

Committee on Market Access

A MULTILATERAL APPRAISAL OF THE OPERATION OF THE INTEGRATED DATA BASE AND RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES - WESTERN AND EASTERN EUROPE, THE BALTIC STATES AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Note by the Secretariat

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this note is to provide factual information to assist Members in their Multilateral Appraisal of the Integrated Data Base (IDB) and related Technical Assistance Activities (document G/MA/IDB/4 of 22 February 2001 refers).

2. The objectives of the Multilateral Appraisal as set out in paragraph 2 of that document are to "identify ways of improving IDB participation through a multilateral appreciation of all Members' experiences in complying with IDB notification requirements. To do this, the Committee will focus on obtaining a better understanding of:

- why Members have not been able to either provide any submissions at all or achieve regular reporting patterns;
- how Members have had success in complying with IDB information requirements;
- what has been the effectiveness of existing technical assistance activities."

3. The modalities consist of a series of informal meetings organized on a regional basis at which Members in that region are strongly encouraged to describe their experiences in complying with IDB notification requirements.

4. This note contains the region-specific information referred to in paragraph 8 of G/MA/IDB/4 to support the second meeting devoted to Western and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It is in three parts. The first part (B), dealing with the operation of the IDB, focuses on the status of IDB submissions (participation and timeliness), dissemination details and problems encountered by the Secretariat in standardizing the information for inclusion in the IDB. It is based on information contained in IDB administration records and the guidelines for supplying PC IDB submissions which were reissued as document G/MA/IDB/W/6 on 15 June 2000. The second part (C) identifies supplementary sources of information which could be of assistance to delegations in pinpointing institutional or capacity related bottlenecks in complying with the IDB notification requirements. The third part (D) summarizes the Secretariat technical assistance accorded to WTO Members in the region.

5. The cutoff date for information contained in this note was 31 March 2001.

B. OPERATION OF THE IDB

Participation

6. Table 1 shows that 15 out of the 19 Members in the region have submitted information to the IDB. All the leading traders in the region participate. Members that do not yet participate have only recently acceded to the WTO (three countries became WTO Members in 2000, one in 1998). For a detailed region-specific status table, see the Annex.

Table 1: Integrated Data Base - Status of Responses of WTO Members

Western and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the CIS

Respondents (total 15)	Non-respondents (total 4)
Bulgaria	Albania
Czech Republic	Croatia
Estonia	Georgia
European Communities	Kyrgyz Republic
Hungary	
Iceland	
Latvia	
Malta	
Norway	
Poland	
Romania	
Slovak Republic	
Slovenia	
Switzerland	
Turkey	

Source: IDB administrative records

Status of submissions

7. Table 2 summarizes the extent of the information submitted for inclusion in the IDB from the start of the PC version in 1996. It should be noted that from a high of 14 submissions in 1999, tariff submissions declined to ten for 2000 and five by the end of March 2001. The number of import submissions for 1999 (the latest applicable year) is below the highest level which was recorded in 1997.

Table 2: Number of IDB Submissions

Western and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the CIS

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Tariffs						
Current MFN applied duties	8	9	13	14	10	5
Current MFN bound duties	3	4	5	7	5	4
Product descriptions	7	7	9	9	8	5
Imports	9	12	10	10	2	---
National correlations	1	1	1	2	2	3
Other references	4	8	8	8	3	3

--- = Not applicable

Source: IDB administrative records

8. The detailed records presented in the Annex show that for the last four years (1998-2001);
- Five Members have supplied applied tariffs for each of the four years and imports for each of the two years required;
 - Six Members have supplied applied tariffs and imports for at least one year in that period;
 - Four Members have supplied applied tariffs but not imports for one or several years.
9. Regarding the material needed to complete the IDB submissions (product descriptions, national correlations and other references), the information in Table 2 can be clarified as follows:
- Not all tariff submissions were accompanied by product descriptions in one of the official WTO languages;
 - Other reference information is frequently not supplied. However, in those cases where reference information of previous years was still considered to be valid, the Secretariat used that information. Confirmation by Members to do so would be of assistance to the Secretariat and would be reflected accordingly in the status table as submission of information.
 - Correlation tables are needed to track changes in the tariff nomenclature between imports and tariffs for a given year, and between tariffs from one year to the next (document G/MA/IDB/W/6 refers). An analysis of those submissions that have been processed has shown that in most cases, there are discrepancies both between the tariff and import nomenclature and the year to year tariff nomenclature. It should be noted that with respect to the import to tariff match, the Secretariat generates matching tariff lines in the import files if no correlation table is received, and informs the Member as part of the approval process. The incidence of discrepancies between year to year tariffs implies the need of a correlation table. The Secretariat cannot generate the correlation table without input from Members. Discrepancies have been flagged in the Member-specific notes.

Timeliness

10. The deadline for submitting tariffs is 30 March of the current year, and for imports, 30 September of the previous year. As at 31 March 2001, requirements were tariff information 1996-2001 and import statistics 1996-1999.

11. Table 3 provides an overview of the extent to which IDB submissions of applied tariffs and imports have been made in compliance with the mandated deadlines. For tariffs and imports, the number of submissions (based on the first date of submission) is counted on a quarterly basis starting in 1998. The quarters corresponding to the deadlines have been shaded in grey.

Table 3: Number of IDB Submissions by Date Received

Western and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the CIS

Submission date by quarter	Applied tariffs for year					
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
up to 1998 - 1.	6	6	4			
1998 - 2.	1		4			
1998 - 3.		1	1			
1998 - 4.	1	2	1			
1999 - 1.			1	5		
1999 - 2.				3		
1999 - 3.			1			
1999 - 4.			1	1		
2000 - 1.				2	4	
2000 - 2.					3	
2000 - 3.				3	1	
2000 - 4.					1	
2001 - 1.					1	5
All submissions	8	9	13	14	10	5
Submission date by quarter	Imports for year					
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
up to 1998 - 1.	8					
1998 - 2.		2				
1998 - 3.	1	4				
1998 - 4.		3				
1999 - 1.		1				
1999 - 2.		1	3			
1999 - 3.			5			
1999 - 4.		1	1			
2000 - 1.						
2000 - 2.			1	5		
2000 - 3.				5		
2000 - 4.						
2001 - 1.					2	
All submissions	9	12	10	10	2	---

Source: IDB administrative records

12. The table illustrates the extent to which respondents have been able to comply with these deadlines. Generally speaking four to five Members submit tariff information within the required time-frame. Ten Members met the import deadline in 1999 compared to eight in 1998 and six in 1997.

Dissemination

13. After successful processing, IDB files are disseminated first through the IDB Internet site. As a first step, the files are loaded into the provisional area of the site to await the Member's approval. Following approval, the files are loaded into the approved area. Files that are lodged in this area are potential candidates for the IDB CD-ROM. Tariffs are the primary requirement for the IDB CD-ROM software. Tariffs with or without the corresponding imports are accepted. Imports without the corresponding tariffs are not loaded.

Table 4: Summary of IDB Data Submitted and Disseminated as of 31 March 2001

Western and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the CIS

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Applied duties						
Communicated to the IDB	8	9	13	14	10	5
Loaded on the Internet File Transfer Facility	8	9	12	11	9	1
Included in December 2000 IDB CD-ROM	8	9	11	10	7	---
Imports						
Communicated to the IDB	9	12	10	10	2	---
Loaded on the Internet File Transfer Facility	8	11	9	10	---	---
Included in December 2000 IDB CD-ROM	7	8	7	5	---	---

Note: The last load of the Internet File Transfer Facility, included in this table, took place on 31 March 2001; the count of files on the Internet also includes files in the provisional area

Source: IDB administrative records

14. The above table gives an indication of the "success rate" of IDB submissions by highlighting discrepancies between the information Members submit to the IDB and the information that is disseminated on the Internet File Transfer Facility. The discrepancies can reflect processing problems and/or delays in processing. It should be noted that the discrepancies between the files disseminated on the Internet and the CD-ROM can be explained by the earlier cutoff date (November 2000) and the more stringent selection criteria.

Processing

15. The main problem encountered in processing the IDB submissions of Members in the region is with respect to the integration between the import and tariff nomenclatures. For example, where, for a given year, a number of codes in the import nomenclature do not match the tariff nomenclature (see paragraph 9 above). Another nomenclature problem identified relates to the data in the import file presented at a lower level of detail than in the tariff file (different number of digits in the import and tariff nomenclatures). The Secretariat addresses the latter and other problems in standardizing the data supplied by capitals for inclusion in the IDB with delegations on an ad hoc basis. Problems identified are described in the Member-specific notes.

C. IDB INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES

16. The results of Secretariat research into electronic sources of detailed import and tariff information that could meet IDB requirements are summarized below. The aim of this research is to assist delegations in ascertaining whether institutional and/or capacity issues underlie problems in complying with IDB notification requirements. Resource constraints precluded exhaustive research.

17. The Secretariat looked at information available first in the Secretariat, notably the Accessions Division, the Market Access Division and the Trade Policy Review Division; then in readily available databases maintained by other international organizations and agencies. The Secretariat also searched for Websites of national statistical offices, of national customs agencies, and of regional integration agreements. The search was restricted to imports and national customs tariffs for the last four years (1998-2001). The results of this search were brought to the attention of delegations in the Member-specific notes as appropriate.

18. For a number of responding Members, the Secretariat identified tariff information through the commercial provider WORLD TARIFF and in the UNCTAD TRAINS database; import information was found in the UNCTAD TRAINS database as well as in the United Nations COMTRADE database. For non-respondents, tariff information has been located in the Accessions and Market Access Divisions, the UNCTAD TRAINS database as well as through WORLD TARIFF. Import data for non-respondents were found in the Accessions Division, the UNCTAD TRAINS database and the United Nations COMTRADE database.

D IDB RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

19. The General Council decision of 16 July 1997 called for the Secretariat to provide technical assistance to Members in relation to IDB submissions. The IDB Technical Assistance Programme was launched in April 1998 following the adoption by the Committee on Market Access of document G/MA/IDB/W/3/Rev.1 setting out the modalities.

20. A regional IDB seminar for Eastern Europe to be held in Prague is planned for June 2001.

Annex

Status of PC IDB submissions as of 31 March 2001

Western and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the CIS

Members	Year	Imports	Current Tariffs		Product Descriptions	National Correlations	Other References	Date of submission	
			Applied	Bound				Imports	Applied Tariffs
Bulgaria	1997	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		10-98
	1998	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		10-98
	1999	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		04-99
	2000	---	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		05-00
Czech Republic	1996	Yes	Yes	No	No	---	Yes	12-97	12-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	12-98	12-98
	1998	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes		03-98
	2000	---	Yes	No	No	No	No		11-00
Estonia	1996	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	---	No	01-98	03-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	09-98	09-98
	1998	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	09-99	03-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	---	Yes	09-00	03-00
	2000	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		03-00
	2001	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		02-01
European Union	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	Yes	12-97	12-97
	1997	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10-98	01-98
	1998	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	05-99	06-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	04-00	01-99
	2000	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		01-00
	2001	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		02-01
Hungary	1996	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	---	Yes	05-97	06-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	06-98	10-97
	1998	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	06-99	06-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	05-00	06-99
	2000	---	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		05-00
	2001	---	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		01-01
Iceland	1996	Yes	No	No	No	---	No	08-98	
	1997	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	08-98	
	1998	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	05-99	09-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	06-00	07-00
Latvia	1997	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	03-99	
	1998	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	08-99	03-99
	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	08-00	03-99
Malta	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	No	01-98	01-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	08-98	01-98
	1998	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	07-99	03-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	06-00	03-99
	2000	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	03-01	01-01
	2001	---	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		03-01
Norway	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	---	No	01-98	01-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	12-98	01-98

Members	Year	Imports	Current Tariffs		Product Descriptions	National Correlations	Other References	Date of submission	
			Applied	Bound				Imports	Applied Tariffs
Norway (cont'd)	1998	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	04-00	05-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	08-00	03-99
	2000	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		03-00
	2001	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		02-01
Poland	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	07-00	07-00
	2000	---	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		07-00
Romania	1997	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	05-99	
	1999	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes		05-99
Slovak Rep.	1998	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		05-98
	1999	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		03-99
	2000	---	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		02-00
Slovenia	1997	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	11-99	
	1998	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	11-99	11-99
	1999	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		11-99
Switzerland	1996	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	---	No	06-97	02-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	06-98	03-98
	1998	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	08-99	03-98
	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	06-00	01-00
	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	03-01	05-00
	2001	---	No	Yes	No	No	No		
Turkey	1996	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	---	Yes	01-98	01-98
	1997	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	08-98	01-98
	1998	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	09-99	09-99
	1999	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	07-00	07-00

Yes = information received.

No = information not received.

--- = not applicable.

In the column National Correlations, "No" may also indicate that the Secretariat has not yet been able to ascertain the need for such a correlation table.