Statistics of International Trade in Services
UNCTAD’s vision of a way forward
A project for
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

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Henri Laurencin
Head
Development Statistics and Information Branch
UNCTAD
The international statistical framework for the collection and compilation of international trade in services data
Development of agreed standards

- **Interagency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (TFSITS) established in 1994** at the request of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and UNCTAD to the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC). Goal: *elaborate the statistical requirements of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)*.

- **Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS) approved by UNSC in 2002**. Goal: *set out a statistical framework for the collection and dissemination of trade in services data*.

Statistical capacity building activities

- At the **national and regional levels** to implement standards on SITS.
- **Workshops, seminars and trainings** for compilers (25 during 2010-2012) by UNSD, UN Regional Commissions, IMF, WTO, Eurostat, countries and other regional organizations.
- **Consultancy** (10 during 2010-2012) by EU, IMF, countries.
- **Coordination of capacity building activities** through inter-agency cooperation in the TFSITS.
- **Pool of experts** available for capacity building activities.
- **E-learning** project (UNCTAD and WTO, in progress).
The full implementation of the recommendations on SITS is seen as a long-term goal for most of the countries.

A phased implementation of the recommendations of the MSITS 2010 is required.

As many administrations and data-compilers are involved in statistics of international trade in services, an effective cooperation at the national and international levels is necessary.

Long-term, tailored and comprehensive projects should be developed to complement workshops and seminars.
UNCTAD's strategy for capacity building
Long-term, tailored and comprehensive projects
Framework

- Targets a group of countries with common needs and similar statistical capacities in the area of SITS.
- Favors long-term projects up to five years.
- Identifies the most urgent needs of the countries in the area of SITS and assesses their capability to address them.
- Evaluates how the best practices for the compilation of SITS can be adjusted to national circumstances.
- Defines and implements a tailored action plan for the group.
- Develops a common IT system to be used across the group for the compilation of SITS if needed.
Coordination

- Is **coordinated** within the Inter-Agency Task Force on SITS and with the relevant organizations.
- Is **complementary** to the current capacity building initiatives.
- Takes **full advantage of all available material** developed up to now.
- **Promotes a twinning-project method** by identifying countries that are willing to provide their knowledge in assisting the beneficiaries' countries.
- Stimulates continuous **transfer of knowledge and experiences** amongst beneficiaries' countries to maximize benefits/costs.
Governance

- **Clarifies responsibilities** of participants in the project. UNCTAD is expected to:
  - Deliver its expertise
  - Supervise and coordinate
- Puts in place necessary **instruments to monitor the project** and reports on the **improvement of SITS released by countries**.
- Last but not least, carries the project forward operating within a **tight budget**.
UNCTAD’s proposal for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)
Rationale

- Development of efficient services economy and services trade could significantly improve the economic outlook for LLDCs.

- A major constraint in formulating relevant policies is the lack of reliable statistics.

- One third of LLDCs compile annual total trade in services data with more than one year lag or do not at all report data.

- Only 8 out of 31 LLDCs publish quarterly trade in services statistics. Only 2 are able to compile quarterly data with 4 months lag.

- 50% of LLDCs provide detailed information on services trade with more than one year delay.

- Less than a handful of LLDCs report trade in services flows by partner.
Proposal

- Assess the capacity of LLDCs to produce SITS and identify those that need capacity building in this critical area.

- Develop a long-term and comprehensive project tailored to the needs and capacities of LLDcs in the area of SITS on the basis of the approach proposed by UNCTAD.

- UNCTAD as the leading agency of the project.

- UNCTAD as coordinator of the project within the Interagency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (TFSITS).

- UNCTAD appeals to donors to support and finance the project.

- UNCTAD to prepare a formal project document and engage UN-OHRLLS, LLDCs and potential donors in the formulation and implementation of the project.
Thank you for your attention

statistics@unctad.org