

UNCTAD's perspectives on maritime transport costs, with a focus on Pacific SIDS

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Regional Roundtable on Improving the Availability of Maritime Transport Costs Data in the Pacific Region

Suva (Fiji), 15-16 February 2023

Why data on maritime freight transport are so important

Maritime freight transport ...

- is an enabler of international goods trade – a driver of economic development (especially in small island states)
- has seen important frictions in recent times → supply shortages
- is a source of carbon emissions

Transport costs ...

- drive import prices and inflation rates
- reduce competitiveness on global markets
- impact on current account balances, real GDP, and welfare
- are a key variable in International Economics → needed for modelling
- need to be known for the compilation of international trade statistics, balance-of-payments, and national accounts
- are in island states primarily maritime

Maritime transport in UNCTAD's Programme of Work (Bridgetown Covenant)


“The pandemic caused significant disruptions in international maritime and air transport networks, with a particular impact on regional trade, port operations and logistics. (...) These developments **highlight the need for resilient air and maritime transportation systems** (...) which are essential for deepening regional integration processes and critical to accelerating developing countries' integration into the global economy.” (§50)

“UNCTAD should (...) continue to **support international and regional transport networks**, ensuring their sustainability and resilience” (§127).


UNCTAD's analytical work should continue being “**grounded in solid evidence**” (§113).



UNCTAD statistics and analyses on maritime transport



UNCTADSTAT
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Merchant fleet (registrations and ownership; by vessel types and carrying capacity)
- Ship building and ship recycling
- Seaborne trade (goods loaded and discharged on seaports)
- Container port throughput
- Liner shipping connectivity (country-level and bilateral indices)
- Port performance (port calls, time on port, ...)
- Global transport costs dataset (experimental) 



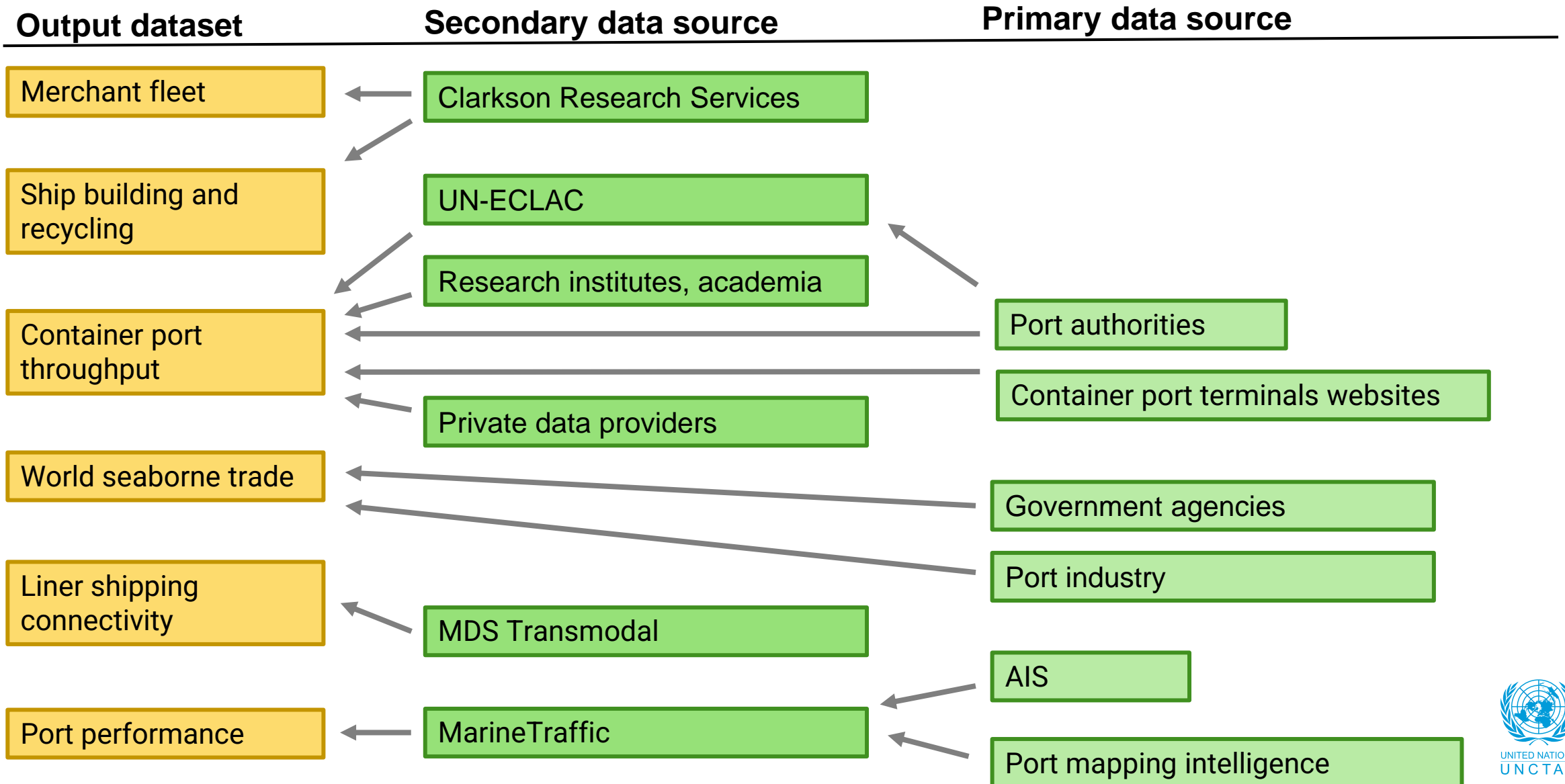
Review of Maritime Transport



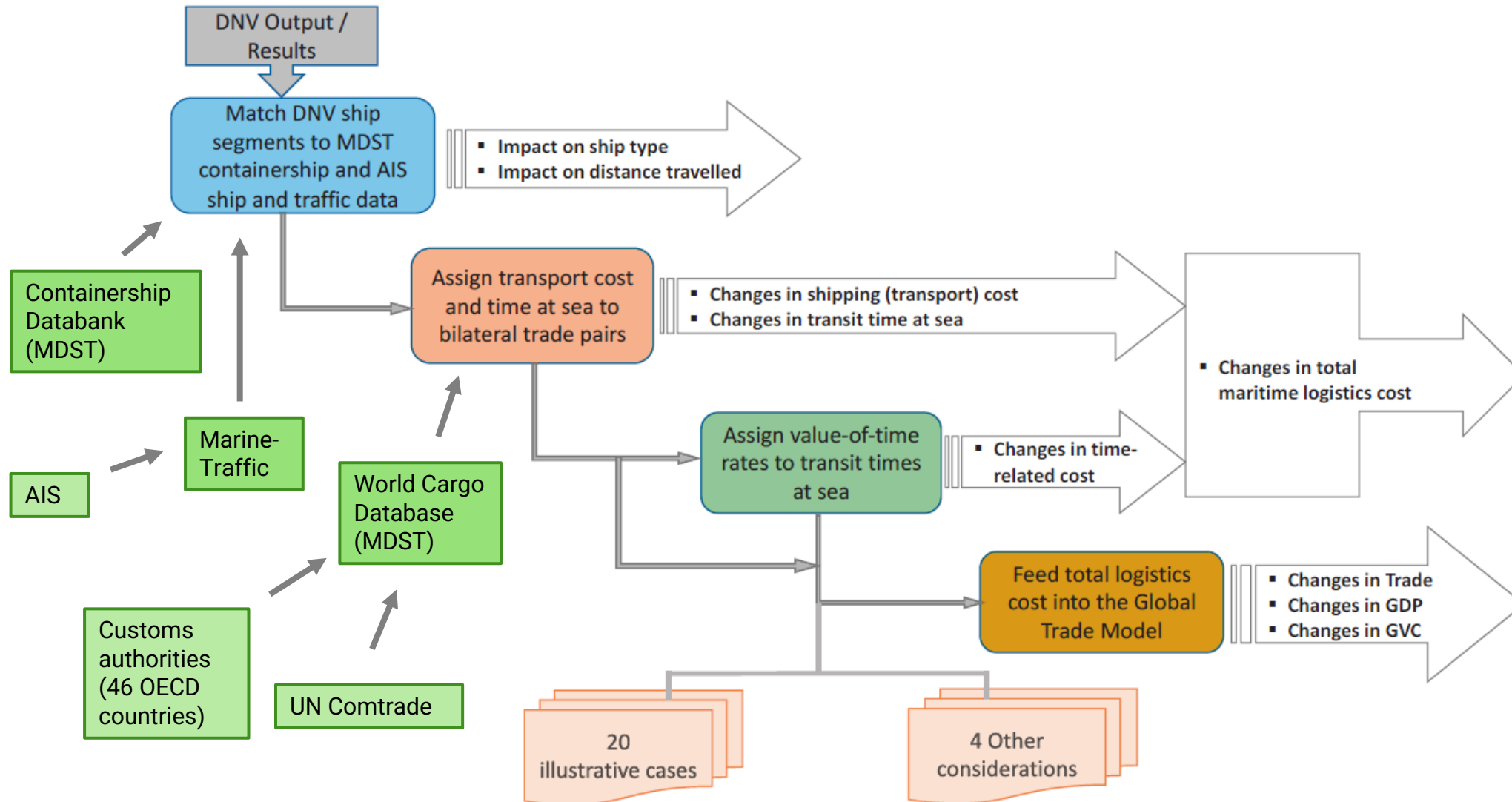
Topical studies and reports

Policy advice

Data sources



Methodological approach of the impact assessment



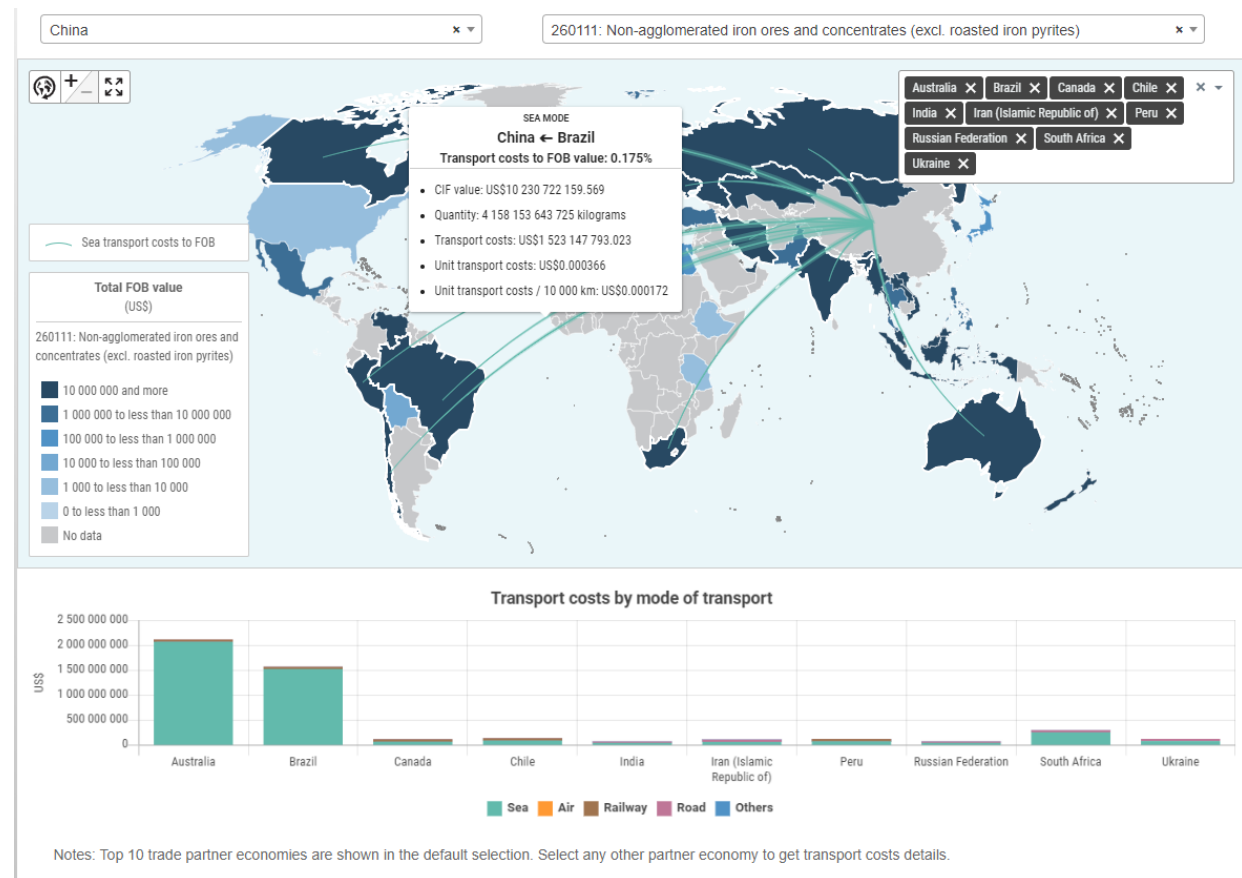
Global Transport Costs Dataset for International Trade (GTCDIT)

UNCTAD - World Bank Cooperation

Goals:

- Enhanced evidence base on the interlinkages between international transport and trade
- Monitoring of the resilience of the maritime and logistical system, especially in SIDS and LDCs

Beta version of the dataset online on UNCTADstat



How GTCDIT is compiled



[Hoffmeister, Halim, Lazarou, Barnat, Cristallo, Englert, Hoffmann \(2022\): Developing a global transport costs dataset for international trade, UNCTAD Research Papers, 85.](#)

UN Comtrade Plus

Reporter	Partner	Commodity	Flow	Mode of transport	FOB value (US\$)	CIF value (US\$)	Quantity (items, kg, l, ...)	Weight (kg)
163 countries	225 countries	5600 commodity groups (HS, 6 digits)	Imports / exports	Air				
				Sea				
				Rail				
				Road				
				...				

Time-Distance Matrix

Reporter	Partner	Mode of transport	Distance (km)	Time (hours)
All countries	All countries	Air		
		Sea		
		Rail		
		Road		

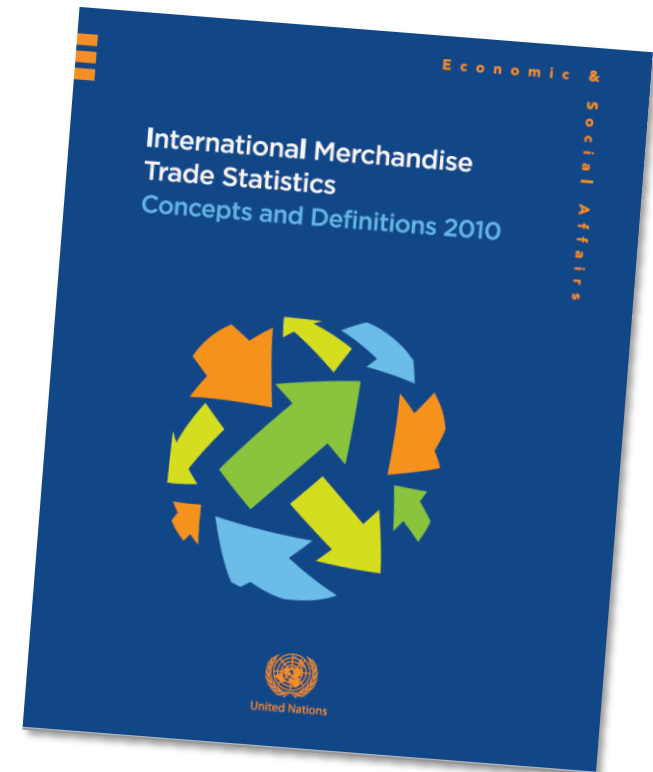
GTCDIT

Origin	Destination	Commodity	Mode of transport	FOB value (US\$)	Transport costs (US\$)	Quantity (items, kg, l, ...)	Weight (kg)	Distance (km)	Ad-valorem transport costs (%)	Per-unit transport costs (US\$/km)	Transport work (ton-km)	
All countries	All countries	1200 commodity groups (HS, 4 digits)	Air									
			Sea									
			Rail									
			Road									
			Others									



Recommended data sources for international merchandise trade statistics

- **Customs records**
 - **Customs declaration**
 - **Supporting documents**
(invoice, transport documents, import license, ...)
- Shipping manifests
- Aircraft and ship registers
- Enterprise surveys
- Postal records
- Commodity board reports



Availability of data on transport costs and mode in UN Comtrade Plus

Number of countries by detail of information, 2016-2021*

		Breakdown by mode		
		No	Yes	Total
CIF-FOB margin	No	66 (3)	75 (3)	141 (6)
	Yes	7 (0)	25 (0)	32 (0)
	Total	73 (3)	100 (3)	173 (6)

Full SPC member States in parentheses.

* Best information content in any available year.

Fiji
Samoa
Solomon Islands

French Polynesia
Kiribati
Palau

Responses in the IMTS National Compilation and Dissemination Practices (NCDP) Survey 2016

“Do you compile data on freight and insurance associated with the importation of goods separately, at the most detailed commodity and partner level possible?”

Country	Yes		No
	Detailed by mode	Not detailed by mode	
Marshall Islands	X	X	
Tokelau			X

Résumé

- Good quality data on maritime transport costs, with global coverage, are key for analytical work in many domains related to (sustainable) development and international trade
- Island States in the Pacific are characterized by
 - high need for precise assessment of the effects of transport costs on their economies
 - low availability of maritime transport costs data
- Data on transport costs and international goods trade are intertwined in both economic analysis and micro-level data collection
- Measuring transport costs and transport work from the trade side
 - can build a bridge between international transport and international trade models
 - allows using synergies in data collection and compilation
 - provides opportunities for cross-validation and reconciliation of collected data