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Towards the OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy"

By Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician of the OECD

Nowadays, the amount of statistics available for developed countries is huge. A wide range of economic, social and environmental phenomena are regularly or occasionally measured through statistical surveys or administrative records. Every day media mention in their reports statistical figures and trends. Internet provides an incredible amount of quantitative information, as well as analytical and policy documents based on statistical findings. All this contributes to create what is called the "information society". But can we trust such statistics? Are they really able to provide a reliable, coherent and understandable picture of our economies and societies? Are they contributing to the improvement of the quality of collective and individual decisions?

The complexity of today's society requires the measurement of new phenomena, and economic, environmental and sociological models are incorporating more and more the interdependencies among these three dimensions. However, it is easy to understand that available data have different degrees of quality and in many cases there are data which do not have any solid methodological foundation, even if they are quoted as "indisputable facts". Finally, politicians as well as other opinion leaders often use statistics to highlight their successes (when they are governing) or underline the failures of the government (when they are at the opposition), quoting those data that better support their positions and ignoring the others.

In such a situation statisticians face two main challenges: first, to provide relevant, timely and accurate (high quality) statistics on various phenomena; second, to transform the quantitative evidence they produce into an actual knowledge for the whole society. Significant work has been done and is being done to address the first challenge, even if, from time to time, small or big "crises" can occur. Let us think, for example, of the recent debate about the "true" rate of inflation in European countries after the introduction of the Euro, when consumer associations and media contested very strongly official estimates (strongly influencing individual behaviours and the economic cycle), even if nobody was able to demonstrate, in scientific terms, that official consumer prices data were wrong. In any case, statisticians know how to deal with measurement issues and continuously work to improve the overall quality of statistics they produce, subject to resource constraints.

The second challenge is much more difficult and it cannot be addressed by statisticians only. In fact, the capacity of transforming statistical information into common knowledge, of using such knowledge to improve the decision making process of governments, businesses, individuals, etc., of evaluating the final impact of such decisions on outputs and outcomes is something that involves all parts of society. This is particularly true when the object of the evaluation

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EU Economic Statistics

'Beyond the EMU Action Plan'

This seminar will focus on priorities and methods for improving European economic statistics. For more information, see the website at http://www.eipa.nl or contact d.urlings@eipa-nl.com

is the overall "progress" of a certain political or administrative entity (country, region, city, etc.) and this is exactly what has been emerging over the last few years in some OECD countries. In particular, the demand for comprehensive views of economic, social and environmental phenomena and for the accountability of democratic institutions elected to manage the complexity and improve the "wellbeing" (or happiness) of citizens are interacting and pushing communities to develop new information/knowledge tools.

Two main approaches have been developed to address this issue: sets of key indicators and composite indicators. In particular, in several countries (for example, Australia, Ireland and Canada), initiatives have been launched to involve various components of the society (government, parliament, research institutes, trade unions, statisticians, etc.) in identifying sets of indicators covering various domains to be used to assess the "position" or the "progress" of the country through an annual report, usually produced by the national statistical office. Similar initiatives have been also launched at the local level (state, city, etc.) in the US and other developed countries, while the European Union has developed a set of "structural indicators", but in this case (as in many other national instances) the process only involved governments, without any institutionalised co-operation with the rest of the society. The OECD itself has a longstanding experience in developing sets of indicators covering various domains (science and technology, education, social issues, etc.). In this case, the choice of such indicators is a process that involves international and national experts (including government representatives), representing their countries.

The aim of "key indicators" initiatives is to develop a comprehensive and articulated knowledge base, founded on robust statistical evidence, agreed by various components of the society. In this way, political assessments and debates can at least make reference to a shared view of the country's position and progress. In addition, through a set of indicators, the complexity of the economic/social reality is fully recognised, without trying to condense it into a single measure, but leaving the interpretation of the situation to individual users, according to their views and preferences.

On the contrary, composite indicators aim to provide a synthesis, combining indicators and other statistical data covering various domains into a single measure. To do that, a weighting system which combines individual indicators has to be defined and other complicated methodological issues addressed. The choice of the weighting system and other methodological aspects has a strong influence on the final results, which quite often do not appear very robust. On the other hand, several users (media, policy makers, etc.) like using composite indicators and country (region, city, etc.) ranks based on them. There are several experiences of composite indicators, both at national and international levels, covering specific subjects (competitiveness, market efficiency, etc.) or combining economic, social and environmental dimensions to approximate the concept of wellbeing (happiness). Unfortunately, the limited robustness of several of these indicators can produce unexpected and unstable results over time, generating confusion among users and affecting negatively the trust in statistical results.

In conclusion, there are no easy ways to measure the situation or the progress of today societies, or to transform the massive amount of available information into shared knowledge to underpin individual and collective decisions and evaluations. On the other hand, good practices (in terms of methodological approaches, institutional setups, involvement of various components of the society) are already available, at international, national and local levels. To promote the policy dialogue on these issues, the OECD has organised an international forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy", to be held in Palermo, Italy, November 2004. More than 500 delegates are expected from OECD countries, other countries and international organisations and 150 highly qualified speakers (policy makers, journalists, civil society representatives, statisticians, etc.) will present their views on these issues, evaluate existing experiences and decide how to foster the dialogue on the development of key indicators systems at national and international levels (for more information see www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum).

The Secretary-General of the OECD, the President of the European Central Bank, the Vice-President of the World Bank, the Comptroller General of the United States and several ministers will address strategic policy issues and discuss how the statistical information, its transformation in shared knowledge and evidence-based policies should be developed. In conclusion, the Forum will shed some light on the best options to improve the capacity of our societies to make better decisions about the future of its citizens and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of economic, social and environmental polices.

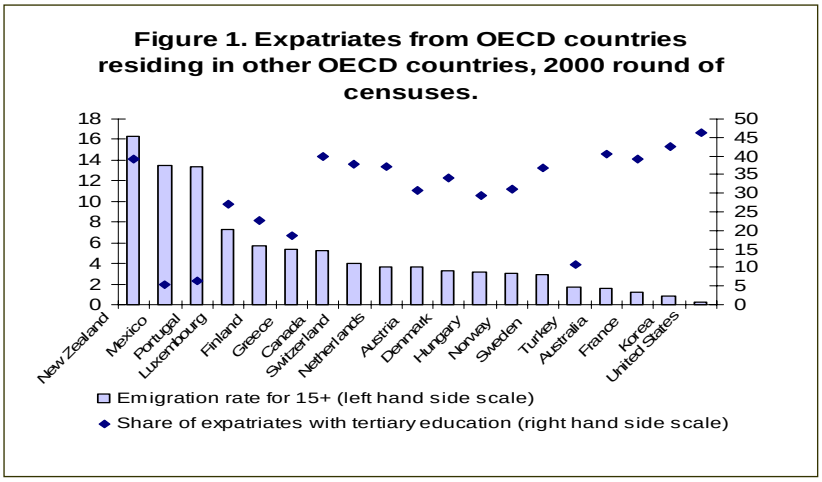
The OECD Database on Expatriates and the Foreign-Born

By Jean-Christophe Dumont and Georges Lemaitre, OECD

International mobility of the highly skilled looms large on the policy agenda of many OECD and non-OECD countries. This is perhaps inevitable in a context where the phenomenon of "globalisation" seems to facilitate movements of many persons with skills that are internationally marketable and where these skills are viewed as vital to innovation and productivity growth. The dotcom bubble brought this into prominence in the media with fears, particularly in many European countries, that young ICT graduates were seeking their fortunes across the Atlantic in what were perceived as greener pastures. More recently, attention has been focused on the shortage of medical staff in many OECD countries and on the emigration of medical personnel from many developing countries to satisfy this demand. Increases in international study, with often the possibility for students completing their study to prolong their stay temporarily or even permanently in the host country, have further emphasised the international character of the high-skills labour market. Finally, expatriation of young researchers in response to differences in salaries, research opportunities and laboratory infrastructure has become a cause for concern in a number of countries, with incentives being introduced to encourage returns.

The OECD sponsored a conference on the international mobility of the highly skilled in Paris in June 2001, and one conclusion from this conference was that data on this population was inadequate to provide an overall picture of the scale and distribution of movements. In order to satisfy the international data requirements in this area, the OECD in July of 2003 issued an invitation to national statistical institutes in its Member countries to participate in data collection on the foreign-born population. The thrust of the proposed project was to collect information on the educational attainment of this population by country of birth and their principal characteristics in the labour market. In addition, one output of the project promised to participating countries was to be the collated data on their own expatriates living and working in other OECD countries. That the timing was right is evidenced by the fact that virtually all OECD countries agreed to participate in the project.

Figure 1. Expatriates from OECD countries residing in other OECD countries, 2000 round of censuses.



The first phase of the project consisted of collections aimed at identifying the nature of the information available (largely from population censuses and registers) and some elementary tables to determine the feasibility of proceeding to a broader data collection. The initial collection revealed among other things the extent to which standard data on the stock of migrants (by nationality in some countries, by country of birth in others) provided a distorted picture of the importance of migration, especially in certain European countries with significant numbers of naturalised immigrants (see Table1) not appearing in the statistics on persons of foreign nationality. For example, although the population of foreign nationality in France, the Netherlands and Sweden stands at between 4 and 6 per cent of the total resident population, the immigrant population, that is the population of persons born abroad, accounts in all three countries for between 10 and 12 per cent. The data collection provided a first opportunity to collect data on the immigrant population on the *same* basis for all countries. This in itself is a major step forward in the international comparability of stock data on international migrants.

At the same time, the data collection has another attractive selling point: its ability to produce estimates of the number of expatriates from one OECD country to all others and to address the issue of the international mobility of the highly skilled in a direct way. The extent of expatriation differs substantially across countries, with New Zealand, Portugal and Mexico all having close to 14 to 16 percent of their native-born populations living in other countries (see Figure 1). Australia, Canada and the United States, but also France all

have significant numbers of OECD expatriates living within their borders, between 2 and 2.5 million in all of these countries except the United States, where it is over 15 million.

Expatriates also tend to be concentrated among the highly skilled, with over 40% of expatriates having tertiary qualifications in many countries. Japanese and United States expatriates are the most highly qualified, with close to 50% of them having a tertiary degree. By contrast, few expatriates (around 10% or less) from high-emigration countries like Mexico and Portugal possess a tertiary qualification.

For the next phase of the project, the data collection will cover additional information, such as year of arrival, field of study and occupation. This has the aim of making some assessment of the importance of highly skilled migration in recent years relative to the past, of its origins, of the extent to which it satisfies actual labour market needs, and possibly of the extent to which foreign qualifications are transferable to the labour market in the host country compared to the country of origin.

It is expected that the project will be completed by the end of the year, at which point the full database will be made publicly available with accompanying documentation through the World Wide Web. Although the data are not always as complete or detailed as one would hope – not all countries have conducted censuses around the year 2000– it is already clear that the database will serve as a very useful data source on the migration of the highly skilled. A working paper describing the initial results will be available shortly on the OECD web site and will appear in the 2004 edition of *Trends in International Migration.* For more information, please contact georges.lemaitre@oecd.org.

Recent Japanese ICT Statistics

By Kazuyuki Matsumoto, Rikkyo University (Tokyo)

Foreign researchers often find difficulties in accessing Japanese ICT statistics. The main reason seems to be language difficulty, because most of the statistics are only available in Japanese, and English versions, if any, are usually rather outdated. Another reason may be the reorganization of the central government. One office and twenty-two ministries were reorganized into the Cabinet Office and twelve ministries in January 2001. Even Japanese people sometimes forget the details of the changes. Given these circumstances, the following article is written about (1) the ministries concerned with ICT-related statistics, (2) some noteworthy points about those statistics, and (3) some new ICT statistics.

Ministries Concerned with ICT

The Japanese statistical system is a decentralized one. Sometimes the U.S. statistical system is characterized as decentralized, compared with those of Germany or Canada, but the Japanese system is even more so. Before the government reorganization of 2001, there were three organizations (two ministries and one agency) that were most relevant to ICT-related statistics—namely, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and the Statistics Bureau of the Management and Coordination Agency. The purpose of the Statistics Bureau was to regulate and conduct government surveys.

The MPT and MITI were also compiling statistics, but their main purpose was to supervise and control the activities under their respective purviews. Roughly speaking, the MPT covered networks and MITI covered computer and communications hardware and software. However, because business and operational statistics and reports are collected by the competent authorities such as MPT or MITI, the Statistics Bureau covered only a small portion of ICT-related statistics, probably less than a third in terms of types of statistics.

After the 2001 reform, the MPT, Management and Coordination Agency (MCA), and Ministry of Home Affairs were combined to become the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, and Posts & Telecommunications (MPHPT), which on September 10, 2004 changed its name to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). For more information about these organizations, including access to free ICT-related data, see:
(a) MIC (former Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications) http://www.soumu.go.jp/joho_tsusin/eng/statistics.html
(b) MIC (former Statistics Bureau, Management and Coordination Agency) http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/it/index.htm;
(c) METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/index_information_policy.html

ICT statistical publications in English come out with considerable delay, and such time lag is in some cases quite critical, but the

following Web pages provide a general outline of Japanese ICT activities.
(d) Japan's ICT White Paper titled "Information and Communications in Japan" is downloadable at: http://www.johotsusintokei.soumu.go.jp/whitepaper/eng/WP2004/2004-index.html
(e) IT Statistics of Japan, compiled by the Statistics Bureau, contains a collection of basic statistical data describing the recent diffusion of information technology.
http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/it/index.htm

Some Noteworthy Points

All statistics are best when they are kept current, but this point is particularly important for ICT, for which change comes especially quickly and time lags can cause serious misunderstandings. The author has long been suspect of various international comparisons of ICT-related statistics. Here is an example. Japan's percentage of broadband users has been rather low for many years, compared with other nations. But looking at recent figures, the number of the Japanese broadband subscribers was 16.57 million as of July 2004, compared with 5.41 million in the same month of 2002. We can clearly see that the two-year lag is critical in this case. Please check the following table with the current basic ICT figures of Japan.

Numbers of Telecommunications Users	**millions**	
Telephone service subscribers	51.59	End of Mar., 2004
ISDN lines	8.63	End of Mar., 2004
Numbers of Internet Users		
Dial-up users	77.30	End of Dec., 2003
Subscribers to Internet services through mobile phone	71.52	End of Jul., 2004
Broadband subscribers	16.19	End of Jun., 2004
Subscribers to Internet services through CATV	2.74	End of Jul., 2004
DSL service subscribers	12.33	End of Jul., 2004
FTTH service subscribers	1.42	End of Jun., 2004
Numbers of Mobile Device Users		
Mobile phone subscribers	83.15	End of Jul., 2004
Subscribers to services for third-generation mobile phones	20.63	End of Jul., 2004
PHS subscribers	4.97	End of Jul., 2004
Pager subscribers	0.77	End of Jun., 2004

Another important issue concerns portable telephones. Statistical treatment of portable phones has been widely discussed, but its significance depends on the country, because the methods of Internet access may vary a lot depending on the culture and other economic factors of the country. In Japan, as in some other nations, portable (cellular) telephones are widely used, particularly by younger generations. The number of subscribers (users) of Internet services through mobile phones is 71.5 million as of the end of July 2004. Whether we include this number or not in Internet connectedness statistics is critical in international comparisons.

New Type of Statistics

There are many study groups in the government working on new surveys and statistics of ICT.

Here we look at one of the unique statistics by the Institute for Information and Communications Policy. The IICP, which is in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, has recently published a report about the amount/volume of Japanese-language content on the Web. Sampling with a search robot, they statistically estimated the number of servers, the volume of content on sites with JP domain names and the number of Web pages ending with .jp. Some very interesting results of this unique survey are as follow.

The total volume of Japanese Web pages was 13,609 giga bytes (as of 2004). It has increased by 57.5% annually since 2000. Concerning the types of files, still pictures have the largest share, at 66.3%. IICP is preparing an English version of this report, so more details will be available in English soon.

The 18th of October is celebrated as Statistics Day in Japan. It is the day in 1870 when the government started compiling modern statistics. This day was set for the purpose of strengthening the national concern and understanding regarding the importance of statistics and promoting cooperation in central and local government surveys. The Japanese Government must continue to make steady improvement in this area. Global accessibility and one-stop services should be given top priority.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) indicators: Issues for International Cooperation

By Susanne Teltscher, UNCTAD

Reliable data are essential for policy makers to design and implement information society programmes. Therefore, an increasing number of statistical offices are collecting data on ICT readiness, usage and impact, as part of their regular statistical measurement activities. Within the OECD, the Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS) has been

year	2000	2004	2000-2004 annual %
Number of servers	95,000	425,000	45.4
Data volume (giga bytes)	2,214	13,609	57.5
Number of files	9,626	29,173	31.9
HTML	4,255	8,589	19.2
still picture	5,103	19,339	39.5
animation	8	81	78.4
sound	30	141	47.2
document	198	899	46.0
unknown	32	125	40.6

spearheading the discussions on definitions, methods and model surveys. As a result, a set of comparable ICT indicators is now available for the OECD member countries.

International Data Gap

For non-OECD countries, internationally comparable ICT indicators are limited. The ITU maintains a database on telecommunication indicators; UNCTAD collects indicators on ICT usage by enterprises from a number of developing countries; UNESCO is planning to include indicators related to ICT in education in its annual education survey as of 2005; and some of the UN Regional Commissions started to compile ICT indicators from their member countries. The World Bank maintains its own ICT-related database based on various household and business surveys conducted by the Bank.

The various efforts by international and regional organizations to improve the availability of ICT indicators, in particular from the developing world, require coordination and cooperation to avoid duplication of efforts (and reduce the burden on national NSOs), to assure comparability of data, and to further advance the work on e-measurement internationally. In particular, there is a need to coordinate work in the area of definitions, methodologies and core indicators, and to link it closely to capacity building activities in developing countries.

Global Partnership on Measuring ICT

Recognizing these needs, some key international stakeholders have joined forces to create a global Partnership that accommodates and develops further the different initiatives at the regional and international levels. The "Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development", which includes the ITU, the OECD, UNCTAD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA), the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank, provides an open framework for coordinating ongoing and future activities, and for developing a coherent and structured approach to advancing the development of ICT indicators globally, and in particular in the developing countries. The Partnership was officially launched at the occasion of UNCTAD XI, which was held in Brazil in June 2004.

The Partnership has three main objectives: first, to achieve a common set of core ICT indicators, to be harmonized and agreed upon internationally, which will constitute the basis for a database on ICT statistics. Second, to enhance the capacities of national statistical offices (NSOs) in developing countries to develop statistical compilation programmes on the information society, based on internationally agreed upon indicators. Third, to develop a global database on ICT indicators and to make it available on the Internet.

NSOs from advanced countries are invited to contribute to the Partnership activities and provide expertise and advice to NSOs from developing countries, and transfer knowledge in areas such as methodologies and survey programmes.

Joint Activities Ongoing/planned Until February 2005

A global stocktaking exercise has been initiated by the UN Regional Commissions, in cooperation with other partners. In July 2004, a metadata questionnaire on ICT statistics was sent out by ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and UNCTAD to statistical offices in all non-OECD countries. The OECD will carry out a similar exercise with its member countries at the end of 2004.

The UN Regional Commissions, with the substantive support of the other partners, will organize workshops to take stock of e-measurement activities, taking into consideration the results of the metadata questionnaire. The workshops will identify priorities for action in the area of ICT indicators and agree on a common set of core indicators at the regional level.

Provisional venues and dates:

- ESCWA (Western Asia), Beirut: 4-5 October 2004;
- ECA and ITU (Africa), Gabarone, Botswana 25-29 October 2004: ECLAC (Latin America and the Caribbean), Santiago de Chile: November 3-4 2004;

- ESCAP (Asia-Pacific), Bangkok: early 2005 (t.b.c.).

An international ICT indicators meeting will be organized in Geneva in February 2005, under the umbrella of the Partnership. It will present the results of the global stocktaking exercise, consolidate the outcomes of the regional workshops and agree on a final list of core indicators. The meeting will also discuss developing country technical assistance needs as regards the compilation of ICT indicators, identify ICT indicators relevant to achieving the MDGs, and present ongoing work concerning the creation of a global database on ICT indicators. This meeting will be held as a WSIS Thematic Meeting, and its outcome will be presented as an input to the second phase of the Summit (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005).

Technical Assistance to NSOs

The Partnership foresees a number of capacity building activities, such as on-site training in NSOs, technical workshops at the regional level, the development of a training course on information society statistics, and the preparation of a guidebook on information society indicators. Since this will require additional resources, a meeting will take place in Geneva on 18 October 2004 to brief interested donors on the Partnership, and particularly on the technical assistance activities necessary to help poor countries produce information society statistics.

For further information on Partnership activities, please consult: http://measuring-ict.unctad.org

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A Unique Set of Statistics at the Worldwide Level on Government Accounts and Financial Accounts

By Michèle Chavoix-Mannato & Jean-Pierre Dupuis, OECD

The OECD provides now the widest collection of national accounts data in the world:

- National Accounts of OECD Countries, Volume I, Main aggregates
- National Accounts of OECD Countries, Volumes IIa and IIb, Detailed tables
- National Accounts of OECD Countries, Volume IIIa, Financial Accounts - Flows
- National Accounts of OECD Countries, Volume IIIb, Financial Balance Sheets - Stocks
- National Accounts of OECD Countries, Volume IV, General Government Accounts

The three last new volumes, Volumes IIIa, IIIb and IV, dedicated respectively to financial accounts and balance sheets of all economic sectors and to government finance, are new annual publications of OECD which have just been released for the first time in September 2004. They are based on internationally agreed concepts and definitions according to the System of National Accounts (SNA 1993). More information is available electronically.

National Accounts of OECD Countries: Volume IV, General Government Accounts covers 29 of the 30 OECD countries. The sector covered is the general government (S.13) in the national accounts framework. This comprises, according to availability, data by sub-sector, central government, state government, local government and social security funds. Time series are provided for the period 1992 to 2003. Figures are presented in national currencies, at current prices.

The publication presents, for each member country, a coherent set of four tables:

1. The first table is a Summary of the government aggregates and balances most referred to by analysts for international comparisons. It emphasises the presentation of revenue and expenditure of government.
2. The second table is the General government account (SNA 1993, simplified presentation). It comprises the usual sequence of national accounts, including the financial accounts (flows and stocks).
3. The third table is dedicated to Detailed Tax and Social Contribution Receipts. These detailed receipts are broken down according to the SNA classification.
4. The fourth table is the breakdown of Expenditure by Function, according to the harmonised classification at international level COFOG. In addition to Total expenditure, the table shows the breakdown by function of Compensation of employees and of Gross capital formation at the general government level.

National Accounts of OECD countries – Volume IIIa: Financial Accounts – Flows, part of the Accumulation Accounts, covers 23 of the 30 OECD countries. It includes, by type of instruments, the financial transactions of OECD countries (both net acquisition of financial assets and incurrence of liabilities), between institutional sectors.

National Accounts of OECD countries – Volume IIIb: Financial Balance Sheets – Stocks, corresponding to the final sets of information in the full sequence of the accounts describing the economic cycle, covers 21 of the 30 OECD countries. It includes the stocks of financial assets and liabilities held by the institutional sectors, and give a picture of their net worth, at the end of the accounting period.

The paper version of these two volumes III present data relating to the main institutional sectors of the economy – *Non-financial corporations* (S11), *Financial corporations* (S12), *General government* (S13), *Central Government (S1311), Households and Non-profit institutions serving households - NPISH (S14-S15), Total economy (S1) and Rest of the World (S2)* - from 1991 onwards (when available in the country) while the electronic versions contain all available data (from 1970 onwards, for all sectors). Data are expressed in national currency (in euros for euro area countries).

Two types of tables are shown in Volumes IIIa and IIIb*:*

1. crossed tables which provide transactions and stocks data in the form of a matrix (institutional sectors in columns and types of instruments in rows), for the last year available: such tables can be used to analyse the behaviour of the economic agents and to evaluate the wealth of economic agents by type of financial instrument;
2. historical tables (1991-2002) in a time series form which present, for a limited number of institutional sectors, the inter-sectoral financial flows and the financial stocks, by financial instrument: these tables give a view of the evolution, over the years, in the use of financial instruments by sector and in the holding of stocks of financial instruments by the different institutional sectors.

A sample of these new data is available on a free basis on the OECD Website at the following addresses:

Financial Accounts and balance Sheets:http://www.oecd.org/document/59/0,2340,en_2649_34245_30202683_119656_1_1_1,00.html

Government Accounts: http://www.oecd.org/document/5/0,2340,en_2649_34245_33785349_119656_1_1_1,00.html

For more information, please contact,michele.chavoix-mannato@oecd.org for Volumes IIIa and IIIb or jean-pierre.dupuis@oecd.org for Volume IV.

Consumer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice

NOW AVAILABLE FOR FREE ON-LINE

This manual, which took some 5 years to compile involving experts on the Consumer Price Index from around the world, is now available for free on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) website at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/guides/cpi/index.htm The manual complements the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians' Resolution on Consumer Price Indices (2003), and represents a significant step forward in the development of CPI methodology which will be used extensively to improve CPI measurement throughout the world.

ACCESS ON LINE DEVELOPMENTS

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Statistics Database

By Christophe Degain, World Trade Organization

The Economic Research and Statistics Division of the WTO launched its new Statistics Database on the WTO web site in June 2004. This database provides statistics on international trade in goods and services as well as specific country trade profiles. It is a unique source of information for the analysis of developments and long-term trends in international trade. The database is accessible free-of-charge at http://stat.wto.org/Home/WSDBHome.aspx and is updated biannually (in October and April).

Contents of the Database

The Statistics Database offers two services:

- Country trade profiles that include structural trade data and trade policy information;
- An interactive data retrieval of international trade statistics.

The Trade Profiles facility provides an overview of a country's trade situation. The statistical information has been standardised and condensed onto one page by country. It covers the following information:

- Basic indicators (macroeconomic indicators and the country's rank in world trade);
- Trade policy measures (tariff information and other trade policy indicators);
- Merchandise trade (total and breakdown by main partner

and main commodity group);
- Commercial services trade (total and breakdown by main item).

The Trade Profiles are currently available for over eighty WTO Members or Observers and country coverage will be gradually expanded.

The Time Series facility presents core annual data sets on international trade in merchandise and commercial services:
- Total merchandise trade, by region and selected country (from 1948);
- Total trade in commercial services, transport, travel and other commercial services, by region and selected country (from 1980);
- Network of world merchandise trade by main commodity group, origin and destination (from 1990);
- Total, intra and extra merchandise trade of selected regional integration arrangements (from 1990);
- Trade of major commodity groups by region and selected country (from 1980);
- Value, unit value and volume indices by region and selected country (from 1981).

The data are sourced from various international organizations such as the FAO, IMF, OECD, the UN and its regional commissions, UNIDO, World Bank, WTO and national statistical offices. Technical notes inform the users on methodological aspects and on the WTO standards, definitions, and methods to compile the statistics. In addition to these general notes, deviations of individual time series from standards are indicated along with the data in the form of flags and specific notes.

Database Functionalities

The Statistics Database allows for an interactive selection, view and download of data. Technical notes are also available online. Downloads are possible in EXCEL, CSV and XML formats and big requests can be downloaded in compressed format. Value flags and individual time series notes are included in data downloads.

Contacting Us

Comments and suggestions on the content and the presentation of this database are welcomed.
Please contact the WTO Economic Research and Statistics Division at statistics@wto.org

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Launch of the HDRO Statistics Website: Expanding Access to Human Development Statistics

By Haishan Fu, Human Development Report Office, UNDP

With the release of the *Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*, on 15 July 2004, we are delighted to announce the launch of the newly designed statistics section of the Human Development Report website, available at http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/

At this website, you can access data from the Human Development Report (HDR) and resources to help you better understand these statistics. You will also find information about the human development index and other composite indices, links to relevant background materials, international data resources and on-going debates and discussions on human development statistics and measurement development.

Among the many exciting new features, you will find:

- a **HDR statistics database**, which allows a variety of ways to explore and access a wealth of human development statistics on-line. Through the build your own table feature, you can pick and choose a combination of indicators and countries into one table and export it to Excel, giving you the freedom to create a single document with all the information you need;

- an **interactive human development index (HDI) calculator** that gives you hands-on and step-by-step experience with the HDI construction and enables you to calculate your own HDI for real applications;

- a **new animation** that features recent income growth and human development trends, letting you see changes over time in graphic motion; and

- the global assessment of **progress towards the Millennium Development Goals** contained in the HDR 2004, as well as data on many of the Goals throughout the tables of the Report.

Also included on the website are information about the principles and practices that guide the HDR statistical work, discussions and links to the on-going international initiatives on statistical capacity building, and the many links to the databases and background information of other international data agencies (including OECD's work on composite indicators). In

addition, you may also lead and participate in the on-line HDR statistics network (HDRStatsNet) or have your questions answered in the Frequently Asked Questions section addressing the composite indices and other statistics in the HDR.

Within the first week of the launch of HDR 2004, the statistical content of the Report and the new HDRO Statistics Website received nearly 250,000 hits. We welcome you to join the many that have already made use of this new resource center for human development statistics, and look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Producer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice

Producer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice provides clear, up-to-date guidance on the concepts, uses, methods, and economic theory of the producer price index (PPI). It provides information on classifications, sources, compilation techniques, and analytical uses of the PPI. The *Manual* supersedes the previous international guidance on producer price indices available in the *Manual on Producers' Price Indices for Industrial Goods*, which was published by the United Nations Statistics Division in 1979. The *Manual*'s conceptual framework derives from the *System of National Accounts 1993* and recent developments in index number theory. Preparation of the *Manual* was undertaken by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics through a technical expert group chaired by the IMF and involving representatives from the ILO, the OECD, the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe, the World Bank, national statistical offices, and academic institutions. The *Producer Price Index Manual* may be ordered from IMF Publications Services at http://www.imf.org/external/pubind.htm for $125.00. 686 pp. Alternatively, it can be freely accessed on line at http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/tegppi/index.htm

27th CIRET Conference, Warsaw 2004

The 27th CIRET Conference took place in Warsaw, 15-17 September 2004 and was hosted by the Research Institute of Economic Development (RIED) at Warsaw School of Economics in co-operation with the National Bank of Poland (NPB) and the Central Statistical Office (CSO). Around 160 economists and statisticians from 26 countries participated in the conference.

The conference included two invited lectures, one by Prof, Victor Zarnowitz, Senior Fellow and Economic Counsellor, The Conference Board, New York, entitled "Growth, Business Cycles and the Indicators: A Global and historical Perspective" and a second by Prof. Laszek Balcerowicz, President of the National Bank of Poland, who gave an overview of "Post Communist Transition in a Comparative Perspective".

About 70 papers were presented in the parallel sessions covering the following main topics: Business Tendency, Investment and Consumer Surveys, Composite and Leading Indicators, Use of Survey data or Cyclical Indicators for Micro- or Macroeconomic Analysis. A special topic focused on the Economic Situation in Countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Detailed information sessions and papers are available on the CIRET web-site http:// www.ciret.org. The download of papers is, however, restricted to CIRET members, authors and participants to the conference. Readers should contact ronny.nilsson@oecd.org if they are interested in obtaining particular papers.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

□ International Direct Investment Statistics Yearbook – 2003 Edition

This annual publication gathers detailed statistics on international direct investment to and from the OECD area. Comparative tables and charts complement the information included for individual countries by geographical and sectoral breakdowns for direct investment flows and stocks. The present edition of the Yearbook incorporates several improvements to address the requirements of analysts.

□ OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications

The OECD education indicators provide information on many important features of the operation, evolution and impact of education, from early childhood through formal education to learning and training throughout life. They provide an opportunity for each country to see its education system in the light of other countries' performances. The Handbook is intended to advise users of the OECD education indicators on the definitions and conventions used in the underlying data collections as well as the statistics derived from them. It will also provide advice on data quality issues, thereby aiding the interpretation of the statistics and indicators derived from the raw data. Not least, the handbook may be used by researchers or statisticians within national ministries who are planning to devise their own collections (e.g. ad-hoc surveys) and who want to adopt definitions and conventions consistent with those used in the statistics regularly collected and published by OECD.

How to order on line?

http://www.oecd.org/bookshop

Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

N.B. Unless otherwise indicated attendance at OECD meetings and Working Parties is by invitation only

Nov 10-13	Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: OECD World Forum on Key Indicators, *Statistics Directorate* (STD) Palermo Sicily
Nov 15-16	Working Party on Statistics: Workshop on Services, *Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry* (DSTI) OECD Paris
Nov 18-19	Special Session on Globalisation/Working Party on Statistics, *Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry* (DSTI) OECD Paris
Dec 2-3	Experts meeting on Health Care Quality Indicators, *Directorate for Education, Employment Labour and Social Affairs* (ELS) OECD Paris
Dec 6-10	National Accounts meeting with the National Bureau of Statistics of China, *Statistics Directorate* (STD) OECD Paris

Forthcoming non-OECD Statistics Meetings

Nov 2-4	3rd World Conference MEXSAI on measuring sustainable agriculture indicators, Cancun, Mexico

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DATABASE OF THE MONTH

The OECD Education Database

The OECD Education Database provides internationally comparable data on key aspects of education, including the volume and nature of investments in education and on their returns, in terms of the graduate outputs of education systems. Data are available for the 30 OECD Member countries as well as for 20 non-Member countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe).

Methodology and UOE Data Collection Process

The data presented in the database result from the annual UOE data collection administered annually by the OECD also on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT). These UOE data are used to calculate many of the indicators of the OECD yearly publication *Education at a Glance*.

The reference period for the most recent UOE data collection (made publicly available on 14 September 2004) is the calendar year 2002 for data on graduates, the calendar year 2001 for data on educational finance, and the school/academic year 2001/2002 for the remaining data.

The coverage extends, in principle, to the entire national education system (within the national territory) regardless of the ownership or sponsorship of the institutions concerned and regardless of education delivery mechanisms. With one exception described below, all types of students and all age groups are meant to be included: children (including students with special needs), adults, nationals, foreigners, as well as students in open distance learning, in special education programmes or in educational programmes organised by ministries other than the Ministry of Education, provided the main aim of the programme is the educational development of the individual. However, vocational and technical training in the workplace, with the exception of combined school and work-based programmes that are explicitly deemed to be parts of the education system, is not included in the basic education expenditure and enrolment data. The classification of the levels of education is based on the revised International Standard Classification of Education *(Classifying Educational Programmes Manual for ISCED-97 Implementation in OECD Countries, OECD).*

The Member countries co-operate to gather the information, to develop and apply common definitions and criteria for the quality control of the data, and to verify the data and to provide the information necessary to interpret and report the submitted data (*2004 Data Collection on Education Systems, UOE data collection manual, OECD*).

The international organisations process and verify data once they have been received. The initial verification is based on common agreed checking rules and is undertaken by one of the data requesters also on behalf of the other organisations, so as to avoid duplication of requests to countries. This initial verification phase should each year be completed by January. The subsequent separate processing of data for analytical purposes will follow the priorities of each organisation.

Content of the Database

The database is *organised by topic* (students enrolled, foreign students, entrants, graduates, educational personnel and educational expenditure) *and by the statistical units for which data are collected* (level of education, programme orientation, programme destination, type of institution, sex and age and some more specific breakdowns to each datasets, e.g. for educational expenditure).

Users can make their own query by selecting criteria from the list of boxes present on the screen, and calculate their own indicators. In connection with the development of a new ***OECD Statistical and Information System*** for data dissemination, a renovated access to the education database is being developed which is more user-friendly and includes many new features in the extraction of data.

The on-line database contains raw data as compiled from countries and checked by the international organisations. The education database is supplemented with information on the sources available on a electronic format (annex 3). The whole set of indicators calculated by the OECD Secretariat to describe the educational systems can be freely accessed as well.

Accessing the Data

The database is updated every year in September when *Education at a Glance* is published. The on-line database presents the raw data received from countries, after the cleaning and checking processes. The database is freely available through: http://www1.oecd.org/scripts/cde/members/EDU_UOEAuthenticate.asp.

The web site www.oecd.org/edu/eag2004 provides for this years publication a rich source of information on the methods employed for the calculation of the indicators, the interpretation of the indicators in the respective national contexts and the data sources involved. This web site also provides access to the indicators published in the paper publication, to the data underlying the indicators as well as to a comprehensive glossary for technical terms used in this publication. For any comments and suggestions you may have on this database, please contact us through edu.contact@oecd.org.