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National Accounts and Economic Statistics - International Trade Statistics

OECD SUMMARY AND COUNTRY REPORTS

**6th OECD INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS EXPERT MEETING (ITS) & OECD-EUROSTAT
MEETING OF EXPERTS IN TRADE-IN-SERVICES STATISTICS (TIS)
Tour Europe, Salle des Nations, 12-15 September 2005**

This document is for information and discussion under point a. of item 4 : Recent developments in OECD Member Countries

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OECD SUMMARY AND COUNTRY REPORTS

Introduction

As each year, OECD is trying to speed up and optimize the availability of trade data together with countries. Timely trade flow data is of very high importance to analysts throughout the world and, obviously, at OECD as well.

The fact that OECD trade data feeds into the UN-system (UNSD and WTO, ITC etc.) confers an additional weight to the apparently simple question of “when can we expect data for country X?” As a matter of fact, the time schedule given in the following pages constitutes a kind of calendar determining earliest data availability for a considerable number of users worldwide.

This note provides a very short summary of reports received from countries in response to the OECD questionnaire on recent developments in OECD countries Concerning the reporting year 2005, which is data submission to OECD in 2006, countries were asked to provide the planned/expected dates of release and submission to OECD. As last year, the vast majority of member countries supplied the Secretariat with this information concerning both detailed annual and more aggregated monthly statistics. They are summarised in part 1 and 2 of this note.

In addition, countries were asked to provide a summary of key developments during the past 12-18 months to better structure the country summaries at the traditional “tour de table” (agenda item 4(b)). The responses received are summarised in part 3.

All country replies received are attached in an Annex to this note.

1. Yearly data

In the questionnaire, the following questions were asked:

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data :
 - Classification and Level of detail:
 - Target date for Final data:
 - Classification and Level of detail:
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value :
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section;
 - Volume and value indices:

- Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

The answers summarised in table 1 below reveal that, despite significant time differences in countries' ability to submit provisional and final detailed commodity trade, a general pattern emerges:

- With the exception of three countries, **February/March** is the point in time where **provisional data** can be supplied.
- **All countries** (including the EC aggregates) can at least supply provisional data by not later than **June**

Table 1: Approximate dates for 2006 annual detailed data

Countries	Month in 2006											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Australia						P	F					
Austria		P				F						
Belgium			P				F					
Canada		P			F							
Switzerland		P			F							
Czech Republic		P				P			F			
Germany		P								F		
Denmark			P						F			
EC					P				F	F		
Spain												
Finland			P		F							
France												
United Kingdom		P							F			
Greece												
Hungary						P			F			
Ireland												
Iceland			F									
Italy												
Japan			P	P	F	F						
Korea				F								
Luxembourg												
Mexico					P				F			
Netherlands												
Norway												
New Zealand		P		F								
Poland		P						F				
Portugal												
Slovak Republic												
Sweden			P&F									
Turkey			P				F					
United States		P				F						

Note: P= Provisional F=Final

Sources: Country replies attached in Annex

- The mid-year target for a complete set of trade data seems attainable.
- With only two exceptions, **final data** can be made available by **September**

2. Monthly data

As can be seen from table 2 below, countries significantly differ in their ability of producing the 4 different sets of monthly trade data. Nevertheless, as for yearly trade data, there are similarities.

Table 2: Approximate dates for 2006 monthly trade data delivery (number of days)

Countries	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
Australia	1-3imp	1-3exp							4quart
Austria				1,2-3e			2-3i		4quart
Belgium							1-4		
Canada				1-4					
Switzerland									
Czech Republic			1-4						
Germany				1,3	2,4				
Denmark				1,2e,3,4			2i		
EC				2-3e	1		2-3i,4		
Spain							1,2		
Finland						1-3			4
France									
United Kingdom					1-4				
Greece						1-4			
Hungary							1-3. 4quart		
Ireland									
Iceland			1-3						
Italy									
Japan									1-4
Korea									
Luxembourg									
Mexico						1,2			
Netherlands									
Norway									
New Zealand		1-3							4
Poland				1,2e,3			2i,4		
Portugal									
Slovak Republic									
Sweden		1		2-3e			2-3i		4quart
Turkey				1-3	4				
United States				1-4					

Note:

1= Total value

2= Total by partner country

3= Totals by SITC section

4= Volume and value indices

i = Intra-EU

e = Extra-EU

Sources: Country replies attached in Annex

The pattern which emerges suggests that

- Total values should become available **before 50 days** after the reference month for **all but 6 countries**,
- Totals by partner country and by SITC sections should be available after around **ten weeks**
- Not surprisingly, volume and value indices show a high dispersion, ranging from 4 weeks to over 90 days (sometimes 90 days after last quarter)

The monthly/quarterly availability patterns broadly confirm the existing experience at OECD. Albeit not straightforward, more automated access and download procedures deserve continued investigation and implementation wherever possible. Agreed file formats and structures are essential.

3 Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

Three questions were asked, namely

1. Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage;
2. Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance; and
3. Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Country delegates are in the best position to outline key aspects and issues. However, to foster debate and explanations and given time constraints a sort summary analysis of key issues is given below. The full text of replies can be found in the Annex.

Australia: Computer software data confrontation Tourism Satellite Account and merchandise and trade-in-services data. Review of treatment of goods for processing.

Studies/research with respect to the use and possible **linking of registers** (interoperability of registers): This is covered in the questionnaire on linking trade registers to business registers. In short, the ABS is establishing an input data warehouse which will store all survey and administrative by-product business data collected by the ABS. This will facilitate the linking of business data via the Australian Business Number.

Austria: Development of a model for early estimates of Foreign Trade Macro indicators. CIF-FOB reconciliation.

Linkage of structural business data with foreign trade data. Objective: Implication of foreign trade statistics results into a broader economic context referring to SBS Outcome: More than 90% of foreign trade data could be merged to structural business data. Enterprises performing foreign trade could be analyzed according to economic activities, employment, turnover etc. (National Action effected in the framework of Eurostat's EDICOM II 2003 Programme).

“Standardisation Exercise”: **Linkage of the General Business Register with foreign trade data**. In 2002, a project has been completed improving the linkage of the General Business Register and the tax register file with the Foreign Trade Register. Results of this exercise set the stage for the above mentioned linkage structural business data with foreign trade data “Standardisation Exercise”.

Belgium: Prices indices broken down by partner country. Mirror exercise with the Netherlands.

Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers): data for Eurostat on trade by categories of companies (size class, activity codes).

Canada: Release of Canada-China reconciliation for the years 2002 – 2003. In 2005, first time release of information about importer register.

Switzerland: The implementation of the statistics agreement between the European Union and Switzerland as well as the adaptation of several methods to the UN concepts and definitions leads to various adjustments within the Swiss foreign trade statistics. . Firstly the provisional figures will be published as usual at the beginning of February and secondly around May the 20th final results will succeed. In order to keep the comparability, the annual results as of 2002 will be recomputed. The definitive figures in the new conception will be available toward the end of May 2006.

Implementation of a stability filter for the Foreign Trade Index.

Implementation of Quality Management for foreign trade statistics.

Czech Republic: New system of quality control. Bilateral mirror exercises with Germany which are particularly useful in a post-accession context.

An important progress has been achieved in the methodology of the Intrastat register – from now on the register is based on VAT numbers instead of identification numbers. This facilitates the link between the Intrastat register and VAT register.

Germany: Work on testing improved methods of data adjustment and revision practice. Mirror exercises with several EU member states.

Sector based results of foreign trade are regularly collected by **linking foreign trade register and general business register**. Unfortunately the figures currently include only intra-community trade since the register of foreign traders does not contain companies which are involved in extra community trade only. So a study was launched looking for solutions how to complete the register of foreign traders.

Denmark: A new flash estimates model has been developed. New method for estimating non-reported trade.

A **micro data interchange** agreement has been made with The Netherlands and Belgium.

Finland: Pilot Studies on CIGET and intra-firm statistics.

The **Trader's register (intra-EU and extra-EU trade operators) is based on structural enterprise data** received from Statistics Finland (General Business Register). New statistical products based on structural enterprise data include: :

1. Foreign Trade Statistics by enterprise size
2. Foreign Trade Statistics in terms of the type of ownership of the enterprise
3. Concentration of foreign trade by enterprises

United Kingdom: Considerable changes and improvements in the operational and managerial fields. Two reconciliation exercises are underway: a bilateral study with Germany and research into the impact of the "Rotterdam effect" on asymmetries. Further research has been conducted on the impact of VAT fraud on trade in goods statistics. Free data access as of 2005.

The UK carried out a pilot study in 2002 to **match the trade in goods data with** the UK's Inter-Departmental **Business Register (IDBR)**. Since then, regular access to the IDBR has been established and the matching methodology will be refined in the coming months.

Hungary: Change in system of international merchandise trade statistics due to the implementation of Intrastat. Research work on how to estimate missing trade values.

The Intrastat register is **linked with the General Business Register**, and the information is regularly transmitted both ways.

Iceland: New data collection system for services. Quality and timeliness improvements.

Research regarding linking of the Business Register, The Settlement System, VAT, External Trade, Direct Foreign Investment and Pay-as-you-earn register in order to find the sample of companies for survey of services.

Japan: Quarterly dissemination of BoP data. Changes of BoP methodology with regard to the treatment of basic data on freight and insurance premiums.

Mexico: Improvements in quality and in timeliness. Dissemination of International Trade Statistics by Transportation Mode through the North American Transportation Statistics On-line Database (NATS-OD) which was developed in Mexico in coordination with the U.S. and Canada and launched on September, 2004

Poland: Reconciliation exercise with Germany. Research on implementation of Intrastat System.

The new register was built for needs of the INTRASTAT system. This register of entities providing the statistical information is created, maintained and updated by the Ministry of Finance, i.e. by the customs administration which functions within the sector. There is a **close link between the Statistical Business Register** (kept in the Central Statistical Office of Poland), VAT

register (on the base of the VAT data sets created by the Ministry of Finance) and the National Register of Taxpayers.

Sweden: New system for early estimates. Organisational change leading to more integrated and co-ordinated checking of data across units to produce coherent economic statistics.

Turkey: Volume and Unit Value Indices were rebased with 2003 as base. New Indices are calculated according to the Chain Index Methodology. Reconciliation exercises with Bulgaria and Georgia.

The SIS plans to publish trade statistics in 2007 according to both the Special Trade and General Trade Systems.

Setting up of Business Registers System is an ongoing project which is realised due to European Norms. It is assumed as there is one to one relationship between legal unit and enterprise. Regarding trade register, we built a file containing all trade operators and their addresses, telephones, fax numbers etc. This file is regularly updated with other sources (Turkish Exporter Union, Customs declaration, Ministry of Finance). After finishing the Business register project, the **trade register database will be linked with business register database**, so some studies/exercises (Trade by turn-over, trade by economic sectors etc) can be done.

United States: In the fall of 2005, the Foreign Trade Division will publish final regulations making the redesigned Automated Export System (AES) mandatory for the filing of export shipments that require reporting to the Government. Implementation of a new data analysis system with the goal of releasing monthly statistics one month after. Research is done on new automated and selective editing procedures.

The Exporter Database (EDB) provides a comprehensive view of the United States exporter population. It does this by combining commodity flow information from export statistical documentation with enterprise and establishment characteristic information from the Census Business Register. Based on the EDB, each year, a "Profile of U.S. Exporting Companies" is released.

Increases in export trade reported electronically through the Automated Export System (AES) have resulted in a substantial improvement in the accuracy, quality and comprehensiveness of the EDB. Also, the linking process is more efficient and accurate due to a redesign of the Business Register in 2002 and methodological improvements in matching. We are currently researching the possibility of having a **unique exporter identification code** collected on exports to Canada transactions to allow for more automated matches. Our goal is to release the Profile report within six months of the prior statistical year, and is on schedule to be realized by 2007. We are also beginning to research the **feasibility of developing an Importer Database** in order to produce a report on the profile of U.S. importing companies and/or ultimate consignees.

ANNEX: COUNTRY REPORTS RECEIVED BY OECD BEFORE THE 6TH ITS MEETING**Country: Australia Contact person: Bernard Williams****1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005****Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But there is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006?**

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : released with the June monthly data
 - Classification and Level of detail:
all required detail available (AHECC8/HS10 by Country)
 - Target date for Final data: data is normally considered to be final 7 months after the month to which the data relates (ie the data can be amended for 6 months)
 - Classification and Level of detail:
all required detail available (AHECC8/HS10 by Country)
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value : 12 days for imports, about 21 or 22 days for exports
 - Totals by partner country as above
 - Totals by SITC section; as above
 - Volume and value indices: about a month after each quarter
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets?
Data available via e-mail. No plans to make the detailed data available via the web.

Could this process be automated/standardised? Not at this stage.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months**a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:**

Timeliness remains very good. Imports are released on the 12th working day after the end of the month and exports about 21 to 22 working days after the end of the month. Timeliness has not changed in the last 12 to 18 months. Quality assurance focuses on data at the HS6 level and quality of data for balance of payments (BoP) purposes remains high. Quality assurance procedures are revised as required to ensure that the limited resources available are allocated appropriately. A major review of the editing strategy has been undertaken with an improved approach to editing to be implemented from March 2006 as part of a system re-development.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

The ABS has not undertaken specific reconciliations in the last 12 to 18 months.

The Economic Statistics Group in the ABS has undergone an organisational review and has established units (National Statistics Centres) which have responsibilities for statistical leadership. This has increased the capacity to advance conceptual and methodological issues.

The main research work undertaken in the last 12 to 18 months/in progress:

- confront computer software data from the Tourism Satellite Account with merchandise trade and trade in services data. The satellite accounts presents a different view of the data which facilitates confrontation. Difficulties in reconciling aggregate level data has highlighted the need to clearly identify the services products according to common definitions. The CPC appears the best option. This is still in progress.

- the treatment of goods for processing is being reviewed. The treatment of certain commodities has been investigated previously but we are re-looking at these commodities as part of ongoing quality assurance and ensuring practices remain correct in light of changing real world events and/or improved understanding of the concepts. The ABS supports the proposed change to treat goods for processing according to a change of ownership basis in BoP and a "cross the border" basis in merchandise trade. This is still in progress.

- for obvious reasons considerable effort is being put into the SNA and BPM reviews.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

This is covered in the questionnaire on linking trade registers to business registers. In short, the ABS is establishing an input data warehouse which will store all survey and administrative by-product business data collected by the ABS. This will facilitate the linking of business data via the Australian Business Number.

Country: Austria Contact person: Antonia Egerer

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : End of February 2006 (expected)
 - Classification and Level of detail: Monthly data broken down by partner country and CN8
 - Target date for Final data: End of June 2006 (expected)
 - Classification and Level of detail: Monthly data broken down by partner country and CN8

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value : 40 days (macroindicators Intrastat/Extrastat)
 - Totals by partner country: 70 days (detailed Intrastat data), 42 days (detailed Extrastat data)
 - Totals by SITC section; 70 days (Intrastat), 42 days (Extrastat)
 - Volume and value indices: only quarterly produced - about 90 days
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?
 Statistics Austria publishes monthly press releases and some tables (http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich_06/txt.shtml) including the main results. Austrian national foreign trade data tables according to OECD needs (aggregated/detailed data and indices) can not be derived from internet.
 But: Austrian foreign trade data according to EU concept are stored in the COMEXT database by Eurostat.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

Estimation of detailed foreign trade data has been based on monthly VAT data instead of VIES data since reference month January 2004.

Development of a Model for Advanced Estimation of Foreign Trade Macroindicators which has been set in beginning September 2004 for the reference month June 2004.
 (National Action effected in the framework of Eurostat's EDICOM II 2003 Programme)

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

Linkage of structural business data with foreign trade data

Objective: Implication of foreign trade statistics results into a broader economic context referring to SBS

Outcome: More than 90% of foreign trade data could be merged to structural business data. Enterprises performing foreign trade could be analyzed according to economic activities, employment, turnover...

(National Action effected in the framework of Eurostat's EDICOM II 2003 Programme)

“Standardisation Exercise”: Linkage of the General Business Register with foreign trade data

Objective: First, to test the feasibility of merging trade registers with business registers, and second, to produce predefined tables broken down by enterprise statistics.

Outcome: This study shows that by merging trade registers with business registers it is possible to achieve better comparability between trade and business statistics. The method provides new aspects of the structure of external trade and complements the information of business statistics.

(Participation in the EUROSTAT-Standardization Exercise in 2003 and 2005 for the reference years 2000 and 2002).

CIF-FOB valuation: Development of a CIF FOB transforming model

Objective: Pilot study on the identification of a methodology for the calculation of CIF/FOB adjustments which does not depend on the recording of monetary flows, is in line with the concepts of ESA 95, does rely on internationally proved methodology and is based on data which are available in Austria.

Outcome: Gaps in the data situation were identified and measures were initiated to fill these gaps. A model to substitute regular surveying of basic data was developed.

(National Action effected in the framework of Eurostat's EDICOM II 2003 Programme)

Transport Data Analysis: Linkage between foreign trade statistics and transport statistics

Objective: Finding a synthesis between statistics compiled for foreign trade and transport in order to analyze parallel structures in transport-parameters of both statistics which should lead to a better quality of these parameters within the foreign trade data validation

Outcome: this project is just being processed; results should be available in October 2005

(National Action effected in the framework of Eurostat's EDICOM II 2004 Programme)

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

In 2002, a project has been completed improving the linkage of the General Business Register and the tax register file with the Foreign Trade Register. Results of this exercise set the stage for the above mentioned linkage structural business data with foreign trade data “Standardisation Exercise”.

Country Belgium Contact person: F Spagnoli

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : 15/3/2006 for 2005 data
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8
 - Target date for Final data: july 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: 70
 - Total value : 70
 - Totals by partner country: 70
 - Totals by SITC section: 70
 - Volume and value indices: 70
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised? all data publicly available free of charge on www.nbb.be after 70 days

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

price indices broken down by partnercountry

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

mirror exercise with NL

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

data for Eurostat on trade by categories of companies (size class, activity codes)

Country: Canada Contact person: David Dodds

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : February 10, 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail:
-HS 10 imports, HS 8 exports by country
 - Target date for Final data: May 12, 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail:
-HS 10 imports, HS 8 exports by country
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: 39-44 days
 - Total value :
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section;
 - Volume and value indices:
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Most data are now sent electronically to OECD. Could this process be automated/standardised? It may be possible to automate the process.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

- i) Statistics Canada (STC) is planning to retire the mainframe computer in early 2009. The merchandise trade program is one of the biggest users and the necessary investment will be made to take all applications off to other platforms over the next three years. This will allow a re-design of the dissemination program.
- ii) To assist STC in reducing export undercoverage, Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) (including Customs) has introduced a “no-load” MOU with most marine carriers. For exports, ships will not load cargo unless there is proof that the goods have been reported appropriately.
- iii) The Canadian Automated Export Declaration now has over 35,000 registrants, who report about 75% of all non-US exports.
- iv) Following a major problem with the flow of data between CBSA and STC at the end of 2004, a major review was undertaken of processes in both organizations to ensure that all transactions are included in the monthly data releases. The review also looked at the situation in Australia, U.S. and U.K.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

-results of Canada-China reconciliation for the 2002, 2003 were released recently.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

-In 2005, STC will release information on our importer register for the first time. Results for exporters has been available for about ten years.

Country: Switzerland Contact person: Alois Zurwerra

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data :
 - Classification and Level of detail: 3rd February 2006
 - Target date for Final data:
 - Classification and Level of detail: 23th Mai 2006
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: All figures are available either the 3rd February or the 23th Mai 2006
 - Total value :
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section;
 - Volume and value indices:
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

Basically yes, but not in the short time. We have to define a small project during the next year, in which all the needs and technical requirements are described (e.g. server address, access authorization, embargo, format ect).

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

The implementation of the statistics agreement between the European Union and Switzerland as well as the adaptation several methods to the UN concepts and definitions leads to various adjustments within the Swiss foreign trade statistics. Thereby the integration of returned goods, goods for processing under contract and electricity into the foreign trade statistics are of special importance. Since the data of electricity are available with a delay of approximately three months, the annual settlement of Swiss foreign trade statistics as of 2005 will be carried out in two steps. Firstly the provisional figures will be published as usual at the beginning of February and secondly around May the 20th final results will succeed.

In order to keep the comparability, the annual results as of 2002 will be recomputed. The definitive figures in the new conception will be available toward the end of May 2006.

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

Foreign trade index: Implementation of a stability filter

Despite outlier detection with four different methods (ARIMA-Model, Median, external prices and original prices) it can sporadically occur that individual tariff numbers still distort the index results. Although those cases were rather rare, index users perceive such cases as disturbing. Particularly in the context of time series analysis outliers make a reasonable interpretation of the results difficult. In this case the reliability of available data declines.

The goal of a stability filter is to identify such cases before the publication of new index results and to prevent their harmful effects. But it is important that the expenditure of time for a stability filter must be reasonable and also no considerable delays in the publication of the data may result.

Implementation of a stability filter consists of following steps: immediately after the index computation all cases are set on a list, which fulfil the following conditions:

$$\frac{1}{10}P_0 \leq P_t \leq 10P_0 \text{ and the products } P_tQ_t, P_0Q_t, P_tQ_0 \text{ and } P_0Q_0 \geq 1'000'000.$$

As soon as the list with the problematic cases is ready, each case is examined individually by two officers. Depending on the importance and extent of the distortion, it will be decided whether the result is still usable. If the distortion is classified as too large, the concerning customs tariff number receives the status "Not index position" (manual change of meta data has to be done in this case). After this the index computation must be repeated without problematic tariff numbers.

Our experiences with the stability filter are positive. This year index computation had to be repeated only twice. The caused delay for the availability of the new foreign trade numbers is modest (not more than a half hour).

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

Implementation of a Quality Management for foreign trade statistics

2004 the quality management project has been launched. Quality management is understood as process based acting. A description about the aims of the Swiss foreign trade statistics and the procedure and the duties of the different services can be found in the quality management manual. This manual is also the base of the quality management. The tasks that have to be done at the foreign statistics department are divided in different closed sub processes. Every process has to go through the four phases of planning, acting, examination and improvement. During the planning phase a small team is tasked with the description in detail of every process. At the same time this team has to define the objectives for the process. The team has also to determine indicators in order to be able to check if the objectives were achieved. After the implementation of the process the daily business has to be done according to the process description. One year later an audit will take place and any deficiency or improvement will be summoned up in a quality report. For the next process cycle the deficiencies and improvements will be taken into account as inputs or progresses.

The introduction of the quality management started with five processes in 2004. These were the processes of: general information, information for the Medias, delivery of data by CD-Rom, handling of the customs declaration and finally the maintenance of the customs documents. 2005 the following processes have been introduced: accounting, corrections, delivery of data by spread sheet on paper.

So far the experiences of the first year are positive and it was possible to improve several proceedings. Furthermore collaborators were enabled to see the whole picture of their tasks. On the other side the work of documenting and evaluating the processes requires a considerable amount of time and resources that should not be underestimated.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers): nothing

Country: Czech Republic Contact person: Sarka Pisarikova, Monika Bartlova

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data: Preliminary and updated data for the preceding year (2005) will be published in February 2006 and June 2006, respectively.
 - Classification and Level of detail: complete commodity and partner breakdown (i.e. CN8, country of origin, country of destination)
 - Target date for Final data: Final data for the preceding year will be published in September 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: complete commodity and partner breakdown (i.e. CN8, country of origin, country of destination)
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value:
 - Totals by partner country:
 - Totals by SITC section:
 - Volume and value indices:

} Data are published on the 25th working day after the end of the reference month

Unit Value indices are measured and published quarterly, on the bases of updated data.

- Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

Following statistical data are available through the query system on CZSO web pages (http://dw.czso.cz/pls/stazo/STAZO.STAZO?jazyk=EN&prvni_pristup=): reference period (from January 1999), flow (imports, exports, balance, turnover), commodity (HS 2-6, CN, SITC 1-5), partner country, net mass, supplementary unit codes (with some CN8 only), volume in supplementary unit and statistical value (CZK, EUR, USD).

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

The Czech Statistical Office (CZSO) participates under Eurostat's Edicom 3 programmes in the data quality actions (Quality of foreign trade statistics, Creating and improving dissemination and query system, Improving the system of registers).

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

The new system of control is building gradually with intent to make automatic routine processes and deepens the check of data in comparison with the current system which is to a large degree based on manual checks. Software for quick finding of mistakes in data is under preparation.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

The CZSO systematically performs bilateral mirror exercises with Germany to detect the main causes of asymmetries in CZ and DE statistics. The analysis done in February 2005 was of particular relevance since it was for the first time after the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union and the implementation of the Intrastat system.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

An important progress has been achieved in the methodology of Intrastat register – from now the register is based on VAT numbers instead of identification numbers. This facilitates the link between Intrastat register and VAT register.

Country: Germany Contact person: Albrecht Krockow

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : 50 days after the end of the reference year
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8
 - Target date for Final data: October in the following year
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value : 39
 - Totals by partner country 48
 - Totals by SITC section; 39
 - Volume and value indices: 48
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

Access to the above mentioned data sets via internet is possible. Modalities of an automated or standardised access still have to be clarified.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

More declarations arrive by electronic media; reminder actions were intensified.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

1. Feasibility studies on how to improve methods of data adjustments and revision practice. They serve as preparatory work for a complete redesign of the processing system of German foreign trade statistics which will be realized within the next three years.

2. A couple of mirror exercises were carried out in the recent years, especially with other EU-member states. As a result mistakes were found and eliminated (missing data, wrong partner country, different classification ...)

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Sector based results of foreign trade are regularly collected by linking foreign trade register and general business register. Unfortunately the figures currently include only intra-community trade since the register of foreign traders does not contain companies which are involved in extra community trade only. So a study was launched looking for solutions how to complete the register of foreign traders.

Country: Denmark Contact person: Carsten Zornig (czo@dst.dk), Peter Ottosen (pot@dsk.dk)

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : 13 March 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8
 - Target date for Final data: 8 September 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: 40
 - Total value : 40
 - Totals by partner country Extra-EU trade 40 days, intra EU trade 70 days
 - Totals by SITC section; 40
 - Volume and value indices: 40
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised? yes and yes

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

Change in the method for early estimates. During 2005 a new Flash model has been developed. An important improvement is among others the use of early V.A.T. data for the first estimate of the detailed trade figures.

A new method for estimation of non-reported trade on countries and commodities has been developed.

An agreement of interchange of micro data between NL, BE and DK (COBRA agreement) has been made, which will found the basis of a mirror study between the three countries.

A system for electronic communication with customs authorities concerning errors in extra EU trade data has been developed.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Country: European Commission (Eurostat) Contact persons: Henri Tyrman, Karo Nuortila

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

- Yearly data: Provisional detailed data on year 2005 will be sent by Eurostat to international organisations in May 2006 (according to HS and SITC rev3). Revisions are usually sent in September/October.

- Monthly data: provisional aggregated data (according to SITC- 1 digit and BEC classification) are published for the EU and eurozone around 50 days after the reference month. The target for 2006 is an average of 48 days after the reference month. Volume and unit value indices are accessible within the same deadlines with a one month lag.

The legal deadline for the transmission of detailed data by EU members is 42 days for extra-EU trade and 70 days for intra-EU. These deadlines are generally respected by Member States.

-OECD has an on line access to Eurostat Comext database.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

A new Intrastat legislation has been implemented in January 2005. The main changes are the following:

- Exemption threshold has been lowered to the level of 97% of minimum coverage above the threshold. Principle of full coverage in data transmitted to Eurostat has been introduced. Missing data (below threshold trade and non response have to be estimated and broken down by partner country and 2 first digit of the product classification).

- A new deadline for transmission of aggregated data (40 days after the reference month) has been defined.

- New quality provisions have been introduced (use of passive confidentiality, breakdown of confidential data), as well as yearly delivery of quality indicators.

In addition, all intra and extra-EU detailed data are now accessible on a free basis on Internet, through the "easy-Comext" interface.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

New actions have been launched on the following points:

- treatment of confidential data to build accurate EU aggregates,

- quality of seasonal adjustments(in particular direct versus indirect adjustment) ,

- adaptation to the enlarged Union of the reconciliation model for intra-EU trade flows.

Results are expected for the beginning of 2006.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

- A new exercise to produce trade data according to enterprises characteristics (activity sector, size, etc.) has been launched with participation of 17 Member States. Results will be published at the end of 2005.

Country: Finland Contact Person: Mikko Laitinen

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

Yearly commodity trade

- Target date for Provisional data : End of March 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN. Level of detail CN2 and CN8.
- Target date for Final data: End of May 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN. Level of detail CN2 and CN8.
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: Approximately 9 weeks after reference period.
 - Total value : Approximately 9 weeks after reference period.
 - Totals by partner country: Approximately 9 weeks after reference period.
 - Totals by SITC section: Approximately 9 weeks after reference period.
 - Volume and value indices: Approximately 13 weeks after the reference period.
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

The Foreign Trade Statistics in Ultika service provides these datasets to customers. The service is chargeable. The internet address to the service is <https://eportti.tietopalvelut.com/>

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

A pilot study on CIGET and intra-firm statistics

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

CIGET and intra-firm statistics.

Trader's register (intra-EU and extra-EU trade operators). The register is based on structural enterprise data received from Statistics Finland (General Business Register).

New statistical products based on structural enterprise data. These new products are:

1. Foreign Trade Statistics by enterprise size
2. Foreign Trade Statistics in terms of the type of ownership of the enterprise
3. Concentration of foreign trade by enterprises

Country: United Kingdom Contact person: Sandra Tudor, Head of Trade Statistics, HM Revenue & Customs

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : delivered mid February of the following year. (2005 data expected to be delivered on 13th February 2006)
 - Classification and Level of detail: Two files at HS2 and CN8 level by country, value (£), quantity (kgs) & supplementary units. Suppressions applied at CN8.
 - Target date for Final data: delivered mid September of the following year. (2005 data expected to be delivered mid September 2006)
 - Classification and Level of detail: Two files at HS2 and CN8 level by country, value (£), quantity (kgs) & supplementary units. Suppressions applied at CN8.
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: expected to be delivered 55 calendar days following reference period. (delivered 10 working days following UK Press Notice Release)
 - Total value : Value in national currency (£ sterling)
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section; SITC section and division
 - Volume and value indices: value and net mass (expressed in metric tonnes)
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

The datasets themselves, as specified by OECD, are not available through the Internet. However, all of the data required by OECD are freely available through www.uktradeinfo.com, and very similar reports could be generated by customers, although there would be slight differences in the way that suppressed data would be indicated.

An alternative method of data supply to OECD could be the setting up of an FTP link, similar to that by which we supply ONS, Forvus, the Data Retailers and Eurostat.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

VAT Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) Fraud – In the last 18 months, the UK has conducted further research into the impact of MTIC fraud on the trade in goods statistics. An article published in February 2005 concluded that the current estimates are the best available using currently obtainable sources. Revisions to the Overseas Trade Statistics were published in July 05 to include the estimates for the impact of MTIC fraud from 1999 onwards. This has increased the quality and consistency of the UK

published data in that now the trade in goods statistics published in the Balance of Payments and Overseas Trade Statistics include estimates for the impact of MTIC fraud.

(In July 2003 the UK revised Balance of Payments data from 1999 to reflect initial adjustments for the impact of MTIC fraud. Presentations were made to Eurostat and the OECD April 04 meeting to inform others about the issue.)

Intrastat legislation – Revised legislation for Intrastat – the collection of intra-EU trade statistics – was introduced in Jan 05. This refined and consolidated previous legislation and included key changes such as: The required coverage is now expressed as a percentage by value (97%), repairs are excluded and the reporting of certain specific movements e.g. vessels and aircraft, gas and electricity, sea products has been clarified and in some cases simplified.

E-services – we have made considerable progress in offering electronic support services to Intrastat declarants, including step-by-step guides to Intrastat and electronic classification tools. This approach was piloted with a group of traders who were new to Intrastat as a result of EU Enlargement in 2004. We have also developed an electronic e-mail alert service where multi-departmental messages specifically relevant to the export import community are delivered directly to businesses. These initiatives have supported the continuing increase in traders submitting Intrastat declarations electronically. The New Export System, introduced in 2002 and fully operational from 2003, means that practically all non-EU trade is now captured electronically.

Merger of departments – in April 05, our former department, HM Customs & Excise, merged with the Inland Revenue (primarily responsible for tax collection) to form a new department, HM Revenue & Customs. The trade statistics function will continue to operate as before and the products and services delivered to customers will continue.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

1. Research into the impact of manual data editing and the feasibility of increasing automation with regards to data quality is currently being carried out.

2. Two Eurostat funded reconciliation exercises are currently underway, a bilateral study with Germany and research into the impact of the “Rotterdam effect” on asymmetries. Both studies aim to improve the coherence of EU trade-in-goods statistics and reduce asymmetries between member states.

3. Meeting users’ data requirements – following on from providing free data access in Jan 05, we are researching new data products and services to meet the requirements of our expanding customer base. This includes development of proactive data set products (Stat Facts) to promote wider dissemination and customer-focused data and related information, reducing the need for tailor-made ad hoc packages on demand.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

The UK carried out a pilot study in 2002 to match the trade in goods data with the UK’s Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). Since then, regular access to the IDBR has been established and we intend to refine the matching methodology in the coming months. We are currently researching further customer requirements with Eurostat, the UK Department of Trade & Industry and academia.

Country: Greece Contact person: S. Bakalidou

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data: *First week of March 2006*
 - Classification and Level of detail: *Flow - CN8 - Partner Country code*
 - Target date for Final data: *2008*
 - Classification and Level of detail: *The same as above*
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade: *Two months after reference month*
 - Days after reference period: *Yes*
 - Total value: *Yes*
 - Totals by partner country: *Yes*
 - Totals by SITC section: *Yes*
 - Volume and value indices: *Yes*
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

This is not applicable yet. We can send you the data by e-mail.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

1. The Intrastat data (70% of total value) are submitted to N.S.S.G. through Web forms.
2. The majority of Customs offices (90% of total value) have been computer organized.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

1. Automatic data editing and imputation of CN8 code for intrastate data (applicable within 2005)

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Studies concerning the link of VIES and INTRASTAT register.

Country: Hungary Contact person: Cecilia Krisztik

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : June
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS2/4/6/country
 - Target date for Final data: September
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS2/4/6/country

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value : 70
 - Totals by partner country 70
 - Totals by SITC section; 70
 - Volume and value indices: quarterly, 70 days after the quarter
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

The above data sets(excl. indices) are available in the free, public Internet database of Statistics Hungary from the www.ksh.hu homepage. Timing of releases is according to the dissemination calendar published for the whole year in advance. With the help of software, queries might be made and tables constructed with the required dimensions.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

The accession of Hungary to the EU brought a major change to the system of international merchandise trade statistics. The implementation of Intrastat was carried out on time and the change-over took place relatively smoothly.

Provision of monthly data has not been changed. Final annual data are available in September of the following year according to the Eurostat recommendations, but in 2006 provisional annual data will be transmitted in June.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

The method of estimating missing trade in Intrastat is under supervision and improvement aiming at the use of VAT data along the process, as well as producing more reliable product and country estimates at the detailed level.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Intrastat register is linked with the General Business Register, information is regularly transmitted both ways.

Country: Iceland Contact person: Auður Ólína Svavarsdóttir

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : No provisional data is published
 - Classification and Level of detail:
 - Target date for Final data: Within 8 weeks after the end of the reference period
 - Classification and Level of detail: All

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: On average within 31 days after the end of the reference period
 - Total value : All data
 - Totals by partner country: All data
 - Totals by SITC section: All data
 - Volume and value indices: Indices for export and import are not available for monthly data. Indices are calculated for the first quarter of each year and then on monthly basis, cumulative figures for the year in question. The reason for that is the small size of the Icelandic market. The classification used is, for export an Icelandic classification of branches of processing and for import, the BEC classification. Still it would be relatively easy to calculate the indices by, for example, the SITC classification. These indices are not published officially yet, only indices for the whole year are official, but official publication is planned and being prepared at the moment.
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised? On Statistics Iceland's web site, monthly data for import (cif) and export (fob) is being published by SITC, 2 digits. Currently, monthly data only for selected countries is published on the web site.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

Statistics Iceland has been working together with the Central Bank of Iceland in preparing for a new data collection system for services. Due to limited resources most of our effort has been devoted to this project.

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

Statistics Iceland's ongoing projects (with the Ministry of Finance and the Customs Authorities) to improve timeliness and quality.

Statistics Iceland (with the Customs Authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture) held a seminar for the exporters of agricultural products in order to improve timeliness and quality. As a result of that, the quality has increased but the timeliness is still a problem.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple responses, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Research regarding linking the Business Register, The Settlement System, VAT, External Trade, Direct Foreign Investment and Pay-as-you-earn register in order to find the sample of companies for survey of services.

Country: Republic of Korea Contact person: Park, No-Myung(Tel : +82-042-481-7847, Email : paromy@customs.go.kr)

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- **Yearly commodity trade**
 - Target date for Provisional data: We don't provide the provisional data to OECD.
 - Classification and Level of detail:
 - Target date for Final data: within April 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS 6digits

- **Monthly Statistics of International Trade: We don't provide the Monthly Statistics to OECD.**
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value :
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section;
 - Volume and value indices:
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?
 - We, KCS, are releasing the monthly data through our Internet Homepage.
 - You, OECD can have free access to our Homepage in the data of Total value(unit : 1,000US\$), Totals by partner country, Volume(unit : kg) and value indices(unit : 1,000US\$), but not Totals by SITC section.
 - From current situation, it will be a little difficult for us to automate/standardize this process. But we will consider the automation/standardization if many other countries develop the automation/standardization process.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

We have executed the error check and error refinement process.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple responses, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

We have executed the researches for the minimization of errors in each declaration certificates, and the researches utilize diverse statistics verification techniques.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

We are engaged in the studies for making the Single Window System which integrates the OGA's(Other Government Agencies).

We have been examining CDM(Customs Data Model) and UCR(Unique Consignment Reference) which is being developed by WCO(World Customs Organization) to take a chance to participate in.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if there are any wrong answers due to misunderstanding about these questions. Thank you.

Country: Japan Contact person: Tetsuma Arita

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data :
Probably, the release date will be February or March in 2006. If we would submit the data, the date of submit will be one or two months (for converting the format) after the release date.
 - Target date for Final data:
Probably, the release date will be April or May. If we would submit the data, the date of submit will be one or two months (for converting the format) after the release date.
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
The release date is 2 or 3 months after. If we would submit the data, the date of submit will be one or two months (for converting the format) after the release date.
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

Yes, all the latest data are available on Web Site. I can't judge that the process can be automated because the detail of the process isn't known.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

1. Increasing the Frequency and Timeliness of Dissemination

- 1) Regional breakdowns of "Balance of Payments" are disseminated on a quarterly basis (currently disseminated semi-annually). The dissemination date is brought forward by roughly one month, so that statistics for a given month are disseminated in the second month of the second quarter, counting from the quarter to which the month belongs.
- 2) The timing of recording for portfolio investments in the "Balance of Payments" is changed from settlement date to contract date (to conform to the accrual principle recommended by BPM5).
- 3) The Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Bank of Japan (BOJ) have partially revised the methodology for compiling balance of payments (BOP) statistics on the value of goods, freight fares (sea freight fares), and freight insurance premiums, which comprise components of import prices.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple responses, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

1) Revision of Compilation Methodology for Balance of Payments Statistics on Sea Freight Fares and Freight Insurance Premiums

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Bank of Japan¹ (BOJ) have partially revised the methodology for compiling balance of payments (BOP) statistics on the value of goods, freight fares (sea freight fares), and freight insurance premiums, which comprise components of import prices. The revised methodology has been introduced from final figures for the January - March quarter of 2005 and the preliminary figures for May 2005, both released in July 2005.

The revision is principally aimed at modifying the methodology for collecting basic data on freight fares and freight insurance premiums, and is intended to reflect changes in business activities. This paper elaborates on the background and details of the revision and the impact on statistics, and is intended to contribute to assist BOP statistics users.

2) FATS Statistics: Producing Statistics for Broadly-Defined Trade in Services

Japan has various micro-economic surveys that are extremely similar to FATS. However, by international comparison, Japan's FATS statistics are not necessarily well developed. FATS statistics are useful in gauging the influence of foreign direct investment and the impact of entry barriers levied on foreign companies. For the development of FATS statistics, it is desirable to establish a consultation for discussion involving both compilers and users of these statistics.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

There is no matching research about it.

Country: Mexico Contact person: Gerardo Durand

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : May 8th, 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS (6 digit) by partner country. Only Value
 - Target date for Final data: September 8th, 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS (8 digit) by partner country. Volume and Value
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade: Available at INEGI's website in the following link: <http://dgcnesyp.inegi.gob.mx/cgi-win/bdieintsi.exe/NIVJ10#ARBOL>
 - Days after reference period: 58-60 days after the reference period
 - Total value: Available
 - Totals by partner country: Available
 - Totals by SITC section: Not Available
 - Volume and value indices: Not Available
 - Supplementary question: to what extend could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardized?
The available data in a monthly basis are values at the level of four digit (HS) and, in the other hand, total values by partner country. To facilitate the collection of monthly data, OECD could get this statistics (in excel format) in a FTP site of INEGI.

1. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

Dissemination of Monthly Statistics of International Trade by HS Classification since May, 2005.

Dissemination of International Trade Statistics by Transportation Mode through the North American Transportation Statistics On-line Database (NATS-OD) which was developed in Mexico in coordination with the U.S. and Canada and launched on September, 2004.

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/and/or improved quality/coverage:

Improvement of quality: Revision and adjustment for the exports of petroleum, and some partner countries, considering the reviewing of Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), and the criteria of last known destination, respectively.

Improvement of timeliness: Re-organization of the informatics procedures during the third quarter of this year, with the objective to release provisional data of yearly commodity trade (2005) at the beginning of May, 2006.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

No particular research work.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

There are no studies or research on this matter.

Country: New Zealand Contact person: Sun Kim

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data : 1 Feb 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS10 digit level by country
 - Target date for Final data: 27 April 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: HS10 digit level by country

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period: 19 working days (provisional)/4 months (final)
 - Total value :
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section;
 - Volume and value indices: 3 months (provisional)/6 months (final)
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?
 OECD already subscribes INFOS (statistical data serviced by Statistics New Zealand):
 OECD contact person: Eric Dery

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

One release: Previously, merchandise imports data have been released on the 19th working day, and for exports data, 26th working day. These are combined and be released on the 19th working day since the May 2005 month release. This will provide more timely and meaningful data for the users.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

N/A

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers): N/A

Country: Poland Contact person: Mirosława Grebowiec: m.grebowiec@stat.gov.pl

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade:
 - Target date for Provisional data: February 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: 8-digit CN
 - Target date for Final data: August 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: 8-digit CN

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value : 40 days
 - Totals by partner country: INTRASTAT – 70 days, EXTRASTAT – 42 days
 - Totals by SITC section: 40 days
 - Volume and value indices: 70 days
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised? Monthly data are available by the COMEXT data base.

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months;

Since 1 May 2004:

- implementation of the INTRASTAT system, i.e. the system of statistics on trade of goods with Member States of the European Union;
- the system of statistics on external trade of goods covers the EXTRASTAT and INTRASTAT systems;
- all information concerning the external trade of goods carried out by Poland, both the information coming from SAD documents and from INTRASTAT declarations, is registered, controlled, verified and processed exclusively by the customs administrations within the CELINA Declaration Support System.

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

- timeliness: improved thanks to the application of the customs CELINA system;
- quality/coverage: new control parameters of the customs CELINA system, plausibility control by minimum and maximum acceptable prices.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

- reconciliation exercises: comparisons of the Polish external trade data with data of Germany and Lithuania;
- methodological research connected with the implementation of the INTRASTAT system and with changing of the EU legislation in the field of the INTRASTAT system since 1 January 2005.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

The new register was built for needs of the INTRASTAT system. This register of entities providing the statistical information is created, maintained and updated by the Ministry of Finance, i.e. by the customs administration which functions within the sector. There is a close link between the Statistical Business Register (kept in the Central Statistical Office of Poland), VAT register (on the base of the VAT data sets created by the Ministry of Finance) and the National Register of Taxpayers.

Country: Sweden Contact person: Carl-Magnus Jaensson

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data: late March 2006
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8 etc
 - Target date for Final data: late March 2007 (year 2005 is hopefully revised last time, normally we revise the reference month and the previous five months)
 - Classification and Level of detail: CN8 etc
- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value: early estimates 25 days
 - Totals by partner country 70 days (Extrastat figures 40 days)
 - Totals by SITC section; 70 days (Extrastat figures 40 days)
 - Volume and value indices: 80 days (published quarterly)
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Via Statistics Sweden's own statistical databases, or via Eurostat.
 - Could this process be automated/standardised?

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

New system for producing early estimates (first released figures);

To produce this statistics we used to sample (once a year) about 1.500 enterprises, asking them about their imports and exports. Now, we instead use figures from all enterprises obliged to give this information, but are focusing on the 500 largest enterprises (sampled each month), with regards to imports and exports. We then estimate the growth rate. The main result is better precision.

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

Statistics Sweden are about to make some organisational changes; creation of a unit designed for checking and correction of all figures regarding e.g. economic statistics from the enterprises. Regarding foreign trade statistics, this means that the checking and correction takes place at one unit and aggregation of data and publishing at another unit. The aim is to co-ordinate checking and correction processes within economic statistics. This organisational change has just been implemented.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

We have developed a joint checking system between the goods and service components of the foreign trade statistics. A need for consistency checking between the goods and service components of the foreign trade statistics has surfaced due to the problems enterprises are having in distinguishing goods and services in their reporting. In addition to checking the consistency between the goods and services components of

the foreign trade statistics, information from other statistical sources is also used such as corporate tax returns, the deliveries in industry on export markets survey and industrial production survey. We plan to implement the application constructed early 2006.

We are also working on a new system for shortening the publishing period of detailed statistics by 14 days, mainly by estimating the VAT. Implementation is planned by April 2006.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Country: Turkey Contact person: Bulent Tungul

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data :
 - Classification and Level of detail: March 2006
 - Target date for Final data:
 - Classification and Level of detail: July 2006

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value: 40 days
 - Totals by partner country: 40 days
 - Totals by SITC section: 40 days
 - Volume and value indices: 50 days (Volume and Unit Value Indices)
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

Monthly data (total value, totals by partner country, by SITC, external trade indices) can be provided from internet but detail data can be extracted from database (intranet).

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

- DB2 Database was moved to Oracle. Oracle Discoverer interfaces were developed by SIS (State Institute of Statistics) to extract data by authorized staff at Data Dissemination Division. Detail data are available from 1969.

- SIS publishes dissemination time table for all statistics including Foreign Trade Statistics. According to this time table Foreign Trade Statistics have to be published within 30 days following the reference month.

- Data processing system was changed. All processing system was developed made automated on SAS.

- Volume and Unit Value Indices were rebased with 2003 and changed the methodology. New Indices are calculated according to the Chain Index Methodology.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

- Foreign trade statistics are published by Special Trade rules. In order to publish also General Trade data, SIS organized some meetings with related organizations. In 2007, SIS plans to publish both systems.

- Reconciliation exercises were held with important neighbour countries in 2004 (Bulgaria and Georgia).

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

Setting up of Business Registers System is an ongoing project which is realised due to European Norms. Ministry of Finance records are the main administrative source that has sufficient and continuously improved quality. (It was checked during the General Census of Businesses, 2002) At the current time, the periodicity of updates is not fixed since the studies are still continued. It is planned to update data quarterly in the near future. It is assumed as there is one to one relationship between legal unit and enterprise.

Regarding trade register, we built a file containing all trade operators and their addresses, telephones, fax numbers etc. This file is regularly updated with other sources (Turkish Exporter Union, Customs declaration, Ministry of Finance)

After finishing Business register project, trade register database will be linked with business register database, so some studies/exercises (Trade by turn-over, trade by economic sectors etc) can be done.

Country: United States Contact person: David M. Dickerson

1. Merchandise trade data for reporting year 2005

Many improvements have taken place in 2005 with respect to timeliness. But here is still scope for further improvements. What is the likely date of data submission to OECD in 2006 ?

Please state the approximate date for

- Yearly commodity trade
 - Target date for Provisional data :
 - Classification and Level of detail:
 - Target date for Final data:
 - Classification and Level of detail:

- Monthly Statistics of International Trade:
 - Days after reference period:
 - Total value :
 - Totals by partner country
 - Totals by SITC section;
 - Volume and value indices:
 - Supplementary question: to what extent could OECD have access to monthly data via Internet for the above data sets? Could this process be automated/standardised?

Yearly Commodity Trade:

Annual 2005 trade data will be available with the release of December 2005 data on February 10, 2006. In June 2006, annual 2005 data will be released again and include any revisions. The exact release date in June 2006 is not available at this time. Dates for this release and all monthly releases in 2006 will be available later this year, likely in late September or October. For the most up to date list of release dates go to: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/faq/gen/gen0007.html

The general level of detail available is ten-digit Harmonized System commodity classification by country of origin (imports)/destination (exports) by district of entry (imports)/export (exports). Among several measurements, quantity and value are available at the above levels of detail.

Monthly Statistics of International Trade:

In general, monthly trade statistics are available 40 - 45 days after the reference month. A list of release dates is available using the link above. The partner country and SITC section data are e-mailed each month, on the day of release, to std.tradestats@oecd.org Similar data can be obtained through the Internet using the following link: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/country/index.html

2. Developments during the past 12 to 18 months

a) Operational/managerial improvements having led to improved timeliness/ and/or improved quality/coverage:

Automated Export System Improvements

Background

The Automated Export System (AES) was implemented in July 1995 to automate the collection and processing of export information while improving export control and statistics and reducing filing and processing costs for the trade community and federal government. Participants approved to use the system are able to file their commodity information on AES either directly to a Customs mainframe or via the Internet. In ten years, AES has led to improvements in the coverage of exports. Today, AES collects approximately 1.3 million transactions a month or 96 percent of eligible export transactions from over 18,000 filers. The system also ensures that data are more accurate by informing the filers of incorrect or incomplete reporting, which is accomplished through up-front editing. Recently, the Foreign Trade Division (FTD) of the United States Census Bureau has made additional business and system improvements that will further enhance the timeliness, quality, and coverage of the reported export data. These improvements include a redesign of the system, and efforts to mandate the electronic filing of exports.

AES Redesign

In June 2004, FTD and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) implemented a redesign of AES to prepare for full mandatory filing on AES. With this redesign, the AES processing system became more robust and able to collect and respond more timely to several million transactions a month. Filers receive responses to over 95% of all AES transactions within thirty seconds, enabling the filers to receive their confirmation and move their freight to the port of export. In addition, the edits within AES were improved to reject more invalid data through fatal error messages. In the short term, these fatal errors proved to be a tough test to the industry, but after a year, only one-half of a percent of transactions contain a fatal error. By rejecting more invalid transactions, the AES redesign has helped to improve the quality of our export data.

Mandatory Filing on AES

In the fall of 2005, FTD will publish final regulations making AES mandatory for the filing of export shipments that require reporting to the Government. In these regulations, FTD will increase the penalties for failure to file, late filing and inaccurate filing up to \$10,000 and/or 5 years imprisonment. These penalties will have an immediate effect on timely filing, improved accuracy of the filing, and coverage. Along with the penalties, the regulations will establish pre-departure time frames for filing of export information through AES, which will also improve the timeliness of the reported data. In addition, the regulations will put requirements on the filers and carriers to have an AES confirmation prior to passing the cargo off and prior to loading the freight respectively. This new regulation is written more clearly so that the industry will better understand their reporting responsibilities. Carriers will be fined if they accept cargo from their customers without an AES confirmation number or filing exemption. This practice will allow the industry to account for everything leaving the U.S., improving our coverage of exports.

Introduction of Call Center

The FTD Call Center was implemented in June 2005 to improve customer service. The Call Center allows three customer service branches in FTD to utilize all open phone lines for agents or staff available to answer calls. For example, one branch's main line, if in use, previously only rolled over to three other lines. Today, with the Call Center, calls on that main line can roll over to as many as ten other agents or staff members in the branch. In addition, the Call Center is menu-driven and toll-free. The increase in calls taken and decrease in voice mails or abandoned calls will expedite problem resolution and provide more timely answers to customers' questions. In the long run, this feature will allow the industry to be better educated and will improve the reporting habits of our customers.

Implementation of New Data Analysis System

After accelerating the monthly merchandise trade statistics release by a week, starting in 2003, efforts have continued to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of analyzing the trade data. Our goal is to eventually release the statistics one month after the reference month. In 2004, a category verification system was implemented that allows analysts to review import and export data aggregated by filer, company, movement locations, and combinations of these fields. Reports are generated on largest value changes that include up to 25 months of data. The system allows analysts to drill down to transaction level data to help determine causes of the changes. Implementation of the system has helped to improve the quality of the statistics by allowing for more potential problems with the data to be identified prior to release, and reduced investigation times by at least 50 percent.

b) Particular research work (e.g. reconciliation exercises, methodological research). If applicable, please describe briefly the main objective(s) and outcomes. In case of multiple response, please rank according to importance or relevance (limit to 3):

The Foreign Trade Division (FTD) of the U.S. Census Bureau has been researching data editing procedures as a way to reduce costs and improve effectiveness, while maintaining quality and timeliness of the merchandise trade statistics. Two areas of research are automated edit parameter updates and selective editing.

Automated Edit Parameter Updates

In order to ensure the quality of the published merchandise trade data, the FTD edits the reported data by using a set of edit parameters. Currently, subject-matter analysts manually update these parameters that are based on commodity. However, there are roughly 10,000 export and 17,000 import commodity classifications, all of which may be edited against 30 or more different parameters that must be maintained individually for each commodity. Manually maintaining effective parameters has become increasingly challenging. As a result, FTD is researching a new way of automating updates to the edit parameters.

In order to develop an automated system to refresh edit parameters, we wanted to select a methodology that would determine an acceptable range of data values by commodity, since all of our editing is done on a commodity basis. We selected an outlier-detection method known as Resistant Fences, which develops edit parameters based on the distribution of data for a particular commodity. The philosophy behind the Resistant Fences method is that the majority of data are reported accurately, so by looking at the bulk of the data, one can develop reasonable parameters (called fences) that would be able to detect unusual data values. The methodology could be applied to any commodity, for either imports or exports, and any edit parameter for which there is a sufficient amount of data. As newer data become available, the parameters can be updated using this methodology, and this process can be automated. This would allow our commodity analysts to spend less time updating parameters, and to have more time for contacting data filers and correcting misreported data. Additionally, our updated parameters would be more current and accurate, resulting in improvements to the quality of our published data.

We are continuing to research and refine this methodology prior to putting it into production. Currently, we are developing lower and upper bounds for unit prices using this methodology and are working with commodity analysts to help us determine how reasonable these new parameters are. The Resistant Fences methodology tends to work better for some data distributions than it does for others, and as a result, we need to spend some time working with the analysts to resolve any of these specific issues. Once we become comfortable with the methodology, we intend to phase in the automation of updates to the parameters one edit at a time.

Selective Editing

In addition to updating the parameters, we are also investigating macro-editing techniques to reduce time spent manually editing merchandise trade data. Currently, FTD processes millions of records per month, yielding an average of 12,000 rejects on imports and 10,000 rejects on exports. Each analyst must resolve roughly 600 of these rejected records per month. There is a time pressure to resolve these rejected records more quickly in order to publish earlier. As a result, we are researching ways of selectively editing our data to relieve some of this pressure without affecting the quality of the published statistics and enabling us to possibly publish the statistics earlier.

Currently, we are investigating a selective editing methodology, which allows us to compute scores that rank the impact of each rejected data record on our published statistics. We are able to compare this score against a cut-off value where scores below the cut-off indicate that editing one more record will have little impact on the published data. These records, whose scores are below the cut-off value, are automatically handled by the editing system. Observations with a score larger than the critical value are marked for our analysts to follow-up with the data filer before we publish our monthly statistics. The goal is to reduce the cost and burden to our analysts associated with contacting filers. We also intend on focusing on suspicious records that may have a significant impact on the estimates without affecting overall data quality.

We are continuing to research and refine this methodology for use with the merchandise trade data. In our current research, we are calculating the scores for one editing variable (i.e., unit price) and are exploring ways to measure the impact of editing only some of the records in our published statistics. As we become more comfortable with this methodology, we intend to add other editing variables (such as shipping weight/quantity) into the score function.

c) Studies/research with respect to the use and possible linking of registers (interoperability of registers):

The Foreign Trade Division (FTD) of the United States Census Bureau has been releasing information profiling U.S. exporters for several years. The Exporter Database (EDB) provides a comprehensive view of the United States exporter population. It does this by combining commodity flow information from export statistical documentation with enterprise and establishment characteristic information from the Census Business Register. The EDBs have been compiled for 1987, 1992, and 1996 through 2003. Originally linked to the 5-year economic census, the EDBs are now produced annually.

Each year, the “*Profile of U.S. Exporting Companies*” is released based on the current EDB. The latest report available is the “*Profile of U.S. Exporting Companies, 2002-2003*,” released on July 13, 2005. The report includes information on the company sector of activity, employment size, location, related party trade, and export markets. As with all Census data, there are confidentiality requirements. Summary statistics from the EDB may be provided but some detailed data, including company names and addresses, cannot be disclosed.

The critical field, for the purposes of the EDB, is the exporter's Employer Identification Number (EIN). The Internal Revenue Service assigns the EIN to any business with a payroll. In theory, the EIN provides the basic linkage of export transactions and the information in the Business Register. The EIN is reported only on non-Canadian export transactions. For exports to Canada, the transactions contain the name of the exporter, instead of the EIN.

The linking process of the export transactions and the Business Register is first attempted in an automated manner using the EIN, name or combinations with other information. The remaining unlinked records go

through a clerical matching process. The clerical matches are then added to the automated matched records. This final compilation makes up the EDB.

Increases in export trade reported electronically through the Automated Export System (AES) have resulted in a substantial improvement in the accuracy, quality and comprehensiveness of the EDB. This is because the EIN field is edited on AES for completeness, and is not edited on paper source documents. About 95 percent of non-Canadian exports are filed on AES. Also, the linking process is more efficient and accurate due to a redesign of the Business Register in 2002 and methodological improvements in matching. We are currently researching the possibility of having a unique exporter identification code collected on exports to Canada transactions to allow for more automated matches. Our goal is to release the Profile report within six months of the prior statistical year, and is on schedule to be realized by 2007. We are also beginning to research the feasibility of developing an Importer Database in order to produce a report on the profile of U.S. importing companies and/or ultimate consignees.