The Manual is published by UNSD at the request of the United Nations Statistical Commission to assist United Nations Member States in the implementation of the methodological guidelines laid out in International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions (published in 1998). The Manual has been prepared in cooperation with other international organizations and country experts. It is directed to all institutions that play a role in collecting, compiling, and disseminating trade statistics. It may also serve as a guide to users who wish to understand the nature of trade data better. The Manual discusses the conceptual and institutional framework of data collection, the sources of data, methods of data compilation, and data dissemination, reconciliation, and exchange.