



**ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee, Third Session**  
Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 10-12 September 2013

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**WORKING GROUP ON STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES  
(WGSITS)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**  
Revised Draft as of 19 August 2013

The original Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Task Force on Statistics on International Trade in Services (TFSITS) were adopted on 26-27 January 2010 at the Tenth ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

During the Second Meeting of the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Sub-Committee on Planning and Coordination (SCPC) in July 2012, it was proposed that the TFSITS be converted into the Working Group on SITS (WGSITS) for the following reasons:

- 1) To reflect its permanent status within the decision making framework of the ACSS Committee;
- 2) To take account that the initiative on the harmonization of SITS is no longer completely new; and
- 3) To address the emerging needs for more detailed, more comparable, and more comprehensive SITS in various forms.

Thus, the proposed WGSITS ToR was founded on the originally approved TFSITS ToR, incorporating the necessary amendments to establish the new status of the Working Group.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**General Objectives**

1. The main purpose of establishing The Working Group on Statistics on International Trade in Services, hereinafter referred to as WGSITS, is to promote the development and harmonization of SITS in support of the ASEAN evidence-based policy in monitoring the free flow of services within the ASEAN Economic Community as well as between ASEAN and the global economy.
2. The WGSITS shall carry out its functions and activities under the purview of the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee in the statistical domain of international trade in services (SITS), including foreign affiliates statistics (FATS).

**Specific objectives**

3. The WGSITS aims, in particular to:  
Identify issues in the current system of collecting, producing and disseminating SITS in ASEAN, and recommend appropriate measures towards more regular



- a. collection and dissemination of timely, high quality and comparable SITS, including FATS;
- b. Assist the ASEAN Secretariat in the development and enhancement of the minimum requirements/regional standards/common references of the national and regional databases on SITS within the context of international standards;
- c. Monitor adherence to and recommend measures to improve compliance with agreed international methodological standards and/or agreed regional frameworks and standards, and specifications in the compilation and reporting of SITS by the ASEAN Member States; and
- d. Promote and facilitate the sharing of knowledge/experiences/best practices in the compilation of SITS.

#### Functions/Tasks

4. The functions/tasks of the WGSITS are to:
  - a. Develop and recommend for adoption and implementation common references and mechanisms for the regular collection, compilation, and dissemination of timely, high quality and comparable SITS for ASEAN purposes, based on international standards:
    - (i) statistical framework;
    - (ii) methodologies;
    - (iii) standards and classification systems;
    - (iv) guidelines on the transmission of data to the ASEAN Secretariat; and
    - (v) guidelines on the dissemination of statistical outputs to primary stakeholders and the general public at the national, ASEAN and international level.
  - b. Undertake a periodic data quality review of national statistics and metadata based on the ACSS Code of Practice assessment measures, monitor improvements relative to agreed specifications, methodologies, quality and timeliness standards in the supply of national data to the ASEAN Secretariat and recommend measures to address statistical gaps and deficiencies;
  - c. Respond to user needs and identify relevant statistical developments that may affect the generation of SITS for ASEAN purposes, e.g., regional economic agreements, changes in international and regional frameworks, standards and classification systems, among others, and recommend appropriate adjustments and interventions;
  - d. Recommend, promote and facilitate adoption and implementation of strategies and programs for the improvement and harmonization of SITS, including the:
    - (i) effective coordination among competent authorities/agencies at both the national and regional levels;



- (ii) coordination of capacity building and technical assistance programs with international organisations where applicable, taking into account the priorities and capacity levels in the ASEAN Community and in the ASEAN Member States;
  - (iii) promotion of the wider use of SITS in national and regional economic policy and monitoring; and
  - (iv) publication of the ASEAN SITS report.
- e. Elevate statistical issues and recommendations to the ACSS-SCPC, for endorsement by the ACSS Committee.
5. The implementation of these tasks shall be guided by an integrated ASEAN work plan that will be agreed upon among the Working Group members and approved by the ACSS Committee, upon the endorsement of the ACSS-SCPC. The integrated ASEAN work plan will include both regional and national measures for the improvement of the collection, compilation and dissemination of ASEAN SITS.

#### Organization

6. Each ASEAN Member State shall designate at most two (2) permanent representatives and two (2) alternates to become members of the Working Group. These representatives and alternates are presumed to be experts and/or officials/officers of the principal agency/ies mandated to compile and/or disseminate official data on international trade in services. The ASEAN Secretariat shall likewise designate one (1) representative and one (1) alternate to the Working Group.
7. Each ASEAN Member State shall designate a country focal point on SITS, from the two permanent designated country representatives in the Working Group, to coordinate and monitor related activities at the national level. The focal point shall provide periodic updates on Working Group matters to the heads of concerned national statistical agencies.
8. The Working Group shall be chaired by a National Official from the principal agency(ies) mandated to compile and/or disseminate official data on international trade in services by the lead country; ASEANstats shall serve as co-chair. The term of the Chair shall be for a minimum of two (2) years, with the possibility for an extension. Chairmanship shall be rotated in alphabetical order.
9. The Chair shall be responsible primarily for steering the implementation and monitoring of the WGSITS work programme, mechanics and institutional arrangements. He/she shall coordinate closely with ASEANstats in initiating/leading the planning and implementation of the work programme/agenda to achieve the objectives of the Working Group; report to the ACSS Committee in coordination with ASEANstats.
10. The Working Group shall meet at least once a year, and recommend the conduct of additional meetings, as may be deemed necessary. It can also conduct inter-sessional or preparatory meetings as well as exchange views through telephone, mails, or emails. Outside consultants or experts may be invited to attend the Working Group meetings when a particular subject or objective needs to be addressed.
11. At the national level, the WGSITS members shall lead in the implementation of recommendations, mechanisms and activities, and shall keep the ACSS-SCPC country focal point informed of the progress and developments in the Working Group.



12. The Working Group may create task forces or special subgroups, to undertake specific tasks or assignments in the fulfilment of its functions/roles. The term of such task forces or subgroups shall terminate upon completion of the assigned task(s).
13. Hosting of the meetings shall be either by the ASEAN Secretariat or by one of the ASEAN Member States, rotated in alphabetical order.
14. The ASEANstats shall:
  - a. Initiate and undertake all necessary technical and coordination arrangements in line with the implementation of regional activities, including the planning and conduct of meetings;
  - b. Monitor progress of implementation of the integrated ASEAN work plan and in coordination with ASEAN Member States, track progress of the national work programmes;
  - c. Coordinate with concerned ASEAN bodies (e.g. Services and Investment Division, External Economic Relations Division) on recent regional developments, policy issues that may affect the generation of SITS, as well as forward requests and key decision points to the WG, for appropriate action;
  - d. Coordinate with relevant international organisations (e.g. UNSD, IMF) regarding matters on/the implementation plan of updated international methodological standards/ recommendations and other related statistical developments on SITS, for implementation in the ASEAN Community and the ASEAN Member States; and
  - e. Provide updates on the Working Group activities/agreements/decisions as well as forward requests and key decision points to the ACSS-SCPC and concerned ASEAN bodies, for endorsement/appropriate action. Report at least once a year to the ACSS Committee, which in turn reports to the ASEAN Economic Ministers.

#### Funding arrangements

15. The respective institution(s) of the ASEAN Member States are responsible for the costs of participating in WGSITS meetings and other related activities. Expenses related to hosting of the meeting/other activities, including meeting venue/facilities and meal packages, are the responsibility of the host institution. In certain circumstances, as deemed necessary, the ASEAN Secretariat shall mobilise resources to facilitate the Working Group's meeting/other activities.

#### ***The ACSS Committee may wish to:***

***Discuss and adopt the Draft Working Group on Statistics on International Trade in Services (SITS) Terms of Reference (TOR)***

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