Metadata sheet
Foreign Merchandise Trade Statistics

Section:	Foreign Trade Statistics Section
Responsibility:	Compilation of Foreign Merchandise Trade Statistics.
Section Head:	Fatima Mohd AL-Hammadi Falhammadi@mdps.gov.qa
Expert:	
Staff members:	Hamida Al Shaiba Halshaiba@mdps.gov.qa
	Haneen Basim Hmarmash@mdps.qa
	Amina Al-Abaidli Aalobaidli@mdps.gov.qa

1. Concepts and definitions

International Recommendations

The compilation of Foreign Trade Statistics broadly follows the international recommendations of the United Nations, International Merchandise Trade Statistics Manual (IMTS) 2010-Concepts and Definitions.

1.1. Foreign merchandise trade statistics. Qatar's foreign merchandise trade statistics refer to goods which add to or subtract from the stock of Qatar's material resources. Goods simply transported through Qatar (goods in transit), and goods entering or leaving Qatar on a temporary basis do not add to or subtract from Qatar's stock of material resources and are not included in Qatar's foreign merchandise trade.

1.2. Goods. Goods are the physical objects for which a demand exists, over which ownership rights can be established, and where ownership can be transferred from one institutional unit to another by engaging in transactions on markets.

1.3. Foreign merchandise trade balance. Represents the difference between Qatar's total merchandize exports based on free on board (f.o.b.) values and Qatar's merchandize imports based on cost, insurance and freight (c.i.f.) values.

1.4. Imports. Imports are goods which add to the stock of material resources in Qatar, as a result of their movement into the country. Currently, imports comprise only imported goods to the country for domestic consumption, which are cleared through customs formalities, whether dutiable or exempted.

1.5. Total exports. Total exports measure the total physical movement of merchandise out of Qatar to foreign countries. Encompass exports of goods of domestic origin and re-exports.

1.6. Exports of domestic goods. These exports are goods which subtract from the stock of material resources in Qatar, as a result of their movement out of the country. These goods have been produced or manufactured in Qatar.

1.7. Re-exports. Re-exports are goods originally imported, cleared through customs formalities, and then re-exported without undergoing any transformation leading to change in shape or value. Re-exports are not considered to be Qatari production or manufacture.

1.8. Country of origin. It is the country of production or the country in which the final stage of production or manufacture occurs.

1.9. **Country of last known destination**. It is the country of last destination as far as it is known at the time of exportation, to which goods are to be delivered.

1.10. **Trade system**. Qatar applies to the Special Trade System in accordance to the Customs aligns Law & Its Executive Regulations of 2011. Under this system, the statistical territory aligns with the customs territory. Duty Free Shops and Free Zones are not part of the statistical territory.

1.11. **Statistical territory.** The statistical territory of Qatar aligns with the customs territory. Therefore, duty free shops and free zones are not part of the statistical territory. Goods taken out from the free zones into the customs station are treated as foreign goods even if incorporating local raw materials or articles on which customs duties have been collected prior to their admission into the free zones.

1.12. **Temporary Entry.** Foreign Goods entering to Qatar on a temporary basis or a warehouse for a certain time after which they will be subject to duties if consumed or exempted from duties if re-exported.

1.13. **Transit Trade.** Represents commodities passing through the country while using the country's facilities 'land, sea and air' and yet didn't leave the customs areas, in order to be dispatched to their final destination without being subjected to customs clearance.

2. Scope and coverage

2.1 Scope of data

It is recommended that foreign merchandise trade statistics record all goods which add to or subtract from the stock of material resources of Qatar by entering or leaving the economic territory.

2.2 Data Coverage

In principle, all imports and exports of goods are covered if a Customs declaration is lodged and the value of the goods exceeds the Customs threshold.

Goods Included in foreign trade statistics are:
* Non-monetary gold.
* Banknotes and securities, and coins not in circulation.
* Goods traded in accordance with barter agreements.
* Goods which cross borders as a result of transactions between related parties.
* Gas and oil.
* Satellites and their launchers.
* Power lines, pipelines and undersea communications cables.
* Used Goods.
* Waste and scrap.
* Goods acquired by all categories of travelers.
* Migrants effects.
* Goods dispatched or received through postal or courier.
* Electricity and water.
* Goods traded on government account.
* Humanitarian aid, including emergency aid.
* Goods for military use.
* Media, whether or not recorded .
* Goods under financial lease.
* Goods received or sent abroad by international organizations.
* Goods delivered to or dispatched from offshore installations.
* Goods transferred from or to a buffer stock organization.
* Goods in electronic commerce.
* Gifts and donations.
* Fish catch, minerals from the seabed and salvage.

2.3 Goods recommended for inclusion but not yet included in MDPS Foreign Trade database :
* Ships and aircrafts.
* Mobile equipment that changes ownership while outside the country of residence of its original owner.
* Bunkers, ships' stores, ballast, and dunnage.

2.4 Goods Excluded Per IMTS 2010 :
- Goods simply being transported through a country.
- Goods simply being transported include goods under "in transit" or "in trans-shipment" customs procedures but are not limited to them.
- Goods temporary admitted or dispatched.
- Monetary gold.
- Issued banknotes and securities and coins in circulation.
- Goods consigned to and from the territorial enclaves.
- Non-financial assets.
- Goods treated as part of trade in services:
  - a) Goods acquired by all categories of travelers.
  - b)Newspapers and periodicals sent under direct subscription.
  - c) Goods supplied for governments such as embassies and military bases.
- Goods under merchanting.
- Goods under operating lease.
- Goods lost or destroyed after leaving the exporting territory and before arriving the importing territory.
- Satellites and their launcher launched in another country without change of ownership.
- Goods functioning as means of transport.
- Content delivered electronically (downloading,e-mailing..etc.)

3. Classification Systems

3.1. **Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)**
The detailed data on imports are released according to the unified customs tariff system of the General Secretariat of the GCC countries at the 8-digit level for imports and the 4-digit level for exports (to safeguard confidentiality) according to HS 2012. The new version of the HS 2012 was applied in January 2012.

3.2. **Standard International Trade Classification (SITC)**
Data are also published according to the 2-digit level of the SITC-Rev3.

3.3. **Other Classification systems in use are:**
  - Material Usage Classification
  - Material Nature Classification
  - Broad Economic Classification (BEC).
  - Country classification using the geo-nomenclature

4. Basis for recording

4.1 Valuation
Imports are recorded at their cost, insurance, and freight (c.i.f.) values and exports at their free on board (f.o.b.) values.

4.2 Recording basis
Value data are expressed in Qatari Riyal (QR).
Exports data reported in foreign currencies are converted in Qatari Riyal using the official exchange rate: 3.64 QAR = 1 USD, which is fixed and pegged to the US dollar.

4.3 Frequency of data collection.
Monthly

5. Nature of basic data sources

Foreign Trade Statistics Section obtains its data from different sources. These data are obtained on a daily or monthly basis, as follows:

5.1 Import and Re-export Data
The General Authority of Customs is the main source of imports and re-exports data, and the Customs Declaration is the only source of the data. The General Authority of Customs provides

The Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics MDPS with the data of the Imports, Exports and Re-Exports in two ways: The Single Window System and The Bin Nimaa Program:

1. **Customs Clearance Single Window System:**
   Single Window System is an electronic system used by traders custom clearance agent to submit the declaration form for approval.
   - MDPS is linked to the system.
   - At the end of each month, the General Authority of Customs uploads a backup of the Oracle file to the Customs Authority server on the government network. Then, the Information Technology Department at the MDPS uploads this file to the FT database.
   - Information received is stored in temporary file in the Oracle (SIS).

2. **Bin-Nimaa:**
   - The Customs General Authority provides the MDPS with the Ben-Nimaa program data on the form of a CD delivered by hand at the end of each month to the MDPS IT Department.
   - During 2013 an agreement was made that the Bin-Nimaa Program data is to be delivered by E-mail to the Head of the Foreign Trade Statistics Section.
   - Data migration from the Bin-Nimaa Program was stopped since June 2015.

5.2 Export Data

Data on exports is collected through a monthly reporting system, which was introduced in 2012. Data collected from the exporting enterprises cover some 95% of exports and is the main source for data on exports of crude oil, natural gas, refined Oil, petrochemical products, fertilizers, iron, aluminum, and other products.

Since the third quarter of 2011, the export data of crude oil and refinery oil are provided by Tasweeq Company Ltd.

6. Compilation Practice

6.1 Data Entry

6.1.1 Data received from the single window system are entered on temporary files for examination and revision before transmission to the permanent system on Oracle.

6.1.2 Data received from the exporting companies are edited by staff officers of the FTS and forwarded to IT department for transfer to SIS (ORACLE) system.

6.2 Data Cleaning

6.2.1 Refers to the initial processing of data in the temporary files: checks are made to the Item code, country of origin or destination, value commodities, and weight.

6.2.2 Ensures that the commodity unit value (price) of each item is consistent with previous years/months data.

6.2.3 Cleaned data are transferred from the temporary to permanent files to prepare tables for analysis.

6.2.4 Staff members communicate with the data sources to confirm or to make the necessary adjustments.

6.2.5 Very often, there are wrong or missing information on quantity, value and destination.

6.3 Review of tables before publishing

The tables are reviewed (imports and exports by country and by commodities) to ensure the quality and consistency of data.

Time series analysis: Comparative tables are prepared using a time series format to ensure consistency in the data series.

7. Data dissemination

7.1 Confidentiality

The Statistics Law No.2 of 2011 guarantees the privacy of data providers and the confidentiality of information they deliver, and its use for statistical purposes only.

- Article 7 states "all data related to the names and identities of establishments and individuals shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed to other than those authorized to peruse them, except after *obtaining prior approval from the concerned person.*"

- Article 9 states that "The authority may not publish any data concerning the source of information. It shall take necessary measures to prevent identifying the source of information's identities, either directly or indirectly."

7.2 Statistical presentation

Data on Imports and exports values (in Qatari Riyal) and weights (in kilograms) are disseminated via different publications. Detailed data include number of units, country of origin/last known destination, port of loading/discharge and different classification codes: HS, SITC, and BEC. The monthly press releases include analysis on Y-o-Y percentage changes.

7.3 Dissemination media and format

Data on foreign merchandise trade statistics are disseminated via three channels:

1.3.1   Online Foreign Trade Query System. Monthly imports, exports of goods and re-exports data are disseminated at 8-digit (imports) and 4- (exports) level of the Gulf Cooperation Council Tariff code (GCC Tariff). This database contains details on values, weight, number of units, port, and country of destination/origin, and other classification codes: SITC and BEC.
Details can be seen at: http://ftq.mdps.gov.qa:8088

1.3.2   Quarterly and Annual Reports on Foreign merchandise trade. Quarterly and annual data on imports, exports of domestic goods, and re-exports are disseminated by GCC Tariff at 4-digits level for exports of domestic goods and re-exports, and at 8-digits level for imports. These tables include details on values, weight, units, and country of origin/destination. Public can access the tables by following the link below:

http://www.qix.gov.qa/portal/page/portal/QIXPOC/Documents/QIX%20Knowledge%20Base/Publication/Economic%20statistics/Foreign%20Trade%20Statistics

1.3.3 Press Releases. Monthly imports, exports of domestic goods, and re-exports values are disseminated by main partner country and by main group of commodities (4-digits level of the GCC Tariff) through press releases. The Foreign Merchandise Trade Press Release is disseminated within six weeks after the end of the reference period. Details may be seen at the following link: http://www.mdps.gov.qa/eng/

8. Other aspects

8.1 Challenges

8.1.1 To implement fully the International Merchandise Trade Statistics 2010 (IMTS 2010).

8.1.2 To move from SITC Rev(3) to SITC Rev(4).

8.1.3 To introduce electronic link and electronic reporting with export data sources.

8.2 Future plans

8.2.1 To develop a revision policy.

8.2.2 To automate the data cleaning process.

8.2.3 To revise and update the classifications (HS 2012, SITC Rev 4, and BEC Rev 4) in the Oracle system and to create correspondence tables accordingly.

8.2.4 To search for new data sources to fill in data gaps in imports.

8.2.5 To coordinate with GCC stat in order to harmonize FTS among GCC member countries.