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Statistics, Balance of Payments
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Survey of Swiss trade in services with foreign countries (serviceBOP)¹ – Introduction of extended annual survey with effect from 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Switzerland's trade in services with foreign countries forms part of its balance of payments, which is compiled and published by the Swiss National Bank (SNB). At present, there are gaps in the statistical coverage of Switzerland's foreign trade in services. Consequently, the SNB is extending the current survey in a project called 'serviceBOP'.² In future, all major categories of services will be covered, and the collection of data will be broken down geographically. To make the data more representative, the group of reporting institutions will be expanded.

In 2010, the SNB conducted a preliminary survey of some 9,000 companies to select nearly 2,200 companies that would, in future, be required to report data. They will include your company, which will be required to report data annually from 2012. The **first** data that will be collected using the extended survey will be for 2012, with a **reference date of 31 December 2012**. Your company is required to **submit** this initial data by the **end of March 2013**.

Participation in the survey is compulsory. The SNB is authorised by the National Bank Act³ and the National Bank Ordinance⁴ to collect the statistical data required for drawing up the balance of payments⁵.

In the attachment you will find all the available information on the contents of the new survey (the documentation can also be accessed at www.snb.ch/en/iabout/stat/servbop). Please note that the attachments relate merely to the **contents of the survey** and do not reflect the final appearance of the survey.

In future, data on Switzerland's trade in services with foreign countries will be collected using a general survey which covers the entire range of services categories and countries/regions. As a

¹ All documents and websites associated with the serviceBOP project are also available in German.

² For more detailed information on the project, cf. www.snb.ch, *Statistics, Project trade in services*.

³ SR 951.11 Federal Act on the Swiss National Bank (National Bank Act, NBA) of 3 October 2003.

⁴ SR 951.131 Ordinance on the National Bank Act of 18 March 2004 (National Bank Ordinance).

⁵ For the collection of data from companies in the Principality of Liechtenstein, the annexes to the Currency Treaty between the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein (SR 0.951.951.4) apply.

reporting company, you are asked to select the categories and countries that apply to you. The questionnaire also covers selected cross-border transactions in other areas, such as goods trading and investment income. [An additional survey for xx will enter into more detail on the specific features of the industry. In future, your company will be required to fill in both the general questionnaire and the specialised questionnaire for xx.]

It is possible that your company will not yet be in a position to allocate transactions to all the relevant sub-items in the **introductory year, 2012**. If this is the case, you may allocate transactions to the (main) items designated with an asterisk (*) – see the general questionnaire and the accompanying notes. However, the SNB would very much appreciate it if your company were able to implement all the requirements from 2012 onwards. Limited reporting is not possible for either the specialised industry questionnaire or the geographical breakdown. The relevant transactions must be reported with all sub-items **from the year 2013** at the latest.

For transmitting the data, the SNB will provide a user-friendly web-based solution. Your company will be able to access the survey via the internet, enter the data in an intelligent, Excel-based form and transmit the forms directly to the SNB via an upload function. The confidentiality of the data will be guaranteed throughout the procedure – at transmission as well as during further processing. Before the survey begins, you will receive a letter from the SNB with detailed information on the web-based processing steps as well as the URL address, an individual user name and a password. We will continue making improvements to the online reporting system after its introduction in 2012 in order to meet user requirements.

If you are already required to report for the SNB's existing current account surveys, please note that your company must continue to submit data for the existing survey until the new extended survey is launched, in other words, up to and including the reference date of 31 December 2011. This means that the final quarterly report (fourth quarter of 2011) must be submitted by the end of January 2012 and the final annual report (for the year 2011) must be submitted by the end of March 2012.

If you have queries relating to specific details of the data requirements or questions on implementation, the serviceBOP team would be happy to be of assistance (e-mail serviceBOP@snb.ch, tel. +41 44 631 35 34).

By participating in this preliminary survey, you are contributing to better statistical coverage of trade in services between Switzerland and foreign countries, an important sector of the Swiss economy. We would like to thank you in advance for your valuable support and we look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely
Swiss National Bank

Enclosures mentioned