

## OECD STATISTICS REFORM

The OECD Secretariat requires a wide range of comparable statistics for both the analytical work underpinning the development of policy recommendations and for its ongoing work monitoring developments in member countries and in key non-member economies. The OECD also disseminates a substantial amount of statistics to external users. Although the OECD has a high reputation for both the quality of its analytical work and for the statistics that support that work, new challenges have emerged over the past few years. To face these challenges, in 2001 the Organisation launched a new Statistics Strategy, based on the development of the **OECD statistical information system**, the completion of the first version of the **Quality Framework for OECD Statistics** and the launch of **new statistical projects** and **new publications**.

Thanks to the results achieved during the first phase of the Statistics Strategy, the OECD is now in a better position to address the new challenges faced by both the Organisation and the international statistical community at large. In this context, at the beginning of 2004 the OECD Council agreed on the establishment of a **Committee on Statistics**, which will oversee all the statistical activities carried out by the Organisation and will play a crucial role in improving the overall quality of OECD statistics and reinforcing the key role of the Organisation in the world of international statistics.

### **New research projects**

At the OECD level, growing demand for internationally comparable statistics covering various economic, social and environmental subject matter, is putting particular pressure on statisticians and analysts working in the secretariat. At the international level, the revision of the **System of National Accounts (SNA)** and of the **Manual on Balance of Payments**, as well as the development of the new classification of **industrial activities**, are processes that will have a major impact on all economic statistics. The OECD is the focal point for the development of the new SNA. In addition, a new project on general government national accounts aims to disseminate timely and detailed data, enhance the comparability of the major aggregate results for general government (such as general government deficit/surplus and/or general government debt) and draft a special new chapter in the forthcoming SNA.

The OECD is engaged in other research activities devoted to establishing standards for the measurement of various economic, social and environmental phenomena, as well as the integration between the three dimensions. A tangible signal of this stronger integration of OECD statistics will be the publication of the first *OECD Statistical Yearbook*, which will bring together data related to various topics.

Especially important in 2004 will be work to prepare new **handbooks** and **manuals** in the following domains: education statistics, purchasing power parities, producer prices

for services, hedonic prices, globalisation statistics, data and metadata presentation. Methodological recommendations will be issued or reviewed in the areas of national accounts, quantitative and qualitative short-term economic statistics, foreign direct investment statistics, creditor reporting systems, ICT statistics, working time measurement and small and medium enterprises statistics (in the context of the 2004 Istanbul Ministerial Conference on small and medium enterprises).

New **datasets** and **publications** will be disseminated on general government accounts and financial accounts, while significant extensions have been made to already existing databases on business tendency and consumer surveys. A web site containing data and methodological papers has been created on **productivity measures and analysis**.

Finally, is it worth mentioning the initiative undertaken by the OECD to organise a **Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy”**. Policymakers and civil society are demanding integrated views of various phenomena to make decisions and to evaluate the overall situation of a country, a region or a local community. The OECD has therefore decided to provide a catalyst to sustain and promote a global community of practice on how to develop indicator systems for democratic political units on major areas of interest. The first Forum will be organised in Italy, in November 2004, as the “kick-off” event of a medium-term initiative in this field.