

Foreword

This *Export and Import Price Index (XMPI) Manual* replaces the United Nations *Strategies for Price and Quantity Measurement in External Trade*, Series M, No. 66 issued in 1981. The development of the *XMPI Manual* has been undertaken under the joint responsibility of five organizations—the International Labour Office (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and World Bank—through the mechanism of an Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (IWGPS). It is published jointly by these organizations.

The *Manual* contains detailed, comprehensive information and explanations for compiling XMPIs. It provides an overview of the conceptual and theoretical issues that statistical offices should consider when making decisions on how to deal with the various problems in the daily compilation of XMPIs, and it is intended for use by both developed and developing countries. The chapters cover many topics; they elaborate on the different practices currently in use, propose alternatives whenever possible, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. Given the comprehensive nature of the *Manual*, we expect it to satisfy the needs of many users.

The main purpose of the *Manual* is to assist producers of XMPIs, particularly countries that are revising or setting up their XMPIs. The *Manual* draws on a wide range of experience and expertise in an attempt to describe practical and suitable measurement methods. It should also help countries to produce their XMPIs in a comparable way, so that statistical offices and international organizations can make meaningful international comparisons. Because it brings together a large body of knowledge on the subject, the *Manual* may be used for self-learning or as a teaching tool for training courses on XMPIs.

Other XMPI users, such as businesses, policymakers, and researchers, make up another targeted audience of the *Manual*. The *Manual* will inform them not only about the different methods that are employed in collecting data and compiling such indices, but also about the limitations, so that the results may be interpreted correctly.

The drafting and revision process has required many meetings over a three-year period, in which XMPI experts from national and international statistical offices, universities, and research organizations have participated. The *Manual* owes much to their collective advice and wisdom.

The electronic version of the *Manual* is available on the Internet at www.imf.org. The IWGPS views the *Manual* as a “living document” that it will amend and update to address particular points in more detail. This is especially true for emerging discussions and recommendations made by international groups reviewing XMPIs, such as the International

Working Group on Price Indices (the Ottawa Group) and the International Working Group on Service Sector Statistics (the Voorburg Group).

The IWGPS welcomes user's comments on the manual, which should be sent to the IMF Statistics Department ([e-mail: TEGPPI@imf.org](mailto:TEGPPI@imf.org)). They will be taken into account in any future revisions.

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