Metadata Report of International Trade Statistics

V-2.0

Quality Management

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1. Contact

1.1.	Contact organization	General Authority of Statistics
1.2.	Contact organization unit	International Trade Statistics
1.3.	Contact person function	Director of Business, Investment, and International Trade Statistics
1.4.	Contact mail address	P.O. Box: 3735 Riyadh, 11481 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
1.5.	Contact email address	info@stats.gov.sa
1.6.	Contact phone number	920020081

2. Metadata Update

2.1.	Metadata last update	04/05/2023

3. Statistical Presentation

3.1.	Data description

The International trade report presents the data on the exports and imports in Saudi Arabia. It is an administrative data that is collected, processed and classified on the main characteristics as following:

1. Commodity code and description.

2. Value, quantity and weight of commodities.

3. Country of origin for imports and country of destination for exports.

The data is further used to show the:

1. Saudi Arabia's exports.
2. Saudi Arabia's imports.
3. Trade exchange between Saudi Arabia and its partners.
4. Trade volume and trade balance.
5. Re-export.
6 Most important exporting and importing countries.
7. Most important exported and imported commodities

3.2.   Classification system

Classification is identified as an organized group of related categories, which are used to collect data according to similarity. Classification is the base for data collection and dissemination in various statistical fields, such as (economic activity, products, expenses, occupations, or health…. etc.). Classifying data and information helps to put them in meaningful categories to produce useful statistics. Data collection requires an accurate organization based on their common features to create reliable and comparable statistics. The merchandise exports and imports statistics of Saudi Arabia are based on the international standards of data collection and classification and rely on WCO's Commodity Description and Coding System (H.S.2017), which is a table describing and classifying commodities. The table includes subheadings, their numerical codes, sections and chapters, in accordance with the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System signed in Brussels.

Other classifications:

- **Standard International Trade Classification (SITC):**
It is a classification of commodities used to classify a country's exports and imports in order to compare different countries and years. It is currently in its fourth revision, which was issued in 2006, issued by the United Nations.

- **Classification of Broad Economic Categories (BEC):**

It is a three-digit classification, which groups transportable goods according to their main end use. It is most often used for the general economic analysis of international merchandise trade data. The BEC system is defined in terms of the Standard International Trade Classification system.

The original BEC was published in 1971, and revised in 1976, 1986 and most recently in 1988.

- **National classification of economic activities (ISIC4):**
    The statistical classification based on the International Standard of Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC4) is used to describe productive activities of an establishment.

- **Groups of Countries:**

Countries were classified according to continents or according to common elements, as follows:
- Gulf Cooperation Council
- Other Arab League Countries
- Islamic Not Arabic Countries
- Asian Not Arabic, Not Islamic
- African Not Arabic, Not Islamic
- Australia And Oceania
- North America
- South America
- European Union
- Europe Not European Union

3.3. Sector coverage

International trade report covers all economic sectors.

3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions

Main terminologies and concepts:

- **Exports (Total):** Consist of exports of domestic goods (national exports) and exports of foreign goods (reexports). Valuation is on Free-on-Board (FOB) basis.
- **National exports:** All goods fully produced or manufactured in the country or undergone some modifications that lead to a change in their shapes and values.
- **Re-exports:** The sale of previously imported goods abroad without any clear modifications on them.
- **Oil exports:** Exports of goods classified in Chapter 27 (mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) of the Harmonized System (HS).
- **Non-oil exports:** Total exports minus exports of goods classified in Chapter 27 (mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes) of the Harmonized System (HS).
- **Commodity imports**: All goods entering the country after passing through the customs procedures to meet its local needs. Valuation is on Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) basis.
- **Trade volume:** Total amount of exports and imports during a certain period of time.
- **Trade balance:** The difference between the value of exports and imports during a certain period of time.
- **Countries:** The origin of goods for import statistics and the final destination for exports statistics.
- **Groups of countries:** Countries classified geographically according to continents or international organizations, federations and associations.

- **Partner country:** The country that has economic transactions in Saudi Arabia, so it exports to it and imports from it. Based on such transactions, the value of exports and imports, quantity of trade between the two countries, trade balance, and most important exported and imported commodities are estimated.
- **Port of Entry:** Port through which goods and merchandise pass for customs clearance.
- **Means of transportation:** It indicates to the way of transport: by air, sea or land.
- **Country of origin:** It is the country where the agricultural crops and animal products are produced, or the country where the raw materials are extracted.
- **Comparison year:** Year or period in which prices are attributed to the prices of the base year in order to change prices, it is called the major year.
- **Net Weight:** Full weight of goods excluding the weight of the packaging materials.
- **Gross Weight:** Full weight of goods, including the weight of the packaging materials.
- **Monthly Change:** Change from the previous month.
- **Quarterly change:** Change from the previous quarter.
- **Annual Change:** Change from the previous year.

3.5. Statistical unit

The statistical unit in International trade report is both commodities and countries.

3.6. Statistical population

Trade in commodities of Saudi Arabia and partner countries includes all commodities that add or subtract from the stock of Saudi Arabia's commodity resources by entering (imports) or leaving (exports) its economic territory, including commodities for processing. Information about the goods is provided by the Zakat, Income and Customs Authority.

3.7. Reference area

The data covers the exports and imports of Saudi Arabia.

3.8. Time coverage

International trade data is obtained from administrative records on a monthly basis according to the Gregorian calendar and is available from 2000 and onwards.

3.9. Base period

Not applicable.

4.   Unit of measure

The amount of any commodity is expressed in terms of net weight. Yet, other commodities are shown in unit numbers as necessary, such as (sheep, cars and watches), in addition to their weights in kilograms. The value of these commodities is in Saudi Riyals.

5.   Reference period

Data obtained are attributed to the calendar month of the reporting period.

6.   Confidentiality

6.1.   Confidentiality - policy

According to the Royal Decree No. 23 dated 07-12-1397, data must always be kept confidential, and must be used by GASTAT only for statistical purposes. Therefore, the data are protected in the data servers of the Authority.

6.2.   Confidentiality - data treatment

Data were displayed in appropriate tables to facilitate its summarization, comprehension, and results extraction. Also, to compare data with other data and extract statistical meanings for the study community. It is also easier to check tables without the need to see any sensitive or confidential data, which violates data confidentiality of statistical data.

7. Release policy

7.1. Release calendar
The International trade report results are bound by a release calendar.

7.2. Release calendar access
Available on the: https://www.stats.gov.sa/ar/future-releases

7.3. User access
One of GASTAT's objectives is to meet better its clients' needs, so it immediately provides them with the publication's results once the International trade publication is published. It also receives questions and inquiries of the clients about the Bulletin and its results through various communication channels, such as: • GASTAT's official website www.stats.gov.sa • GASTAT's official e-mail address info@stats.gov.sa • Client Support's e-mail address cs@stats.gov.sa • Official visits to GASTAT's official head office in Riyadh or one of its branches in Saudi Arabia. • Official letters. • Statistical telephone (92002008).

8. Frequency of dissemination

Monthly.

9. Accessibility and clarity

9.1. News release

The announcements for each publication are available on release calendar as mentioned in 7.2. Release calendar access. The news release can be viewed on the website of GASTAT in the link https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/news.

9.2. Publications

GASTAT issues International trade publications and reports on a regular basis within a pre-prepared publishing plan and installed on the GASTAT's website. GASTAT is keen to publish its publications in a manner that serves all users of different types, including publications in different formats that contain (publication tables, data graphs, indicators, metadata, methodology, and used questionnaires) in both English and Arabic.

The International trade publications are available on the (https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/325).

9.3. On-line database

The data is published in the statistical database (https://database.stats.gov.sa/home/landing).

9.4. Micro-data access

Not available.

9.5. Other

Not available.

9.6. Documentation on methodology

The framework of international trade is based on the concepts and definitions mentioned in the international manual: the International Merchandise Trade Statistics Manual\ Concepts and Definitions 2010 issued by the United Nations.

9.7. Quality documentation

Quality documentation covers documentation on methods and standards for assessing, measuring, and monitoring the quality of statistical process and output. It is based on standard quality criteria such as relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence.

10. Quality management

10.1. Quality assurance

GASTAT declares that it considers the following principles: impartiality, user orientated, quality of processes and output, effectiveness of statistical processes, reducing the workload for respondents.
Quality controls and validation of data are actions carried out throughout the process in different stages such as the data input and data collection and other final controls.

10.2. Quality assessment

GASTAT performs all statistical activities according to a national model (Generic Statistical Business Process Model – GSBPM). According to the GSBPM, the final phase of statistical activities is overall evaluation using information gathered in each phase or sub-process. This information is used to prepare the evaluation report which outlines all the quality issues related to the specific statistical activity and serves as input for improvement actions.

11. Relevance

11.1. User needs

Internal GASTAT's users making use of International trade data are:
- National accounts.
- Prices.

External users who make significant use of International trade data include, but is not limited to:

- The governmental entities.
- Regional and International Organizations.
- Research institutions.
- Media.
- Individuals.

Main variables external users benefit from:

General Authority for Foreign Trade	Exports and imports
Ministry of Commerce and Investment	Exports, imports and trade exchange
Ministry of Economy and Planning	Exports, imports and trade exchange
Saudi Export Development Authority	Exports and imports
Saudi Central Bank	Exports and imports

11.2. User satisfaction

Not available.

11.3. Completeness

International trade data is based on two main sources in order to provide comprehensive information on merchandise exports and imports from government agencies, as follows:

- Data obtained from the Ministry of Energy is a major source of petroleum exports.
- Data obtained from Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority is a major source of non-oil merchandise exports and imports.

12. Accuracy and reliability

12.1. Overall accuracy

Merchandise data of international trade is periodically reviewed to ensure coverage and relevance.
Main and sub-number totals are reviewed and matched to ensure that the totals are consistent.

Indicators are calculated in accordance with the recommendations proposed in the International Guide of International Trade, such as the use of unified concepts and classifications in international trade that are appropriate with the countries of the world.

13. Timeliness and punctuality

13.1. Timeliness
GASTAT uses the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) issued by the International Monetary Fund. According to this Standard, all statistics agencies are required to publish data on a monthly basis, and with a delay of not more than one quarter (8 weeks) after the end of the reference period. If the data are from different source, they may be published in a different frequency.
13.2. Punctuality
Publication takes place in accordance with published release dates of international trade report in GASTAT's webpage. The data are available at the expected time, as scheduled in the release calendar.

14. Coherence and comparability

14.1. Comparability - geographical
Data are comparable.
14.2. Comparability - over time
The data reference year is updated on a monthly basis according to the main sources of data until the end of this reference year.
14.3. Coherence- cross domain
Not applicable.

14.3.1.Coherence - sub annual and annual statistics
Not applicable.
14.3.2.Coherence- National Accounts
Export and import data are consistent and serve as an input within the variables and indicators of the national accounts in the balance of payments.
14.4.   Coherence - internal
Not applicable.

15.   Resources used

Description	Total
Total staff (GASTAT's staff, researchers)	Not applicable.
Number of surveyed units	Not applicable.
Total days of data collection period (end date – start date)	Not applicable.
Average conducted interviewer per day (during data collection)	Not applicable.

16.   Data revision

16.1.   Data revision - policy
Not applicable, only preliminary results will be published.
16.2.   Data revision - practice
Not applicable, only preliminary results will be published.

17. Statistical processing

17.1. Source data

Sources of administrative records for the international trade report are:

• Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority: merchandise exports and imports.
• Ministry of Energy: petroleum exports

17.2. Frequency of data collection

Monthly.

17.3. Data collection

Data collection from administrative records:

Register-based data of the international trade report publication is obtained from Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority, including values and weights of non-oil exports and imports, also from the Ministry of Energy such as data of oil exports.

Data is saved on GASTAT's databases, after being audited and reviwed according to the approved statistical methods and generally accepted quality standards to refer back to the data source in case errors occur.

17.4. Data validation

Data are reviewed and matched to ensure their accuracy and precision in a way that suits their nature with the aim of giving the presented statistics quality and accuracy.

The data of the publication's current year are compared with the data of the previous year to ensure their integrity and consistency in preparation for processing data and extracting and reviewing results.

In addition to the data processing and tabulation to check their accuracy, all the outputs are stored and uploaded to the database after being calculated by GASTAT to be reviewed and processed by specialists in International trade through modern technologies and software designed for this purpose.

17.5. Data compilation

Data Coding

   In the International trade report, interviewers collect from respondents, a detailed description of each field. This information is then coded in-house by an automated process, which is reviewed by a small-dedicated team of coding experts using a series of consistency checks.

Data Editing

   Specialists of (Statistical dept. name) Department have processed and analyzed data in this stage, and this step was based on the following measures:
- Sort and arrange data in groups or different categories in a serial order.
- Summarize detailed data into main points or main data.
- Linking between many parts of data and make them connected.
- Process incomplete or missing data.
- Process illogical data.
- Converting data into statistically significant data.
- Organize, display and interpret data.

17.6. Adjustment

Not applicable, only final results will be published.

18. Comment