Changes to Country and Port Classifications

Australia

May 2003

CHANGES TO COUNTRY AND PORT CLASSIFICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

From 1 July 2003 there will be changes to the country and port classifications used for the release of ABS international merchandise trade statistics.

The changes are being made in preparation for the introduction by the Australian Customs Service (Customs) of United Nations Location Codes (UN locodes) for classifying country and port information on export and import records. In the past, the ABS has assigned country and port codes from text descriptions provided on the records.

Additional changes are being made to ABS output port codes to remove the separate identification of ports, both Australian and overseas, which have experienced little or no Australian trade in recent years.

CUSTOMS CHANGES

Customs is undertaking a major redevelopment of its business processes and IT systems through its Cargo Management Re-engineering (CMR) project. Since Customs records are the data source used by the ABS to compile its trade statistics, the implementation of CMR will have an impact on the data received by the ABS and therefore the statistics it provides to clients.

The scheduled dates for CMR implementation are March 2004 for exports and July 2004 for imports. Further information about the Customs changes can be found on the Customs web site **< http://www.customs.gov.au>**

One substantial change that will occur is the adoption by Customs of the UN locode system to classify countries and ports (Australian and overseas). The UN locode is an international standard classification maintained by the United Nations Economic Commission, comprising over 36,000 codes.

The UN locode is a five character code, with the first two characters identifying the country and the remaining three characters identifying ports within each country. The level of detail provided by the UN locodes is far greater than that required for Australia's trade statistics i.e. many of the ports have little or no trade with Australia.

The ABS has decided to minimise the impact of this change on the data it disseminates to clients. Firstly, it will continue to provide statistical outputs at about the same level of detail as it currently does. In the majority of cases it has been possible to concord the new UN locodes to the existing ABS output codes to maintain comparability over time.

However, this has not been possible for a small number of ABS country and port codes where no match exists between the UN locode and the ABS code. Appendix A provides scenarios and examples to explain the nature of the changes and Appendix B includes a full list of the changes to the ABS country and port codes.

Secondly, the changes are being implemented from 1 July 2003 rather than at the actual time of CMR implementation. This will ensure consistency of data over the full financial year; consistency of classification of exports and imports (the same reference data has to be used for both exports and imports in the current ABS processing system); and less change (and risk to trade statistics) at the cutover to the new Customs IT systems and business processes.

However it is expected that there could be some minor impacts on clients from the changed classifications on 1 July 2003, and the changed basis for allocating the codes when the new Integrated Cargo System (ICS) is implemented by Customs for exports and imports.

REMOVAL OF LOW VALUE CODES

The ABS has also reviewed its current output port codes. The review identified ports with less than $1 million of trade over the 18 month period from July 2001 to December 2002 for both exports and imports. It has been decided that these ports should no longer be separately identified in ABS merchandise trade statistics. Many had recorded no trade for either exports or imports.

The trade that would have been classified against these ports will be recorded in the 'other ports' category for the relevant state or country. Full details of the port codes that have been eliminated are shown in Appendix B.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Appendix C includes the full set of ABS output codes that will be used for the country and port classifications from 1 July 2003.

Appendix D is a concordance showing the mapping of ABS country and port classifications (excluding "other and unspecifed" ports) to the relevant UN locode . The port classification will be reviewed periodically to ensure that separate data is being released for all ports involving substantial Australian trade.

If you require further information on the classification changes, or their impact on the statistical output that you receive, please contact ABS Client Services, Pam Koorey (02) 6252 6328 or Bruce Cumming (02) 6252 5422.

APPENDIX A: NATURE OF THE CHANGES

The following scenarios and examples are included to help explain the nature of the changes being made to the country and port codes from 1 July 2003. They highlight the issues that influenced each decision.

Scenario 1: No UN locode for the current ABS country code

Some of the current ABS country codes do not exist in the UN locode system. These are shown in table 1 in Appendix B.

Example: The current ABS classification has three separate country codes for Antarctica: Australian Antarctic Territory (ANCA), French Southern Antarctic Territory (FSAT) and Ross Dependency: NZ Antarctic Territory (ROSS). However only one UN locode exists for Antarctica. Therefore, from July, the ABS will open one country code for Antarctica (ANTC) and the three current country codes will be closed.

Scenario 2: No country UN locode for Zone A (Timor Gap)

The current ABS classification has a country code for Zone of Cooperation A: Timor Gap (ZONA). This isn't recognised as a country code in the UN locode classification, but it does exist as a port code. Therefore information on Timor Gap Zone A will be recorded against the country of International Waters (IWAS) and the port of Zone A - Timor Gap.

Scenario 3: No UN locode for the current ABS port code

There are no UN locodes for some currently existing ABS port codes.

Example: Currently the ABS has two port codes for Melbourne: Melbourne (port 201) and Melbourne airport (port 211). No UN locode exists for Melbourne Airport, therefore, from July 2003, the ABS will close the Melbourne airport code (port 211) with the trade subsumed into the Melbourne code (port 201). Trade through Melbourne airport can be identified by selecting Melbourne (port 201) with mode of transport Air. This is also the case with other Australian airports.

Example: There are currently ABS port codes for parcel post for each Australian state e.g. Parcels Post NSW. There are no UN locodes for parcel post classifications. Therefore, from July 2003, the ABS will close these parcel post port codes and the equivalent information can be identified by selecting 'Other ports' for the state with mode of transport Post.

Example: There is no unique UN locode for the port of Jurong. This port code has therefore been closed and the information will be subsumed into the classification 'all ports Singapore'.

Scenario 4: Creating one 'Other and unspecified' port category for each country

In the current ABS port classification there may be more than one category for 'other and unspecified port' for a particular country. For example, for India there are 'other and unspecified ports - India (East)' and 'other and unspecified ports - India (West)', and for France there are 'other and unspecified ports - France (Mediterranean)' and 'other and unspecified ports - France (Atlantic)'. From July 2003, there will only be one 'Other and unspecified port' for each country.

Scenario 5: Ports with low value trade

Following a review of port codes with low value trade, the ABS has decided to close a number of port codes where trade was either zero or very low. The port codes were closed if both imports and exports were below $1 million over the 18 month period from July 2001 to December 2002. A number of overseas and Australian port codes are being closed with the information subsumed into 'other and unspecified ports' for the relevant Australian State or overseas country.

Example: The Australian port code for Ballina has been closed, with the information subsumed into 'other ports NSW'.

Example: The Papua New Guinea port code for Buna has been closed, and, if there is any trade in future, it will be captured under the port 'other and unspecified ports PNG'.

Example: The two ports for the country Jamaica, 'Kingston' and 'other and unspec ports-Jamaica' have been closed and the port 'all ports-Jamaica' has been opened.

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