



OECD SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC STATISTICS WORKING PARTY
(STESWP)

Future evolution of short-term economic economic statistics collected and disseminated by the OECD and national agencies: summary of national comments

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FUTURE EVOLUTION OF SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC STATISTICS COLLECTED AND DISSEMINATED BY THE OECD AND NATIONAL AGENCIES

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL COMMENTS

AUSTRIA (Statistics Austria)

The further evolution of STS in Austria depends on the evolution of legal request by the European Union. Priorities are the work for the revision of NACE and the change of the base year (2005=100) as they involve comprehensive conceptual changes in short-term economic statistics. Austria is concentrating on the implementation of and the compliance with the requests of the amended STS-Regulation and on the satisfaction of national user's needs, that is:

- improvements in timeliness: release of the IPI at t+55 respectively t+30 or t+40 from base 2005=100 for determined aggregates
- compilation of eurozone/non-eurozone indicators,
- conduct of *feasibility studies* concerning the variables hours worked and wages and salaries in services and conceptual work in the area of trade and services
- transition to NACE Rev.2 (including methods for backcasting, new sample etc.)
- new web dissemination policy
- satisfaction of national needs on regional level (NUTS 2): compilation of production index on NUTS 2 level; it is planned to compile turnover and labour input indicators for NACE section H, hotels and restaurants
- more advanced use of administrative data

Resources for new variables (e.g. the compilation of an index of service production) are therefore not available at the moment.

CANADA (Statistics Canada)

No comments provided on this topic

CZECH REPUBLIC (Czech Statistical Office)

The range of problems concerning service statistics and particularly short - term statistics is very wide and the demand for more information is increasing. The documents prepared by STESWP contribute to improving the quality and the better coverage of service sector.

Short - term statistics in Czech Statistical Office is now focused on a few important topics. First CZSO makes an effort to meet the requirements STS Regulation amended by Regulation No 1158/2005 in range of indicators, timelines, level of detail. One of the most challenging issues is the implementation of new revision of NACE. The new version of economic activity classification brings most changes into service sector, which has been developing rapidly and constantly erase new types of activity. The implementation

of new classification will bring a lot of problems not only with the “reclassification” of activities into new codes but maybe more difficult will be making back casting of time series.

Regardless of these most important tasks, we also continuously work on improvement in the field of dissemination of short - term statistics and also improvement of quality of indicators. The main tool to improve accessibility and timelines of statistical data to all users is enlarging number of time series regularly published on the Internet. At present in the field of service sector there are more than 200 time series on the CSZO web sites concerning monthly turnover in trade and services and also price indices of market services. During summer we plan to place quarterly time series of employment and basic economic indicators for trade, transport and other services.

According to the requirements of Eurostat the work on quality assessment has been started, first for the monthly index of turnover in retail trade. The problem of cost and burden on the side of CZSO as well as on the side of reporting units are monitored and some effort has been made to decrease the volume of data collected from enterprises.

DENMARK (Statistics Denmark)

1) The introduction of new indicators is very much determined by EU-regulation due to scarce resources.

At half-yearly meetings with Advisory Boards, which have a broad representation, all sort of questions regarding indicators are discussed.

2) On the web-site for Statistics Denmark, you can find a special reference to short-term indicators. www.dst.dk

The on-line StatBank is free for all, and almost all figures are available. www.statistikbanken.dk

3) StatBanc includes metadata.

4) Possible if user-financed.

GERMANY (Federal Statistical Office)

No comments provided on this topic

GREECE (NSSG)

No comments provided on this topic

ITALY (ISTAT)

Comments about the specific issues submitted for consideration by STESWP participants:

1. (item a of the submitted issues) In general, the statistical production of Istat is based on a planning process that hinges on a three years plan (updated yearly) considering strategic activities. However, the process of setting the priorities of new developments in front of binding resource constraints is not formalised. Concerning short-term economic statistics, the current plans (and priorities) are largely dependent on the developments settled at European level. First of all, there are the requirements established by the STS Regulations (1998 and 2005). Given the current limitations of the Italian STS set of indicators, Istat is planning substantial improvements in the availability of service sector indicators. In particular, there are programs aiming at widening the scope of quarterly turn over indexes of service activities (specifically, with new surveys devoted to compile indicators for NACE Rev 1 groupings, 60, 63 and 74) and to develop gradually a new system of output service prices, that are still at a very rudimentary stage. Moreover the development of the new survey for import prices is planned. As for the refinement of existing indicators, there are plans to comply with the new European requirements (STS Regulation 2005) on timeliness (in particular concerning employment and service turn over indicators). Going beyond the scope of the current STS, a further development of wage and employment indicators concerning industry and services is planned, with the transition from quarterly to monthly indexes. Moreover, a planned program, deriving from European requirements, concerns the release of a quarterly job vacancy indicator (the data collection process has already started) and the completion of the process of compiling worked hours indicators. Almost all the above mentioned developments were not based on a negotiation process involving key national users.

2. (items b and c) Short term economic indicators are disseminated via an online database (at the web address con.istat.it) managing the whole set of available time series . The database can be utilised also as a catalogue of the available indicators, containing complete information about their level of detail and a reasonable amount of metadata.

3. (item d) As already pointed out almost all the new developments planned to improve short term economic indicators are fully integrated in the process involving the European Statistical System. A limited but interesting exception concerns new wage indicators for the public sectors that could be developed to fulfil the national demand.

JAPAN (Office for Policy Planning (Statistical Standards), Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)

No comments provided on this topic

KOREA (KNSO)

A. Is there a formal planning process outlining the intentions or priorities of your agency with respect to the future development of short-term economic statistics in terms of :

- . the introduction of new indicators(such as for services, etc). If so, what are the main elements of these current plans;*
- . elaboration/refinement of existing indicators(e.g. new forms of presentation, introduction of new classification, expansions in scope, etc);*
- . negotiations with key users for the setting of priorities for new indicators and possible removal(or reduction in quality) of existing indicators?*

Korean IIP is under development to enhance its quality reflected in actual reality. It has been reviewed to change the method to compile index from fixed weight index to chained Fisher index. It'll be presented if the results are reasonable. Korean ISP that is compiled based on fixed weight index is also under consideration for chained index to reflect the actual world better.

B. The existence of (on-line) catalogues that outline short-term indicator series available to external users;

Statistics Korea provides external users with the catalogues in our webpage.

C. Proposals/plans for the development in the short to medium terms of new output database from where external users would have on-line access to the broad range of short-term economic statistics disseminated by your organisations and their related metadata.

Statistics Korea already services the database and related metadata that can be accessed to external users in Korean.

D. Finally, do EU member states plan any changes that would be in addition to those designed to meet the requirements of European Commission Regulations, i.e. that are designed to meet the specific requirements /needs of national users(particularly those in government)?

None

LUXEMBOURG (STATEC)

Luxembourg, as other EU Member states, must meet the requirements of the PEEIs and European Commission Regulations, such as Regulation (EC) N° 1158/2005 amending Council Regulation (EC) N° 1165/98. This Regulation requires e.g. the production and transmission of industrial import price indices and producer price indices in the service sector. These requirements involve a high burden on the statistical system of a very small Member State with fix costs comparable to those in much larger countries.

Considering the available financial and human resources, the Luxembourg short-term statistics unit will in short and medium term focus on:

- a qualitative evaluation of the existing short term indicators and, if necessary, their refinement;
- the implementation of all of the indicators required by the STS-Regulations before 2010, considering the amendments provided;
- the implementation of NACE Rev2 in 2008/2009;
- a step-to-step passage to more and better service sector indicators;
- a reduction of timeliness despite the maintenance or even the improvement of quality;
- business surveys in retail trade and in other services;
- the possibility of producing adequate short term statistics in the financial sector;
- minimizing the burden on enterprises by using more and more the existing administrative data if quality and timeliness aspects are guaranteed;
- a user-friendly supply of online questionnaires and statistics.

Suggestions for future work by STESWP

Concerning the future work of the short term economic statistics expert group (STESEG), Luxembourg proposes for 2006/2007 and later on to develop methods helping to estimate the industrial production by using the results of the business opinion surveys (monthly qualitative surveys).

In fact, the results of the opinion surveys are normally available before the results of the quantitative surveys (e.g. on the industrial production). It would be useful to consider the development of a reliable method that uses the different answers provided in the business survey frameworks in order to estimate the industrial production index. An *ad hoc* task force could analyse the available series on OECD level and try to develop a suitable methodology. Unfortunately and for the known lack of resources, Luxembourg however cannot participate in such a task force.

NETHERLANDS (Statistics Netherlands)

Plans of SN for the future:

- Although SN complies with all international recommendations, it distinguishes between recommendations which lead to indicators which are of international and national interest and indicators which are compiled primarily for international use. If recommendations are only relevant for international and not (or less so) for national use, then SN may use next-best solutions (which still comply with the international standards). Example: turnover indices broken down into export to eurozone and non-eurozone are not very important for national use, therefore SN uses the “GEO-split method” (using external trade commodity data).
- SN focuses on better use of existing sources. For instance: the development of monthly volume indices of external trade using external trade values deflated by producer prices (SN has recently compiled such a monthly indicator).
- In presenting the indicators, the focus is on (1) a coherent and systematic description of existing indicators, with the use of new technology (e.g. the recently developed Business Cycle Tracer); (2) a systematic presentation of data bases in which also earlier versions of the indicators are still available (e.g. StatLine 4)
- The development of new indicators should be carried out without a significant increase of the response burden. New indicators should be developed on the basis of a combination of administrative data, existing surveys and a set of assumptions. Therefore the coordination between statistical institutes and a system approach of statistics will become more and more important.

NEW ZEALAND (Statistics New Zealand)

From a Statistics New Zealand perspective, there are no major comments on this paper except that the priorities look suitable however it would depend on what data the OECD can obtain from member countries to undertake the tasks.

NORWAY (Statistics Norway)

There are several steps in the formal planning process in Statistics Norway and the hierarchy is somewhat difficult to describe. In short it can be given as:

- ✓ Statistics Act (no explicit planning tool)
- ✓ The strategic plan for a certain period of time (2002-)
- ✓ Yearly plans of activity
 - for Departments (e.g. Department of Economic Statistics)
 - and Divisions (e.g. Division for Economic Indicators)

The Statistics Act gives the formal frame for all Norwegian official statistics. The Statistics Act also underlines that Statistics Norway is an independent institution when it comes to the content of its statistics and analyses. Statistics Norway decides on an independent basis what the institution is to publish of official statistics, and when and how this will be done.

The review of the strategic plan for Statistics Norway began in 2005. The current Strategy 2002-, is detailed and thorough, and remains current. Statistics Norway are therefore now aiming at a more concise, “sharp” plan document, supplemented with *sub-strategies* in several key areas, including IT, data collection, expertise and metadata. A sub-strategy for metadata was completed in 2005. Statistics Norway has also initiated a *scenario process* in order to think through possible development features/changes to the surroundings and discuss the consequences for the statistics production. An important aim of the strategy process is to involve the whole organization.

Laws and international requirements give important input to the planning process. In addition to Norwegian laws such as the Statistics Act, Statistics Norway's priorities are increasingly governed by acts as a consequence of the cooperation in the European Union (EU) through the European Economic Area (EEA) like the Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 of 19 May 1998 concerning short-term statistics.

The yearly plans of activity are the most detailed tool of planning and give priorities in all statistical areas. For the last three years there has been an explicit priority given for price statistics and plans of activity in this field has been coordinated by a project group. Price statistics and price indices play a central role in the statistical system, and are of great importance for measuring economic development and for index regulations of various kinds. Norwegian and international experiences show that there is a special need for working with price measurements for capital goods and services. This requires increased research effort and a better statistical base for taking the quality changes in the products into account. The aim of the project is to develop new and upgrade existing statistics on prices and volumes. In 2005, price indices were developed, or developing was started for several new areas as listed under item 8.

The priorities given by the National Account is probably the single most important input to further develop short-term economic statistics in Statistics Norway. It was the main reason for priorities in the ongoing price project and gives important input when preferences must be done in developing new short-term service statistics.

b)

All short-term indicators are disseminated in Statbank Norway (<http://www.ssb.no/english/statbank>). Metadata is available for external users in the so called ‘About the statistics’. This contains information about how the statistics is compiled, definitions, sources of errors and so on. An example for The Retail Trade index can be found at http://www.ssb.no/doi_en/about.html.

A database that in the future is supposed to contain all standards used in Statistics Norway is available for external users on the Internet: <http://www3.ssb.no/stabas/MainFrames.asp?Language=en>.

In addition a database that contains definitions of all variables that is included in Statistics Norway statistics is under development. This is supposed to be available for all users on the Internet in the near future.

c)

In Statistics Norway we are for the time being conducting a project for better dissemination of short-term statistics. As of today Statistics Norway have a dedicated web site for short-term indicators which can be found on this address: <http://www.ssb.no/en/indicators/> . The site has also separate links to *charts and articles* and *economic forecasts*. In the process of improving our web sites several sites in other national agencies have been evaluated, e.g. <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/macro-economie-financiele-instellingen/conjunctuurgegevens/publicaties/conjunctuurbericht/conjunctuurklok/conjunctuurklok.htm>.

POLAND (CSO of Poland)

The CSO of Poland elaborated annual Statistical Survey Program of Official Statistics (SSPOS) that is determined by the Council of Ministers, in way of Regulation (required by Law on official statistics). Priorities and needs of other administrative offices, national bank and other national authorities are taken in to consideration in this Program.

There are included the list determining the scope of topics, units and entities to be covered by statistical surveys and related to them responsibilities. SSPOS describes for every survey: topic and the institution conducting survey; type of survey; subjective and objective scope; sources of statistical data; subjects obliged to provide information and transfer statistical data or voluntarily participating in survey; form, frequency and date of data transfer as well as place of statistical data transfer; types of final statistical information and forms and dates of dissemination of final statistical information; costs and ways of financing.

This plan obtains also methodological works needed for introduction of new indicators or new classification, elaboration of existing indicators or extending the use of administrative sources. At present the most important issues connected with introduction new short term indicators are methodological works in the scope of prices in services (pilot survey is planned for 2007, full survey – since 2008) and on import prices (methodological works has started since 2004, pilot survey is planned in 2006, full survey – since 2007). In the area of existing short term indicators, there are problems related to the implementation of NACE Rev.2 (production of back-casted data - methodology, length of recalculated time series, dates of transmission of recalculated data, new weight system), problems on seasonal adjustments (currently only in national accounts, industry production and construction, turnover in retail trade, business tendency, the lack – in labour market area). Other issues are to high burden of respondents and statistical system and to limited scope of administrative sources using in short term statistics.

On the CSO website www.stat.gov.pl exists database *Poland – basic trends* in Polish and English version. This is a comprehensive set of quarterly and annual macro-economic indicators that portray the main tendencies of socio-economic development of the country.

Electronic and paper version has *Statistical Bulletin* with monthly edition in Polish-English version. There are included basic indices on the socio-economic situation of the country with respect to, among others, quarterly GDP estimates, labour market and earnings, social security benefits, population, prices, money and finance, agriculture, industry, construction, transport and trade. Moreover, monthly or quarterly data on the socio-economic situation of the EU member states are included too.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic)

a)-d) Every year the process of defining the requirements in written form in all ministries is organised. The requirements are discussed in internal procedure with regard to the efficiency of surveys. Great effort is done to the analyses of possible duplicities with already existing statistical and administrative surveys. On the base of the written procedure results the possible changes in the content of present questionnaires are realised. In co-ordination with ministries and state institutions Programme of State Statistical Surveys is compiled for a three-year period. The Programme may be updated on the annual basis regarding the new important needs of national users as well as new requirements of European regulations.

b)-c) New national online public database SLOVSTAT was created in May 2005. This tool is gradually improved. Special on-line catalogue does not exist. The relevant meta information is accessible at the level of particular table. The whole database is available in English language as well.

SPAIN (INE)

Directorate for Labour Statistics

In the coming years, development of short-term indicators in this Unit will depend on the requirements of European Regulations. To be precise, the change in the classification of economic activities and widening of coverage on Labour Costs Index including those units dependent on the Public Administration (NACE Rev.1 - Section L).

SWEDEN (Statistics Sweden)

No comments provided on this topic

UNITED KINGDOM (ONS)

OECD questions:

a) Is there a formal planning process outlining the intentions or priorities of your agency with respect to the future development of short-term economic statistics in terms of:

- the introduction of new indicators (such as for services, etc.). If so, what are the main elements of these current plans;

UK response

Yes. In the UK, the strategy for the development of STIs is encapsulated largely in what is referred to as the 'Sources Blueprint'. This was developed by ONS in 2003 and established the principle that all data collected by ONS should be published in one form or another. For STIs this means an expansion of the existing portfolio to include more detailed and more regular (monthly rather than quarterly) publication of service sector turnover statistics. Beyond this, the strategy for the publication of the short term measures of Gross Value Added (principally the IIP and ISP) is guided by a programme for the development of a monthly indicator of value added. This programme involves consultation with key users of these indicators.

- elaboration / refinement of existing indicators (e.g. new forms of presentation, introduction of new classifications, expansions in scope, etc);

UK response

ONS approach here is rather more piecemeal.

New forms of presentation are guided by an office-wide initiative managed by ONS Press Office. This takes the form of a review of existing publications, including consultation with external users.

The introduction of the new NACE is being managed as a pan-ONS project, which includes the transition arrangements for STIs.

Changes in scope of surveys is managed through a set of Steering Groups (one for each set of STIs, e.g. one from prices, one for Labour Market and one for turnover inquiries). These report to an overarching Sources Management Board.

□ negotiations with key users for the setting of priorities for new indicators and possible removal (or reduction in quality) of existing indicators?

UK response

As noted above, users are engaged through various means on the development of STIs. The UK has also supported the reprioritization of outputs covered by Eurostat's STS Regulation. In particular the UK is keen to promote the reduction of the level of detail published for the IIP. In the UK, plans are already underway to reduce the amount of detail published for the IIP in ONS own publications. The outcome of research into the quality of these detailed series will dictate their future and users will be consulted as part of the transitional arrangements.

b) The existence of (on-line) catalogues that outline short-term economic indicator series available to external users.

UK response

Not explicitly. ONS does maintain, though, a 'databank' of all published time series, which includes a reference list, albeit with limited metadata.

c) Proposals / plans for the development in the short to medium terms of new output databases from where external users would have on-line access to the broad range of short-term economic statistics disseminated by your organisations and their related metadata.

UK response

ONS is committed to the redevelopment of the existing web-portal through which users access STI time series. Current plans are that new web-based technologies will be harnessed for this purpose by 2008/09.

d) Finally, do EU Member states plan any changes that would be in addition to those designed to meet the requirements of European Commission Regulations, i.e. that are designed to meet the specific requirements / needs of national users (particularly those in government)?

UK response

The needs of UK government are always evolving, and it's difficult to anticipate what new STIs will be required. However, ONS is committed to developing a range of regional measures of GVA, and to improving the periodicity of estimates of GDP (from quarterly to monthly). The UK's plans in this area are guided by a report into the development of macro-economic statistics conducted by the UK's Central Bank and Finance Department in 2003, see

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/alltop_review/consult_alltop_index.cfm.

UNITED STATES

Bureau of Labour Statistics

In the U. S. statistical system, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has an important role in providing guidance to the statistical agencies on the compilation and release of principal economic indicators, including changes of any type to these indicators. The attached Statistical Policy Directive

Number 3 describes the procedures that are followed to that end. According to OMB, there are no plans to change this directive. Even changes to the numerous statistical series that are not principal indicators required OMB notification prior to implementation.



statPolicyNo3.pdf

Beyond the requirements associated with OMB, the BLS discusses plans and proposals with three advisory groups—the Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee, the Labor Research Advisory Committee, and the Business Research Advisory Committee. In addition, any program change that involves funding also requires departmental discussion prior to going over to OMB. Improvements/changes to data series that are developed in conjunction with State agencies will involve discussions with the State partners who are involved in data collection, estimation, and their own publication. Lastly, the BLS will actively engage major users in discussions of program improvements. When BLS must reduce output or quality, those negotiations typically remain within the agency, although discussions occur with users.

The BLS website <http://www.bls.gov/> is the full repository of BLS data series. Both statistical data and supporting explanatory material appear on it. Programs will also include information on the website pertaining to upcoming changes, in advance of introduction.

Bureau of Census

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts over 100 separate economic surveys taken monthly, quarterly, and annually, including thirteen designated as Principal Economic Indicators (PEI). These surveys provide statistics on merchandise trade, new construction put in place, new residential construction; retail sales; wholesale sales; manufactures shipments, inventories, and orders; business sales and inventories; and corporate profits. In 2004, the Census Bureau introduced the Quarterly Services Survey (QSS), the first new PEI in thirty years.

The QSS focused initially on information, communications, and technology-intensive industries. The survey covered information (NAICS Sector 51); professional, scientific and technical services (NAICS Sector 54); and administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (NAICS Sector 56). The following year, the Census Bureau expanded the survey to include hospitals and nursing and personal care facilities. Combined these areas account for about 17% of U.S. GDP.

We are likely to face funding and personnel resource constraints over the next several years. Consequently, any improvements to our current economic statistics program will most likely have to be funded from our existing resource base.

Despite these resource constraints, the Census Bureau is planning to expand industry coverage of the QSS in the 4th Qtr of 2006 to include rental and leasing services; arts, entertainment and recreation services; the remainder of health care and social assistance; trucking and warehousing; repair and maintenance services, personal and laundry services, and grant making, civic, professional, and similar organizations. This will more than double the QSS sample size to approximately 13,000 reporting units and increase the QSS coverage to over 25 percent of U.S. GDP.

Further, the Census Bureau will design and select samples covering finance, insurance, education, real estate, utilities, and the remainder of transportation. Currently, these industries are covered only in our economic census. We will begin phased-in coverage of these industries in our 2008 Service Annual Survey (SAS). For the 2008 survey, we will expand to include finance and insurance. The 2009 SAS will include education and the uncovered transportation industries, and the 2010 SAS will cover real estate and

utilities. When fully implemented, SAS coverage will increase to 55 percent of GDP, and will serve as a necessary prelude to their coverage in the QSS.

We will fund these improvements in our service statistics by reallocating resources from lower priority programs and off sets within the current service program.

Negotiations with Key Users

The Census Bureau is working closely with the Bureau of Economic Analysis and other federal users in the developing these survey plans. The expansion of service industry statistics supports the BEA's own initiative on measuring the knowledge economy and in addressing long-standing data gaps in the coverage, detail and frequency of measuring service industries.

The two agencies currently are working to identify sampling levels for producing the new quarterly service industry estimates, identifying potential off sets to fund service industry expansion, and in prioritizing all of our economic surveys. Further these plans were recently presented to the Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee (FESAC) comprised of the Census Bureau, BEA, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and a proposal for prioritizing programs to the Census Advisory Committee of the American Economic Association.

On-Line Access to Short-Term Economic Statistics

The Census Bureau recently modified its web site to provide more prominent and easy access to its principal economic indicator data. Access to the latest estimates and historical data, program descriptions, survey questionnaires, definitions and survey methodology, and FAQ's are only a click or two away. In addition, the Economic Statistics Administration of the Department of Commerce provides timely access to the daily releases of key economic indicators of the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. The White House briefing room provides access to the current federal economic indicators produced by a number of federal agencies. These sites, along with the Office of Management and Budget, provide a release date schedule for these indicators.

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