



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

*The Global Services Forum*

*Beijing, China*

*28 May 2013*

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**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.*
- ❖ **MSITS revised in 2010.** *Goal: make it conform with the System of National Accounts 2008 and the 6th edition of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual.*



# 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.
- ❖ **Long-term technical assistance** (UNCTAD-UEMOA 2013-2015).
- ❖ **Coordination of capacity building activities** through inter-agency cooperation in the TFSITS.
- ❖ **Pool of experts** available for capacity building activities.
- ❖ **Development of a Compilers' Guide** for MSITS 2010 (UNSD, in progress).
- ❖ **E-learning** project (UNCTAD and WTO, in progress).



# Lessons learnt and ways forward

- ❖ 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

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