
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Jane Naylor
Head of Profession for Statistics
Department for International Trade (by email)

25 August 2022

Dear Jane

Trade and Investment Core Statistics Book and UK Trade in Numbers Compendia

We recently completed a rapid review of two of your official statistics products – [Trade and Investment Core Statistics Book](#) and [UK Trade in Numbers](#) compendium – each of which contains statistics from a range of statistical producers that DIT helpfully brings together and adds value through summaries, presentation and visualisation.

DIT has shown exemplary outreach to its data providers such as Office for National Statistics and HM Revenue and Customs. This engagement allows DIT to fully understand the data sources and any limitations as well as working collaboratively to improve the quality and value of the statistics.

Our review found many positive features that demonstrate compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics:

- The outputs are widely used within governmental departments as a source of information for monitoring trade, supporting policy decisions and by public communication teams. Additionally, the use by media is particularly beneficial for informing the wider public about trade statistics. DIT adds value by collating all the sources into one place making it quicker for users to access the information required and improving consistency.
- The Trade and Investment Core Statistics Book is aimed at experienced analysts whilst the UK Trade in Numbers release is shorter and more accessible, suitable for a range of users. Having both products meets the needs of users and increases the transparency and value of the statistics.
- The technical annex for the Trade and Investment Core Statistics Book provides quality and methodological information to inform users of the comparability and appropriate use of the statistics.
- DIT has recently changed the presentation of its UK Trade in Numbers compendium to an HTML platform and plans to move the Core Statistics Book onto HTML later this year. We support this improvement to screen readability, improving accessibility and potentially further increasing the user base.
- The provision of infographics helps to make the statistics easy to understand, communicating the statistics to a wide audience and aiding interpretation.

There were only a few areas where we thought DIT might enhance users' accessibility to these statistics and their understanding of their quality:

- The migration of the Trade and Investment Core Book to the HTML platform provides an opportunity to review whether both compendia could be published as one consistent product whilst still meeting the needs of multiple users.
- A stronger cross-reference between the data published in the tables in Trade and Investment Core Book and the strengths and limitations of the statistics as set out in the Technical Annex may be helpful to support the use of the statistics. For example, it might be useful to add a footnote to the fastest growing markets for UK imports table to cross reference the Technical Annex section on data quality.

Thank you to your team for their positive engagement during this rapid review and we look forward to continuing to engage with you and the team. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pont', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead