

A GUIDE TO PREPARING THE TRADE STATISTICS FORMAT

Consistent and comparable merchandise trade statistics can be produced for all of Canada's trading partners using the following method. In preparing and using trade statistics you should be aware that these statistics as collected in Canada and internationally are increasingly inaccurate. Therefore, trade statistics should be presented as long-term trends and by broad commodity group rather than as short-term trends and by specific commodities.

The attached explanatory notes, based in part on previous memoranda to MINT and DMT, provide further detail on problems with trade statistics and the choice of statistics for the format. They may be of interest to those who use these numbers in their work.

SECTION I

Where to Find the Numbers:

The attached tables, produced by CPE using Statistics Canada data, give Total Exports and Imports on a Customs Basis for all of Canada's trading partners from 1988 to 1993. These tables will be updated yearly by CPE. In addition, the Statistics Canada TIERS CD Rom, available in the DFAIT Library, can be used to find imports and domestic exports by commodity on a Harmonized System basis for these years. The library staff can provide assistance in finding statistics for years prior to 1988.

Directions:

1. Use Customs Basis Total Exports (i.e., including re-exports) for exports.
2. Use Customs Basis Imports for imports.
3. Calculate the trade balance using Customs Basis Total Exports and Imports.
4. Calculate percentage change for the years shown.
5. Cite the sources used.
6. If you judge it useful, show a breakdown of exports by commodity (e.g., top five commodities exported and imported). Customs Basis Domestic Exports (i.e., not including re-exports) must be used for specific commodity exports because of the way the data are collected. Customs Basis Imports should be used for imports.