

Session 1

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Measuring government output and productivity: meeting the need for more timely, detailed and better quality data on government expenditure

Ideal requirements for measuring government output :

- expenditure data at both high level (e.g. COFOG) and low level (e.g weight for each level of education, for specific health treatments etc)
- ideally need these annually and quarterly
- and according to principles of national accounts

Consistency required between high and low level spending categories in measuring outputs

Requirements in measuring productivity :

- deflating inputs requires detailed spending data, by function, by economic category and by product
- also need to identify quality change in inputs : better quality teachers, better qualified hospital staff
- need price information on government expenditure in high level of detail in order to provide appropriate deflators

Recent UK developments:

- new government accounting system being introduced
- new system gives national accountants access to detailed accounting elements at any time

National accountants have "line of sight" access to expertise in each ministry. Provides a source of information on evolution of spending.

Keys to success:

- national accounts framework plays an important role in presentation of macroeconomic information
- high profile of government output and productivity work helped us shape the system