

Taking Account...

Updated international services data available

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) annually produces detailed statistics on services provided by and to the United States through two channels: (1) conventional trade in services and (2) services supplied by affiliates of multinational enterprises (MNEs). These data are accessible via BEA's [interactive data application](#). They were discussed in detail in the [December issue of the Survey of Current Business](#).

The annual statistics on trade in services were updated in October 2016 to include preliminary statistics for 2015 and revised statistics for 2013 and 2014. Statistics for previous years were not revised. With this year's release, BEA introduced expanded geographic detail by increasing the number of countries and areas included in its bilateral statistics from 49 to 90. The additional countries include those with which the United States has a free trade agreement and other trading partners with significant transactions.

BEA also updated statistics on information and communications technology (ICT) and potentially ICT-enabled services that were first presented in a [May 2016 Survey of Current Business article](#). These statistics complement BEA's standard presentation of international trade in services statistics by providing insight into the extent that ICT might facilitate trade in services.

The statistics on services supplied through affiliates measure services supplied by MNEs via the channel of direct investment.

This category covers transactions between majority-owned foreign affiliates of U.S. companies and foreign residents, both in the host country and in other foreign markets, and transactions between majority-owned U.S. affiliates of foreign companies and U.S. residents. Because of the importance of physical proximity to customers in the delivery of many types of services, many MNEs serve foreign markets partly or wholly through their affiliates rather than through trade.

The annual statistics on services supplied through affiliates were updated in December 2016 to include preliminary statistics for 2014 and revised statistics for 2013. With the release of statistics on services supplied through affiliates in December, BEA introduced a new table that presents services supplied to the United States by U.S. affiliates of foreign MNEs by major industry category for more than 70 countries and areas.

Earlier data on services to be included in GDP

BEA and the Census Bureau are taking another step in their joint quest to get more data into earlier estimates of gross domestic product.

As noted in the BEA Blog, the Census Bureau will begin releasing an early snapshot of its ser-

vices sector data each quarter, in time for BEA's second estimate of quarterly GDP. The new data will be included in BEA statistics beginning on February 28.

Seeking source data faster is one way BEA is working to improve its estimates of GDP. The Census Bureau is the biggest contributor of data for GDP.

During the 3 months following the end of each quarter, economic data flows into BEA from many sources. Previously, BEA had to wait until the third estimates to include the types of services data now destined for second estimates. BEA expects the earlier data to reduce revisions between second and third estimates by about 0.1 to 0.2 percentage point on average.

Census plans to release its first Advance Quarterly Services Report on February 17. It will serve as a preview of Census' more detailed services report, already a major data source for BEA's third estimates of GDP.

The Advance Quarterly Services Report, to be published about 50 days after the end of each quarter, will offer a snapshot of revenue for selected sectors, subsectors, and industries. They will enhance GDP estimates by providing earlier data on consumer spending for services and on private fixed investment in software.

The full Quarterly Services Report will follow 3 weeks later on March 9. It will feed into BEA's third estimate of GDP, coming on March 30.