World Trade Organization

2.6 International trade and balance of payments (World Trade Organization)

International Merchandise Trade Statistics and Tariff and Trade Databases

Ongoing work:
For disaggregated merchandise trade statistics, the WTO is largely a user of other agencies' data. It complements these data with own estimates and adjustments to build aggregates according to WTO definitions. In addition, through the inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (TF IMTS) and other bodies, the WTO supports actively ongoing efforts to improve coordination in data collection and dissemination, development of concepts and definitions, and analysis of trade data.

On tariffs and tariff-related imports, the WTO collects primary data from national compilers. The WTO actively cooperates with UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre (ITC) to enhance the exchange of tariff information through a Common Analytical Market Access database (CAMAD) combining information on tariffs and imports at the tariff line level. The WTO also maintains a database containing WTO Members' legal commitments on goods.

The WTO also coordinates the inter-agency MDG-Trade group of Geneva (ITC/UNCTAD/WTO) that monitors market access conditions for developing and least-developed countries and produces corresponding MDG indicators. Besides compiling the relevant information, work focuses on improving the measurement and interpretation of related MDG statistics by extending coverage and developing complementary indicators (

).

Priority objectives:

To actively contribute to the development of a consistent, internationally-recognized set of up-to-date international trade statistics and tariff information.

To implement an enhanced framework for the collection of WTO Members' submissions of tariffs and tariff-related import statistics in order to fill in the gaps of missing data.

New activities:

In 2010, for measuring trade by value-added, an atlas-type publication of the Asian region will be produced in co-operation with IDE-JETRO to analyse the impact of global value chains on trade flows and regional integration.

The WTO will follow up with FAO/UNIDO on individual product value chains in the agribusiness sector to complement the analysis of global value chains.

The WTO will make available to the public its tariff databases at tariff line level in January 2010 via the Tariff Analysis Facility. The public already has access to tariff and trade information at the Harmonized System six-digit level via the Tariff Download Facility.

A study on historical developments of tariffs is also under way.

International Trade in Services Statistics

Ongoing work:

Active participation in the work of the inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services with particular emphasis on finalizing the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services; developing compilation guidance in co-operation with other agencies; and assisting in statistical capacity building (development of e-training modules).

Priority objectives:
• carry out statistical capacity building seminars and developing e-training modules (national and regional seminars).

Inter-agency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

The Task Force has been established by the UN Statistical Commission. The World Trade Organization (WTO) convenes this Task Force and maintains a website for it providing relevant material on classifications, concepts and definitions, an inter-agency Common Data Set on the countries' total merchandise exports and imports, and technical assistance (

).
Ongoing work:
• Methodological work: Implementation of IMTS 2010 and assisting in developing respective Compilation Guidance.
• Data collection and processing: Maintain the inter-agency Common Dataset (CDS) of aggregate merchandise trade values that includes officially reported data and reconciled data (UNSD, IMF, UNCTAD, OECD, Eurostat, WTO).

Priority objectives:
• Through inter-agency collaboration, improve the coverage, consistency, quality and timeliness of aggregate and detailed merchandise trade statistics; and identify and analyze emerging statistical issues related to globalization and trade;
• Provide analysts, policy-makers and other users with easily accessible, analytically valuable data by maintaining an online, interactive database on the Task Force's website for the inter-agency Common Data Set (

);

New activities:

• Joint Session with the inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, aiming at identifying and discussing cross-cutting issues to help assisting implementation and preparation of Compilation Guidance for IMTS and MSITS 2010. Co-operation with the Working Group on the Impact of Globalization on National Accounts.

• Analysis of the impact of global value chains on trade statistics.