

MEASUREMENT AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES DATA

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ABSTRACT

Developments initiated by the World Trade Organization (WTO) that have implications toward the global economy and international trade environment require major adjustments to the way economic data is collected, recorded and measured. A prime issue in international services data arises as a result of the agreements on services trade that include completely new concepts of which even fundamental comprehension can be of great challenge to many.

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Notwithstanding these issues, it is essential that these new concepts and definitions are fully understood in order to be able to produce reliable statistics on services industries that realistically account for transactions. A number of countries especially those with developing economies, however, are still grappling with the immense task of filling knowledge and data gaps for policies and decision making. A reason for this is due to the infancy state of services statistics in these economies. In view of the implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), there is an urgent need to investigate and understand how services trade data is compiled and measured by data compilers to ensure that meaningful services statistics are produced. This paper conceptualizes some of the pertinent issues faced by those involved in generating relevant services statistics that measure and account for international trade in services (ITS), and explores an approach in dealing with those issues.

KEYWORDS: *International trade in services, services measurement, national treatment, WTO*