



INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES STATISTICS ENHANCEMENTS

Consultation paper

5 October 2021



SUMMARY

This consultation paper presents the projects aimed at enhancing the quality and range of international trade in services statistics.

The ABS are seeking your feedback on the priority of the projects outlined below.

We recommend you first read the paper '[Enhancing the quality of Australia's international trade statistics](#)' for important background information.

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Enhancing the quality and range of international trade in services statistics

More frequent detailed services statistics

Currently detailed services statistics, including services by partner country and by state, are available twice per year, in publications [International Trade: Supplementary Information Calendar Year](#), and [International Trade: Supplementary Information, Financial Year](#). These publications are funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

This project will be looking to review and improve existing processes and systems, and seek new and more frequent source data to enable the production and release of these detailed statistics on a quarterly basis as part of the ABS' suite of trade data.

This project will improve the accuracy and timeliness of detailed services statistics and may open avenues for producing other detailed cross-classified services statistics, such as services by state by country.

Statistics on characteristics of service traders

Characteristics of businesses that trade in services are often quite different to those that trade in goods. In addition, trade in services typically involves delivering bespoke solutions to address a customer's needs. This means service businesses vary widely, in size, but also in the services they trade, delivery modes, and speed with which they go global.

Data on characteristics of service traders are currently not available due to source data constraints. The ABS will explore opportunities for producing a high quality, consistent, coherent, and regular release of information on the characteristics of businesses trading in services.

An option could be to link data collected on the Survey of International Trade in Services to ABS' [BLADE](#) (Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment) which would allow characteristics information - such as business size, industry, number of countries traded with, and how this changes over time and in response to domestic or global events - to be produced for a selection of services businesses.

Monthly indicator statistics

The availability of source data does not currently allow the ABS to produce and release robust and representative monthly international trade in services statistics.

However, the ABS recognise that, at times, timeliness is just as important, if not more so, than accuracy. The ABS will partner with data custodians to explore new data sources and methods for producing monthly indicator series for the most significant services, for example travel and transport.

This project will aim to find a balance between timeliness and accuracy to provide a robust, but early indication of changes in the services trading environment.

NEXT STEPS

Please complete the online survey and tell us which of these projects are your priorities and why.

If you have any technical difficulties accessing the survey, please email:
international.trade@abs.gov.au.