

**Ghana Statistical Service**

**International Merchandise  
Trade Statistics**

**Technical Manual**

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# CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION.....                              | 1  |
| 2. SOURCE OF TRADE DATA .....                     | 3  |
| 3. DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF TRADE STATISTICS ..... | 4  |
| 3.1 Excluded Goods.....                           | 5  |
| 4. THE GENERAL TRADE SYSTEM .....                 | 6  |
| 4.1 Customs Regime Codes .....                    | 7  |
| 4.1.1 Exports .....                               | 7  |
| 4.1.2 Imports.....                                | 8  |
| 4.2 Customs Procedure Codes.....                  | 10 |
| 4.2.1 Exports.....                                | 10 |
| 4.2.2 Imports .....                               | 10 |
| 5. TIME OF RECORDING .....                        | 12 |
| 6. COMMODITY CLASSIFICATIONS .....                | 13 |
| 7. VALUATION .....                                | 14 |
| 8. PARTNER COUNTRY .....                          | 15 |
| 8.1 Ghana to Ghana .....                          | 15 |
| 8.2 Other Partner Countries .....                 | 15 |
| 9. AUCTIONED GOODS.....                           | 16 |
| 10. CRUDE OIL EXPORTS.....                        | 17 |
| 11. COMPARISON TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS .....        | 18 |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

International merchandise trade plays a crucial role in economic development because trade connects producers and consumers across the world, providing a much larger market than simply the national market. Therefore, the availability of high-quality trade statistics is necessary for analysing trade patterns which largely affect Ghana's economy and general welfare levels. Accurate and reliable trade statistics provide insights into the performance, competitiveness, and trends of Ghana's international trade. Specifically, trade statistics will aid in evidence-based policy making, monitoring trade policies, and supporting economic development strategies. These statistics are important for policymakers, international organizations, researchers, and business as they provide essential information to understand trade dynamics, as well as to help formulating effective trade strategies.

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) has the mandate and mission to lead the efficient production and management of quality official statistics based on international standards, in support of national development. Therefore, the production of quality trade statistics is an important duty of the Ghana Statistical Service.

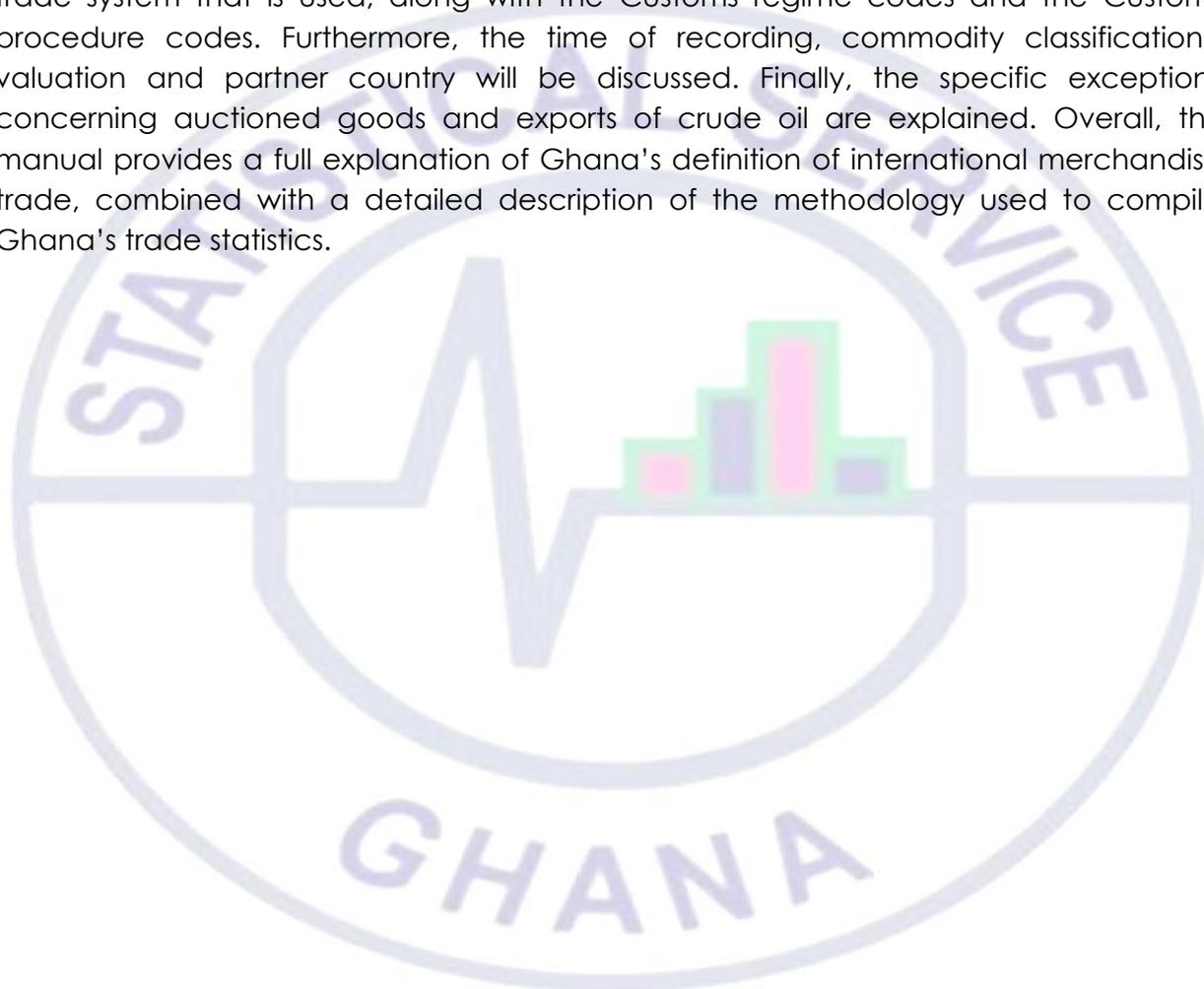
To ensure the production of accurate and consistent trade statistics, Ghana follows a well-defined methodology based on international standards and guidelines. This technical manual outlines Ghana's methodology to compiling trade statistics, to ensure openness and clarity about Ghana's trade statistics. The methodology is based on the United Nations' International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) Manual. The IMTS Manual provides an international framework for the compilation and dissemination of trade statistics, to ensure consistency and comparability across countries. By adhering to this manual, Ghana ensures that its trade statistics align with international best practices and can be effectively compared with those of other nations.

The use of the well-defined methodology following the IMTS manual, as outlined in this technical manual, to produce Ghana's trade statistics has several advantages. First, this manual promotes transparency and accountability for the production of trade statistics, as it provides clear guidelines and the methodology which can be reviewed by external parties. Secondly, it establishes a standardized approach, which ensures that data collection, processing, and analysis procedures are consistent and comparable over time. This enables the users of Ghana's trade data to identify trends and patterns over time, facilitating efficient use of Ghana's trade statistics for evidence-based policies. Finally, by following the IMTS Manual, Ghana Statistical Service ensures the quality and reliability of its trade statistics, enhancing the confidence among domestic and international stakeholders. Accurate trade statistics can contribute to building credibility, attracting foreign investment, and facilitating international cooperation.

To conclude, the production of international merchandise trade statistics in Ghana is crucial for understanding and analysing Ghana's trade dynamics, facilitating evidence-based decision making and finally supporting economic development. By providing this technical manual which follows the International Merchandise Trade Statistics Manual, the Ghana Statistical Service ensures the accuracy, consistency, and comparability of its trade statistics.

The Ghana Statistical Service closely follows the International Merchandise Trade Statistics Manual of the United Nations to ensure alignment with international standards. Readers can make reference to the IMTS Manual for the very detailed guidelines that GSS uses. The purpose of this technical manual is not to replicate the IMTS Manual, and therefore not all details of the manual will be included here. However, this manual will explain the application of the IMTS Manual to trade statistics in Ghana and clarify exactly how Ghana's trade data is used to compile trade statistics in line with the IMTS guidelines.

Therefore, this technical manual explains the source of Ghana's trade data, as well as the definition and scope of trade that is used. Then the manual explains the general trade system that is used, along with the Customs regime codes and the Customs procedure codes. Furthermore, the time of recording, commodity classifications, valuation and partner country will be discussed. Finally, the specific exceptions concerning auctioned goods and exports of crude oil are explained. Overall, this manual provides a full explanation of Ghana's definition of international merchandise trade, combined with a detailed description of the methodology used to compile Ghana's trade statistics.



## 2. SOURCE OF TRADE DATA

The Ghana Statistical Service uses data from the Customs division of the Ghana Revenue Authority as main source of the trade data. The Customs division collects data on all international merchandise trade crossing Ghana's borders.

Ghana Statistical Service accesses the data through the Integrated Customs Management System (ICUMS) since its inception in June 2020. This database provides information on all goods entering and leaving the economic territory and is collected following the Revised Kyoto Convention of the World Customs Organization. In the IMTS Manual it is recommended to use Customs records as the main and normally preferred data source, as they reflect the physical movement of goods across borders that international merchandise trade statistics aim to record, and are in general reliable, detailed and readily available. Therefore, for all trade statistics from June 2020 onwards, this is the source of Ghana's trade data.

Before June 2020, Customs used another system to distribute their trade data, the GCNet system. For consistency in historic records, the Ghana Statistical Service does not change the way it treats any data prior to the start of the ICUMS. Hence, this technical manual describes the definition and methodology used for the dissemination of all trade statistics starting from June 2020.

### 3. DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF TRADE STATISTICS

The general guideline of the scope of international merchandise trade statistics is to record all goods which add or subtract from the stock of material resources of a country by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory. Please refer to the IMTS Manual of the exact products recommended for inclusion and exclusion. Section 3.1 will provide an overview of the specific goods that are excluded in Ghana's trade statistics.

To follow this outlined scope of trade statistics, the statistical territory with respect to trade data must be defined. To accurately define the statistical territory there is the need to distinguish between the general and special trade system. The special trade system is in use when the statistical territory only a particular part of the economic territory, so that certain flows of good which are not in the scope of IMTS are not included in either import or export statistics. The general trade system on the other hand is in use when the statistical territory coincides with the economic territory. It is recommended that the general trade system is used. Therefore, for Ghana's trade statistics the general trade system is used. In Section 4 the alignment between the general trade system and Ghana's Customs regulations is described in detail. The general overview of the statistical territory of Ghana's trade is as follows.

General imports and exports are flows of goods entering/leaving the statistical territory.

1. General imports consist of:
  - a. Imports of foreign goods entering the free circulation area, premises for inward processing, industrial free zones, premises for Customs warehousing or commercial free zones;
  - b. Reimports of domestic goods into the free circulation area, premises for inward processing or industrial free zones, premises for Customs warehousing or commercial free zones.
    - i. Reimports are imports of domestic goods which were previously reported as exports.
2. General exports consist of:
  - a. Exports of domestic goods from any part of the statistical territory, including free zones and Customs warehouses;
  - b. Re-exports of foreign goods from any part of the statistical territory, including free zones and Customs warehouses.
    - i. Re-exports are exports of foreign goods which were previously recorded as imports.

### 3.1 EXCLUDED GOODS

Following the IMTS guidelines, there are certain goods that should be excluded from the trade statistics. For the specific case of Ghana that means that the following goods are excluded:

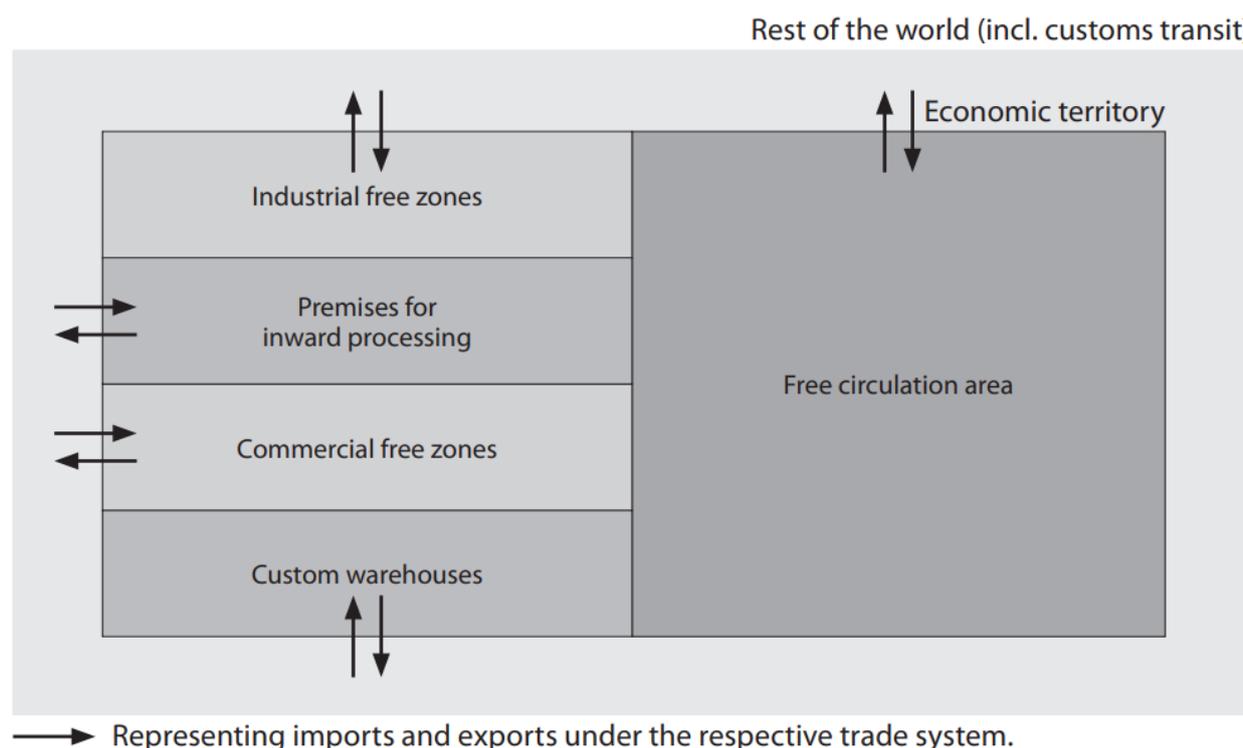
1. Good simply being transported through Ghana.  
This means that all good that are in transit or transshipment are not included in the trade data.
2. Monetary gold.  
Monetary gold is gold to which monetary authorities have title and is held as reserve assets, in the case of Ghana this means that all goods with the HS code "7108200000" are excluded.
3. Issued bank notes and securities and coins in circulation.  
These represent evidence of financial claims and should be excluded for international merchandise trade statistics, which means that all goods with the HS codes "4907000000" and "7118900000" are excluded.
4. Goods entering or leaving the economic territory of a country illegally.  
This category includes, for example, smuggling, trade in stolen vehicles and shipment of narcotic substances, the use or possession of which is illegal in one or both of the compiling countries. Therefore, cars that were smuggled into Ghana illegally and arrested by Customs will not be included.

## 4. THE GENERAL TRADE SYSTEM

As outlined in Section 3, the general trade system is used for the compilation of Ghana's trade statistics. In this section this trade system will be explained and its definition will be applied to the specific case of Ghana.

Figure 1 outlines the general trade system. The arrows indicate the trade flows which should be included in the general trade system.

**FIGURE 1: TERRITORIAL ELEMENTS AND POTENTIAL IMPORTS AND EXPORTS UNDER THE GENERAL TRADE SYSTEM (SOURCE: IMTS MANUAL)**



This shows that the following trade flows should be included in the trade statistics of Ghana:

- Import into the industrial and commercial free zones;
- Import into premises for inward processing;
- Import into custom warehouses;
- Import into the free circulation area;
- Export out of the industrial and commercial free zones;
- Export out of custom warehouses;
- Export out of the free circulation area.

This also means that all places where there is no arrow should be excluded from the trade data, such as imports into the free circulation area following the free zones.

Customs have different Customs regime codes under which they categorize all the transactions. Within these regimes there are Customs procedure codes, which are more specific codes under which Customs categorize the transactions.

It is recommended in the IMTS Manual that statisticians closely cooperate with Customs experts to correctly allocate Customs procedure codes and associated trade transactions according to the general trade system. Therefore, the Ghana Statistical Service has closely collaborated with the Ghana Revenue Authority's (GRA) Customs division to define the exact scope of which trade transaction under which specific Customs procedure codes and Customs regime codes are part of the scope of international merchandise trade statistics.

## **4.1 CUSTOMS REGIME CODES**

In Ghana there are 34 Customs regime codes, which are the most general classifications of trade transactions. Therefore, to apply the general trade system definition to Ghana's trade data, the first step is to decide which Customs regime codes should be included and excluded according to the definition of the general trade system. In collaboration with Customs, the GSS has decided the scope for Ghana's trade statistics in line with the general trade system. First of all, the regime code 00 is labelled "Reserved", and is excluded, as it falls outside the scope of the general trade system. Then the following subsections will present the included and excluded Customs regime codes for Ghana's trade statistics.

### **4.1.1 EXPORTS**

For exports the following regimes are **included**:

10: Direct Export

Direct exportation means the Customs procedure applicable to goods which, being in free circulation, leave the Customs territory and are intended to remain permanently outside it.

19: Export of petroleum products following Petroleum Operations/ Other Transactions (following freezones)

Export following freezones is the act of exporting goods from the freezones territory outside the country.

34: Re-export following home consumption

Re-export following home consumption means the act of exporting goods, which were previously imported, from the free circulation in the Customs territory to outside the country.

37: Re-export following warehousing

Re-export following warehousing means the act of exporting goods, which were previously imported, stored in a warehouse from the country.

39: Other Re-export (following freezones)

Re-export following freezones means the act of exporting goods, which were previously imported, stored in a freezone from the country.

For exports the following regimes are **excluded**:

20: Direct Temporary Export

24: Temporary Export following Import into Home Use

27: Temporary Export Following Warehousing

30: Direct Re-export for Goods landed but not entered

35: Re-export following temporary Admission

#### **4.1.2 IMPORTS**

For imports the following regimes are **included**:

40: Import into home consumption (Direct Import)

Import into home consumption means the Customs procedure which provides that imported goods enter into free circulation in the Customs territory upon the payment of any import duties and taxes chargeable and the accomplishment of all the necessary Customs formalities.

45: Import into home consumption following temporary admission

Home consumption following temporary admission is a Customs procedure under which goods which were brought into the Customs territory conditionally relieved totally or partially from payment of import duties and taxes are admitted into free circulation.

48: Home Consumption following coast-wise Transshipment/Transit

Home consumption following coast-wise transshipment/transit is the importation of goods into free circulation goods which were originally brought under transit/transshipment or coast wise trade.

61: Re-import following Direct Export

Re-import following direct export is the Customs procedure under which goods which were previously exported are imported into the Customs territory.

70: Direct entry into bonded warehouse

Customs warehousing procedure means the Customs procedure under which imported goods are stored under Customs control in a designated place (a Customs bonded warehouse) without payment of import duties and taxes.

75: Warehousing Following Temporary Import

Warehousing following temporary admission is the admission of goods into a customs bonded warehouse goods which were brought into a Customs territory conditionally relieved totally or partially from payment of import duties and taxes.

90: Direct Entry into Free Zones / Ships Stores / Duty Free Stores

Entry into the free zone means a part of the territory of a contracting party where any goods introduced are generally regarded, insofar as import duties and taxes are concerned, as being outside Customs territory.

95: Entry into Free Zones / Ships Stores / Duty Free Following Temporary Import

Freezone following temporary admission is the importation of goods into the freezone which were temporary admitted into the Customs territory.

For imports the following regimes are **excluded**:

47: Import into home Consumption following warehousing

49: Import into home consumption following Free Zone / Duty Free Stores

50: Temporary Admission

57: Temporary Admission following warehouse

59: Temporary Admission Following Free Zone

62: Re-import following Temporary Export

72: Warehousing Following Temporary Export

77: Bond to Bond (Warehousing)

79: Other Bond Operations (Free Zones to Warehousing)

80: Transit / Transshipment / Coast Wise Removal

88: Transit / Transshipment following Transit / Transshipment

89: Transit of petroleum products from Bond

94: Entry into Free Zones / Ships Stores / Duty Free Stores from Domestic Market

97: Entry into Free Zones / Ships Stores / Duty Free Following Warehouse

99: Other Operations (Free Zones to Free Zones)

## 4.2 CUSTOMS PROCEDURE CODES

As explained before, Customs have the general classifications of Customs regime codes to classify products. In Section 4.1 it is shown which regimes are included in the scope of Ghana's trade statistics, following the general trade framework. However, every country has specific Customs procedure codes that fall within every regime. Customs procedure codes are 5 characters long and the first two numbers of the code refer to the Customs regime code it falls under. In general, the custom regime codes are included following Section 4.1. However, within some regimes there are specific Customs procedure codes that should be treated differently to be in line with the general trade system. Only these exceptions will be mentioned in this section, therefore implying that all products under other Customs procedure codes which fall under included Customs regime codes will be included.

### 4.2.1 EXPORTS

For exports the following Customs procedure codes are **excluded**:

19R11: Bunkering for local operations

37X01: Re-export following warehousing after manufacturing in bond

### 4.2.2 IMPORTS

For imports the following Customs procedure codes are **excluded**:

40D03: Certified Entry following Short Landing

40D12: Home Consumption of Vehicles following Diplomatic Exemption

40D21: Tax payment for goods and vehicles previously entered under tax relief

40D22: Processing of Items in ICUMS with duty already paid for in GCMS

40D23: Processing of Items in ICUMS with CCVR already acquired in PAARS and BOE created in GCNet/GCMS with tax not paid

70X12: Migration of stock balances in GCMS into ICUMS for items in bonded warehouses

70X99: Goods Warehoused under ASYCUDA

90S12: Migration of stock balances for items in GCMS into ICUMS for items in the Ship Stores

90T12: Migration of stock balances for items in GCMS into ICUMS for items in the duty-free shops

90Z01: 90Z Direct Entry into Free Zone from local market

90Z12: Migration of stock balances in GCMS into ICUMS for items in the free zone



## 5. TIME OF RECORDING

As a general guideline in the IMTS Manual, the goods should be recorded at the time when they enter or leave the economic territory of a country. In the IMTS Manual it is mentioned that this time can often be approximated by the data of lodgement of the Customs declaration, the declaration date, in the case of Customs-based data-collection. However, if the declaration date differs considerably from the date when goods actually cross the border of the economic territory, more appropriate dates should be identified. It is therefore the responsibility of countries' statistical authorities to identify the best proxy date of the general guideline on the time of recording, by taking into account the national rules on administrative procedures.

In the case of Ghana, Customs collect many different dates for every transaction. After consultation with Customs, it was decided that for imports the declaration date is the best date to indicate the time of when products enter the country. However, for exports it regularly happens that an export is already declared a long time before the products is actually exported. Therefore, in the case of exports the release date is used as the time variable. This is the date on which Customs releases the product, such that it can actually be exported. Therefore, in conclusion the release date is used for exports whereas the declaration date is used for imports.

## 6. COMMODITY CLASSIFICATIONS

Ghana Statistical Service uses 10 digits Harmonized System (HS) codes for the compilation and dissemination of international merchandise trade statistics. That can be done because the Customs data is also collected on a 10-digit HS code level. Moreover, the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) can also be requested, as they can be linked to the HS codes.

For some of the reports on trade statistics, the GSS has chosen to use commodity classifications that are specific to Ghana. That is done to be able to identify Ghana's trade patterns as clearly as possible.

This Ghana specific classification is as follows:

- Gold: products for which the 4-digit HS code is "7108";
- Mineral Fuels and Oils: products for which the 2-digit HS code is "27";
- Cocoa Beans and Products: products for which the 2-digit HS code is "18";
- Machinery and Electrical Equipment: products for which the 2-digit HS code is "84" or "85";
- Chemical Products: products for which the 2-digit HS code falls in the range from "28" to "38";
- Vehicles and Automotive Parts: products for which the 2-digit HS code is "87";
- Iron and Steel: products for which the 2-digit HS code is "72" or "73";
- Plastics: products for which the 2-digit HS code is "39";
- Vegetable products: products for which the 2-digit HS code falls in the range from "6" to "14";
- Other Products: all other products that are not in one of the classifications listed above.

## 7. VALUATION

In line with the IMTS Manual, a statistical value is defined for all goods covered in trade statistics. The statistical value for exported goods uses the Free On Board (FOB) valuation, and the Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) valuation is used for imports. Alongside the CIF-type valuation, GSS also compiled FOB-type values for imported goods as supplementary information.

As the basis for these valuations the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation is used. This means that the assessed value of Customs, which follows this WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, is used. Overall, this means that the assessed FOB value is used for exports, and the assessed CIF value is used for imports.

The valuation of the Customs data is provided to GSS both in Ghana Cedis, as well as in the currency of the transaction. In case that data should be compiled in another currency, the daily exchange is used as published by the Bank of Ghana. For days on which no exchange rate is available, the latest recorded exchange rate is used, so for example for Saturdays the exchange rate for the Friday is used.

One exception for this valuation is made for auctioned goods, by the way they are treated in the Customs systems. Please refer to Section 9 for more information about these auctioned goods.

## 8. PARTNER COUNTRY

For imports the partner country is the country of origin, whereas for exports the partner country is the country of last known destination. These partner countries are provided by Customs. The list of countries (or areas) that is used for the reporting follows those countries or areas for which statistical data are compiled by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat. However, there are a few exceptions to simply using the partner country, which will be highlighted in this Section.

### 8.1 GHANA TO GHANA

In the data there are certain observations for which the partner country is Ghana. These will be highlighted here, and it will be explained how that is treated in the data:

- In Customs Procedure Codes 10X03 (Aviation Turbine Kerosine (ATK) Export), 19R10 (Bunkering-Export from GBS following Petroleum Operations) and 19R20 (ATK Export following Petroleum Operations (International flights)) the country of destination is often Ghana, as it is for bunkering or ATK export. The destination of these products is therefore often not exactly known. Hence, for these goods the partner country will be changed to "Unknown".
- In regime 40 (Import into home consumption (Direct Import)) there should not be any Ghana partner countries, as it is direct imports. Therefore, all Ghana imports from this regime are relabelled as "Unknown". Customs is working on making sure this does not happen in the data.
- In regime 70 (Direct entry into bonded warehouse) if Ghana is the partner country that means that it is an import from the free circulation area into the warehouse, these should therefore be excluded from the dataset. This happens for specific Customs Procedure Codes because for some of them there is no specific code for when it is from outside Ghana or from the free circulation area.
- Similarly, in regime 90 (Direct Entry into Free Zones / Ships Stores / Duty Free Stores) if Ghana is the partner country that means that it is an import from the free circulation area into the free zones / ships stores / duty free stores, these should therefore be excluded from the dataset. This happens for specific Customs Procedure Codes because for some of them there is no specific code for when it is from outside Ghana or from the free circulation area.

### 8.2 OTHER PARTNER COUNTRIES

There are a few observations in the Customs data for which the partner country is either unknown, unavailable, or a name is filled in which is not an actual country. In these specific cases, they will be reviewed by Customs and changed accordingly. In the cases where no final country can be determined, they will be labelled as having the partner country "Unknown".

## 9. AUCTIONED GOODS

There is one specific Customs Procedure Code for auctioned goods in Ghana, CPC 40D04 (Omnibus Entry for Auctioned Goods). These goods need a special treatment to be aligned with the statistical definition of trade. Auctioned goods are either auctioned because they are not collected after being imported, such that they remain at the Customs stations. This could either be because importers forgot to pick the products, or because they were not able to pay for the appropriate duties and charges. Such products add to the stock of material resources and should therefore be included in the data. However, products that are illegally smuggled into the country and arrested by Customs officers will also be auctioned. In the context of Ghana these are mainly cars that are illegally smuggled over the land borders. These goods fall under smuggled/illegal goods and are therefore excluded, as explained in Section 3.1.

Therefore, the auctioned goods data has to be treated in a specific way. The Customs data does not directly point to which goods are auctioned for which reason. However, based on their procedures the following methodology is used:

- Only auctioned goods which entered through Tema, Takoradi or Kotoka International Airport are included, as goods entering through other entry points are auctioned only because of arrests.
- For Tema and Takoradi only auctioned goods that are labelled as entering by sea transport are included, as other goods will be smuggled/illegal goods that are auctioned.
- For Kotoka International Airport auctioned vehicles (HS codes starting with "87") will be excluded, as those concern smuggled/illegal cars. Other auctioned goods will be included.

Furthermore, the valuation of auctioned goods is also different from the valuation of other goods. That is because there is no assessed CIF value for most auctioned goods. Therefore, for auctioned goods the tax amount payable is used as value, as this presents the value that is paid in the auction. This is the best approximation of the value for auctioned goods.

## 10. CRUDE OIL EXPORTS

There is a small challenge with the data of crude oil exports in Ghana. In the Customs system not all crude oil exports are recorded on a timely basis with their price and country of destination. To arrive at the total export of crude oil, Customs has therefore provided a separate dataset on crude oil exports. This is data on the number of barrels of crude that are lifted, along with all prices that are already known. If prices for the barrels of crude are not available, the GSS estimates the value of crude oil exports using the monthly OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) reference basket prices. Then, as soon as the actual prices are known, the data gets updated to include the new and actual value of the exports. In this way Ghana's exports numbers always include the crude oil exports, as they are a very important export commodity.



## 11. COMPARISON TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

It must be noted that in Ghana other institutions process and publish trade statistics besides Ghana Statistical Service. There are slight variations in the trade data that is published by these institutions. These variations exist due to the definitions and concepts of measurement of trade used by these institutions. This in effect brings differences in the scope of trade, the time of recording, the commodity classifications and the valuation. Moreover, some institutions do not rely solely on Customs data, but use data from other institutions for part of their trade data. Therefore, depending on the usage of the trade data, data from different institutions can be suitable for different parties. To understand the exact differences in the methodology, the GSS uses this technical manual for transparency about the compilation of its trade statistics. Please refer to other institutions to find out their exact methodology.

In this technical manual we specifically want to list the main differences between Ghana Statistical Service trade data and that of the Bank of Ghana. While these variations might not fully uncover the entire disparity in methodology between the two institutions, they will clarify the primary factors contributing to the contrasting figures provided by Ghana's two major sources of trade data.

The main differences between the Bank of Ghana and Ghana Statistical Service trade data are:

1. GSS uses the CIF value for imports, whereas BoG uses the FOB value for imports. The CIF value is the FOB value plus the costs of insurance and freight, therefore GSS numbers on imports will be higher than those of BoG.
2. GSS relies solely on Customs data, whereas BoG uses data from other institutions for part of their trade data. Therefore, some discrepancies in the exact time of recording and valuation might be present.
3. GSS focusses on international merchandise trade statistics, including only trade in goods, whereas BoG also includes trade in services in their trade statistics.



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