



JOINT GCC-STAT - UNSD REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS

WEBINAR HOSTED BY THE GCC-STAT

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA



9-11 NOVEMBER 2020



PREFACE

Economic globalization, advancement in technology and the emergence of Big Data, coupled with rapid growth of digital trade and e-commerce accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and some case despite the complexities it creates, present many new challenges, but also new opportunities for International Trade Statistics in goods and services.

Those new challenges and opportunities, at a large extent, are well reflected in the International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010) and its companion Compiler Manual (IMTS 2010 CM), developed by the United Nations Statistics (UN) Division (UNSD), and in the latest methodological documents and other guidance materials prepared by the UN Expert Group on international trade and economic globalization statistics, Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics and the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics discussed at and supported by the 51st session of UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) held at UN Headquarters in New-York city from 3–6 March 2020 with active participation and inputs by GCC member states and the GCC-Stat.

To add here also other methodological documents and guidance materials, compilation frameworks, automated platforms and global and regional databases on, or related to, trade statistics, developed or being developed, or modified, by international and regional organizations, covering big data: automatic identification system (AIS) and Automatic Dependent Surveillance (ADS-B), digital trade, including e-commerce, world integrated trade solution (WITS), trade by enterprise characteristics (TEC), global value chain (GVC), trade in value-added (TiVA), ABRAMS world trade wiki business intelligence portal, and GCC intergraded MRSA system.

And lastly macroeconomic linkages between the IMTS and Statistics of International Trade in Services (SITS) and the macro-economic frameworks, such as national accounts statistics, balance of payments statistics. Linking trade statistics with business statistics, and alignment across all economic statistics are essential for measuring the GVC.

The current workshop is the second Joint GCC-Stat - UNSD regional workshop on IMTS. The first joint regional workshop was held from 7-10 February 2016 in Muscat, Oman, hosted by the GCC-Stat. 29 participants from 15 Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) countries attended the workshop, including 19 participants from GCC member countries: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait, and 10 participants from eight Arabic speaking Western Asia and Africa countries: Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia. Also, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) attended the workshop, and the workshop greatly benefitted from their contributions made.

The main purpose of the workshop was to assist the countries in better understanding the concepts and definitions of IMTS-2010 and implementing the international standards and recommendations



set out in the IMTS-2010 and its companion compiler manual (IMTS-2010 CG). Although noticeable progress has been made since then, by GCC member states, in implementing IMTS-2010, there is still a significant room for further improvement on this path, including implementation of Unified GCC Customs procedure codes, developing and adopting statistical GCC statistical procedure codes, and respective correlation tables, compiling IMTS based on general trade system, compiling IMTS by second partner country (country of consignment, and reducing bilateral asymmetries), and other.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOPS

The objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- 1) Advancing the implementation of International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010;
- 2) Raising awareness on the current working definition of statistical conceptual framework on digital trade and e-commerce; and
- 3) Building capacity of national statistics centers and other relevant agencies in addressing the challenges of, and benefitting from the opportunities created by advancement in technology and emergence of Big Data.

It is also an opportunity for countries to share their experiences and challenges in the compilation of IMTS.

The outcome of the discussion will form the basis for developing strategic action plan for GCC member countries and the GCC-Stat in the priority statistics field of international trade statistics that will provide users with up-to-date data relevant to contemporary challenges, outline new opportunities for data collection and create a “road map” for the development of intra-GCC and extra GCC statistics on trade in goods, and, in some extent, also of SITS.

The discussion is to include theoretical as well as practical issues relating to the implementation of the IMTS 2010 and its companion Compilers Manual (IMTS-2010-CM), and the new challenges and opportunities ahead, under the following topics:

1. Implementation by GCC member countries of IMTS 2010
2. Latest developments in revision of international standards and future of IMTS
3. Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade (including e-commerce)
4. WCO frameworks of standard on e-commerce.
5. Status of global e-commerce in goods and services
6. Demand and challenges in measuring e-commerce in countries - (i.e., increase of e-commerce due to COVID-19): round table
7. Missing Data Estimates, Intra-GCC Trade and Asymmetries in IMTS
8. Enhancing usefulness of customs data
9. Processing data for UN Comtrade
10. Big data for IMTS: AIS datasets and Trade Statistics



11. Trade by Enterprise Characteristics (TEC)
12. GCC-Stat MRSA project: an overview of the MRSA project in terms of the mechanism for collecting and making available data and the benefits achieved.
13. GCC Interconnection Authority (GCC-IA) Electricity trade data.
14. Forthcoming GCC HS-8 2022
15. HS 2017 and forthcoming HS 2022
16. Conclusion and evaluation of the workshop

The workshop will include presentations on conceptual and methodological issues, country practices, and round-table discussions.

PARTICIPANTS

The target groups of participants include compilers of IMTS from member countries:

- 1) Compilers of international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS) and statistics of international trade in services (SITS) from national statistics centers (NSCs),
- 2) Compilers of Customs statistics form national Customs administrations (NCAs);
- 3) Compilers of balance of payments and international investment position statistics from monetary authorities and central banks;
- 4) Compilers of IMTS from NSCs from other Arabic speaking countries from the national statistical centers and/or central banks and/or national customs administrations (NCAs).

OTHER

Organizers: The Workshop is a Joint undertaking organized by the Gulf Cooperation Council Statistical Centre (GCC-STAT) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), and hosted by the GCC Stat using Zoom Webinar platform.

Languages: simultaneous two way translation: English-Arabic, Arabic-English

Other contributors and invitees

- 1) GCC Secretariat, Customs Affairs (GCC Customs)
- 2) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- 3) Eurostat
- 4) World Customs Organization (WCO)
- 5) World Trade Organization (WTO)
- 6) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- 7) ABRAMS world trade wiki
- 8) GCC Interconnection Authority (GCC-IA)



Place and dates: the workshop is hosted by the GCC-Stat, Muscat – Sultanate of Oman, from November 9-11, 2020 using Zoom Webinar platform

Contact information for substantive matters

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TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Day 1: Monday, 9 November 2020

- 13:30-14:00 Registration and signing in (open throughout the meeting)
- 14:00-14:30 1. Inaugural program
- a. Launching the meeting (Chairperson)
 - b. Welcome address by GCC-Stat
 - c. Opening remarks by UNSD
- 14:30-15:15 2. Setting the stage
- a. Adoption of agenda, purpose and context of the workshop (UNSD)
 - b. Administrative and procedural matters (Chairperson)
- 14:45-15:15 3. Implementation by member countries of IMTS 2010 (GCC-Stat)
- 15:15-15:30 Coffee break
- 15:30-15:45 4. Latest developments in revision of international standards and future of IMTS (UNSD):
- 15:45-16:00 5. Handbook on Measuring Digital Trade (including e-commerce) (WTO)
- 16:00-16:15 6. WCO frameworks of standard on e-commerce. (WCO)
- 16:15-16:30 7. Status of global e-commerce in goods and services (UNCTAD)
- 16:30-17:00 8. Demand and challenges in measuring e-commerce in countries – (i.e., increase of e-commerce due to COVID-19) (Round Table).
Mediator: GCC-Stat, UNSD



Day 2: Tuesday, 10 November 2020

- 13:45-14:00 Registration and signing in (open throughout the meeting)
- 14:00-14:15 9. Missing Data Estimates, Intra-GCC Trade and Asymmetries in IMTS (GCC-Stat)
- 14:15-15:15 10. Country presentations on compilation challenges in implementation of IMTS 2010 (National experiences)
- 15:15-15:30 Coffee break
- 15:30-15:45 11. Enhancing usefulness of customs data (Abrams.wiki)
- 15:45-16:00 12. Processing data for UN Comtrade (UNSD)
- 16:00-16:30 13. Big data for IMTS: AIS datasets and Trade Statistics (IMF)
- 16:30-17:00 14. Round Table.
Mediators: IMF, UNSD

Day 3: Wednesday, 11 November 2020

- 13:45-14:00 Registration and signing in (open throughout the meeting day)
- 14:00-14:15 15. Trade by Enterprise Characteristics (TEC): Eurostat
- 14:15-14:45 16. GCC-Stat MRSA project: an overview of the MRSA project in terms of the mechanism for collecting and making available data and the benefits achieved. (GCC-Stat)
- 14:45-15:00 17. Electricity trade data. (GCC Interconnection Authority (GCC-IA))
- 15:00-15:15 Coffee break
- 15:15-15:30 18. Commodity classifications: forthcoming GCC HS-8 2022 (GCC Customs)
- 15:30-15:45 19. Commodity classifications: HS 2017 and forthcoming HS 2022 (WCO)
- 15:45-16:15 20. National experiences
- 16:15-17:00 21. Round table, conclusion and evaluation of the workshop (Chairperson)



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