

# Methodological Research

## **Methodological Research**

# **Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Handbook**

### **Purpose**

To promote and publicise the key recommendations and guidelines on the presentation of data and metadata included in the handbook.

### **Objectives and outputs**

The Handbook and the resultant internet portal bring together guidelines and best practice on data presentation from existing international standards and draft new standards as appropriate into the one single document. The presentation issues included in the Handbook and portal include those relating to: different types of data (absolute figures, indices, growth rates) and different forms of data (non-seasonally adjusted, seasonally adjusted, trend cycle).

The Handbook also provides recommendations on a number of key data reporting presentation that also have a significant impact on data consistency. These comprise: data revision practices, presentation of series breaks, data citation practices, presentation of information on sampling and non-sampling errors, presentation of metadata; presentation of administrative data.

The major areas of real difference in the comparability of data produced by various international organisations and national statistical agencies are: conceptual differences arising from the use of different variable definitions, units and classifications; and operational differences flowing out of differences in data collection and processing practices. However, even where differences from these factors are minimal, data disseminated by different countries, etc., may actually look different because of the use of different data presentation and reporting practices.

### **Non-member countries involved in the activity:**

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

### **Main Developments for 2008**

#### **General aspects:**

After the publication of "Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Handbook", in late 2006, the portal will include additional presentation / reporting issues as they emerge in future. In 2008, the web version of the Handbook will allow the incorporation of emerging data presentation and reporting issues following the publication of the paper version.

## Methodological Research

# Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies

### Purpose

To promote research- and information-sharing among countries, allowing them to better measure and assess the overall "position" and "progress" of a certain political entity (country, region, etc.) vis-à-vis other similar entities. The project will be more policy-oriented, rather than technical in nature, as indicator systems are about establishing an agreed set of figures for everyone to use to assess the position and progress of their country.

### Objectives and outputs

The need to look at economic, social and environmental phenomena from a "horizontal" perspective is becoming more and more evident, both at national and international levels. Policy makers and civil society, in particular, are demanding integrated views of various phenomena to make decisions and to evaluate the overall situation of a country, region, or a local community.

To address these issues the OECD has established an initiative to promote the international debate on these issues, to help OECD member countries, as well as non-members, to develop indicator systems for monitoring economic, social and environmental developments.

In June 2007 the OECD organised a major World Forum (1200 people from 130 countries) in Istanbul in co-operation with the Turkish State Planning Organisation and Turkstat. The conference, entitled "Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies" persuaded the OECD of the need to continue this work by launching a Global Project in collaboration with the European Commission, the UN and UNDP and the World Bank. Strong links have also been built with a network of regional partners such as the Inter American and African Development Banks, as well as international organisations, NGOs, academics, national statistical offices and the private sector.

### Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Europe, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, International organisation, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Other, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

### Main Developments for 2008

#### General aspects:

Work in 2008 will focus on taking the Global Project forward around the world. The OECD and partner organisations will be setting up working groups for Africa, the Arab Region, Latin America as well as the OECD countries, and beginning a programme of scientific research on the topic "What makes an indicator

set successful". A book on measuring progress will be published. In addition, regional and thematic events will be arranged.

# Methodological Research

## Glossary of Statistical Terms

### Purpose

The aims of the OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms are:

- to provide a highly visible and readily accessible source of statistical terminology and definitions that are derived from international standards for use by OECD author areas in the development of questionnaires and other data collection instruments and for inclusion in published output. The Glossary also has wide application for external government and non-government agencies;
- to provide a set of target definitions based on existing international statistical standards that will ultimately be linked to data located in the OECD's Statistical Information System (SIS);
- to be the catalyst for the development of consistent international statistical standards by highlighting existing inconsistencies between existing standards.

### Objectives and outputs

The OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms contains a comprehensive set of definitions of the main data items collected by the Organisation. The Glossary also contains definitions of key terminology and concepts and commonly used acronyms.

Over 6 700 definitions currently included in the glossary are primarily drawn from existing international statistical guidelines and recommendations that have been prepared over the last two or three decades by international organisations such as the OECD, IMF, ILO, Eurostat, United Nations working with national statistical institutes.

Work in 2007 entailed the addition of new definitions prepared by a number of OECD statistical working parties and expert groups, as well as definitions published by other international organisations, and the insertion of extensive information into the "context" field of the glossary, explaining the uses and limitations of many of the definitions included.

New Glossary facilities include the possibility to identify new definitions included in the Glossary or existing definitions modified. The facility to download the entire Glossary from the web in as a WORD file and PDF has also been developed.

References to the Glossary is now included in over 170 000 web pages of national statistical agencies, central banks and academic institutes.

### Databases

OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

### Main Developments for 2008

#### General aspects:

## OECD Statistical Programme of Work 2008, Part II

Insertion of new definitions reflecting the continuing activities of various expert groups and working parties both within the OECD and other international organisations.

Development of facility to enable users to download Glossary contents into SDMX-ML and XML.

Preparation of a paper Glossary publication.

## **Methodological Research**

# **Journal of Business Cycle Measurement and Analysis**

### **Purpose**

To exchange knowledge and information on the theory and operation of business and economic cycle research, including both statistical measurement and analytical aspects.

### **Objectives and outputs**

The themes covered by the Journal comprise: analysis and explanation of cyclical fluctuations; business cycle specification, definition and classification; statistical approaches to the development of short-term economic statistics and indicators; business tendency, investment and consumer surveys; use of survey data or cyclical indicators for business cycle analysis.

The Journal is closely linked to the well known statistical and methodological research work carried out in this area by the OECD and by the Centre for International Research on Economic Tendency Surveys (CIRET), in particular to the work produced by the OECD Short-Term Economic Statistics Working Party (STESWP) and by joint research in economic statistics with other institutions such as the European Commission and Eurostat, whereas CIRET encompasses a wide variety of researchers whose work results in the most up-to-date insights in this field.

The Journal also provides a calendar of conferences, along with e-information and book reviews which are of interest and within its scope.

### **Main Developments for 2008**

#### **General aspects:**

Typesetting the journal is expected to be carried out by PAC with the following changes to production/dissemination: article-by-article publishing (printed issues will follow later); a single proofing cycle; a layout that conforms to standard OECD format.

## Methodological Research

# Metagora - Measuring Human Rights and Democratic Governance

### Purpose

To develop methods, tools and frameworks for measuring human rights and democratic governance. Its strategic goal is to enhance evidence-based assessment and monitoring in these fields.

### Objectives and outputs

Metagora was launched in February 2004 within OECD-PARIS21. Its implementation is financed through voluntary contributions from the European Union, Canada, France, Sweden and Switzerland.

Metagora is based on a North/South partnership and is being implemented by a community of national organizations and individual experts. It is the first international project on measuring human rights and democratic governance to undertake several pilot experiences in different regions of the world simultaneously and in an interactive fashion.

The main objective of Metagora is to develop tools based on well-established statistical methods to obtain data and create indicators upon which policies can be formulated and evaluated. Metagora works on crucial monitoring issues, such as proper matching of quantitative and qualitative data. Metagora acts as a catalyst of expertise: it identifies and documents national and local initiatives aimed at measuring human rights and democratic governance, and develops a network of experts involved in these initiatives.

2007 marked the starting of a new pluri-annual phase of the project (2007 – 2010). Activities carried out during 2007 included: (1) the finalisation, peer-review and on-line delivery of the Training Materials, (2) the conduct of a supplementary in-depth review by a senior expert and adoption by the Independent Panel of Experts of an Assessment Report on the Implementation and Results of the Metagora Project from February 2004 to July 2007, (3) the launching of two Strategic Networks of Human Rights Institutions and National Statistical Offices and (4) the conduct of advocacy work and activities focusing on the transmission of the tools developed and lessons learned by Metagora.

### Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, International organisation, Mongolia, Peru, Russian Federation, South Africa, Venezuela

### Main Developments for 2008

#### General aspects:

The recommendations of the Independent Assessment Report will be largely implemented both at the global level and at the level of national and regional activities. The pilot experiences conducted in the pilot phase will be replicated (in new countries) and /or extended (at the regional multi-country level), with particular emphasis on the policy impact and institutional appropriation of the working methods and tools at the national level.

## Methodological Research

### Statistical Classifications

#### Purpose

To contribute to more relevant, more useful international economic and social classifications for use in OECD member countries and elsewhere. To encourage greater convergence of regional and national activity, product, and trade classifications in OECD member countries. To coordinate OECD input into the revision of international statistical classifications that are actively used in OECD.

#### Objectives and outputs

Coordinate with other agencies and contribute to the revision of EBOPS in consultation with OECD analysts and countries.

Contribute to the 2008 publication and promotion of ISIC (including special SNA and other aggregations), and CPC.

With analysts contribute to advancing new demands for classifications e.g. on information economy and revision of health activities list.

#### Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

#### Main Developments for 2008

##### General aspects:

The OECD (virtual) sub-group of Statistical Policy Group (SPG) co-ordinates OECD inputs to UN Expert Group on Social and Economic Classifications and to other guardians of International Classifications.

Development with IMF and other agencies the revised EBOPS classification and submission to IMF BOPCOM (2008) and UNSC (2009) for approval. The ISIC Rev 4 and CPC Rev 2 to be published by UN. ISIC will include OECD provided annexes on special SNA and ICT aggregations.

## Methodological Research

### Statistics for Sustainable Development

#### Purpose

To identify good concepts and practices in order to assist national governments and international organizations in the design of sustainable development indicator sets and in the development of official statistics in the area.

#### Objectives and outputs

A joint working group of the OECD, Eurostat and the UNECE Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has been established in 2005.

The working group should:

- i) articulate a broad conceptual framework for sustainable development measurement. While the starting point of this work should be the concept of capital, the group should also consider other approaches to the extent the capital approach is found insufficient from a conceptual standpoint;
- ii) identify the broad domains that good indicator sets should span;
- iii) develop a menu of good sustainable development indicators in order to help governments and international organizations when they are designing indicator sets;
- iv) identify a small set of indicators from the menu that might become the core for international comparisons;
- v) identify basic data systems necessary for a small set of indicators and identify their possible sources (existing or new statistical surveys, administrative records, information derived from environmental monitoring systems);
- vi) discuss the relationship between integrated environmental and economic accounts and sustainable development indicators.

#### Main Developments for 2008

##### General aspects:

The final version of the recommendations on how to measure sustainable development will be prepared and discussed with national and international experts. After the approval of the report, the OECD will evaluate how the project should be continued.