



Activity Title and Number: Study assignment on trade data quality control, analysis and dissemination, A279-C4

Beneficiary: General Administration of Customs (GACC)

Location and Date: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HRMC), Southend-on-Sea, UK, 16-17 June 2014

Stakeholders: Eurostat

Brief Activity Report

Relevance and Impact

Improving the accuracy and accessibility of China's external trade statistics continues to be a priority for GACC and a key area of customs cooperation between the EU and China. The 2009 EUCTP project (A0301: Needs Assessment for EU-China Customs Statistics Cooperation) identified a number of priority actions to improve the compilation methods, quality control, analysis, dissemination and publication of external trade statistics in China. China and the EU are now each other's second largest trading partners. Consequently, the existence of reliable external trade figures is more important than ever to inform the development of EU-China trade policy.

As GACC progressively implements improvements to its trade data management practices in line with UN standards (IMTS 2010), EUCTP organised a study assignment to HRMC to study the robust regulatory framework and best practice management of trade data and statistics in the UK.

Activity Description

Four senior statistical officials who manage all aspects of trade data and statistics in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Shijiazhuang customs districts attended HRMC for two days of intensive study. Major topics covered included:

- Overarching legal framework – how to implement a robust, comprehensive framework for gathering, analysing and disseminating trade data and statistics that ensures transparency, accuracy and also accessibility for policy makers, business and the broader public
- Quality control – IMTS 2010 contains new recommendations for best practice quality control of trade data. GACC studied HRMC's policies and practical techniques for quality assuring data based on transparent risk management standards which will assist GACC to implement the IMTS 2010 standards.
- Strategies to reduce regulatory burden on business – HRMC no longer requires trade data reporting from all businesses and instead relies on a transparent estimation procedure in many cases. This significantly reduces the burden on small and medium enterprises which are disproportionately affected by regulatory red tape and cost.

Results and Dissemination

- GACC learned best practice approaches that will enhance its capacity to implement new international trade data standards (IMTS 2010) and continue the modernisation of its statistics regime, including more accessible dissemination online.
- GACC learned new, best practice standards and techniques for quality assuring data to ensure accuracy, which was identified in the EUCTP needs assessment as a key area for improvement in China's trade statistics regime.
- GACC has expressed interest in further exploring the UK's system of reducing the data reporting burden on business and instead relying more on estimation techniques to construct trade statistics. EUCTP and GACC are discussing options for further cooperation in this area, which may include a workshop on how to implement such a system in China.