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Background document
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Economic statistics: statistics of international trade in services

**First meeting of the Technical Subgroup on
the Movement of Natural Persons – Mode 4
Minutes**

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division
Department for Economic and Social Affairs

First meeting of the Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Natural Persons – Mode 4

United Nations Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

Minutes of the meeting

(Paris, 15-16 September 2004)

1. The meeting was opened by Mr. Enrico Giovannini, Director of the Statistics Directorate and Chief Statistician of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It was hosted by OECD and chaired by Mr. Ivo Havinga, Chief Economic Statistics Branch, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The agenda and list of participants is included in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

2. The meeting: (a) discussed issues relevant to the movement of natural persons in the revision of BPM5 and the update of the 1993 SNA; (b) discussed the statistical framework proposed for the measurement of the movement of natural persons (see background paper) and (c) provided a forum for exchange of information among countries and international agencies.

Revision processes of economic statistics standards

3. The update of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA) and the revision of the Balance of Payment Manual 5 (BPM5) are proceeding in parallel. A list of issues for discussion was drawn by the Inter-secretariat Working Group of National Accounts and the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM). The time schedules as well as the list of issues being considered by the two processes have been elaborated in detail and are fully consistent.

4. During the revision process of BPM5, IMF is assisted by the BOPCOM, chaired by IMF. BOPCOM has several technical expert groups which report to the Committee on methodological advances on selected topics and positions on the issues identified in the list. The United Nations Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, chaired by the OECD and the Technical Subgroup (TSG) on Movement of Natural Persons – Mode 4, chaired by UNSD, are part of these expert groups which report to BOPCOM. Both the Task Force and the TSG will report on advances made on international trade in services and on the measurement of the movement of natural persons respectively in the next BOPCOM meeting in October 2004.

5. As a result of the update of the 1993 SNA and revision of BPM5 other manuals will also have to undergo a revision. Relating to trade in services, these include:

- (a) Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS);
- (b) OECD Benchmark Definition of Foreign Direct Investment;
- (c) Tourism Satellite Accounts.

6. Of particular interest to the TSG is the revision of the MSITS and in particular of its Annex I, which provided a general discussion on the measurement of the supply of services through the presence of natural persons as defined in GATS Mode 4. The TSG will in fact be responsible for developing a statistical framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons. The framework will serve as a basis for:

- (a) An annex or a chapter in the revised Balance of Payments Manual,
- (b) A chapter in the revised MSITS manual;
- (c) A dissemination paper for trade negotiators.

7. Although the idea of the framework will be the same, the text should be written in different ways in order to meet the demands of the target audience. In the case of BPM6, the framework would focus on balance of payments flows, mention possible extensions of the BOP and present a short description of the full framework. In the case of MSITS, the statistical framework will be discussed at greater length and will also include further elaboration of balance of payments and national accounts concepts. In the case of the GATS, a paper could be written in a language understandable to trade negotiators and policy makers. It could focus on certain categories of workers, a subset of the universe considered in the framework proposed, which are relevant for the GATS negotiations.

Concept of residence

8. The concept of residence is a key concept for all economic statistics frameworks and it is central to the statistical framework for measuring the movement of natural persons. The proposal to adopt a stricter application of the one year rule, rather than a more flexible one as stated in the current BPM5 was discussed. Participants in the TSG were divided with some favouring the stricter rule as this would facilitate data comparability across countries and others favouring a more flexible one on the basis of specific country considerations.

9. The harmonization of the concept of residence across various fields of statistics would imply a careful consideration of special cases which are exceptions to the one year rule (e.g. students, patients, crew members). The need for harmonizing the concept of residence in economic statistics, tourism and census/migration statistics was discussed. It was noted that the discussion residence was particularly timely in consideration of the fact that economic statistics frameworks, tourism statistics and census recommendations are all undergoing revisions at this time. Having consistent and comparable definitions in the three areas of statistics is particularly relevant in the context of the measurement of the movement of natural persons, in consideration that the framework proposed combines information from the various sources of statistics. The three statistical frameworks use different criteria to identify the residence of households with economic statistics (1993 SNA and BPM5) using the “center of economic interest”, tourism statistics using the “usual environment” and census/migration using “usual residence”. These criteria should be harmonized or at least reconciled.

10. As a minimum, the TSG recommended that some clarifications on the application of the 1 year rule were needed. For example, there was some discussion on the treatment of students who move with the whole family to the country where they receive education services. There was general agreement that they should be considered as residents of the country where they study as they are no longer part of a household in the home country.

Only students who move alone to another country should continue to be considered as remaining members of a household in the home country. Although, this recommendation may be difficult to apply in practice, it is conceptually correct and thus should be explicitly mentioned in the revised BPM5 and update of the 1993 SNA.

11. Clarification is also needed as regard the timing in which household changes the residence from one country to the other. Countries seem to apply different rules, with some countries applying the change in residence from the time the migrant arrives in the country (regardless of the intention of length of stay) and some others apply as long as two years before changing the residence. Another issue that is becoming increasingly important with globalization is the identification of the center of interest for households with multiple residences. Clear guidelines should be given to identify the “predominant” center of economic interest.

12. The concept of residence is extremely important in the context of measuring the impact of the movement of natural persons in the host and home economies. The classification of certain flows, such as compensation of employees, is very much dependent on the application of the concept of residence. It is therefore important, in order to ensure data comparability between partner countries that the concept of residence is applied in a consistent way across countries. (See below for further discussion on this).

Statistical framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons

13. The framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons proposed in the paper prepared by UNSD was well received. There was strong support for the choice of a broad framework, which would permit to obtain a more in-depth picture of the economic impacts of temporary movement of persons in the home and host countries as well as more reliable estimates of economic indicators, such as gross domestic products (GDP), remittances and by extension, gross national income (GNI) and Gross National Disposable Income (GNDI). There was strong support for having the framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons based on internationally recognized systems, such as the 1993 SNA, BOP, migration and tourism statistics. The TSG recognized the need for the framework to meet, as much as possible, the needs of various users, including on migration, labour market, globalization, etc. It noted however, that in some cases the needs of the various users may be in conflict. Nevertheless, it recognized the need to keep the link with the legal framework proposed by GATS. In particular, it recommended to separately identify the relevant flows related to the different categories of natural persons covered by GATS.

14. Establishing the concordance between the framework proposed and the GATS-Mode 4 commitments is not straightforward. The same natural person depending on the type of contractual agreement (e.g. service delivery or employment contract) and on the place where he/she works (public or private company) is or is not covered by GATS. For example a foreign doctor who works as an intra-corporate transferee for a foreign owned hospital in the host country is covered by GATS. If the foreign doctor works for a public owned hospital he/she is excluded (services supplied under governmental authority are not covered by the agreement) and if he/she works for a private locally owned hospital may or may not be included depending on the country’s interpretation of the GATS. Identifying different types of natural persons by type of contract is very difficult in practice, thus making the measurement of the impact of Mode 4 in a strict sense, difficult to assess in

statistical terms. The concordance is also difficult to establish when looking at countries schedules of specific commitments. GATS Commitments on Mode 4 are not uniform across countries, with some countries including natural persons working for local companies (e.g. United States included H1B Visa holders in its schedule, where H1B Visa enables US employers to hire foreign professionals for a specified period of time) and others only referring to intra-corporate transferees or independent service providers. The duration of stay is also not applied uniformly across countries.

15. An additional issue is related to the change in classification of jobs when a person moves from one country to another. This would be the case, for example of a person working as a doctor in the home country and changing his/her occupation to medical assistant/nurse when moving to another country.

Universe

16. Using non-citizens as universe was considered a neat idea, however, this recommendation should be used with some degree of flexibility as the concept of citizenship may not be completely relevant in all countries. This would be the case for example of Germany, in which citizenship is acquired on the basis of *ius sanguinis*, rather than *ius solis*. According to *ius sanguinis*, citizenship is only acquired by blood and not by place of birth (*ius solis*). In this case, second or even third generation immigrants would still be considered non-citizens of the host country, although their ties to the home countries may be virtually nonexistent. The difference in the concepts of citizens/non-citizens depending on the country of migration would impair data comparability across countries. From a GATS perspective, the citizenship of the service supplier, depending on the category of service suppliers (natural or juridical person) should also be considered.

17. The identification of different categories of workers (e.g. self-employed or foreign employed migrants, seasonal and border workers, etc.) in the universe was considered very important. Relevant flows for the various categories of workers could be separately identified in the BOP and SNA. Moreover, the link between the broader universe of temporary workers and the narrower GATS-Mode 4 universe could be more easily established.

18. The issue of how to identify the category of workers was discussed. Although visas could, in principle be used, they do not provide the necessary level of details that is needed to identify in which industry the individual works, the service the worker provides and the type of contract held.

Variables

19. The variables proposed in the framework, namely number of persons, imports and exports of services, remittances, consumption expenditures, migrants' transfer and net wealth, were discussed by the Group. However, there was not enough time to reach an agreement on the final list of variables. In order to keep the variables limited in number, "net" variables (such as remittances, defined as total income flows in cash or in kind that are payable/receivable and transferred to/received from a non-citizen household residing in another country) rather than "gross" variables (such as compensation of employees and travel expenses), were chosen in the paper.

20 . From the discussion, it appeared that “gross” variables were preferred to the “net” ones. However, it was recognized that “net” variables (e.g. remittances) are also very important in their own right (although they could be derived from the “gross” variables). UNSD will prepare a comprehensive list of variables identifying under which account they are covered in the BOP or 1993 SNA for consideration by the TSG. WTO/OMC and OECD-Trade will elaborate the relevance of each variable for the different types of workers, in the context of GATS.

21 . Remittances are recently very high on the political agenda. It is therefore important to improve the measurement of remittances and to reach a common understanding of what it is meant with the term “remittances”. Different definitions have, in fact, been used:

- (a) The paper on the statistical framework defines remittances as the total income flows in cash or in kind that are payable/receivable and transferred to/received from a non-citizen household residing in another country. In the case of non-citizens residents, remittances are defined as the part of the household income, which can be derived from various sources, domestic or from the rest of the world, which is not consumed or invested but leaves the country where the household resides. The various sources of income include: (a) compensation of employees; (b) property income (e.g. interests on bonds, rents on land, etc.), (c) social contribution and benefits (e.g. unemployment, maternity, and child support benefits, etc.) and (e) other current transfers (e.g. workers remittances and other remittances). In the case of persons who are non-resident (e.g. business travelers and short term workers), remittances are defined as the difference between gross compensation of employees received, including benefits in cash and in kind, which is not consumed and travel expenses (e.g. hotels, food, etc.) in the country where the person worked.
- (b) The World Bank Global Development Finance (GDF) 2003 defines remittances as the sum of three components: (a) workers’ remittances recorded under the heading “current transfers” in the current account of the balance of payments; (b) compensation of employees which include wages and salaries of border, seasonal and other non-resident workers (such as local staff of embassies) which are recorded under “income” subcategory in the current account; and (c) migrants’ transfers which are reported under capital transfers in the capital accounts .
- (c) In the paper *Working abroad – The benefits flowing from nationals working in other economies* (Harrison *et al.* 2003) prepared for the OECD Round Table on Sustainable Development, remittances are defined as the sum of workers’ remittances and compensation of employees. This definition differs from the one in GDF (2003 and 2004) for the exclusion of migrants’ transfers on the ground that they are not related to current earnings. Other transfers such as pensions, which a person may receive from an enterprise or government abroad are also excluded.

22 . The TSG agreed that migrants transfer should not be included in the definition of remittances for several reasons. Migrants’ transfers relate to the belongings (goods, financial and non-financial assets) of migrants when they move from one country to another, which are not related to income earned in the current period. They do not imply a change in ownership nor redistribution of income. They are a one-time flow, which has an

impact only on the net worth of the countries (both home and host). Thus, they differ from remittances, which can be considered as a transfer from a non-resident to a resident and thus may have an impact on poverty reduction.

23 . Other flows, in addition to workers' remittances, are relevant for the measurement of the economic impact of the movement of natural persons on the host and home economies. They include for example, pensions and other social contributions, financial flows, connected for example to the holding of a bank account by a non-resident or holding of joint (resident-non-resident) bank account, as well as investment in small businesses. The framework should allow the identification of these flows and allow for the analysis of their economic impacts.

24 . The TSG recognizes the urgency to improve data quality on remittances. This was also the message from the G7 Summit which recommends the World Bank to lead an initiative on improving the measurement of remittances. The IMF had been informed of a proposal to create a statistical working group as a step towards this goal. This group would be led by the World Bank and would include government agencies that compile the national balance of payments, both from G7 and other countries, along with technical experts from the World Bank, IMF, and other international agencies . IMF proposed that the existing TSG, expanded to include the World Bank, would be the most appropriate group to deal with the issue. However, the terms of the mandate are still unclear to make a definite recommendation. IMF, in consultation with the World Bank, should report to the TSG the implications of the G7 recommendations both in terms of additional tasks for and membership in the TSG. UNSD, as chair of the TSG will report the outcome of this meeting to the World Bank and seek their input in the future work of the TSG.

25 . As a first step towards an improved database on remittances, the TSG proposes to create a small database (for data and metadata) on selected variables, for the countries present in the TSG, by partner country. The variables consist of compensation of employees, workers remittances, travel expenses, migrants' transfers and net wealth. The database will be hosted on the TSG website at UNSD. It will be password protected and be accessible for the members of the TSG only.

Work programme

26 . The time schedule to complete the final draft of the paper to be included as an Annex or Chapter in the revised Balance of Payment Manual is very tight. A detailed time schedule and tasks to be completed by the members of the TSG is attached in Annex I. A summary of tasks is listed below.

27 . UNSD will be responsible for:

- (a) Preparation of a short paper for the BOP Committee in October 2004;
- (b) Contact the World Bank to communicate the outcome of the meeting of the TSG and seek their input in future meetings (October 2004);
- (c) Preparation of an exhaustive list of variables relevant for the measurement of the economic impact of the movement of natural persons in the home and host countries(end of October 2004);

- (d) Design a data frame for partner countries data exchange (in cooperation with United States) (end of October 2004);
- (e) Revision of the draft paper on the statistical framework to measure the movement of natural persons (December 2004) and further revision as a result of comments received from various fora (see consultation strategy below);

28 . IMF will be responsible for:

- (a) Providing UNSD with metadata on the compilation of remittances data from the Balance of Payments Yearbook, other existing public sources, if any, and, if feasible in selected cases, from other sources, such as mission discussions. This information will be included in the TSG website (end of October).
- (b) Providing detailed comments on the paper on the framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons (end of October 2004);
- (c) Reporting on the implications , in consultation with the World Bank, (in terms of additional tasks and membership) on the work of the TSG of the G8 recommendations on improving information on remittances (when possible).

29 . WTO/OMC and OECD-Statistics and Trade Directorate will be responsible for preparing material to include in the framework paper to cover the sub-universe of the non-citizens relevant for Mode 4 as defined in GATS, looking both at the narrow and broader definition (which includes also employees of locally owned companies). They will also suggest a list of variables that are relevant for each GATS category of workers (mid November 2004).

30 . Countries will be responsible for revising/preparing country papers including further elaborating on the metadata for the calculation of the following variables: compensation of employees, workers remittances, travel expenses, migrants' transfers and net wealth. They will also supply data, if available, to be included in the data base on remittances by partner countries. The password-protected database will be posted on the TSG website.

31 . In addition to the above, United States will work with UNSD on the preparation of a data frame for remittances by partner countries (end of October). It will also develop a fictitious numerical example for the calculation of remittances to be included in the revised paper on the statistical framework.

Consultation strategy

32 . As mentioned earlier, the statistical framework for the measurement of the movement of natural persons will serve several purposes, including being part of the revised Balance of Payments Manual, the revised Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services and being used for discussion by GATS negotiators. The TSG recognizes the importance of having the framework widely discussed and commented on before a final draft is produced. The website of the TSG managed by UNSD ([www.http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/subgroup.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/subgroup.htm)) will play a major role in the consultation process. All documents of the meetings and the various versions of the framework paper will be posted on the website. In addition, the consultation strategy will include the following activities:

- (a) A summary paper will be presented to the BOPCOM meeting in October 2004, and the draft paper distributed as a background document at the same meeting;
- (b) A revised paper, which will take into consideration comments received by the TSG and by the BOPCOM members, will be discussed at the second TSG meeting in January 2005;
- (c) A further revised paper will be discussed at the Eurostat Balance of Payment Working Group (March 2005);
- (d) An issue paper will be prepared for presentation in the BOPCOM meeting in June 2005;
- (e) A revised paper will be discussed at the TSG meeting in September 2005;
- (f) The paper will be presented at the OECD meetings on national accounts (October 2005);
- (g) The paper will be discussed at the AEG meeting on national accounts in November 2005;
- (h) A final version of the paper will be produced by the end of 2005.

Annex I

The table below outlines the detailed time schedule agreed at the TSG meeting and the tasks of countries and organizations.

Tasks	Countries/ organizations	Deadline
1. Summary paper to be submitted for presentation at the BOP Committee meeting	UNSD	Beginning October 2004
2. Metadata on remittances from various sources	IMF	Mid October 2004
3. Minor revision of the framework paper (clarify the universe and further elaboration of the flows related to the variables)	UNSD	End of October 2004
4. Report to the TSG, in consultation with the World Bank, on the implications of the G8 recommendations on remittances	IMF`	When possible
5. Contact World Bank to seek input on the future work of the TSG	UNSD	End of October
6. Comments on the framework paper to UNSD	All	End of October 2004
7. Exhaustive list of variables for discussion among TSG members	UNSD	End of October 2004
8. Revise country papers, including further elaboration on metadata to be included in the database	Countries	End of October 2004
9. Text to include in the framework paper on how to define the sub-universe of the non-citizens relevant for Mode 4 as defined in GATS (narrow and broader, including employees of locally owned companies). Choose relevant variables by category of workers covered by GATS	OECD/ WTO	Mid-November 2004
10. Design data frame for partner countries data exchange	UNSD	End of October 2004
11. Submit data, if available, and metadata by partner country for the following variables: compensation of employees, workers remittances, travel, migrants' transfer and net wealth	Countries/ UNSD to prepare password- protected website	End of November 2004
12. Numerical example to be included in the revised framework paper	USA	Mid-November 2004

13. Revise draft paper on statistical framework	UNSD	Beginning December 2005
14. Report on data exchange to the TSG.	Countries	End of December 2004
15. Presentation of paper on statistical framework at the TSG meeting and comments from TSG members	All	End of January 2005
16. Presentation of the revised paper on statistical framework (including the comments from TSG) at the Eurostat Balance of Payment Working Group		March 2005
17. Preparation of issue paper for presentation in BOP Committee in June 2005	UNSD	End of April 2005
18. Presentation of the paper on statistical framework in the meeting of the UN Task Force on Trade in Services and TSG	UNSD	September 2005
19. Presentation of the paper on statistical framework in the OECD Meetings on National Accounts	UNSD	October 2005
20. Presentation of the paper on statistical framework at the AEG meeting (November 2004)	UNSD	November 2005
21. Final paper on statistical framework, including comments received in various fora	UNSD	End of 2005

Annex II

Meeting of the Technical Sub-group on Movement of natural persons - Mode 4

United Nations Task Force on International Trade in Services

15- 16 September 2004

OECD, PARIS, MONACO BUILDING
2 rue du Conseiller Collignon (16e),

AGENDA

Wednesday – 15 September

- 9.30-1:00 Review of GATS and statistical developments in areas related to Mode 4
1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Revision of BOP - Issues related to Mode 4(IMF)
 3. GATS and Mode 4 (World Trade Organization)
 4. Travel services – Conceptual differences in MSITS, BPM5 and TSA and data collection (World Tourism Organization)
- 2:30-6:00 Discussion of statistical frameworks
5. GATS agreements for health workers and country experiences in the measurement of flows of health workers (WHO)
 6. Recent developments on migration statistics and its relevance for Mode 4 (OECD – George Lemaitre)
 7. Statistical Framework for the Measurement of the Movement of Natural Persons (UNSD)
 8. Concept of residence of households (IMF)

Thursday– 16 September

- 9:00-1:00 Data sources and country practices
9. Measurement of remittances – recent developments (IMF/OECD)
 10. Collection of FATS statistics – issues and possible use of these statistics for measuring import and exports of services and remittances (USA)
 11. Visa, work permits and other administrative arrangements –Use for the compilation of remittances (Saudi Arabia)
- 2:30-6:00 Implementation issues - Country presentations (Canada, Mexico, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Japan, USA)
12. Discussion of the Subgroup functioning; comments from members on the revision of the framework and preparation of the text of the Chapter on Mode 4
 13. Future meetings

Annex III

List of participants

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