with national accounts and other economic statistics, describe a country's economic development. Therefore, national statistical offices and central banks often share responsibility for the collection and compilation of those statistics.

3.10. Compilers should be aware of another important analytical aspect, namely, the need of countries' economic agencies, such as ministries of economic affairs and chambers of commerce, to conduct assessments of the competitiveness of countries and economic sectors for the design of economic policies and international trade negotiations based on GATS. Furthermore, the compilation of statistics on the international supply of services in some areas coincides with other mandatory regulations. For example, financial market authorities are typically responsible for banking and insurance supervision. Moreover, national statistical offices, national census bureaus and other institutions may play very important roles in collecting, producing and disseminating FATS, in accordance with the legal mandate in the statistics area assigned to each institution.

3.11. The success of institutional arrangements, in most cases, is dependents on the existence of a clear division of the responsibilities and mutually beneficial cooperation between national statistical agencies and central banks (and possibly other agencies), which have historically developed in different ways. In view of the growing need for information that is coinciding with rising cost consciousness, the agencies and banks should seek cooperation in focusing on their respective areas of expertise, making use of existing data and ensuring consistency in statistical production.

3.12. The process is further stimulated by the planned expiration in many countries of the bank settlements systems (traditionally the main data source of central banks for BOP statistics, which cover trade in services). Such systems are generally being gradually replaced by enterprise surveys as the main data source for the compilation of trade in services statistics. The transition is making evident the need for closer cooperation and coordination between central banks and national statistical offices, as the latter normally conduct enterprise surveys and maintain business registers.

3.13. National statistical offices and central banks should also look for close cooperation with chambers of commerce, or other representatives of a country's private sector, to obtain support in producing high-quality data. On one hand, chambers of commerce or other representatives of a country's private sector can inform enterprises about the importance of timely and accurate reporting and the use of electronic media and support communication between statistics producers and enterprises in the design of surveys and in the interpretation of results. On the other hand, national statistical offices and national census bureaus can make customized datasets available to the representatives of the private sector that reflect their specific economic interests.

3.14. Central banks and financial market authorities, sometimes centralized in a single institution, work closely together in carrying out their respective tasks for financial market stability. Therefore, they normally cooperate closely and no additional legal act is needed to ensure the sharing of information. However, in addition to institutional arrangements, central banks and national statistical offices should ensure that they have legal access to administrative data on banking and insurance transactions collected for supervisory purposes.

3.15. The following characteristics of effective institutional arrangements are recommended:

(a) They should take into account the respective responsibilities of the institutions involved covering all stages of the statistical process, from the identification of user needs and the collection of raw data to data compilation, dissemination and evaluation;

(b) The rights and responsibilities of the institutions involved should be clearly defined to avoid misunderstandings, the duplication of work or the omission of significant elements of work;

(c) The terms of cooperation should be laid out in a legal document so that any changes to administrative procedures or statistical processes that could affect data compilation become an integral part of the terms of cooperation and can be dealt with in advance;

(d) Institutional arrangements should leave room for flexibility in everyday statistical production;

(e) Given the legal foundation for the cooperation of various agencies, one institution—the national statistical office, the central bank or a specially established interagency body—should have a clear mandate to monitor and coordinate the production of statistics on the international supply of services, disseminate the data and keep in contact with international organizations and other data users;

(f) The main user groups should be included in the institutional arrangements and their needs should be accounted for, taking into account the legal obligations and resource restrictions of the institutions that produce statistics.

3.16. Further, the characteristics of effective cooperation are as follows:

(a) The operationalization of the relevant international statistical standards and good country practices;

(b) The development and implementation of a work programme for the collection and compilation of data in accordance with the statistical framework for describing the international supply of services, including the establishment of appropriate interagency data compilation arrangements;

(c) The establishment of close contact and regular consultations with the user community to guarantee the analytical and policy relevance of the compiled and disseminated data;

(d) The promotion of an integrated approach to data compilation, as well as of appropriate quality management, to ensure that high-quality data on the international supply of services meet increasing user demand and are made available, despite limited resources;

(e) The dissemination of easily accessible and detailed statistics on the international supply of services to users, both domestically and internationally;

(f) Consultations with enterprises on questions concerning the reconciliation and exchange of data.

3.17. Finally, guidelines for creating effective institutional arrangements and terms of cooperation include the following:

(a) Adopt a strategic approach to multilevel planning for advancing the integration of economic statistics;

(b) Implement effective process management, from the identification of data sources to the dissemination of outputs;

(c) Periodically review institutional arrangements and initiate necessary adjustments to keep them relevant in the light of evolving user needs and emerging data sources;

(d) Establish an advisory committee to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are taken into account and that the committee members assist in the development of data by supporting sound decision-making;

(e) Promote communication between the staff of the different institutions involved to develop an understanding of the entire production process of statistics compilation within the framework for describing the international supply of services, as recommended in MSITS 2010.