

**Thirteenth Meeting of the  
IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics  
Washington, D.C., October 23–27, 2000**

**Statistics of International Trade in Services: A Status Report**

**Prepared by the Statistics Department  
International Monetary Fund**

## STATISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES: A STATUS REPORT

### Introduction

The *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (Manual)* is now in the final drafting stages. This paper describes the work that has taken place over the past year in the development of the *Manual*, gives the proposed timetable for publication, and briefly describes the proposals for continuing development work in trade in services.

### Progress in the past year and plans for publication

In November 1999, as part of the consultation process on the development of the *Manual*, the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (Task Force) conducted a world-wide mailout of the draft *Manual*. The draft was sent by the Fund to all of its balance of payments correspondents and by the United Nations Statistical Division to all heads of national and international statistical agencies. Responses were received from over 70 countries and agencies, discussed at a Task Force meeting in February, and, as appropriate, incorporated into a further draft of the *Manual*. This draft was discussed by a United Nations Expert Group that met in New York during July 10-12, 2000, and has been provided as a background document to the Committee. The Expert Group, which included balance of payments compilers, national accountants, trade negotiators, and other users of services statistics, welcomed the *Manual* and commended the work of the Task Force. It requested further changes to the draft, and also identified further work that is needed after publication of the *Manual*. A copy of the final report of the Expert Group is attached.

Regional consultation on the *Manual* continued, with several Task Force members participating in a seminar for statisticians from APEC economies on Statistical Reporting on Services Trade that was held in Tianjin, China during August 14-17, 2000.

The Task Force is presently redrafting the *Manual*, taking into account the comments of the Expert Group, as well as its own remaining concerns. This draft, after editing, will be translated into the official languages of the UN before being presented to the UN Statistical Commission for endorsement in March 2001. After this endorsement, the Task Force expects to finalize and publish the *Manual*. This is consistent with the timetable that was provided to the Committee at its 1999 meeting.

## Future Plans

The Expert Group and the Task Force have identified a number of areas where further work is needed, beyond the completion and publication of the *Manual*. These are:

- ❑ further methodological development in a range of areas such as the development of classifications and definitions of the components of financial, telecommunications, internet-related, and environment-related services;
- ❑ a set of procedures for providing and disseminating clarifications and interpretations of the *Manual*, along with revisions as appropriate;
- ❑ the development of a compilation guide to cover all areas of data collection that are not covered by the existing *Balance of Payments Compilation Guide* (including collection of data on trade in services transactions between residents and nonresidents by partner country and by mode of supply, data for the compilation of statistics describing foreign affiliates trade in services (FATS), and data for the monitoring of international trade in services through the four modes of supply);
- ❑ the development of a website for the dissemination of country experiences in data collection and compilation and to provide the mechanisms for an international discussion forum;
- ❑ provision of technical assistance to countries that wish to further develop their statistics on trade in services;
- ❑ appropriate international collection and dissemination of data and metadata relating to international trade in services; and
- ❑ the development of a system for the monitoring of country implementation of the recommendations contained in the *Manual*.

The Task Force will address these issues at its next meeting, in December 2000.

Regional consultations will continue with discussions at a United Nations Workshop on International Economic and Social Classifications in Addis Ababa during November 27-December 1, 2000. Additionally, the next OECD/Eurostat meeting of experts on services will be held during December 11-12, 2000. This meeting is expected to discuss, inter alia, implementation issues related to the *Manual*. The ASEAN Secretariat has also indicated that it is interested in conducting workshops on trade in services, with the first of these tentatively scheduled for the first half of 2001.