

Stats News & Views

Facts, Figures and Updates from the Statistics Section of the Caribbean Community Secretariat

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Main Events

CARICOM Workshop on Merchandise Trade (Phase II) - Domain Modifications, 7 – 11 February 2011 in Saint Lucia and 14 - 18 February 2011 in Antigua and Barbuda

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened **Two Working Sessions on the Enhancement of Eurotrace Domains – Data Quality**, from 7 – 11 February 2011 in Saint Lucia and 14 - 18 February 2011 in Antigua and Barbuda. The Working sessions were funded by the **European Union** under the Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP) of the Ninth European Development Fund (9th EDF), which included a statistical component, *“Improved and Harmonised Economic Statistics Developed and Disseminated”*, which contains an activity on Merchandise Trade data enhancement.

The main objective of these workshops was to offer training to Member States in the modification of the Eurotrace domain, which was built in many Member States under the 9th EDF Project. The workshop also addressed issues on data quality encountered in the processing of merchandise trade statistics and attempted to find solutions for them.

It was anticipated that the training will augment and sustain improvement in the range and the quality of merchandise trade statistics in the Member States. It also provided an opportunity for the sharing of country experiences in addressing data quality issues, and ultimately serve to enable more timely and high quality Trade data production and dissemination for decision-making. The main expected outcome was the strengthening of capacity through the participants in the use and enhancement of the respective Eurotrace country domains.

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CARICOM DevInfo/CensusInfo Workshop, 28 February to 4 March 2011 at the Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel, Georgetown, Guyana.

The CARICOM Secretariat convened a workshop in Georgetown, Guyana from 28 February to 4 March 2011 to explore the harmonisation of the DevInfo adaptations. It also focused on enabling a common approach to census data dissemination using CensusInfo. The purpose of the Workshop was therefore twofold: to review the DevInfo adaptations in Member States with the aim of exploring the feasibility of harmonisation of these adaptations and to attempt to advance the process of preparing a regional adaptation of the UNSD Global CensusInfo template based on previous work put in place with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The specific objectives of the Workshop were to:

- enable consistency in the data dissemination formats which will allow users to have direct access to basic statistical data with the ability to create their own tabulations without compromising data confidentiality; and
- develop and adopt a common census tool for simple and easy disseminating population and housing census data for region-wide comparability in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census.

The CensusInfo aspect of the workshop built on work put in place under the Inter-American Development Bank funded Project on Common Census Framework and specifically on Component III (Common Tools for

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the challenges/best practices and experienced in their efforts at “cleaning” and producing high quality statistics.

The sessions focused on issues relative to the quality of data being produced. Some of the workshop activities entailed presentations by countries with respect to the challenges/best practices and their experience and efforts at “cleaning” and producing high quality statistics.

The workshop was conducted in the following two (2) groups:

Sessions for Group I were conducted in Saint Lucia from 7-11 February 2011 with **one** participant from each of the following countries: Barbados, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Sessions for Group II were conducted in Antigua and Barbuda from 14-18 February 2011 with one participant from the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Montserrat and Suriname .

Training in Web-based Communication Infrastructure—Mechanisms for Submitting Data from National Statistical Offices to the CARICOM Secretariat, 4—8 April, Barbados.

A workshop was held from 4—8 April 2011 in Barbados to provide training in Web-based Communication Infrastructure.

The main purpose of the Web-Based Communication Infrastructure Project was to strengthen the capacity of the CARICOM Statistics Programme and the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in Member States, by developing and implementing a secured web-based communication infrastructure for data transfer, from Member States to the regional databank at the CARICOM Secretariat. The main outcome of the project will be the implementation of a framework for the transmission of data, including the provision of relevant training to CARICOM Secretariat staff as well as Member States, in an effort to sustain the process.

The training targeted experienced Information

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Technology (IT) Administrators or other relevant officers in the NSOs as well as staff of the CARICOM Secretariat who are positioned to provide the necessary technical support and maintenance of the database.

The overall objective of the workshop was to train representatives of Member States as well as the CARICOM Secretariat in the requisite skills needed to:

- enable the replication, in the NSOs, of the system which has been developed for the transmission of statistical data from Member States to the regional databank at the Secretariat; and
- ensure the effective maintenance of the system post installation.

The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To provide an overview of the key elements of the system designed during the project;
- To demonstrate the data transmission system developed during the project;
- To demonstrate data replication mechanisms;
- To demonstrate setting up of the network system;
- To demonstrate actual use of the data transmission system.

Training of Trainers Workshop on the Organisation and Use of Data from 17-19th May, 2011 in Gross Islet, Saint Lucia.

The CARICOM Secretariat convened a Training of Trainers Workshop workshop on the Organisation and Use of Data from 17-19th May, 2011 in Gross Islet, Saint Lucia. It was facilitated by Consultants hired to work on the project from Serverside Solutions – the company hired to execute this component of the project.

This workshop was one of the activities under the EU-funded technical assistance project aimed at harmonizing the Intra-Regional Statistical Infrastructure, framework and focused on the approach of storing and retrieving data in the CARICOM Secretariat and Member States.

The meeting was therefore held to expose

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Statisticians and System Administrators in the description, functioning and implementation of the systems for organizing statistical databases.

The general purpose of the training was to provide practical experience in the use of the Toolkit while the specific objectives were, inter-alia:

- To familiarize participants with the National Statistics Submission System (NSSS) and its intended method of operation;
- Understand the nature of the problems to be addressed by the “Organization and Use of Statistical Databases” project;
- Understand the underlying concept of the proposed solution for organizing statistical databases
- Understand the key characteristics and functions of the National Statistics Submission System (NSSS).

The workshop accomplished its objectives.

Current Events

Workshop on Merchandise Trade Statistics– Web COMEXT Dissemination System, St. John’s Antigua and Barbuda, 22-24 June 2011 .

The CARICOM Workshop on Merchandise Trade Statistics- Data Dissemination System was held at the Jolly Beach Resort in St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda on 22-24 June 2011 funded by the European Union (EU) under the Ninth European Development Fund (9th EDF) and Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP).

The main objective of the Workshop was to train participants in the use of the Web Comext module. The COMEXT module is a module of the New Eurotrace System used in the dissemination of trade data which enable users to have easy access to trade data in a searchable database format. The workshop also allowed participants to perform extraction using advanced selection functions in order to enable the production of mirror statistics for analysis and reconciliation.

It was one of several activities funded under the 9th EDF Project - Enhancement of Trade Information Systems in Member States-Phase II. Participants were informed that this workshop was the last in a

Current Events

series of three workshops. The first two workshops were held on the Finalization of Eurotrace Domains and the Trade Indices Module of Eurotrace.

Workshop activities included:

- A presentation by the Consultant on COMEXT;
- An illustration of the procedure for installing the programme;
- An examination of the way the “mirror statistics function” works; and
- Troubleshooting by the Consultants for those persons who encountered difficulty with installing the software on their computer.

Member States were challenged to begin adhering to the data submission protocol by the end of July 2011. They were also encouraged to use the “Circa Eurotrace interest group forum” to report any problems posed by the software and identify any modification/improvements that they would like to have in the software.

Eighth Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (8th AGS), Kingston, Jamaica, 27 June to 1 July 2011.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the Eighth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) from 27 June – 1 July 2011, with a follow-up meeting on 2 July 2011 in Kingston, Jamaica. Present at the meeting were The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Bermuda.

The objective of the Meeting was to advance the development of statistics through the work of the AGS focusing on matters discussed at the Seventh Advisory Group (7th AGS) Meeting which was held in November 2010 in Dominica. Some of the primary topics discussed were Components I and II of the Inter-American Development Bank Project – Common Framework for the Production of Statistics; the Action Plan on the High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics; the High Frequency Indicators— Implications for the Minimum Data Set and the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. The Revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) was also examined.

Past Events and Outcomes

Workshop on the Improvement in Basic Sources of data for National Accounts, 7 – 18 February 2011 – Antigua and Barbuda.

Under the consultancy on Improvement in Basic Sources of data, a workshop was held from 7 – 18 February 2011 in Antigua and Barbuda. The objective of the workshop was to provide training on the use of source data in the compilation of national accounts with emphasis on priority areas for CARICOM member states such as:

- GDP by economic activity and income components;
- GDP by expenditure;
- The supply and use table;
- The rest of the world accounts; and
- Quarterly estimates of GDP.

The workshop was scheduled for two (2) weeks and targeted those persons involved in the actual compilation in the area of national accounts. Staff from the CARICOM Secretariat who work in this area also attended this training.

While the first week focused on the compilation of the various types of accounts in the system, the second week focused primarily on the Business Register with the main objective of that week's work being the provision of training in the design and content of the Statistical Business Register and inclusion of administrative data that is useful for economic statistics and in particular the priority area of national accounts statistics. Activities included: the approach in the build-up of the Statistical Business Register, design of the database, update and maintenance as well as use of the data.

Prior to the workshop, a questionnaire was sent to the participants in an effort to collect information on the current state of the national accounts of each country, e.g. scope, base year, major sources, etc. The intention was to provide an overview, for a basis for the proceedings of the workshop

Once the country practices were ascertained the work was done under the following topic areas:

- GDP by activity and the production of generation of income accounts;
- GDP by expenditure and product flows;
- The supply and use table;
- The rest of the world accounts and the balance of payments; and
- Quarterly estimates of GDP

The workshop was very informative and achieved its objectives.

Future Events

The Round of Upcoming Meetings— Annual Statistics Meetings, Other Meetings.

This year the CARICOM Secretariat convened the Thirty -Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (36th SCCS), Twenty– First Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (21st RCCC) and the Fourth (4th) Regional Research Seminar. A workshop on the System of National Accounts was also held back to back with these meetings. This year the host country for the foregoing meetings was Belize.

Other meetings held during the second half of the year focused on areas of work such as:

- The Environment;
- Social Gender Statistics;
- Advanced Data Editing for Census Data;
- Information and communication Technology; and
- Literacy.

Publications

Forthcoming publications:

- *Selected Economic Indicators 2002-2009;*
- *CARICOM's Trade—A Quick Reference to Some Summary Data—2001-2006*
- *CARICOM's Trade in Services 2005—2009*

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