



SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE STATISTICS

27 - 30 November 2012
Noumea, New Caledonia

OUTCOMES DOCUMENT

1. The Regional Workshop on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) was conducted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Noumea, New Caledonia from the 27 – 30 November 2012 and was attended by trade compilers and customs officials from SPCs member countries, development partners and resource persons. A list of participants is attached as [Annex 1](#).

The need for a workshop

2. Many Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) face difficulty in providing users quality and timely IMTS. Staff shortage due to the smallness of the NSOs, high staff turnover, ability to attract qualified staff due to low pays, lack of skills, lack of awareness of best practice used for compiling IMTS, irregular data capture, issues with data from Customs and in some cases lack of understanding of what users want are some of the challenges PICTs face.

Objective of the workshop

3. The objective of the workshop was to bring together the different key players of merchandise trade to address areas of mutual interest and/or concerns with respect to user needs, challenges faced by countries in compiling IMTS, best practice to be used for the compilation of IMTS and possibilities that could be pursued in order to be able to produce more reliable and timely trade statistics needed by the various users, most importantly the government. This objective is in line with the Pacific Statistics Strategy Action Plan Phase 1 (2011-2014) of the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy to assist PICTs produce the agreed core set of statistics across key sectors by making greater use of common tools for statistical collections. Striving for greater harmonization of statistical standards, classifications and systems also echoes the call of the Pacific Leader's request outlined in strategic objective 12.4 of the Pacific Plan.

Expected outcomes from the workshop

4. The expected outcome from the Workshop was for each player of merchandise trade to clearly understand the role it has to play to give users reliable and timely IMTS:
 - National Statistics Office's to be clear on
 - User needs
 - Understand source data/maintain close relationship with Customs
 - Follow recommended best practice and report any divergence
 - Customs to be clear on the data needs for the compilation of IMTS
 - Providers of Technical Assistance to be clear on how to best provide assistance
 - Establish networking for countries so that they are able to assist each other

Outcomes and recommendations

Meeting User needs

5. Production of IMTS should focus on user needs: the need for it to be used as a “Food availability indicator”, its requirements for Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations and trade policy frameworks, its use in Balance of Payments and National Accounts compilations and trade indices. Stakeholder meetings are important for users like the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific Financial Assistance Centre, SPC and Government to let NSOs know what they want.
6. Improvement at NSO is needed: NSOs need to get to know their stakeholders’ needs and strive to give them what they want i.e. quality and timely IMTS. Within the limited resources available to them, they need to pursue alternative data sources, adopt United Nation’s Statistics Division recommended best practice and adapt them with a Pacific focus, set clear guidelines on data dissemination, including a policy on data revision. NSOs also need to be more user-friendly i.e. release statistical tables in PDF copies but at the same time give excel copies so that users do not have to retype numbers. NSOs and national Customs agencies need to maintain (or develop) a strong working relationship, which is built upon the supply and demand for administrative statistics and information required by their respective data users.
7. Improvements at Customs are needed: Customs are mandated to collect revenue for the Government, but equally important is how Governments draw up their expenditure budget and for this trade data are needed, either on its own or as an input into other statistical compilations. Customs therefore need to have a continuous flow of data to NSOs. Customs also need to improve their data collection systems, processing of information, use of HS 12 classifications, recording of correct quantity information etc. An option would be to look at Customs legal framework and strengthen it for statistical requirements.

Use of recommended best practice

8. The need to have a sound legal framework in place, such as a Legal Act or a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure;
 - a. Availability of, and access to, necessary data sources such as customs records and non-customs sources
 - b. Establishment of effective institutional arrangements that define “*official statistics*” (*this is essential to avoid confusion* amongst data users in circumstances where the same data are accessible from different agencies, such as NSOs, Customs departments, Ministry of Finance and Central Banks, and where values might be different)
 - c. Protection of privacy / data confidentiality
9. Use of Customs records as the main and preferred data source, however supplement it with information obtained from other sources e.g. enterprise, mirror statistics, as necessary, to ensure full coverage of IMTS. ***Further work needs to be done by SPC in consultation with the UNSD on the treatment of fish in merchandise trade.***
10. ASYCUDA and PC Trade should be used at Customs and PC Trade and excel at NSOs for data processing and data base management. ***Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and Statistics New Zealand will further progress work on PC Trade and keep SPC and other development partners informed.***

11. The use of general trade system for both imports and exports is recommended.
12. PICTs should use the general guideline for reporting IMTS i.e. international merchandise trade statistics record all goods which add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory. Despite informal trade taking place in almost all the PICTs, estimates on shuttle trade were not being compiled and countries are encouraged to look into this.
13. Time of recording of goods should be the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country. In the case of customs-based data-collection systems, this time can be frequently approximated by the date of lodgement of the customs declaration.
14. Classifications to be used are the HS as the primary classification for the collection, compilation and dissemination of IMTS, SITC for analysing trade statistics and BEC for retained imports. Use of most current versions of the classifications is recommended: HS12, SITC Rev. 4 and BEC Rev. 2. ***PICTs have been reminded to amend the classification of Kava as per the communication from the World Customs Organisation emailed to PICTs by SPC.***
15. Partner country: country of origin for imports and country of last known destination for exports are to be used. Country of consignment as second partner attribution is recommended.
16. Valuation: the statistical value of imported goods to be a CIF-type value - need to have estimates on insurance and freight. The statistical value of exported goods to be a FOB-type value - include the value of services performed to deliver goods to the border of the exporting country.
17. Quantity of measurement: the standard units of quantity recommended by the World Customs Organization (WCO) are to be used.
18. Data quality and metadata: PICTs need to assess the quality of their IMTS using a data quality framework to be developed by SPC. PICTs also need to develop metadata as a high priority and disseminate it as an integral part of the dissemination of IMTS. ***Data quality framework is to be developed by SPC. A compilation guide detailing how IMTS is to be compiled by SPC.***
19. Mode of transport and Customs Procedure Code: PICTs need to compile and disseminate IMTS by mode of transport at the most detailed commodity level. The mode of transport should be recorded as the means of transport used when goods enter or leave the economic territory of a country. Information about the customs procedure applied to individual transactions (or the nature of transaction), in order to facilitate the identification of re-exports and re-imports, but also of other types of trade, such as goods for processing, trade between related parties, goods on consignment etc need to be included.
20. Dissemination: dissemination of data and metadata should be an integral part of IMTS and need to be made available to all users in an impartial basis as per the Advance Release Calendar which all PICTs need to develop. 14 tables for PICTs have been recommended and they need to be disseminated with commentary explaining the movement in numbers. PICTs need to report IMTS on a quarterly basis, although monthly would be preferred. A Reconciliation table (Trade to BOP) is also recommended to be compiled but this is for the BOP Statisticians and not for dissemination.

21. Integrating Trade and Business Statistics: this was presented as a supplementary topic and countries are encouraged to integrate their trade register with their business register and to take steps towards establishing an integrated system of economic statistics for data compilation and analysis.

What is to come

22. OCO intends to compliment work of NSOs by focussing on improving primary data at Customs and assisting them to adopt latest International standards. It is also looking at working with Statistics New Zealand on PC Trade.
23. SPC will have 19 trade compilers attached for a week immediately following the Workshop so that lessons learned from the Workshop can be applied and by the end of Quarter 1 2013 a Pacific Compilation Guide is produced, thus standardising the Pacific IMTS methodology.
24. SPC informed the workshop that with the **investment in knowledge and skill upgrade taking place** it would like to see countries' Customs organisations and NSOs taking a leading role in producing visible IMTS outputs recommended in the workshop. SPC added that it will continue providing TA to countries to do this.
25. Statistics New Zealand intends to support PICTs through the NZ Pacific Annual Attachment Programme. It reinforced New Zealand's commitment to PC Trade support to June 2014. OCO will work with Statistics New Zealand to look at **what beyond 2014**.
26. SPC, Oceania Customs Organisation, Statistics New Zealand and Australian Bureau of Statistics will work together as technical development partners to assist PICTs produce reliable and timely IMTS. In doing so a close collaboration with UNSD will be maintained.

Annex 1

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Name of Country	Name of Person	Name of Organisation
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS		
American Samoa	Mrs Ma'u Alipate Leha	Department of Commerce
	Mr Francis Maluia	ASG Department of Treasury, Customs Division
Cook Islands	Mr Enuarua N Pakitoa	Cook Islands Statistics Office
	Mr Putaanga W Robati	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
Federated States of Micronesia	Ms Sharon Lebehn	Office of Statistics, Budget & Economic Management Overseas Development Assistance and Compact Management
	Ms Lorina R Seady	Department of Finance and Administration
Fiji Islands	Ms Sashee L Nath	Statistician
	Miss Mereia S Waqa	Revenue & Customs Authority
French Polynesia	Mr Dany M J Schutz	Institut de la Statistique
Kiribati	Ms Anataake Maurintekeraoi	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
	Mr Tooua Bateriki	Customs / Ministry of Finance
Marshall Islands	Ms Hemline Ysawa	Economic Policy, Planning & Statistics Office
Nauru	Mr Ramrakha Detenamo	Finance Department
	Mr Marcellus Mau	Justice and Border Control
New Caledonia	Mr M. Alexandre Gautier	Institut de la statistique et des études économiques
	Mme Patricia Tran Van Hung	Direction Régionale des Douanes de Nouvelle-Calédonie
Niue	Mr Kimray Vaha	Finance
	Mr Chamberlin M L Pita	Customs – Treasury Department
Northern Mariana Islands	Mr Justin Andrew	Department of Commerce
Palau	Ms Muriell Sinsak	Planning and Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance
	Ms Joline S Spesungel	Division of Customs / Ministry of Finance
Papua New Guinea	Mr Blasius Vaninara	National Statistics Office
	Mr Kavie Kambiri	Treasury and Finance
Samoa	Mrs Toese U Tautalagia	Bureau of Statistics
	Mr Fili Chu-Ling	Ministry for Revenue
Solomon Islands	Mr Henry Risoni	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
	Mr Michael Upuwe	Ministry of Finance & Treasury
Tokelau	Mr Asofa Fereti	Transport & Support Services
Tonga	Mrs Lesieli M Tohi	Statistics Department
	Mrs Vila A D V Mafi	Customs Department / Ministry of Revenue
Tuvalu	Mr Toakai Puapua	Central Statistics Division
Vanuatu	Mrs Anna Tavoa	Statistics / Ministry of Finance & Economic
	Mr George R Pakoa	Customs & Inland Revenue
Wallis and Futuna	Mme Malia E Valefakaaga	Service Territorial de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques
	Mr Jean-François Poncet	Service des Douanes
RESOURCE PERSONS		
	Dr Siosaia K Kami	Oceania Customs Organization
	Mr Paul D Meredith	
	Mr Michael Andrews	PFTAC
	Ms Nikola-Maria K Komailevuka	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
	Mr Stuart K Jones	Statistics New Zealand
	Mr Christopher Hinchcliffe	Australian Bureau of Statistics

Name of Country	Name of Person	Name of Organisation
	Mr Luis G Gonzalez Morales	United Nations Statistics Division
	Mr Alick Nyasulu	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
	Mr Arthur Jorari	
	Mr James Hemphill	
	Mr Navneel N Prasad	
	Ms Nilima Lal	
SUPPORT STAFF		
	Mrs Chloé Caillot-Lessiau	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
	Ms Natalie Girin	
	Mrs Rachel Cuzin	
	Mrs Sandra Gianini	
	Ms Vicci Lawrence	
OBSERVERS		
American Samoa	Miss Mine H Timoteo	Department of Commerce
Fiji	Mrs Olivia V Koroi	Bureau of Statistics
Fiji	Mrs Lilieta T Lewanavanua	
Vanuatu	Mr Ben Tokal	Statistics / Ministry of Finance & Economic
	Mr Elenio Yap	Secretariat of the Pacific Community