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**Recent Activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International
Trade Statistics (TFITS)**

**Prepared by the
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS, WITH A FOCUS ON THE MSITS2010 COMPILER'S GUIDE¹

This document summarizes the ongoing work of the Inter-agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics (TFITS, the combined Task Forces on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and on International Trade in Services) to produce a Compiler's Guide for the *Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010 (MSITS2010)*. It also gives an overview of selected other activities of the Task Force in 2014.

MSITS2010 Compiler's Guide

The aim of the MSITS2010 Compiler's Guide is to provide specific guidance on compilation of trade in services statistics. The MSITS2010 Compiler's Guide is completely consistent with the Balance of Payments' and International Investment Position Compilation Guide (BPM6 CG) and the International Recommendations on Tourism Statistics (IRTS 2008). However, it provides more detail than the BPM6 CG on items specifically relevant to trade in services, including statistics by service category, by trading partner, and by mode of supply. It also provides detailed guidance on the compilation of Foreign Affiliate Statistics (FATS), considering that commercial presence abroad is one of the four modes of international supply of services (i.e. mode 3).

The MSITS Compiler's Guide is produced by the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics, which includes all international organizations dealing with balance of payments and trade in services statistics, including e.g. the IMF, World Trade Organisation (WTO), OECD, UN Statistics Division (UNSD), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and Eurostat. Individual countries have also been involved in the process of drafting and commenting on the Compiler's Guide, either by participating in the TF meetings and/or as part of the wider Expert Group of national experts that have also provided comments as well as country experiences for inclusion in the Guide.

The guide is structured in 4 parts and 21 chapters², including:

- **Part I: General Framework**, which provides an overview of the conceptual, legal and institutional frameworks and arrangements which underpin the production of trade in services statistics;
- **Part II: Data Collection**, which reviews the different data sources that can be used for the compilation of trade in services statistics, such as surveys, administrative sources, and ITRS, and their respective advantages and disadvantages;
- **Part III: Data Compilation**, which provides guidance on the compilation of trade in services statistics for both resident/non-resident trade, FATS and other measures of modes of supply;
- **Part IV: Cross-cutting issues**, which gives an overview of practices for e.g. data and meta dissemination and data quality management related to trade in services statistics.

¹ Report prepared by Fabienne Fortannier, Head of Trade Statistics in the Statistics Directorate, OECD. Please note that this document was prepared prior to the upcoming meeting of the TFITS (22-23 October 2014).

² A more complete description of the structure of the MSITS2010 Compiler's Guide was provided by Nadim Ahmad in the report discussing recent activities of TFSITS at the 26th Meeting of the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics.

The unedited draft of the Guide was submitted to the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in March 2014 and endorsed for use. The Task Force agreed however that the guide as submitted still needed to be streamlined and the content and presentation made consistent; that the compilation guidance needed to be clarified, particularly for developing countries; and that the conclusions from the Task Force on Global Production that are relevant to trade in services needed to be incorporated.

During April to early July 2014, the draft chapters were revised and finalized. Between July and August, the Expert Group was consulted for the last time. Their comments were incorporated and final editing took place in September. At the October 2014 meeting of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics, representatives will be asked to approve the Guide.

The paper publication will be released by the end of this year (2014) and it will be accompanied by a website that contains additional and more detailed country experiences in compiling trade in services statistics and other relevant background material for compilers. This website and the country examples will be updated and refreshed so that compilers always have access to the latest information and compilation guidance.

Merger of the Task Force on Statistics on International Trade in Services (TFSITS) and International Merchandise Trade Statistics (TFIMTS)

The inter-agency taskforces TFSITS and TFIMTS have been meeting jointly since 2008. Both Task Forces were founded in the early 1990s and aim to strengthen the cooperation between International Organizations in trade in services statistics and merchandise trade statistics, respectively. This work includes the harmonized collection of data and metadata; the processing and dissemination of trade in services and of merchandise trade statistics; the development and promotion of international standards and classification systems; the resolution of compilation problems and provision of technical assistance in order to improve the availability, quality and comparability of statistics. The two task forces are proposing to merge into the Task Force on International Trade Statistics (TFITS). During their March 2014 meeting, the two Task Forces agreed on a revised Terms of Reference that integrated previous Terms of Reference, and on the procedures to follow for the merger proposal to the UNSC via its Bureau. The TFITS will be convened jointly by the OECD and WTO and will hold annual meetings in the fall.

Other Activities of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics

While the work related to the Compilation Guide to the MSITS2010 formed a major part of the work of the Task Force in the past few years, other activities have also been on the agenda. Examples include the development of a joint metadata questionnaire on international trade in services (to be launched by the international organizations after the implementation of BPM6), and exchanges on analytical work conducted by IOs related to trade in goods and services statistics. The TFITS is also developing concordance tables between the new Extended Balance of Payments Classification System 2010 and other classification systems, such as the Central Product Classification. A proposed concordance has been submitted to the UN group for classifications and will be included in the MSITS2010 Compiler's Guide when it is completed. The revision of the Broad Economic Categories classification system is also discussed, and statistical capacity building efforts in the area of trade in services statistics compilation are coordinated.