



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

Policy on use and re-dissemination of UN COMTRADE data

UN COMTRADE

- i. UN COMTRADE contains annual imports and exports statistics for more than 160 reporting countries or areas, which account for almost all trade worldwide. The trade statistics are detailed giving value and quantity for each traded commodity broken down by trading partner. For more information see: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/Knowledgebase/What-is-UN-COMTRADE>

Free unlimited access

- ii. Free unlimited access to UN COMTRADE is available for all users on the website of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) at <http://comtrade.un.org>. A download limit of 50,000 data records per query is applicable for technical reasons. There is no limit on the number of queries. The same free access and limitations apply for obtaining UN COMTRADE data via WITS (World Integrated Trade Solutions) or similar applications.
- iii. Institutional users (academic institutions, government, inter-government agencies, NGOs) from developing countries¹, data providers, permanent missions to the United Nations and users from International Organizations who are members of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) can submit a request in writing to comtrade@un.org for the download limit to be waived.

Copyright statement

- iv. Data from the UN COMTRADE database are copyrighted by the United Nations.
- v. UN COMTRADE data are provided for internal use only and may not be re-disseminated in any form without the written permission of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

Internal use

- vi. Internal use is defined as: only for use by staff members of the institutional unit for the benefit of the unit; internal use explicitly excludes data dissemination to any entity outside of the institutional unit.
- vii. The definition of institutional unit is derived from the description contained in the System of National Accounts publication (SNA, 2008), namely:

“An institutional unit is an economic entity that is capable, in its own right, of owning assets, incurring liabilities and engaging in economic activities and in transactions with other entities.”
- viii. If UN COMTRADE data are used within the boundaries of the definition of internal use, then a written permission from UNSD for its use is not necessary and a royalty fee will not apply.

¹ See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm#developed>

Use of data within a joint project

- ix. UNSD allows the sharing of UN COMTRADE data, beyond the definition of internal, only if it is shared with another institution within the framework of a joint project. In all other cases written permission from UNSD for sharing of UN COMTRADE data is necessary and a royalty fee may apply.

License Agreement

- x. Use of UN COMTRADE data is subject to a license agreement which can be found at <http://comtrade.un.org/db/help/LicenseAgreement.aspx> , irrespective of whether the data is accessed via free or premium access.

Disclaimer

- xi. Use of UN COMTRADE data is also subject to acknowledgement of the disclaimer contained in the section “Readme First” in the UN COMTRADE website at: <http://comtrade.un.org/db/help/uReadMeFirst.aspx>.

Additional information on UN COMTRADE

- xii. Further details regarding free basic data access to UN COMTRADE as well as information on premium access options can be found at <https://unp.un.org/comtrade.aspx>.
- xiii. For metadata, refer to the UN International Trade Statistics Knowledgebase at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradekb/Default.aspx> or the UN COMTRADE website itself, e.g., <http://comtrade.un.org/db/mr/daPubNoteDetail.aspx>.

Permission for re-dissemination and use of data within applications

- xiv. UNSD allows the use of UN COMTRADE data within data extraction and/or visualization/analytical applications, either free-of-charge or with fees. In both cases, written permission from UNSD is necessary and a royalty fee may be applied. In some cases, users of such applications are required to obtain a yearly subscription to UN Comtrade.
- xv. Permission for the re-dissemination of UN COMTRADE data needs to be requested in writing (contact comtrade@un.org); in general, permission will be granted without application of a royalty fee if the amount of data used does not exceed 1,000 records.
- xvi. For publication of UN COMTRADE data in a few tables or graphs in newspaper articles, journals, other magazines or books, it is not necessary to request permission; please refer to the source of the data as “DESA/UNSD, *United Nations Comtrade database*”.
- xvii. The following rationale is considered regarding the application of a royalty fee:
 - a. If data being re-disseminated are substantially different from the data provided in the UN COMTRADE database, then a royalty fee shall not apply;
 - b. If data being re-disseminated are substantially the same as data provided in the UN COMTRADE database, then a royalty fee shall apply where the amount charged is based on:

- 1) the number of records being re-disseminated or type of application (data visualization/analytics or data extraction oriented);
- 2) whether data is re-disseminated for a fee or free-of-charge; and,
- 3) whether access to this data is limited to a specific audience or open to the public in general.

The actual fees are calculated based on the price of a Premium Site License (PSL), which is \$6,065 in 2014 (unchanged since 2009).

- xviii. Exceptionally, case by case decisions will be taken for special situations wherein the previously stated guidelines may not easily be applied.

The following royalty fee scheme incorporates the considerations stated above:

Royalty Fee Scheme*

Free-of-charge re-dissemination		
# of records	Limited Access (<i>Basic rates</i>)	Open Access
< 100,000	4% of PSL (US\$ 243)	8% of PSL (US\$ 485)
< 1,000,000	20% of PSL (US\$ 1,213)	40% of PSL (US\$ 2,426)
< 5,000,000	80% of PSL (US\$ 4,852)	160% of PSL (US\$ 9,704)
< 20,000,000	2 X PSL (US\$ 12,130)**	4 X PSL (US\$ 24,260)**
Type of application		
Visualization / Analytical application ***	No fee	
Data extraction application****	No fee. However, users of the application need to have active UN Comtrade subscription for downloads of more than 50,000 records per query *****	
Re-dissemination involving fees		
# of records	Limited Access	Open Access
< 100,000	10% of PSL (US\$ 607)	20% of PSL (US\$ 1,213)
< 1,000,000	50% of PSL (US\$ 3,013)	1 X PSL (US\$ 6,065)
< 5,000,000	2 X PSL (US\$ 12,130)	4 X PSL (US\$ 24,260)
< 20,000,000	5 X PSL (US\$ 30,325) **	10 X PSL (US\$ 60,650) **
Type of application		
Visualization / Analytical application ***	1 X PSL (US\$ 6,065) per year	
Data extraction application****	1 X PSL (US\$ 6,065) per year and users of the application need to have active UN Comtrade subscription *****	

* The royalty fees are based on the price of a Premium Site License (PSL) which is US\$ 6,065 in 2014 and which can change every year. Accordingly, the fees indicated in brackets are the ones applicable for 2014 only. The current subscription prices are available at <https://unp.un.org/COMTRADE.aspx>.

** If more than 20 million records are required, specific arrangements will need be established on a case by case basis.

*** These applications normally do not provide download features, but if it does, then it will also be considered as considered as a data extraction application, in which case, a subscription to UN Comtrade is required.

**** These applications are similar to the UN Comtrade style data dissemination system characterized by fully flexible query and strong data extraction capabilities.

***** The application must implement special authentication for such users.