Country experience: China: compilation of mode 4 person numbers

9.38. According to the Foreign Trade Law of China, qualified enterprises that seek to supply trade in services supplied through the presence of natural persons, or to enter into contractual services with natural persons, need to apply to and receive approval from the Government. The governmental agency responsible for approving the applications of enterprises or service suppliers also collects and aggregates data on outflows and stocks of mode 4 persons in the category of contractual services. A statistical institution has been jointly established by the Ministry of Commerce and the National Bureau of Statistics in China, to which relevant enterprises are obligated to report required information, such as service projects, outflow and stock of persons, occupation or overseas work, length of stay and destination country. The national authority is responsible for the aggregation and annual publication of the data.

9.39. Sometimes basic information, such as occupation, purpose and destination of visit, is compiled separately by different authorities, such as immigration, tourism or labour, each with its own statistical purposes and measurement scope, resulting in statistics that do not always match the requirements for measuring the number of mode 4 persons. As a result, it is difficult to extract useful information from the existing statistical systems. For instance, occupations may be classified by primary category (i.e., manager, technician or professional), and it may be impossible to further break those classifications down by industry details. One potential solution is for compilers to cooperate more closely with the relevant sectors and ask for additional useful information. Alternatively, statistical systems of the authorities, other than the compiling authority, could be redesigned to meet the data needs for compiling the number of mode 4 persons. Another solution is for compilers to establish a new and specific statistical system for the compilation of the number of mode 4 persons. Both solutions require close cooperation among the different agencies involved, such as immigration, labour and tourism. Redesigning the existing system requires more communication and understanding, and increases the daily workload for the agencies involved. Establishment of a new system may improve the coverage and accuracy of the data, but requires a large capital input and more coordination, and could raise the risk of leaking personal and business information.