C.4. Work permits

9.34. In many developed countries in which migration regulations are complex, each legal foreign entrant applying for a work permit is asked to register his/her nationality, occupation, purpose and place of visit, length of stay, etc. The information on the inflow and stock of such persons could be collected from the immigration authority and, with the help of such information, it may be possible, under certain conditions (see para. 9.35) to estimate the movements, numbers and presence of foreign natural persons under mode 4 of supply. In some other countries, registrations of work permits may be available from the immigration or labour authority and may include additional information on the foreign resident, such as date of entry into the country and detailed occupation type, as well as information regarding the resident employer, such as name, location and type of business, or even gross annual income and number of employees. Such data could serve as a major source for compiling the number of foreign employees of service suppliers or the number of foreign nationals providing services as independent suppliers. Moreover, such information could complement information used source for compiling FATS statistics, at least for foreign affiliates in the services industry that may be hiring foreign nationals, both in terms of identifying such foreign affiliates as well as estimating their sales and/or output and number of employees. Data derived from documents issued in the context of social security coordination and employment services could also be useful sources of information.

9.35. Work permits and visa application records Only permits relating specifically to mode 4, or those that are clearly identified as a subgroup of a mode 4 category, can be used for the compilation of mode 4 persons. While rarely possible, immigration registers could, in theory, include the relevant information. A solution could be to add questions to visa/permit application forms to obtain more detail on the reasons for migration, visit or permit request. This would enable the acquisition of information more directly related to mode 4, as defined in MSITS 2010, which would, therefore, be comparable among countries. For example, current visa information may indicate the length of stay or whether a migrant is moving under the entrepreneur or skilled migrant category, but may not indicate whether a person is moving as an intracorporate transferee or being directly recruited by an overseas service producing company. In general, statistics on visas granted for work or education reasons are available; however, further breakdown by reason of stay (employment contract, service contract or official residence permit categories) or for short-term visas of less than three months are typically not available.

Next: C.5. Population records

[2] It is important to note that in certain cases, countries have established commitments based on existing specific types of visas or working permits, which may or may not comply with the definition of mode 4 as defined in MSITS 2010 (i.e., it may have been designed to serve complementary or additional administrative needs). When that information is used to analyse mode 4, it should be clearly specified that such information relates to the commitment made, but does not necessarily refer to mode 4 as defined statistically.

[3] Actually, such information is often used by analysts and policy makers to support decisions, including concerning labour migration. Ensuring that relevant mode 4 information is also included and reliably recorded in such a source would greatly improve understanding of the different types and characteristics of international movements, and consequently help make the distinction between labour migration and mode 4 trade in services.

[4] See also http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat, the technical guidelines for data collection under article 6 of regulation 862/2007 of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing Council regulation 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers. Statistics on residence permits specify, under those called grants of permission to stay to third-country nationals for reasons related to remunerated activities, categories for those activities (e.g., highly skilled workers, European Union Blue Card, researchers, seasonal workers and other remunerated activities). The last category could be expanded for mode 4 purposes.