

# The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

May 2002

Issue No. 9

## OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

By Denis Ward, OECD

Over the last two decades, international organisations such as the OECD, IMF, ILO, United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) and Eurostat, in concert with national statistical agencies, have developed a comprehensive set of international statistical guidelines and recommendations covering almost all statistical subjects<sup>1</sup>. This work continues as new areas of statistical need arise (e-commerce, biotechnology, etc) and old standards require revision. The primary aims of these statistical standards are promotion of best practice and use of common concepts in the statistics compiled by national agencies and international organisations alike. Both are prerequisites for the compilation of statistics that can be readily used in international comparisons.

A cornerstone of these international standards are definitions of data elements and concepts developed to facilitate a common understanding across countries of the basic concepts and practices embodied within each standard. Because of the diversity of the institutional, economic and cultural climate within different countries these definitions are often the result of compromises and by necessity are fairly broad in many instances. To a large extent they can be viewed as “target” definitions requiring elaboration and adaptation to national circumstance.

Notwithstanding these limitations, it is important to promote the use of these concepts and definitions by increasing their visibility by making them readily accessible via the internet. For these reasons the OECD has been developing a Glossary of Statistical Terms over the last twelve months. This work was described in the October 2001 edition of *The Statistics Newsletter*. The first production version of the Glossary is now available for free distribution on the OECD internet at [www.oecd.org/statistics/glossary](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/glossary).

As mentioned in the previous *Newsletter* article, the Glossary contains both target definitions of the main variables (data elements) collected by the Organisation for use in its statistical and analytical output (e.g. for industrial production, services, unemployment) and definitions of terminology/concepts (data element concepts) used in OECD publications (e.g. accrual accounting, metadata). The 3 500 definitions currently included in the OECD Glossary cover a very broad range of statistical subjects. A number of definitions can only be obliquely regarded as “statistical” in nature and are a reflection of the wide range of analytical and policy interests of the OECD itself. In the main, the definitions in the Glossary are quoted word for word from existing international statistical standards. Very limited use has also been made of definitions published by national agencies.

The main elements of the current OECD Glossary are:

- unique title for the definition;
- the actual definition;
- for some definitions, text providing further background on the definition, its application and relation to similar or related concepts. This field may also contain URLs to relevant documents describing appropriate use of the variable defined, etc;
- detailed source information;
- classification of each definition to a broad statistical theme;
- internal cross-links to related definitions, etc., contained elsewhere in the Glossary;
- URL links to the complete source document containing the definition where this is currently located on the websites of international organisations or national agencies.

<sup>1</sup> An extensive list of these guidelines is located on the United Nations Statistical Division website, *Methodological Publications in Statistics* (<http://esa.un.org/unsd/progwork>).

<b>In this Issue</b>		Page
<b>Features:</b>		
<b>OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Developing a strategy for a NSI: Danish Experiences</b>		<b>2</b>
Korea's Monthly Index of Services Output		<b>4</b>
Integrated Statistical Information Systems		<b>5</b>
OECD Forum 2002		<b>5</b>
<b>News in Brief</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Recent Publications</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Data collection from the Web using Excel</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Forthcoming Statistics Meetings</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>Database of the Month</b>		
<b>Taxing Wages</b>		<b>11</b>
<b>SourceOECD The online service from the OECD</b>		
A single institutional subscription provides unlimited online access to OECD books, periodicals and statistics, 24 hours, 7 days/week. Accurate, continually updated, and backed by the reputation for which the OECD is known world-wide, it is ideal for universities, companies, government departments and other information-hungry organisations.		
For a free trial of this innovative service, contact <a href="mailto:sourceoecd@oecd.org">sourceoecd@oecd.org</a> or go to <a href="http://www.SourceOECD.org">www.SourceOECD.org</a>		

The Glossary also includes search and interrogation facilities and information describing each of the fields. One of the powerful features of the Glossary is the linkage (via URLs where available) of definitions to the full standard/source containing the definition. This enables the user to readily obtain further information about the definition.

#### Future work on the Glossary

Even though the Glossary is now available on the web, work continues on both definitional content and improvement in the quality of information provided. For example the:

- inclusion of definitions describing other elements of statistical work, e.g. on survey design methodology, other aspects of the statistical production cycle, etc;
- more precise reference/source information;
- on-going task of including context information for specific definitions by way of further explanation on the meaning of the definition, appropriate use of the concept, relation to similar concepts, etc.

The last point is particularly important and is one of the significant features of the Glossary. As mentioned above, the Glossary focuses on the inclusion of definitions that are drawn primarily from international statistical guidelines and recommendations. In many instances the guidelines have been developed in isolation to each other and there are a number of cases where different definitions exist for the same concept. As also previously mentioned, the wording of definitions is frequently broad and imprecise. Rather than prepare yet another definition, the approach taken in the OECD Glossary is to include further elaboration and background information (in the Context field) to assist in the appropriate use of the concept, etc. This is not a small task and it is expected that work in this area will be phased into the Glossary over the next two years. Hopefully, this could be done as a collaborative effort between the OECD and other international organisations and national statistical agencies.

Future work will also make the Glossary an integral part of the new OECD corporate data environment through the establishment of links between the Glossary and other

elements of the data environment now being developed within the organisation. Discussions are also taking place with other agencies, in particular with Eurostat, regarding options for the sharing of glossary database facilities between different international organisations in some way. Options for a joint facility range from the location of glossary

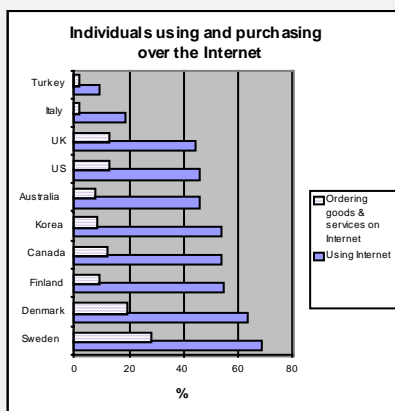
definitions on a single physical database shared by different organisations, to the maintenance of separate glossary databases by each organisation and the development of procedures and appropriate linkages to ensure the consistency of overlapping definitional content.

Further information on the Glossary can be obtained from Denis Ward at [denis.ward@oecd.org](mailto:denis.ward@oecd.org).

#### Internet: Update on Consumer Transactions

The latest official statistics on Internet consumer transactions were presented to the last meeting of the OECD Committee on Consumer Protection.

The figures show that buying and selling over the Internet is not very common yet. Sweden has the highest percentage of individuals using the internet and purchasing goods and services over the internet.



Source: OECD, ICT database

For more information go to

<http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M00027000/M00027669.pdf>

#### Developing a strategy for a NSI: Danish experiences

By Jan Plovings, National Statistician, Denmark

Strategic management and planning are extensively used as tools for managing and maximising the achievement of the institution's objectives within limited resources. However, strategic management is, obviously, only possible if a comprehensive strategy for the organisation has actually been prepared.

This article gives a brief summary of our purposes of preparing Statistics Denmark's present *Strategy 2006*, its main components and, especially, the process of its creation and anchorage in Statistics Denmark.

#### A common management and working base: no given solutions

There is naturally no final definition of what to include in a "strategy", "corporate plan", "business plan", "framework document" – to mention some of the many names – or how it should be prepared. It hinges on the tasks, structure, framework conditions, etc. of each statistical institution – and, especially, the organisation's *purposes for use* of its strategy base. For Statistics Denmark it was important to set up an *updated and forward-looking, common management and working base*, which:

- clarified the institution's basic values, mission and a vision of its future;
- provided each employee with knowledge of the strategic objectives and enabled each employee to become involved in and to contribute to the process;
- was adapted in a general way enabling it to become a management tool for the entire institution;
- was adapted in a detailed and structured way implying that specific, binding, and measurable tasks for all Statistics Denmark's departments and divisions could be derived and given priority over the entire strategy period;
- could form the basis for measuring and assessing the results of the institution, e.g. for internal management of objectives and results and for the annual company

accounts. In this perspective, the strategy could be regarded as an “informal development contract” between the NSI’s management and the political level.

### Work process: a long and thorough process

Statistics Denmark has prepared a corporate strategy twice (in 1996 and 2001). The current *Strategy 2006* covers the period 2001-2006. The process of preparing *Strategy 2006* was divided into 5 phases, each involving internal stakeholders (e.g. Joint Consultation Committee, Technology Committee, Education Committee) and external stakeholders (the Advisory Committees and the Board of Governors):

1. *Commencement of the work:* The management’s draft work programme – a “timetable for the strategy” – including how to involve the different stakeholders, was discussed and approved.
2. *Preparation of a draft for a new strategy:* The National Statistician prepared the first draft strategy, partly based on discussions with each division.
3. *Thorough discussions of the draft strategy:* A revised draft was then prepared.
4. *Completion of the strategy:* The revised draft was handed out for discussion throughout the whole organisation, enabling everyone at Statistics Denmark to follow the process and to make contributions. A *final* draft was then prepared by the National Statistician.
5. *Approval of the strategy:* The final draft was presented to all stakeholders before adoption by the Board of Governors. Having adopted the strategy all employees were asked to become familiar with it.

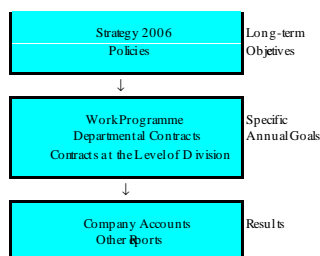
### Main components: the need for applications is reflected by the content

Recalling our above-mentioned purposes, *Strategy 2006* has the following main components:

- “the central messages”, i.e. Statistics Denmark’s purposes, values, mission and vision of the future. The central messages also

clarified the relationship between long-term goals, specific goals and performance reports. This relationship is shown in the figure below.

- *Framework conditions* for Statistics Denmark’s activities,



including legal framework, political independence, the significance of trustworthiness, consequence of international harmonization and general financial aspects.

- *Stakeholders*, i.e. users, data suppliers, other interested parties and their various relations with Statistics Denmark.
- *The strategic objectives* regarding production, dissemination and development of the main statistical areas. If there was no basis for determining quantitative objectives, the intended direction of development was defined.
- *The means* to achieve the strategic objectives, e.g. management structure, budget, Human Resources Management, working groups and coordination.

Within that framework, sixty strategic objectives were identified within five strategic areas: Statistics, dissemination, international cooperation, service activities, staff and organisation. The strategic objectives are pursued during the strategy period and each strategic objective will manifest itself in a number of specific annual goals, which are incorporated into the work programme, departmental contracts and contracts at the level of division. The hierarchy of goals is shown in the figure below.

*Strategy 2006* also forms the basis for preparing and revising corporate policies in areas, such as ICT, electronic data collection, dissemination and Human Resources Management.

### Implementation

*Strategy 2006* is currently being implemented. For each strategic objective responsibility, contributions, due dates etc. are stated. Many – but not yet all – strategic objectives are specified as tasks in the above-mentioned contracts, which are the core of Statistics Denmark’s operational “objectives and results” management system: For instance, as regards production of statistics, specific quality projects have been launched; as regards dissemination; specific reductions in publication times are being pursued and our targeted efforts to disseminate statistics electronically are being further developed.

### Benefits: The strategy is a reality, not a formality

Some may claim that a “corporate plan” is frequently a formality of little operational importance. This may be true in some cases. It could also be



claimed that a general corporate plan contributes only indirectly to the core business of a statistical institution. Furthermore, the preparation and anchorage of a comprehensive strategy is a very time-consuming activity, especially in relation to management resources. However, at Statistics Denmark the strategy has become a “living reality”, which we would not be without – particularly the process of preparing the strategy. Today, we consider the following beneficial consequences to be essential to our development:

- that a long-term basis for planning and prioritization is necessary, not least in a period – as the present one – with decreasing resources.
- It has been definitely established and accepted that the continuous search for improvements is crucial in order to maintain the long-term justification of the organisation.

- That inclusion of all stakeholders' ideas and views in thorough discussions of future prospects leads to the best and most efficient result.
- That staff members enhance their understanding of the institution's mission, framework conditions and objectives and enhance their commitment as regards each staff member's own areas of responsibility.
- That external stakeholders enhance their understanding and commitment as regards development plans and – partly – enhance their understanding of the framework conditions.
- That a better relationship is achieved between the general corporate plan and the policies for various specific areas of activity.

One of the potentially negative consequences from having an explicit and detailed strategy is the tendency to focus too much attention on the selected objectives. This implies the risk that other evolving and important challenges might be overlooked. The dilemma is that a strategy with a relatively general formulation of objectives and policies facilitates focus on long-term objectives, whilst a strategy that is relatively specific and applicable to all members of staff is more vulnerable to external changes and threats and thus needs more frequent revision.

Strategy 2006 is available in English at [www.dst.dk](http://www.dst.dk) or can be obtained by contacting Statistics Denmark ([bin@dst.dk](mailto:bin@dst.dk)).

-----

### ***Korea's Development of Monthly Indices on Service Industry Output***

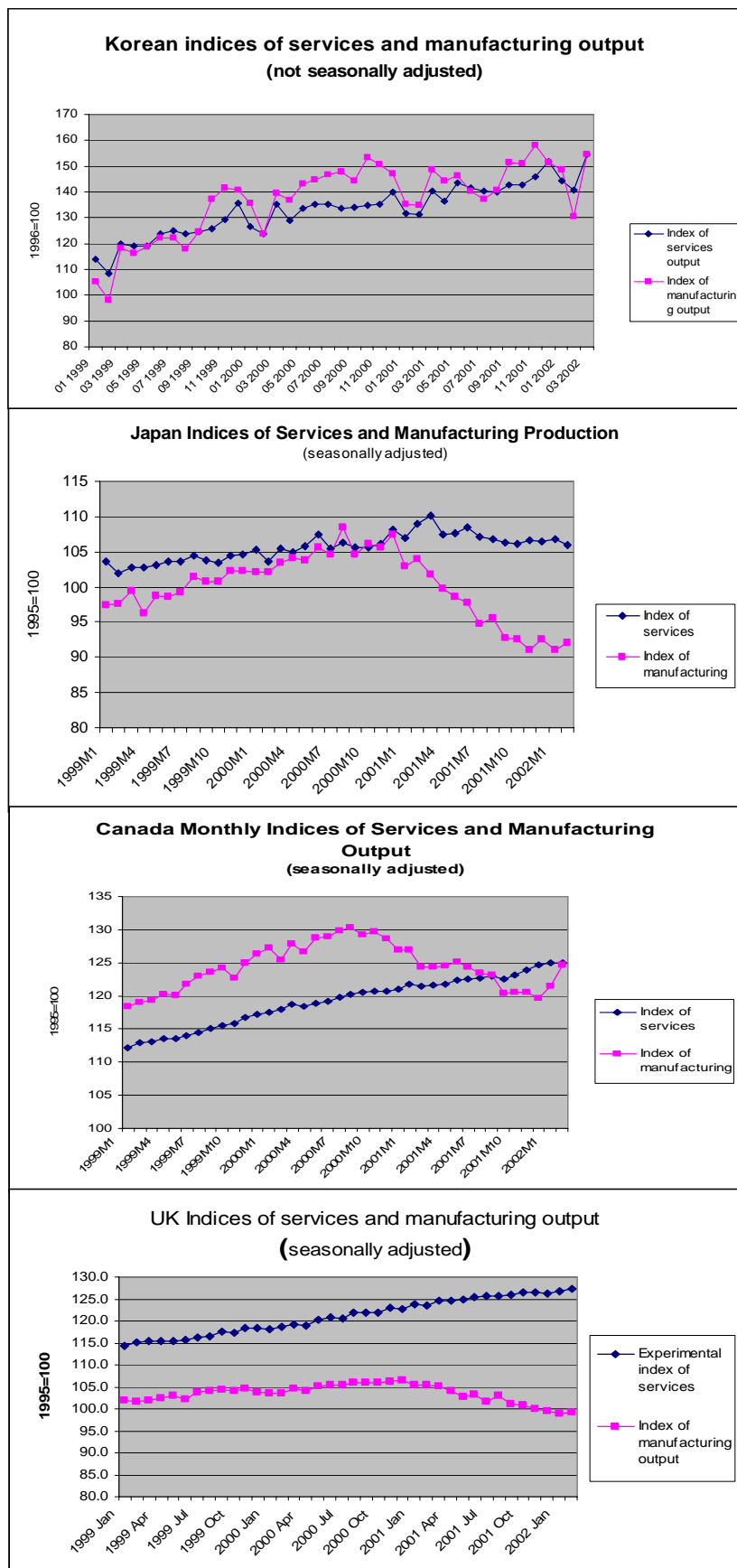
*by Bongho Choi, OECD*

Given an increasing need for short-term information on the service sector, Korea is one of a very few pioneering countries to publish indices on service industry output on a monthly basis starting from August 2000, with the back series data from January 1999 (Canada, Japan and UK also publish monthly indices of services output). The series are published with the base year 1996=100, and are broken down into eight broad industry categories (i.e., G to O except L according to ISIC

Revision 3). The indices are published 6 weeks after the end of the reference month, two weeks later than that of industrial production indices.

The main sources of data are from:

- 1) an existing monthly survey on wholesale and retail trade;
- 2) administrative data sources (about 50



in all) especially on financial intermediation sector and health sector;

3) a monthly survey on services industry activities, newly introduced, covering 4,000 establishments.

In order to convert the data into volume terms, relevant components of producer price indices for goods and services and of consumer price indices are used as deflators.

Further information in the form of news release is available at the Korean National Statistical Office's (KNSO) web site [www.nso.go.kr](http://www.nso.go.kr). However, the metadata has not been well developed up to now, indicating that the publishing of the indices has still an *experimental* status. Please also note that seasonal adjustment is not yet done due to the lack of historic time series data and the indices are to be revised once a year, usually at the beginning of the following year. KNSO is now in the process of revising the base year from 1996=100 to 2000=100. After the revision, the metadata is expected to be fully available.

The four charts show monthly indices of services output compared to manufacturing output. UK and Korean services indices are still **experimental**.

The Korean indices are not seasonally adjusted. The overall impression is that i) services output is less volatile than manufacturing output;

ii) trends in services output can be quite different to manufacturing output.

On a cautionary note the coverage of the service indices and the deflation methodology may vary from one country to another.

-----

### **UNECE – Eurostat Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems** By Gérard Salou, OECD

The UNECE and Eurostat organise a seminar on integrated statistical information systems (ISIS) every 2 years. The latest one. The purpose of the seminar is to share knowledge and experience in the area of statistical information management and related technologies. This year's event ISIS2002 was held in Geneva 17-19 April. It was attended by about 70 representatives from 35 countries

and 7 international organisations, focused on four topics:

1. application of web technologies to integrate statistics;
2. secure communication and data confidentiality;
3. object oriented technologies and component architectures;
4. ways of making statistical information systems more responsive to users

Documents presented at the seminar can be found at:

[www.unecce.org/stats/documents/2002.04.isis.htm](http://www.unecce.org/stats/documents/2002.04.isis.htm).

Some specific issues raised during the panel discussions included:

- metadata play an ever-increasing role in the integration of information systems. ICT solutions need to take this requirement into account. The understanding of the importance of metadata must be increased among owners of statistical data collections.
- Data-warehouses are seen as an essential element in the ICT infrastructure for statistical applications.
- Architectures based on the open source technologies are investigated into, but not implemented by many statistical institutions.
- Component architectures are promoted in several institutions, but require a central, well-managed and tightly controlled user and development environment.
- IT departments should look for partnerships with their clients and adapt to changing cultural and technical challenges. A joint project team approach is strongly recommended for application development.

The participants also worked on future work items and, in this context, made two major proposals:

1. the creation of a web site to establish a collection of best practices in the field, as well as a general knowledge base on IT for statistical offices. The OECD will "host" this portal service. The site will be divided into five themes:

strategies, management, applications and services, tools and standards. More detail on the site will be given in a future issue of this newsletter.

2. The alignment of the work of the ISIS group with that of the "Management of Statistical Information Systems" group also featuring a single event on an annual basis instead of two separate streams of meetings on a biannual basis.

-----

### **OECD Forum 2002**

The OECD Forum 2002 was held in Paris from 13-15 May. The main themes were Security, Equity, Education and Growth. The keynote speech was given by Guy Verhofstadt Prime Minister of Belgium and a wide range of other distinguished speakers included Laura Bush US First Lady. Participants from around 90 countries attended.

For the first time there was a session on statistics entitled "*Measuring Globalisation - Are the Statisticians Getting it Right?*". Chaired by the OECD Chief Statistician, Enrico Giovannini, the four speakers were Kathleen Cooper (Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, US Dept of Commerce), Yves Franchet (Director General of Eurostat), Lelio Iapadre (Professor of International Economics at the University of L'Aquila) and Paul van den Bergh (Bank for International Settlements).

The ideas advocated included: greater efforts to harmonise regional activity and product classifications; a set of indicators to show a profile of openness of economies; the importance of PPP and trade price data; more attention to be given to statistics of multinationals; and more integration of production, trade and FDI statistics generally and by enterprise.

For more information on the Forum and the speeches go to:

<http://www1.oecd.org/forum2002>

-----

## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **China Formally Joins the IMF's General Data Dissemination System**

The IMF has announced that China has begun participating in the International Monetary Fund's General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), which the Fund considers to be a major step forward in the development of the country's statistical systems.

At a meeting between Governor Dai Xianglong of the People's Bank of China, and IMF Managing Director Horst Köhler on the 19<sup>th</sup> April, Mr Köhler congratulated China on making this important move to further improve its statistical systems and enhance the transparency of its statistical practices. Earlier in Beijing, Zhu Zhixin, the Commissioner of China's National Bureau of Statistics, had likened China's participation in the GDDS in the area of statistics to accession to the WTO in the wider realm.

The IMF press release goes on to say:

- "The GDDS, established by the IMF in 1997, provides a framework to assist Fund member countries to develop their statistical systems with the objective of producing comprehensive and accurate statistics for policy-making and analysis. It addresses three key areas—the quality of data; development plans for statistical systems; and the dissemination of data. Countries that participate in the GDDS commit themselves to use the GDDS framework for the development of their statistical systems and for the production and dissemination of economic, financial, and socio-demographic data. They are also required to prepare and make publicly available on the IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board ([dsbb.imf.org/gddsindex.htm](http://dsbb.imf.org/gddsindex.htm)) their current statistical production and dissemination practices, as well as their plans for improvements and their technical assistance needs. At present, 42 countries are participating in the GDDS.

In recent years, China has been working closely with the IMF and the international community to bring its official statistics in line with international standards. . . .

With China's participation in the GDDS, the IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board now provides, in one place for the first time, the most comprehensive documentation on China's statistical practices in English. The plans for improvement and technical assistance needs that are included in the documentation also provide the international community with a useful framework to develop and coordinate their technical cooperation projects in China."

### **Quarterly National Accounts: A Revised and Enlarged Publication**

The latest May 2002 issue of the Quarterly National Accounts publication, takes account of five more OECD countries and now covers 28 OECD countries. It presents a new set of tables covering a selection of the accounts most widely used for economic analysis.

GDP by expenditure and by activity, gross fixed capital formation by product and by sector, and components of

disposable income are shown at both current and constant prices. Saving and net lending and GDP by income are available at current prices.

Totals for the main expenditures on GDP are also provided in two standard tables for the five following groups of countries: OECD, OECD-Europe, the European Union, the Euro area and the Major 7 (G7). These totals are given at current and constant US dollars and are based on data converted into dollars using GDP purchasing power parities.

Comparative tables showing volume and price indices for countries' main expenditures on GDP are given in the last part of the publication.

### **International Price and Volume Comparisons of GDP: The International Comparison Programme (ICP)**

The World Bank held an international conference on the ICP in Washington from 11th to 14th March 2002. The conference brought together key ICP experts and players from universities and research institutes, national statistical offices, regional coordinating agencies and various international organisations. Its purpose was to consider a number of research papers and pilot studies that the World Bank had commissioned as part of the planning of the next round of the ICP which is currently scheduled for 2003.

The topics discussed included the survey framework, the improvement of the quality and usefulness of the prices collected, the compilation of expenditure weights for aggregating primary price data, the measurement of medical, educational and other non-market services, the linking of countries both within a region and between regions and the integration of the ICP with the CPI, with poverty measurement and with alternative approaches to international comparisons. The papers presented at the conference can be found on the World bank web site: [www.worldbank.org/data/icp/](http://www.worldbank.org/data/icp/)

### **PARIS21**

The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (PARIS21) has launched a new quarterly newsletter [www.paris21.org/pdf/NL\\_01\\_en.pdf](http://www.paris21.org/pdf/NL_01_en.pdf). In addition to English, versions in French, Spanish and Arabic are being prepared.

Earlier this year the UN Statistical Commission stressed the importance of statistical capacity building and that such efforts and related technical cooperation activities need to be embedded within the national framework of development policies. The Commission also agreed that the PARIS21 initiative provided a useful framework in which issues such as raising the profile of statistics and coordination of technical cooperation could be addressed. It welcomed the regional approach of PARIS21.

-----

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### □ OECD Economic Outlook No. 71 Preliminary Edition

This preliminary edition of the *OECD Economic Outlook* analyses the major trends that will mark the next two years. It provides in-depth coverage of the economic policy measures required to foster high and sustainable growth in each Member country. Recent measures and forthcoming developments in major non-OECD economies in East Asia, Russia and South America, in particular Brazil, are also evaluated in detail. Each edition of this Outlook provides a unique tool to keep abreast of world economic developments. The online Preliminary Edition is prepared six to eight weeks prior to the release of the print edition.

The introduction and summary of projections, as well as individual country summaries, are available to download **free of charge** at <http://www.oecd.org/EN/document/0,,EN-document-0-nodirectorate-no-2-21578-0,00.html> :

The *OECD Economic Outlook* Flashfile contains a summary of the projections for the Preliminary Edition of the *OECD Economic Outlook No. 71*. Data for key macroeconomic variables are presented in this Excel file for all OECD countries and regions. This file can be downloaded **free of charge**.

The *OECD Economic Outlook No. 71* will include the following special chapters, which highlight selected current policy issues. These topics will generally be treated in more detail in forthcoming Economics Department Working Papers. The chapters, listed below, will be made available one by one on the Web (in PDF form) over the course of May and June 2002.

- Economic consequences of terrorism
- Ongoing changes in the business cycle
- Intra-industry trade and intra-firm trade and the internationalisation of production
- Productivity and innovation: the impact of product and labour market policies
- Exchange market volatility and security transaction taxes

Special chapters from previous issues of the OECD Economic Outlook are also available online in PDF form.

To access the full version of the final edition, chose from the following options:

- Subscribers and readers at subscribing institutions to the *OECD Economic Outlook* can access the online Preliminary Edition of the *OECD Economic Outlook No. 71* via [SourceOECD](#).
- Non-subscribers can purchase the PDF e-book of the Preliminary Edition of the *OECD Economic Outlook No. 71* via our [Online bookshop](#).
- Access by password for [accredited journalists](#).

The EO71 version of the *OECD Economic Outlook* Database Inventory, the *Economic Outlook* CD-ROM User Guide, and the Sources and Methods will be updated following the release of the print edition of the *Economic Outlook*.

### □ GATS: The Case for Open Services Markets

This study has a threefold purpose. First, to recall the economic case that underpins service sector reforms and the policy rationales for pursuing open service markets through trade and investment liberalisation. Second, to address concerns over the effects of the GATS by explaining the operation of the Agreement, the obligations WTO Members subscribe to and the policy options they may pursue under it. And third, to point out some of the key negotiating challenges of the current GATS round, focusing particular attention on the interests and concerns of developing countries and recalling the potential the GATS holds for anchoring development-enhancing reforms in services markets.

- [Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ Measuring Up: Improving Health Systems Performance in OECD Countries

This book highlights the core elements of a possible performance measurement framework to assess health systems at the international and national levels. It also addresses further challenges which remain: how do we overcome the lack of health outcome measures? How do we better align performance information and incentives with policy objectives? And how do we reconcile the traditional professional self-regulation approach with greater public accountability for health care quality?

- [Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ Basic Science and Technology Statistics: 2001 Edition

How much personnel and money is devoted to research and experimental development (R&D)? This publication provides recent basic statistics on the resources devoted to R&D in OECD countries. The statistical series start from 1981 and cover, inter alia, expenditure by source of funds, type of costs, personnel by occupation and/or level of qualification, at national level by performance sector, for enterprises by industry, and for higher education by field of science.

- [Now available in CD-Rom from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ Financial Market Trends No. 81

The April 2002 edition of Financial Market Trends includes articles on recent trends, electronic finance, supervision of financial services and pension fund governance.

### □ Purchasing Power Parities and Real Expenditures: 1999 Benchmark Year 2002 Edition

The purchasing power parities and real expenditures contained in this publication cover 43 countries including the 30 OECD Member countries, the 13 EU candidate countries, Israel and the Russian Federation. They are based on price and expenditure data for 1999 and have been calculated using the EKS aggregation method. International comparisons of price levels and real GDP can be made using the price and volume measures presented in this publication.

- [Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ Agriculture and Trade Liberalisation: Extending the Uruguay Round Agreement

This report provides information on the average tariff levels and on the use of tariff-rate quotas, export subsidies and export credits by selected OECD countries for temperate-zone agricultural products. The implications of further liberalisation of the various instruments over the medium term are examined.

- [Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ OECD Historical Statistics: 1970/2000 2001 Edition

This annual publication provides an overview of the economic development of the Member countries of the OECD since 1970. The tables mainly show derived statistics such as growth rates and percentage shares. They include national accounts, population and labour force, prices and domestic finance, as well as international trade with OECD and groups of non-member countries.

- [Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ International Development Statistics CD-ROM 2002 Edition

Published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, this CD-ROM provides economists and researchers with a unique source of up-to-date comparative development statistics and information on: volume, origin and types of aid and other resource flows to over 180 aid recipient countries; individual aid activities on bilateral/multilateral Official Development Assistance or Official Aid commitments by sector, donors, recipient, with detailed information on projects; amount and composition of the external debt of over 170 aid recipient countries; key development indicators; Aid charts for DAC members, recipient countries/territories and regions.

This new edition includes: DAC/GEO (Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Aid Recipients, 1960-2000) and EDS (External Debt Statistics, 1975-2000) databases

which are in user-friendly Beyond 20/20™, a Windows™-based software that allows you to build customised tables and charts, export the data, and perform your own analysis; CRS (Creditor Reporting System, 1973-2000) and DCR/STATS (Statistical Annex of the 2001 Development Co-operation Report) databases which are in CSV and/or Microsoft™ Excel format; Aid at a Glance, including Aid Charts for DAC Members, recipient countries/territories and regions; A detailed documentation in Acrobat™ format for each database; A free annual subscription to the International Development Statistics Online databases which allows access to the most up-to-date data. For further information, please consult: [www.oecd.org/bookshop](http://www.oecd.org/bookshop) and [www.oecd.org/dac/stats](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats).

### □ Handbook of Biodiversity Valuation: A Guide for Policy Makers

This Handbook describes the types of values usually associated with biodiversity. While there are exceptions to the need to prioritise economic values over other cultural, traditional and spiritual values, economic valuation has a sound theoretical foundation that can help clarify the tradeoffs implicit in public policy decisions. On the other hand, the Handbook recognises the limitations of the economic approach, and considers how economic and non-economic values can eventually be reconciled.

- [Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)

### □ Main Economic Indicators: Non-Member Countries

This is a monthly bulletin providing the latest monthly, quarterly and annual indicators for: Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Estonia, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, The Russian Federation, Slovenia and Ukraine. It is available on the internet at [www.oecd.org/pdf/M00009000/M00009160.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M00009000/M00009160.pdf).

## *OECDdirect Registration*

Do you wish to be informed about new publications from OECDdirect? To register, change your interests, or unregister, simply update your profile via "MyOECD" in the top right of the OECD Homepage at <http://www.oecd.org>

If you have any publication ordering queries or comments, please contact our customer service team by e-mail at [sales@oecd.org](mailto:sales@oecd.org) or by Fax:(33-1) 45-24-19-50.

## ONLINE ACCESS DEVELOPMENTS

### *Data Collection on the World Wide Web using Excel*

By Eric Déry, OECD

A paper prepared for the third meeting of OECD Statisticians on 30 April examines a few tools available within Microsoft Excel that facilitate the extraction of data directly from the Internet. For example, Excel allows users, at the simple click of a button, to automatically pull economic data and other type of information from your intranet server or from the Internet and transfer it directly into an Excel worksheet for tracking and analysis. This type of function could be particularly useful for statisticians and analysts involved in the gathering and frequent/regular updating of data from various internet sources.

Much of the information presented to Internet users today is in HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) tables. Indeed, tables are a useful way to organize information and display it effectively and attractively. It is possible to import HTML information, especially tables, directly into Excel worksheets.

This paper examines Excel's Web Queries. This feature goes beyond allowing the simple importation of HTML information and lets the user query a specific Web page or server, and receive the result directly in an Excel worksheet. A query can be automated, it can prompt for parameters, or it can use the contents of a worksheet as input. From Excel worksheets, it is possible to use Web Queries to pull "live" updated data from the Internet or an intranet, and then perform calculations and analysis with the updated data. Information can be refreshed automatically, and as often as needed, while maintaining worksheet layout and formulas unchanged, even if the amount of data returned changes.

Excel supports hyperlinks that allow users to click on a cell or object and connect to an Internet or intranet Web page, another Excel worksheet, or any Office document. Excel also supports several HTML extensions that allow tables to be displayed normally in a worksheet. An Active Server Page (ASP) web site can also be imported, using a Web Query, into an Excel worksheet. Finally, all of these tools can be fully automated using Excel Visual Basic for Applications for custom solutions.

In short, almost any static or dynamic Web page (HTML, ASP, Common Gateway Interface (CGI), etc.) that require parameters to be loaded and passed to a table page, can be imported into Excel using the Web Query functionality.

The full document<sup>2</sup> covers the two following topics:

- Hyperlinks (including linked cells)
- Web Query

Web Queries are tools that can facilitate data collection from the World Wide Web. While the statistician will need some

time up-front to set them up appropriately, Web Queries have the potential to significantly reduce the overall time spent on data collection.

The following is a list (so far identified) of member countries' Central Banks and National and International Statistical Agencies where Web Queries can be performed to retrieve data on the click of a button:

- ✓ National Bank of Belgium
- ✓ Statistics Denmark
- ✓ Banque de France
- ✓ Deutsche Bundesbank
- ✓ National Statistical of Greece
- ✓ Central Statistics Office Ireland
- ✓ Banca d'Italia
- ✓ De Nederlandsche Bank
- ✓ Statistics Norway
- ✓ National Bank of Slovakia
- ✓ Statistical Office of Slovak Republic
- ✓ Statistics Sweden
- ✓ Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey
- ✓ Bureau of Labor Statistics (United States)
- ✓ Statistical Office of the European Communities (EuroStat)
- ✓ OECD

For further information or a copy of the paper contact [Eric.Dery@oecd.org](mailto:Eric.Dery@oecd.org)

The **Statistics Newsletter** is published by the Statistics Directorate of the OECD

**Editor in chief:** Enrico Giovannini

**Editor:** William Cave

**Editorial assistant:** Marie-Line Noonan

**Technical advice and assistance** Joscelyn Magdeleine

**Distribution** Anne Hamilton

**For further information contact:** *The Editor, The Statistics Newsletter, email* [STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org](mailto:STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org)

Readers are invited to send their articles or comments to the above email address

*deadline for articles for the next issue is 10 June 2002*

**Contributors in this issue:**

Bongho Choi, OECD/STD

Eric Déry, OECD/STD

Micheline Harary, OECD/STD

Christopher Heady, OECD/DAFFE

Jan Plovsing, Statistics Denmark

David Roberts, OECD/STD

Gérard Salou, OECD/STD

Antoine Simonpietri OECD/DCD

Denis Ward, OECD/STD

<sup>2</sup> A lot of the information in this document is based on information provided in "Microsoft Excel Web Connectivity Kit"

## ***Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings***

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

### **2002**

**27-31 May** Meeting on Purchasing Power Parities Program for CIS Group, Moscow, *Statistics Directorate (STD)*

**3 June** Steering Group on Revenue Statistics, Paris, *Directorate for Financial, Fiscal and Enterprise Affairs (DAF)*

**4-5 June** Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Statistics (WP-STAT), Paris, *Directorate for Co-operation and Development, (DCD)*

**6-7 June** ICCP Committee, Working Party of the Information Economy (WPIE), Paris, *Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI)*

**10-12 June** Conference of European Statisticians, Paris, *Statistics Directorate (STD)*

**13 June** OECD High Level Group on Statistics, Paris, *Statistics Directorate (STD)*

**13-14 June** Working Party on Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Paris, *Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS)*

**24-25 June** OECD Short-term Economic Statistics Expert Group Meeting, Paris, *Statistics Directorate (STD)*

(for information go to <http://www.oecd.org/EN/document/0,,EN-document-notheme-15-no-20-27740-0,00.html> )

**25-26 June** UN Interagency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, Dresden, *Statistics Directorate (STD)*

**7-9 October** Norway/OECD Expert Meeting on Agricultural Landscape Indicators, Oslo.

## ***Other International Statistical Meetings***

**23-24 May**, CEIES 18th seminar “Active Ageing Statistics”, The Hague, The Netherlands - see [forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library](http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library) Deadline for registration: 8 May 2002. 26-27

**27-29 August** IAOS Official Statistics and the New Economy, London – see [www.singstat.gov.sg/IAOS](http://www.singstat.gov.sg/IAOS)

**September**, CEIES 19th seminar “Innovative Solutions in Providing Access to Microdata”, Lisbon, Portugal – see [forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library](http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library)

**14-15 November**, CEIES 20th seminar “Labour Statistics – Towards Enlargement”, Budapest, Hungary – see [forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library](http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/ceies/library)

### ***ERRATA***

The March OECD Statistics Newsletter contained two errata which we have been asked to correct. They are as follows:  
*2-5 April Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Statistics (WP-STAT), Paris, Directorate for Co-operation and Development, (DCD)*

by

*2-5 April Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Statistics (WP-STAT **Informal meeting**), Paris, Directorate for Co-operation and Development, (DCD)*

-----

On page 7 of the March Newsletter we referred to the new publication of *International Development Statistics 2000 Edition*. The reference is wrong, it should have read **2002 Edition**, released in March 2002.

The correct text is shown in this month’s recent publications section. We apologise for any confusion caused.

## ***DATABASE OF THE MONTH***

### **TAXING WAGES**

The OECD Taxing Wages database contains the information published in the annual *Taxing Wages* publication. Its purpose is to provide internationally comparative data on direct tax levied on employees and their employers in all Member countries of the OECD. These taxes include the employer's social security contributions and employee's social security contributions plus personal income tax. In addition it specifies family benefits paid as cash transfers. Amounts of taxes and benefits are detailed programme by programme, for eight household types, which differ by income level and household composition. Results include the tax burden for one-and two-earner families, with and without children.

The information in the database is useful in assessing the tax burden on ordinary workers in OECD countries, the extent to which taxes and benefits redistribute income between different types of household and the incentives that households have to participate in the labour market and to increase their hours of work.

#### **Methodology**

In contrast to many OECD databases, Taxing Wages mainly contains data that are derived from simulation models based on the concept of 'representative taxpayers', rather than statistical surveys. This is because the personal circumstances of taxpayers vary greatly, and the comparisons between countries are most useful if they are made between people who are as similar as possible. To identify representative taxpayers and to calculate the amount of their taxes, the database focuses on employees. It is assumed that their annual income from employment is equal to a given fraction of the average gross wage earnings of adult, full-time production workers in the manufacturing sector of each OECD economy. Additional assumptions are made regarding other relevant personal circumstances of these wage earners to enable their tax/benefit position to be determined.

The gross wage earnings of the average production workers (APW) are obtained from established sample surveys in each country. This information is then combined with detailed information on the tax rules and family benefit systems in each country to calculate the taxes, social security contributions and benefits for each household type. In addition, the additional taxes that would have to be paid on any small income increase, the marginal tax rate, are calculated in order to provide information on the incentives that households have to increase their labour supply.

It is only possible to carry out these 'typical taxpayer' calculations for a fairly narrow range of incomes and for households that receive all their income from labour. This is because very poor households are entitled to social benefits that depend in a very complex way on their individual circumstances, while the richer members of society are often able to claim tax deductions that are also both complex and dependent on detailed individual circumstances.

#### **Variables included**

There are four types of variables in the database: ***TAX, TYPE, COUNTRY and PERIOD***

***TAX*** variables include: earnings, tax allowances, tax credits, central government income tax, state and local income taxes, employees' compulsory social security contributions, cash transfers from general government, take-home pay, employers' compulsory social security contributions, average and marginal tax rates.

**TYPE** covers the eight family-types mentioned:

- *Single1* for single individuals with no child, earning 67% of the Average Production Worker (APW) wage,
- *Single2* for single individuals with no child, earning 100% of the APW wage,
  - *Single3* for single individuals with no child, earning 167% of the APW wage,
  - *Single4* for single individuals with two children, earning 67% of the APW wage,
- *Married1* for married couples with two children earning:  
Principal earner 100% and Spouse 0% of the APW wage,
- *Married2* for married couples with two children earning:  
Principal earner 100% and Spouse 33 % of the APW wage,
- *Married3* for married couples with two children earning:  
Principal earner 100% and Spouse 67% of the APW wage,
- *Married4* for married couples with no child earning:  
Principal earner 100% and Spouse 33% of the APW wage.

**COUNTRY** statistics cover all 30 OECD Member countries.

**PERIOD** indicates the year to which figures refer: 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 or 2001.

#### **Accessing the data**

The data and methodological details are available on CD-ROM (Beyond 20/20) and via the OECD's online service Source OECD. Government agencies can access the data via OLISnet. A paper version, *Taxing Wages*, is published annually.

#### **Contacting us**

We welcome any comments and requests you may have on the database. Please contact the Centre for Tax Policy and Administration:

Email: [daffa.contact@oecd.org](mailto:daffa.contact@oecd.org)

By regular mail: Tax Policy and Statistics Division, Centre for Tax Policy and Administration, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16.