



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
GLOBAL SDMX ARTEFACTS FOR
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS

21 April 2016

Note by the Working Group

An inter-agency working group comprising of Eurostat, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD; as the secretariat and chair of the working group), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has been established to support the implementation of SDMX standards in International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) in 2013.

IMTS refers to a specialized multipurpose domain of official statistics concerned with the provision of data on the movements of goods between countries and areas.¹ The main source of data is customs declaration and it is supplemented by non-customs sources such as foreign shipping manifest, informal trade cross border survey, aircraft and ship registers, enterprise survey, parcel and postal records, etc. Therefore, trade data is considered having the characteristics of a highly structured set with a large data volume comprising multiple dimensions and measures in a single observation.

The working group, which develops these new standards, seeks to specify uniform structures, concepts, definitions, and code lists for IMTS data and metadata which comply with the latest version of the SDMX standard (2.1), and which follow the latest recommendations for IMTS (IMTS 2010). To the extent possible, SDMX-IMTS reuses concepts and code lists that have

¹ See: IMTS Concepts and Definitions 2010

been already agreed internationally. The design of the draft Data Structure Definition (DSD) for SDMX-IMTS was completed in early May 2015 and was released for global consultation and public review in order to receive broad input on the proposed DSD. As of May 2015, the draft DSD consists of 31 concepts of which 18 are dimensions and 12 attributes. The global consultation was conducted from June to August 2015. A total of 87 countries, economic areas and organizations responded to the survey.

The results of the global consultation were integrated into the final global SDMX-IMTS, and the release of a revised version will be made available sometime during the second quarter of 2016. Meanwhile, the working group and other relevant partner organisations have been discussing the implementation strategies and capacity building activities in countries. The follow-up proposals are as follows: establishment of pilot implementation project in countries; alignment with WCO Data Model (SDMX-IMTS as Derived Information Package); or creation of SDMX-IMTS extraction module in commonly used trade data processing system (i.e., EUROTRACE).