

International Update

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International

1. WTOI suggests moderate trade momentum in first quarter of 2017

The WTO's latest World Trade Outlook Indicator (WTOI) suggests that global trade growth will continue to build moderately in the first quarter of 2017 after having strengthened in the final quarter of last year. Trade-related indicators including air freight, automobile sales, export orders and container shipping have all registered solid gains in recent months, indicating faster growth in merchandise trade volumes in the first few months of the year.

The WTOI is a leading indicator of world trade, designed to provide "real time" information on the trajectory of merchandise trade three to four months ahead of trade volume statistics. It combines several trade-related indices into a single composite indicator to measure short-run performance against medium-run trends. A reading of 100 indicates trade growth in line with trend, while readings greater or less than 100 suggest above or below trend growth.

With a current reading of 102.0 for the month of November, the WTOI points to above-trend trade growth in February-March. The WTOI has risen further above trend since the last release three months ago, when the indicator stood at 100.9.

Four of the six component indices of the latest WTOI are more positive than the reading for August. Air freight, automobile sales, export orders and container shipping are all moving in a positive direction above trend and rising. Data on international freight tonne kilometres from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) have risen sharply as European air carriers posted strong growth. Container port throughput of major ports has largely recovered from its recent slump while the automobile index has also rebounded after dipping in the middle of last year. On the other hand, indices for electronics and agricultural raw materials trade are both below trend.

The WTO trade forecast issued on 27 September last year foresaw world merchandise trade growth of 1.7% in 2016 and growth between 1.8% and 3.1% in 2017. The WTOI currently suggests that trade volume may begin to recover in the fourth quarter once data become available. Any such rebound would have to be fairly strong for trade growth in 2016 to match the 1.7% increase forecast by the WTO last September.

The WTOI is not intended as a short-term forecast, although it does provide an indication of trade growth in the near future. Its main contribution is to identify turning points and gauge momentum in global trade growth. As such, it complements trade statistics and forecasts from the WTO and other organizations.

The full World Trade Outlook Indicator is available at here:
https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/wtoi_14feb17_e.pdf.

2. WTO members welcome entry into force of amendment to ease access to medicines

The Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) met on 30 January 2017 to mark the entry into force of the first amendment to WTO rules since the organization was established. The amendment secures a legal pathway to ease access to affordable medicines in developing countries that mostly rely on imports for their medicinal needs.

"The entry into force of the TRIPS amendment is a milestone in the WTO's comparatively short history," said the Chair of the TRIPS Council, Ambassador Modest Jonathan Mero of Tanzania. "The amendment provides a secure legal pathway to access affordable medicines and puts this new procurement tool on a par with other TRIPS flexibilities directly relevant to public health," he said. He was joined by many delegations in calling upon members that are yet to accept the amendment to do so expeditiously.

An amendment to the agreement on intellectual property entered into force on 23 January, once two-thirds of WTO members had accepted the legal change. The amendment gives legal certainty that generic versions of patent-protected medicines can be produced under compulsory licences specifically for export to countries with limited or no pharmaceutical production capacity.

In his address to WTO members, Director-General Roberto Azevêdo said:

“This is the very first amendment to WTO multilateral law, the first to be agreed among all members, and the first to come into force. It is significant that this first amendment is not about pursuing trade opportunities or market access for their own sake. Rather, its aim is to enhance access to medicines by the most vulnerable countries and overturn a situation in which the poorest could face the biggest hurdles in accessing essential drugs.”

DG Azevêdo stressed that, looking ahead, “our collective tasks are to step up practical support for those members who wish to make use of the system, to focus our attention on how to implement the system, and on how to identify the actual procurement scenarios for which the system is the optimal solution.”

Benin, speaking on behalf of the least-developed countries (LDC) group, praised the amendment as “a legal response to difficulties of access to medicines to treat diseases affecting hundreds of millions of people ... in developing countries and, in particular, in least-developed countries”. It noted that “the amendment demonstrates that international trade rules take account of the development dimension and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

Bangladesh stressed the human rights dimension of the TRIPS amendment. It said that “medication for cure of diseases is a primary need for people living in developed, developing and least developed countries. Now, the WTO TRIPS Agreement, with its new amendment, ranks alongside important international instruments to ensure health and happiness for all.”

A number of delegations called for a constructive debate in the TRIPS Council to ensure that the mechanism works as effectively as possible and delivers practical results. This would help to demonstrate that trade can support objectives such as protecting public health.

All delegations taking the floor welcomed entry into force of the amendment. Some underlined the need for its effective implementation; several emphasized the contribution of the intellectual property system to sustaining pharmaceutical innovation. “The challenges are how to promote affordable access to medicine without negatively affecting the research and development by the pharmaceutical industry and therefore the availability of new and innovative medicines,” the European Union noted.

Discussing the challenge of ensuring access to medicines, several delegations pointed out that intellectual property was only one factor among many: they observed that most essential medicines are already available in generic form, yet do not reach those in need because of factors including high tariffs, taxes and mark-ups or inefficient procurement processes and the costs related to trade.

3. Book launch: 'Research Handbook on Trade in Services'

The Research Handbook on Trade in Services was launched in January 2017 WTO. The Director-General Roberto Azevêdo made a speech on how this is an important addition to a growing body of trade literature. The following is an extract of the speech.

This Handbook looks at a number of key issues in relation to trade in services, through the legal, economic, and political lens.

It brings together experts with a range of perspectives. I am glad that a number of them could be here today to share their insights with us. I'd like to acknowledge Ambassador Tauqir Shah of Pakistan as well — thank you for taking part in this discussion.

This volume helps to highlight why trade in services matters so much. For example, it shows how services provide the necessary infrastructure for trade in goods to flourish, whether in road transport, maritime transport, logistics, or distribution services.

It also showcases how services act as enablers of global value chains.

Without services crossing borders, it would be impossible to coordinate production stages in different countries. In fact, research shows that efficient services are a key determinant of export performance in manufactured products.

In addition, this book highlights the role of trade in services in a digital era.

In 2015, e-commerce in goods and services was worth around 22 trillion dollars, and has grown the fastest in emerging economies.

Again, services are a key enabler of these exchanges, in two specific ways:

- *First, on connectivity.*

Telecommunication services, including the Internet, mobile telephony, and database services, provide the basic infrastructure and transmission capacity that allows for services and goods to be provided online.

The WTO binds and encourages openness in telecommunications services through GATS commitments. In this way the Organization has played a significant role in laying down some of these foundations for e-commerce to flourish.

- *Second, services can support diversification.*

A large range of services, from professional services to education or even some health services, can be supplied electronically over digital networks. Indeed, trade in services under mode 1 is essentially electronic commerce. The growth in this area is providing opportunities for developing countries to enter these flows and diversify their exports.

So I think the importance of services for growth, development and connectivity is clear.

It is also clear to me that services will be central to the future work of the WTO. On negotiations, transparency and monitoring, disputes, or capacity building, our success depends to a significant degree on our ability to reflect the reality of the trading system, with services playing a major role.

This means seeing services as a topic that concerns not just a few. It is a key part of trade policies and an essential tool of economic development and connectivity. The book we are launching today is a welcome reminder of precisely this point. It shows beyond doubt the value and importance of trade in services.

ISO

1. Nominations for 2017 Lawrence D. Eicher Award is now open

Nominations for the 2017 Lawrence D. Eicher Award are now open and all nominations should be sent to LDE2017@iso.org by 31 March 2017.

The award recognizes excellence in technical work and is open to all ISO (and joint ISO/IEC) technical committees and subcommittees. It was introduced in honour of Lawrence D. Eicher, ISO Secretary General from 1986 to 2002, who sadly passed away while still in office.

The winner of the 2016 Lawrence D Eicher Award was ISO/TC 207/SC 1, Environmental management systems. Winners of the award enjoy increased recognition for their work, both within and outside the ISO community:

- the award is presented at the General Assembly and is a chance to promote the work of the committee to assembled members,
- winners feature in ISO's communications activities, and
- past winners have enjoyed coverage outside the ISO community in trade and business press.

For more information on eligibility criteria and nomination procedure, see details at: <http://www.iso.org/iso/home/about/iso-awards.htm>

2. ISO/PC 308 Chain of custody

Traceability—known as chain of custody—is important for ensuring the authenticity, and therefore the quality and safety, of virtually every product imaginable. A new ISO project committee, ISO/PC 308 *Chain of custody*, has just been formed to make it easier.

Traceability, and hence transparency, provides reassurance and a better understanding of production characteristics in order to reduce risks to health, safety and quality. In many cases, it is even a legal requirement. A reliable chain-of-custody (CoC) management system is therefore important for certification and quality assurance schemes. It is with this in mind that a new ISO project committee – ISO/PC 308, Chain of custody – was established, making traceability simpler for all supply chain actors by using a uniform ISO language globally.

The world is awash with CoC systems and programmes, all with their own semantics, presentation and industry focus, and include CoCs for food safety, sustainable agriculture or compliance in manufacturing. But the sheer number of such systems adds unnecessary layers of administration, thereby increasing costs and pushing smaller companies out of international markets.

Chair of ISO/PC 308 Rob Busink said: “The proliferation of traceability systems and definitions is causing unnecessary confusion, complexity and costs for players in different supply chains. The proposed generic chain-of-custody standard will define supply chain models and the respective traceability levels and specific requirements related to administration, conversion rates and physical handling activities, thus simplifying market access by using a uniform language and criteria throughout the supply chain.

“It is hoped that existing and new certification schemes will be able to refer to the ISO standard for the terminology regarding chain-of-custody requirements, thus simplifying the conformity assessment for those various product certifications and reducing unnecessary duplication or misunderstanding.”

The committee has already attracted support for the development of the standard from organizations across many sectors, such as food, consumer goods, energy and construction, as well as certification schemes and government.

Organizations and chain-of-custody experts interested in being actively involved in the development of the standard are encouraged to contact their national ISO member for more information.

Australia is currently a Participating member on this committee.

3. A new ISO application Meeting Participant platform will be launched in March 2017

The ISO Central Secretariat will implement at the end of March 2017 a new platform for delegates participation at technical committee, subcommittee and working group meetings, the Meeting Participant (MP) platform.

The aim of the MP platform is to enable Secretaries / Convenors and their support team to create and manage their meetings. In addition, the system will also allow registration of participants by Members. The tool should:

- Facilitate the meeting preparation and organization (check list, reminders, participant list...)
- Ensure that only authorized individuals participate in ISO meetings
- Ease the verification of participation rules for the Secretariats
- Make it easy for Members to register/accredit delegates
- Enable Members and ISO/CS to easily report on ISO meetings.

Some WebEx training sessions will be organized to present this new MP platform.

Australian Delegates will still submit international meeting applications via Standards Australia's Web form (forms.standards.org.au), the implementation of the ISO MP system will only change how accreditation is currently undertaken.

More information will be provided in the next issue of the International update.

4. ISO in Figures 2016 is now available

The ISO in Figures data for 2016 is now available to members.

The raw data can be found in an excel sheet and has also been presented in a pdf document.

Membership and ISO/CS figures, in addition to information on the technical program including standards published per year, per sector and details of work in progress, are available in this file.

A more user-friendly version of this information will be included as part of the ISO Annual Report 2016, set to be released in April.

5. A New Work Item Proposal on *Vulnerable consumers*

A New Work Item Proposal to develop a Guideline for inclusive service: identifying and responding to consumers in vulnerable situations has been submitted to ISO from the ISO Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO).

The scope of the activity is:

To provide guidance to all organizations on how to identify consumers in vulnerable situations and how to develop, implement and maintain policies and procedures for the organization to deal with vulnerable consumers.

The proposal notes that an international standard would help organizations to minimize consumer detriment by:

- raising awareness and understanding of consumer vulnerability;
- giving guidance on how to identify consumers in vulnerable circumstances; and
- establishing processes and procedures that will help organizations respond to consumers in vulnerable situations in a fair and flexible way.

Standards Australia will be consulting with stakeholders on this proposal. For more information or to make a submission please contact Karen.Batt@standards.org.au by 30 April 2017.

1. White Paper on IoT 2020: Smart and secure IoT platform

The Internet of Things (IoT) significantly impacts the global economy and is expected to grow exponentially over the coming years, transforming society as a whole. In order to develop a smart and secure IoT platform, certain critical issues must be addressed in detail to ensure security, interoperability and scalability of the platform. The topic attracts a lot of interest among a very large and diverse community of stakeholders, and the refined solutions will be key to the success of this technology now and for generations to come.

The IoT is an infrastructure of interconnected objects, people or systems that processes and reacts to physical and virtual information. IoT collectively uses today's Internet backbone to connect things using sensors and other technologies. Through data collection and analysis, it achieves a multitude of outcomes that generally aim to improve user experience or the performance of devices and systems.

How data is collected and implemented will determine how transformational IoT can become. Security grows exponentially in importance as devices that were once isolated become interconnected and more and more information is collected. As with most disruptive technologies, solutions are developed by a wide range of providers promoting their proprietary approaches, which can also impact interconnectivity. Bringing the ambitious visions expressed by IoT to reality will require significant efforts in standardization.

Dr. Dr. Timo Kubach, Vice President Cloud Platform Strategy at SAP, states "IoT is an important topic that requires careful consideration by Standards Organizations and others if we are to realize its true benefits. Recognizing this, we aimed at identifying the future state of IoT and providing recommendations on what actions IEC, and the broader standards community could take to support the anticipated dynamic growth of IoT solutions."

This White Paper aims to provide an overview of today's IoT, including its limitations and deficiencies in the area of security, interoperability and scalability. It includes several use cases from industry, public and customer domains that point to requirements for a smart and secure IoT platform. It also discusses next generation platform-level technologies in the field of connectivity, processing and security.

This White Paper, which provides important recommendations to IoT stakeholders and for IoT standardization work, was developed by the IEC Market Strategy Board (MSB) with major contributions from SAP and Fraunhofer AISEC.

The White Paper can be downloaded from:
<http://www.iec.ch/whitepaper/pdf/iecWP-IoT2020-LR.pdf>

Printed copies can be ordered at:
<http://www.iec.ch/whitepaper/iotplatform/>

2. White paper on Global Energy Interconnection

Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces. However, one fifth of the world population still lacks access to energy and 3 billion people rely on wood, coal or animal waste for cooking and heating. Today, sustainable energy and climate change are big global concerns.

Global energy interconnection (GEI) is technically highly complex. It will require a level of dependability never seen before. International Standards inherently contain solutions that will help pre-address this complexity and they will play a crucial role in mastering dependability upfront.

This White Paper aims to assess the worldwide needs, benefits, policies and preconditions for GEI. It examines the readiness of potential markets and identifies technical and business trends as well as hurdles. The White Paper analyzes and compares several global transmission scenarios and evaluates their impact on energy supply, the environment, technologies, and policies, as well as standards development.

Last but not least, this White Paper will provide recommendations on how standardization for such a large system of systems will need to be conducted and which stakeholders have to be involved.

Dr. Hu Hao, Senior Project Manager, International Cooperation Department, State Grid Corporation of China, states “To achieve the ambitious concept of global energy interconnection (GEI) or large scale, regional, intercontinental interconnection, requires political vision and a worldwide collaborative effort. Drawing up GEI concepts at an early stage by a consensus based process and through close cooperation between researchers, industry, regulators and standardization bodies is one of the central requirements for success of the implementation of the concept.”

This White Paper was developed by the IEC Market Strategy Board (MSB) with major contributions from the International Energy Agency (IEA) and State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC).

The White Paper can be downloaded from:

<http://www.iec.ch/whitepaper/pdf/iecWP-globalenergyinterconnection.pdf>

Printed copies can be ordered at:

<http://www.iec.ch/whitepaper/globalenergy/>

3. ISO/IEC 80000 series of Standards are under revision

Consistency in quantities and units is essential for accurate measurement and can only be achieved if everyone is using the same language. The ISO/IEC 80000 series of Standards does just that, and it is currently under revision.

The ISO/IEC 80000 quantities and units series is referenced in the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM) guide on the International System of Units (SI), known as the SI brochure, and thus provides important support for the definition of quantities and units. It consists of 13 different parts, featuring two from the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) and 11 from the ISO (International Organization for Standardization), some of which are approaching a crucial and final stage of their revision.

This series of Standards underpins the international harmonization of terms, definitions and symbols used in science and engineering and thus guarantees a unified language and writing of formulae. It reduces the risk of error and facilitates and encourages communication between scientists and engineers of many disciplines.

Dr. Michael Krystek, Chair of IEC/TC 25, states “The unification of measurements on a global scale, for all domains of activities, is vital to industries and global trade. This harmonization will ease the development of innovative products and services. The ISO/IEC 80000 series is periodically revised in order to stay relevant to today’s market demands.”

The series gives terms, definitions, recommended symbols, units and any other important information related to quantities used in science, engineering, metrology and industry. It is a reference for those writing scientific or technical documents, textbooks, standards and guides.

A number of the parts are currently at Draft International Standard (DIS) stage and approaching publication. They are:

- ISO 80000-2: Mathematics
- ISO 80000-4: Mechanics
- ISO 80000-5: Thermodynamics
- ISO 80000-7: Light and radiation
- ISO 80000-10: Atomic and nuclear physics
- ISO 80000-12: Condensed matter physics

In addition, two parts have recently reached DIS stage, meaning interested parties can once more submit feedback on the draft before final publication. They are:

- ISO 80000-9: Physical chemistry and molecular physics
- ISO 80000-11: Characteristic numbers

The other parts in the series on quantities and units are:

- ISO 80000-1: General
- ISO 80000-3: Space and time
- IEC 80000-6: Electromagnetism
- ISO 80000-8: Acoustics
- IEC 80000-13: Information science and technology

The IEC parts of the ISO/IEC 80000 series of Standards are developed by IEC Technical Committee (TC) 25: Quantities and units, whose secretariat is located in Italy. IEC TC 25 maintains a close collaboration with IEC TC 1: Terminology, and is in constant liaison with ISO/TC 12: Quantities and units, the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the BIPM.

On top of the two parts that are under direct IEC responsibility, the Commission also contributes significantly to the other parts of the ISO/IEC 80000 series of Standards. IEC Subcommittee (SC) 34A: Lamps, IEC SC 62B: Diagnostic imaging equipment, IEC TC 76: Optical radiation safety and laser equipment, IEC TC 100: Audio, video and multimedia systems and equipment, and IEC TC 110: Electronic display devices, all play an integral role in the development of ISO 80000-7: Light and radiation. Furthermore, ISO-80000-8: Acoustics specifically refers to Standards developed by IEC/TC 29: Electroacoustics.

The Standards are expected to be used by metrology and technical institutes, academia, technical book writers and translators, standards developers and many areas of industry.