



## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR GLOBAL SDMX INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS

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Note by the Working Group

### **Assessment**

From the global consultation, 35 countries said that they have experience in implementation of SDMX in at least one other domain. Most of these are concentrated in Europe (19), with some in Africa, Americas and Oceania.

When asked if they have plans to implement SDMX for dissemination of IMTS where the response categories were ranges of years, the responses showed clear regional variation. Five to seven countries in each of Africa, Asia and Europe said that they could implement in 1-2 years. A fewer number of countries in the three regions mentioned it could take them 2-5 years.

Very few African countries mentioned that it could take them more than 5 years or that they have no plans at all. In Asia, number of countries that thought implementation would take them more than 5 years, and those who had no such plans were comparable in number with countries that indicated implementation was possible in 1-2 or 2-5 years. Interestingly, 12 countries in Europe indicated that they had no plans to implement SDMX for IMTS.

There were very few responses from the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Northern America and Oceania, with 5 countries in LAC mentioning that they could implement SDMX for IMTS in 2-5 years. Overall, there were 22 countries who responded to this question using each of the 1-2 and 2-5 years categories, and 20 countries said that they had no such plans.

As additional comments, respondents expressed that SDMX is considered part of the overall information infrastructure and can facilitate external reporting including for international reporting purposes. A concern was raised on the lack of technical skills and the feasibility of implementing SDMX for IMTS due to large data volumes. EU countries reported that TEC

(Trade by Enterprise Characteristic) data have been regularly produced and submitted to Eurostat using SDMX.

### **Challenges in Implementation**

The result of global consultation shows that 22 countries do not have any problem in implementing SDMX for IMTS, 25 responded otherwise, and 29 countries chose to provide no opinion.

Those who mentioned that there were challenges in the implementation (25), pointed out the following issues in particular in the comments section:

- a. Possible inconsistency of codes with existing (national) standards
- b. Impracticality of using SDMX format for IMTS due to huge data volumes
- c. The need to invest to upgrade/build IT system
- d. Lack of SDMX knowledge in substantive area (trade statistics)
- e. The need to address confidentiality issues

A higher variation among the responses were seen for the training requirements question where 44 countries mentioned that they do have training needs, and only 10 countries said that they had no training needs. 26 countries choose to provide no opinion.

In the comments section, countries who responded that they had training requirements expressed that sharing of experience and tools among institutions was important to improve capacity of countries. In addition, training programmes (e.g., workshops, online, consultation) were welcome as part of implementation strategy. The programme could focus on 1) more detailed explanation of each component in DSDs, 2) sharing the national practices including common problems and issues, 3) common tools and demo of data in SDMX-IMTS.

### **Implementation Strategies**

The working group has identified several ways to assist countries in the implementation of SDMX IMTS taking into account national circumstances and challenges in implementation (outlined in sections above). The strategies are as follows:

- a) Conducting training programmes (e.g., workshops, online, consultation) focused on explanation of SDMX IMTS DSDs, sharing good practices and pitfalls (e.g., addressing confidentiality issues), showcasing common tools (e.g., SDMX RI)
- b) Establishing pilot implementation projects in countries, especially those that have expressed interest
- c) Development and support with implementation of SDMX Reference Infrastructure (RI) for countries that are not able to build a system of their own
- d) Exploring possible alignment/mapping with WCO Data Model (i.e., SDMX-IMTS as Derived Information Package)

- e) Developing SDMX-IMTS extraction module in commonly used trade data processing system (i.e., EUROTRACE)