

Country Experience: Stand-alone commodity descriptors in Canada (ch. 13)

Box XIII.10 Stand-alone commodity descriptors: Canada

Merchandise trade data disseminated by Statistics Canada is often supplied with “stand-alone” descriptors designed to identify the commodities of a particular data series. While trade data is collected using the Harmonized System (HS), the HS descriptors are not always suitable for publication purposes. The length of the legal HS descriptors and the use of “Other” or “Other–Other” often do not provide meaningful labels for disseminated data. For example, the Canadian Customs Tariff contains the following descriptors:

- Reception apparatus for television, whether or not incorporating radio-broadcast receivers or sound or video recording or reproducing apparatus:

8528.72 - - Other, colour

8528.72.20.00 - - - Incomplete or unfinished television receivers, including assemblies for television receivers consisting of video intermediate (IF) amplifying and detecting systems, video processing and amplification systems, synchronizing and deflection circuitry, tuners and tuner control systems, and audio detection and amplification systems plus a power supply, but not incorporating a cathode-ray tube, flat panel screen or similar display.

This has been shortened, through the use of a Statistics Canada stand-alone descriptor, to “Television receivers, colour, incomplete or unfinished”.

Data users are advised that these stand-alone descriptors are for dissemination purposes only and have no legal standing. While they are not as precise as the legal descriptors, they do enable an easier understanding of the basic data series.