Revision of the UNCTAD Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy

UNCTAD Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy

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WHY DO WE NEED STATISTICAL DATA?

• Without data, policy makers are fumbling in the dark.
• Without measurement, how can we know if we are making progress?

“There are two kinds of statistics, the kind you look up and the kind you make up.”
— Rex Todhunter Stout (1886-1975).
Sound policy can’t be made without relevant information, and statistics on ICT use by businesses, the size of the ICT workforce, value added in the ICT sector, and ICT goods trade are disseminated in UNCTADStat.

But while statistics on businesses’ ICT use are disseminated for around 85% of developed countries, this figure falls to just 4% for LDCs.
UNCTAD is a member of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, comprising 15 partner organizations.

In addition, we are active in related work such as:

- Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics (TFITS)
- Work with WCO, UPU and others, aimed at using administrative data to measure e-commerce
- G20 and OECD initiatives on measuring the digital economy
Technical cooperation on measuring e-commerce, ICT and the digital economy

- UNCTAD provides methodological guidance, such as the Manual on the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy *(in need of updating)*

- UNCTAD (with UNSD) establishes definitions of ICT goods, based on reclassifications of the Harmonized System

- UNCTAD provides technical assistance, such as the piloting of surveys on exports of ICT-enabled services
  - In India, these accounted for 57% of total services exports in 2016-17
OTHER PARTNERSHIP MANUALS

- Technical Paper No. 2
- Manual for Measuring ICT Access and Use by Households and Individuals
- E-waste statistics
- Manual for measuring e-Government

Being updated
PROCESS OF UPDATING UNCTAD MANUAL

- Oct-Nov 2019: First draft revision
- 3-4 Dec 2019: Working Group meeting: consultation with member States
- 17 Jan 2020: Deadline for submitting written comments to secretariat
- Jan-March 2020: Finalize the revised Manual
- 29 April-1 May 2020: IGE on E-Commerce and Digital Economy
- May-June 2020: Edited, format and print revised Manual
- Second part of 2020: Development of training material
  Raise funds for capacity building
- 2021- : Organize training courses
HOW CAN THE WG CONTRIBUTE?

- Provide feedback on changes proposed
- Share experiences and challenges with collecting statistics on e-commerce and the digital economy
  - Using enterprise surveys
  - Using national accounts
  - Using other sources of data
- Propose concrete examples of good practices and lessons learned that could be included in the Manual
- Identify needs for capacity building
- Provide written comments until 17 January 2020 to: emeasurement@unctad.org
Thank You!

“Digital economy data gap risks widening inequalities, UNCTAD says”