

Trade in services in statistical frameworks -- apt for decision-making?

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The release in January 2013 of a new OECD/WTO database on trade in value added terms suggested that the real share of services in world trade is twice as high as measured by conventional statistics. Against this background, it is asked whether trade in services statistics are relevant for decision-making such as the formulation of national negotiation strategies or the analysis of global value chains.

This paper examines the type of services information available from international trade statistics, the Balance of Payments, and the System of National Accounts, including the international supply of services through foreign affiliates or individuals who temporarily move abroad. Measurement issues are discussed from a conceptual angle to identify possible improvements of concepts and definitions as well as for data production in order to sketch a roadmap for the future development of international trade information systems.

Key words: services trade statistics, challenges, roadmap

¹ The opinions expressed are personal and do not represent an official position of the WTO or its Secretariat.