

The Regional Integration Knowledge System 2.0

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Terms of Use

RIKS is a web-based information and learning platform on regional integration processes worldwide.

Data contained in RIKS, even if calculated based on United Nations (UN) data and other official sources, are not official statistics from the UN, United Nations University (UNU), regional organizations, or the UN Member States.

Primary information is carefully gathered, processed and presented, with indication of the sources. Any errors and omissions that are not already present in the primary data are the sole responsibility of the builders of the system. Users are encouraged to notify the builders if they observe or suspect any anomalies so that they can be rectified by sending an email to riks@cris.unu.edu.

The data of organisation members and the indicators of integration can be viewed through a web browser or as a comma-separated file (.csv). Tables and images are rendered on-demand, meaning that they always represent the latest data available on the platform.

When using data from RIKS in publications, please include the following reference:

UNU-CRIS (2019), Regional Integration Knowledge System (RIKS), [www.riks.cris.unu.edu](http://www.riks.cris.unu.edu)

Introduction

This document describes the Regional Integration Knowledge System (RIKS). It provides guidelines on the use of the data and explains the methods and sources used to generate the information presented.

RIKS was launched as an information platform of the membership of regional organisations and indicators of regional integration in 2008 at the United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS). The updated version of RIKS that is publicly available as of 2020 extends the original database in the following ways:

* 150 regional organisations are included instead of the original 57;
* regional membership of countries is provided on an annual basis since the inception of the organisation, as opposed to the latest known membership composition;
* treaty texts cover all the founding agreements of the organisations and their most significant institutional changes;
* the indicators of regional integration cover the period since 1960 (conditional upon data availability) and have been expanded to include migration and foreign direct investment in addition to trade.

Organization

RIKS is organised into the following modules:

* Database: contains information on country membership, the founding treaty texts, statistical data and indicators on the selected 88 regional arrangements, and links to other databases. All statistical data and indicators are available, including for custom regional arrangements that the user can create by choosing a set of countries.
* Research: contains articles and papers, conference announcements, and links to specialised journals and research centres dealing with regional integration.
* Education: contains a list of educational opportunities in the regional integration sphere, including training programmers, master programmes and Ph.D. programmers.
* Technical Notes: contains the definition and a brief description of the indicators used, the construction of the database and the data sources.

Regional Integration Arrangements

## Definition

The list of arrangements presented in the Regional Arrangements section is not based on a single definition of regional arrangements or regional organisations, but rather should be considered as an open list. The non-inclusion of an arrangement or organisation in this list does not imply that it is not recognized as such.

The criteria to select the regional arrangements included in RIKS are as follows:

* Member states belong to the same geographical sub-region or neighbouring geographical sub-regions; geographical sub-regions are those used by the United Nations Statistic Division, with arrangements such as APEC and OIC also included.
* A minimum participation of three states. The regional dimension taken into account in RIKS has an additional “quantitative” facet, excluding from its scope of analysis bilateral organisations/arrangements (although involving two countries in the same geographical sub-region);
* Regional integration is explicitly set among the purposes in the establishment of the organisation/arrangement, as defined in treaty texts: the specific focus of RIKS is on monitoring and analysing (intended) regional integration processes, and not overall cooperation among countries belonging to the same geographical sub-region(s);
* To help in understanding the dynamics and the effects of regional integration, RIKS gives information on the membership of the organisations/arrangements on an **annual** basis since their inception. Similarly, historical organisations/arrangements at present dissolved, in particular predecessors of present existing organisations/arrangements, are also included in the database.

## Information

The information displayed for the different regional arrangements includes:

* Name and acronym of organisation
* Year of establishment
* Membership information over time, according to different modalities (e.g. full membership, observer status, partner state)
* Legal basis
* Link(s) to the official homepage (when available)
* preceding and successor organisations (if applicable)

The information displayed for single countries provides an overview of the regional arrangements in which the country is involved. This covers only those arrangements that are included in the regional arrangements section of RIKS.

Illustrative maps are available for regional arrangements.

## Treaty texts

The collection of treaty texts includes a corpus of legal texts on which regional arrangements are built. The selection of the texts is based on:

* importance of the text: the collection consists of the founding treaties of the regional organisations, as well as those implying a significant shift in the functioning and structure of the organisation;
* public availability of the text in electronic format.

Whenever possible, the texts are presented in PDF format.

## Data Sources

Several sources were consulted in gathering membership information to control for errors, inaccuracies and missing data that characterises each in the following order:

* the official website of the organisations;
* the treaty texts (the signatory states mentioned)
* the Wikipedia page of the organisations;
* the Yearbook of International Organizations;
* press releases, newspaper articles, books

The list of the specific sources used to compile the membership information is available upon request.

The novelty of the updated version of RIKS compared to the initial one is threefold:

* organisation membership information is provided on an annual basis;
* the number of organisations included is extended by more or less one half (from 57 to 88 organisations);
* the indicators of regional integration have been expanded from only covering international trade to also include international investment and migration.

Regarding the date of membership, three specific events are considered:

* the signing of the agreement;
* the ratification of the agreement;
* the agreement enters into effect.

However, the information on the different aspects of the membership status of the countries involved is seldom complete. The information returned by the database or displayed on the world maps reflects the available information: i.e. in the first place, the year the agreement entered into effect; in absence of specific information thereof, the year of ratification of the agreement and, when lacking the latter, the year the agreement was signed.

When choosing the “organisational details” option, the information on the membership status of the countries is provided in full.

Regional Integration Indicators

For each predefined region of RIKS and any user-defined group of countries, the database provides a number of indicators that reflect the intensity of the integration and the position of the region in the world economy. The data provided for predefined regions cover the regional arrangements as they are presented in the regional arrangements section of RIKS, i.e. with a changing set of countries belonging to each regional arrangement over time, such that it reflects the historical memberships. Two types of data are used:

* for indicators of the intensity of integration: data on bilateral international trade, bilateral international investment and bilateral international migration;
* for indicators of the position (importance) in the world economy: country-level data of population, GDP, international trade, international investment, international migration and human development.

Depending on the availability of the raw data at the UN and other official sources, the time series typically start in 1960.

Currently, any missing data is treated as zero value in the calculation.

The new features of the updated version of RIKS regarding the indicators of regional indicators are the provision of longer and more complete data series, and the extension of the integration intensity indicators to international investment and migration.

Trade-based indicators of integration are those standardly used, based on the most traditional form of international economic relations takes (exchange of goods and services). However, in the last 30 years, international mobility of capital and labour increased substantially in importance and weight and became a component of economic integration equivalent to international trade. Hence, to have a comprehensive view of regional integration, the indicators used by RIKS should reflect the new forms that it takes as well.

## Data sources

### International Trade

The source used for the international trade data is the Comtrade database of the United Nations. It contains data of imports and exports at bilateral country level since 1962 for a large set of countries. Data are given in current million US dollars. RIKS uses data according to four SITC classifications (revisions 1 to 4), though at the level of total bilateral trade, the specific classification has no bearing on the values of the flows, nor the availability of the data.

To limit the impact of missing data when calculating the indicators, missing imports were replaced by exports in the opposite direction, and vice versa.

<https://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

### Migration

Data on international migration used in RIKS originate from a variety of sources. This allows the platform to fill in the gaps in the data in terms of geographic coverage[[1]](#footnote-1) or data frequency.[[2]](#footnote-2) The flows are reported per 1000 people. To compile the most extensive possible set of annual in- and outflow data, RIKS includes:

* Data on the stock of migrants from:
	+ the international migration data of the UN Population Division (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)
	<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>
	+ the World Bank Migration and Remittances data;
	<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>
	+ data from the OECD International Migration Database.
	<https://stats.oecd.org>
* Data on migration in- and outflows from:
	+ the International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries of the UN Population Division (Department of Economic and Social Affairs);
	<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/empirical2/migrationflows.asp>
	+ data from the OECD International Migration Database;
	<https://stats.oecd.org>
	+ the DEMIG C2C data from the International Migration Institute.
	<https://www.migrationinstitute.org/data/demig-data/demig-c2c-data>

### Investment

Data tracking international investment flows from origin to destination country remain scarce. The source used in RIKS is the bilateral FDI statistics compiled by UNCTAD. By reporting country, these consist of four series of data: incoming and outgoing stocks in millions of US dollars, respectively by country of origin and destination, as well as incoming and outgoing flows. It provides data from 2000 onwards, hence a much shorter period compared to trade and migration. To reduce the impact of missing data in the computation of the indicators, missing incoming investment flows are replaced by the outgoing flows in the opposite direction. In case both are unavailable, we used the yearly change of the stock of incoming investments, or the yearly change of the stock of outgoing investments in the opposite direction.
<https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/FDI%20Statistics/FDI-Statistics-Bilateral.aspx>

### Population

The source of the population data used in RIKS is the World Development Indicators constructed by the World Bank. It is reported in 1000 people.

<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-development-indicators>

### GDP

The source of the GDP data used in RIKS is the World Development Indicators constructed by the World Bank. It is reported in million current USD.

[See https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-development-indicators](http://www.apple.com)

### HDI

The source of the human development indicator data used in RIKS come from the United Nations Development Programme’s website.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

## Indicators of regional integration intensity

*Total flows (TT, TM, TI)*

**Definition**

The sum of all trade (TT), migration (TM), or investment flows (TI) from the countries belonging to a particular regional arrangement.



where  represent the flow of trade, migration, and investment between country  and country  at time .

*Intra-regional flows (IT, IM, II)*

**Definition**

The sum of the trade (IT), migration (IM), or investment flows (II) flowing between the countries belonging to a particular regional arrangement.



*Extra-regional flows (ET, EM, EI)*

**Definition**

The sum of the trade (ET), migration (EM), or investment flows (EI) between a country belonging to a particular regional arrangement to a country that is not a member of the agreement.



### Intra-regional share (ITS, IMS, IIS)

**Definition**

The intra-regional trade (ITS), migration (IMS) and investment shares (IIS) are the ratios of the intra-regional flows (IT, IM, or IS) and the total flows (TT, TM, or TI).

**Range of values**

The value ranges from 0% to 100%.

**Interpretation of results**

This indicator reflects how vital the intra-regional flows of a particular regional arrangement are relative to its overall trade. It measures the interdependence among member states of a particular regional arrangement from the perspective of international trade, migration or investment.

### Intra-regional intensity index (ITI, IMI, III)

**Definition**

The intra-regional trade (ITI), migration (IMI) and investment intensity index (III) are the ratio of the intra-regional shares divided by the region’s share in the world’s trade, migration or investment flows.

Where and are the world’s total trade, migration and investment flows in year .

**Range of values**

The value ranges from 0 to .

**Interpretation of results**

This indicator is used to determine whether the value of intra-regional flows is greater or smaller than would be expected based on the region’s importance in worldwide flows. This value is:

* equal to zero in the case of no intra-regional trade, migration and investment;
* equal to one if the region’s weight in its own trade is equal to its weight in world flows (geographic neutrality);
* higher than one if intra-regional flows are relatively more important than the flows with the rest of the world;
* equal to the reciprocal of the region’s share in world trade when all flows are intra-regional.

### Homogenous intra-regional and extra-regional intensity indexes

**Definition**

The homogeneous version of the intra-regional intensity index, whose maximum value is independent from region i’s trade, migration or investment size. Its denominator is the region’s share in the trade of the rest of the world. Thus:

The homogenous extra-regional intensity indexes are the complementary indicators:

### Symmetric introversion index (STJ, SMJ, SIJ)

**Definition**

The trade, migration an investment introversion indexes are indicators of relative intra-regional intensity, meaning that they show whether the intensity of intra-regional flows grows at a faster or at a slower pace than that of extra-regional flows.

The symmetrical version is defined as follows:

**Range of values**

The value ranges from -1 to 1.

**Interpretation of results**

The STJ index value is:

* equal to minus one in the case of no intra-regional trade;
* equal to zero if the region’s weight in its trade is equal to its weight in the trade of the rest of the world (geographic neutrality);
* equal to one in the case of no extra-regional trade.

##

## Indicators of the position in the world economy

### Population (POP)

**Definition**

The sum of the population figures of the countries belonging to a particular regional integration arrangement.

### Share of world population (POPS)

**Definition**

The regional population as a percentage share of the world’s total population.

### Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

**Definition**

The sum of the GDP at current prices in US dollars of the set of countries belonging to a particular regional integration arrangement.

### Regional share of Gross Domestic Product (GDPS)

***Definition***

The regional GDP at current prices in US dollars as a percentage share of the world’s total at current prices in US dollars.

###

### Weighted average of region’s Human Development Index (HDI)

**Definition**

The weighted average of the Human Development Index value of the set of countries belonging to the regional integration agreement, weighted by their population size.

1. The databases on migration in- and outflow are limited to less than 50, mostly highly developed, destination countries [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The stock of foreign population databases typically are only available every decade or half-decade. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)