

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

October 2001

Issue No. 4

The Follow-up to the EU-USA “Benchmarking Study”

By Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician of the OECD

In the July Newsletter, Svante Öberg, Director General of Statistics Sweden, presented the “EU-US Benchmarking Study on Infra-annual Economic Statistics”, carried out by Eurostat and some European statistical offices, with the participation of the OECD. The main aim of the study was to identify the main legal, organisational and technical factors that explain the differences existing in the availability and the timeliness of short-term economic statistics in the European Union and in the United States of America. The specific Task Force created at the beginning of 2001 presented its recommendations in July and the Eurostat Statistical Programme Committee (SPC), where heads of NSOs are present, discussed them in September.

In particular, the Task Force presented several papers focused on statistical and organisational matters, evaluating the main reasons of the differences observed both between EU and US, and within the EU. An impressive amount of documentation has been collected, which will be widely disseminated and used by Eurostat to stimulate the adoption of best practice across European statistical offices, mainly in order to improve the timeliness of short-term economic statistics. Finally, three main recommendations have been suggested:

- that the SPC makes a strategic commitment to improve substantially, in five years, the timeliness of European key short term economic statistics, achieving standards comparable to the best in Europe, USA and the rest of the world;
- that specific studies on developing European wide surveys would be launched;
- that studies on a number of methods to improve timeliness should commence (for example, on the development of a common dissemination platform, in-depth analysis of good statistical practices within the EU, benchmarking of monthly and quarterly statistics to annual statistics, etc.).

The SPC welcomed the report and endorsed the technical recommendations, committing itself to make efforts to improve the timeliness of these statistics, taking into account the other aspects of quality, production costs and the burden on respondents. Eurostat will present an implementation program, which will be annually monitored by SPC.

The OECD, underlying its general agreement with the Task Force’s recommendations, presented some additional comments to the SPC, and informed them of some actions that we intend to undertake in order to stimulate future developments in this area. First of all, we stressed that, although timeliness is very important, it cannot become the only target of national statistical offices. Even if it is possible to undertake several actions to improve timeliness in releasing EU short-term economic and financial statistics, it is also important to stress the current good overall quality of the existing European economic statistics.

Secondly, it is important to consider that, in a “global world”, international data comparability is, at least, as important as timeliness. As OECD experience shows, the comparability between the European and non-European countries is, in various areas, quite unsatisfactory.

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OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston sent the following message after the tragic events in the United States on September 11:

“On behalf of the OECD Secretariat, I wish to express our solidarity with the United States and the American people in condemning these barbaric acts and extend our sincere sympathy to those who have relatives or loved ones among the victims”.

(Continued from page 1)

Finally, the implementation of some recommendations could really create a “discontinuity point” in the evolution of the European Statistical System. For example, it could be necessary to adopt, at least in some cases, a true supranational perspective, moving away from a pure “output harmonisation” towards an “input harmonisation” across countries. This change would require very careful technical and organisational analysis, but it would surely represent a relevant change in the current situation.

Even if there are several documents available about the methods used by US statistical agencies, the benchmarking study has represented, for several EU countries, the first concrete opportunity to gain an extensive knowledge of the US organisation, and of the methodologies used in the area of short-term economic statistics. This experience shows that it is absolutely necessary to establish more continuous contacts between the European Statistical System and other developed non-European countries. The OECD could play an important “bridging role” between European and non-European developed countries. In statistics, several working parties and experts groups are active in different areas. In particular, the National Accounts Experts Group, the Statistical Working Party on Labour Statistics, and the International Trade Statistics Experts Group could be requested to conduct a more specific comparative analysis of methods used in OECD countries to improve timeliness in data production and dissemination.

In addition, the OECD Statistics Directorate has decided to launch a new Expert Group on “short-term economic indicators”, which will cover the areas of quarterly national accounts, output and demand indicators and prices indicators. This Expert Group could become the forum in which to develop a continuous exchange of experiences between EU and non-EU OECD countries, in coordination with what is done in other international and supranational organisations. A first meeting could be scheduled in early 2002, and could focus on some of the topics recommended for further study by the Task Force, and on topics suggested by non-EU countries. This proposal has

been already discussed with Eurostat, as well as with some OECD countries, which welcomed and support the initiative.

As already mentioned, the benchmarking study contains an impressive amount of information, which may be very useful for several non-EU countries. The OECD has proposed to Eurostat to cooperate in publishing and disseminating the report, which could also be presented to some OECD committees, in order to increase policy makers’ awareness of the efforts made by the statistical authorities to meet their needs.

Measurement of software in national accounts

By François Lequiller, OECD

In the last few years many countries have implemented the new SNA 93, including its new recommendation on the recording of software as gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) rather than as intermediate consumption. In the old SNA 68, gross fixed capital formation was limited to goods and excluded software and other intangibles. This was a severe limitation for macroeconomic analysis, when, at the same time, business accounting already permitted the recording of software as fixed assets. This change in national accounts was thus welcome. However, recent studies have shown that the conventions used by national accountants in OECD Member countries to record software as gross fixed capital formation differ significantly. The following graph shows that the ratio of gross fixed capital formation over an aggregate estimating total software resources

(gross fixed capital formation plus intermediate consumption) varies from a little over 10% for the United Kingdom to more than 50% in the United States.

This has a significant impact on GDP: for the same production of software, to count it as gross fixed capital formation will increment GDP, but to count it as intermediate consumption will not. GDP growth rates can be affected by more than 0.2-0.3% per year, owing to the different conventions implemented.

OECD is convoking in October 2001 a special task force devoted to this issue. The task force’s objectives will be to draft recommendations for improving the comparability of data on issues such as:

What is GFCF?

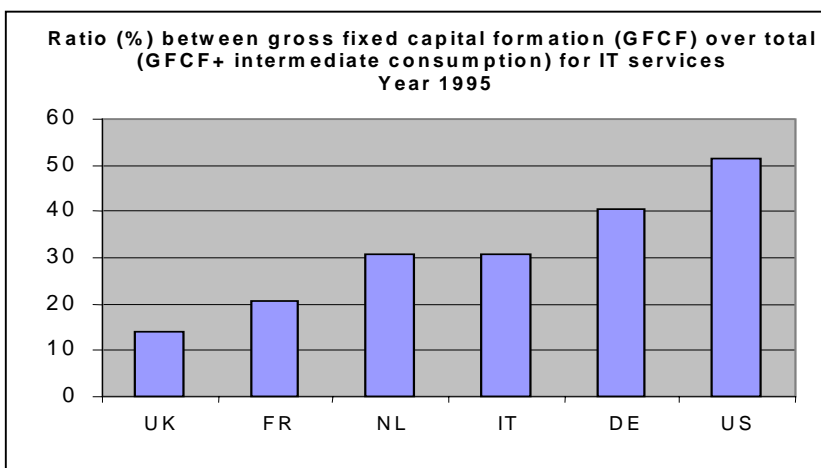
What is intermediate consumption?

Production of in-house software, imports and exports of software, originals and reproductions, depreciation and deflators.

The OECD task force is to be chaired by Carol Moylan, from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. The first meeting will take place during the annual OECD national accounts expert meeting (9-12 October 2001). For more details go to the OECD National Accounts Meeting webpage

<http://www.oecd.org/oecd/pages/home/displaygeneral/0,3380,EN-document-notheme-15-no-20-5228-no,FF.html>

Eurostat is launching a parallel task force for EU countries. The work of the two task forces will be closely coordinated.



Development of OECD Glossary of Statistical Terminology and Variables *By Denis Ward, OECD*

Over the last few months the OECD has been developing an extensive statistical glossary containing both target definitions of the main variables collected by the Organisation for use in its statistical and analytical output, and definitions of key terminology/concepts used in OECD publications. The OECD Glossary is being prepared in the context of an overall OECD statistics strategy, an important element of which is the development of a new corporate data environment. The Glossary will be an integral part of the new environment. As will be seen below, the Glossary will also be linked externally to the work of other international organisations in the development of international statistical standards.

The first production version of the OECD Glossary is expected to be available on the OECD website by the end of 2001. Discussions are also currently taking place with other international organisations, such as Eurostat, with a view to establishing and maintaining a joint glossary with a structure similar to the OECD Glossary described below.

The main aim of the OECD Glossary is to provide a common reference set of definitions to facilitate the collection of consistent data by the various Directorates and Committees of the Organisation. The Glossary is also intended to lend greater transparency to OECD data requirements from national agencies that provide information to the Organisation.

Over the last two or three decades an extensive range of statistical guidelines and recommendations have been prepared by international organisations (such as the IMF, ILO, Eurostat, OECD, UNSD) working with national statistical institutes and other agencies responsible for the initial compilation and dissemination of statistical data¹. The

¹ A comprehensive list of guidelines is maintained by UN Statistical Division on their website *Methodological Publications in Statistics*:

(<http://esa.un.org/unsd/progwork>). The list provides information about current development work being carried out on these statistical standards. Another site listing almost all of the existing current

definitions contained in the OECD Glossary, in particular for variable definitions, have been derived from existing international statistical standards where these exist. In the main, the definitions are quoted word for word from these standards and detailed reference information is provided to enable the user to refer to the complete source document to obtain further information/context where needed. In this regard, extensive use is made of internet links.

It should be emphasised that the definitions contained in the OECD Glossary, in particular, for those relating to variables collected by the OECD are “target” definitions based on existing international statistical recommendations and guidelines. National practices, methodologies and concepts that are used in the actual compilation of data by OECD Member countries may (and frequently do) depart from these standards for a number of reasons. Information on national definitions, concepts, etc, for specific data collected from Member countries are normally presented in relevant OECD publications.

The main elements of the OECD Glossary are:

- unique title for the definition;
- text outlining the actual definition;
- source reference information;
- statistical activity description;
- cross references.

In a relatively small number of instances several variations exist for the one term included in the OECD Glossary. This occurs, for example, when definitions prepared in the context of the System of National Accounts (SNA 93) exist in parallel with those prepared by other United Nations and other international organisations such as the OECD and Eurostat to meet particular requirements. For example, Eurostat and European Commission definitions have been prepared for the European context, and though these definitions are in the main consistent with those developed by United Nations agencies they are often more detailed/specific and are frequently imbedded in various European Commission Regulations.

international statistical classifications is provided on a Eurostat site-
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon>

Where more than one definition exists, a unique title has been provided in the Glossary to identify the source of each definition in the title (SNA, Eurostat, ISIC, UN, ESA, ILO, etc.). The presentation order of such multiple source definitions is as follows:

- those obtained from SNA 93;
- followed by those derived from UN agencies – IMF, ILO, UNSD, etc;
- followed by those developed by other international organisations such as Eurostat, OECD;
- followed by definitions from other sources.

For further information on the OECD Glossary contact: denis.ward@oecd.org

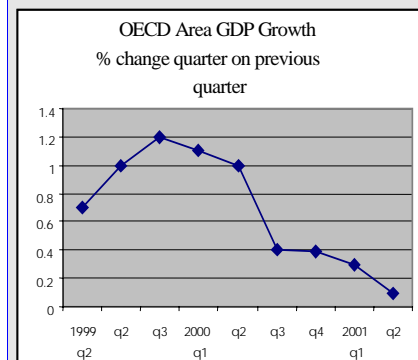
OECD Statistics News Release

Growth slows in OECD area in Q2 2001

On 19 September OECD Statistics Directorate issued the first of a new series of News Releases.

In the second quarter of 2001, GDP in the 30 countries of the OECD area is estimated to have grown by 0.1% compared to the previous quarter. Overall growth in the OECD area continued to slow in the second quarter, for the sixth consecutive quarter.

This News Release can be found at www.oecd.org



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The OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2001 – Towards a Knowledge-based Economy

By Alessandra Colecchia, OECD

The OECD Science, Technology and Industry Directorate has just released the Scoreboard 2001 that brings together over 160 indicators, 60% of which new to this edition, and provides a picture of the trends and implications of the knowledge-based economy. With the essential findings presented in bullet points and methodological notes on indicators and data sources, the publication combines statistical rigour with easy access and readability. For the first time, an electronic version also gives users “clickable” access to data used in charts and figures (see also <http://www.oecd.org/oecd/pages/home/displaygeneral/0,3380,EN-home-54-1-no-no-no-no,FF.html>).

The ability to create, distribute and exploit knowledge is increasingly central to competitive advantage, wealth creation and better standards of

the internet is soaring everywhere, yet in 2000 there was still a noticeable gap between OECD countries. While more than 40 percent of households have Internet access in Sweden, Denmark, United States, Netherlands and Canada, in some others such as Japan, Italy, Germany and France less than a fifth of the households have access to the Internet (see Figure 2). Business use of the Internet is increasing very rapidly although the rate of diffusion differs between users and across countries and the use of the Internet to conduct transactions is still limited. Value of Internet sales in 2000 ranged between 0.4 and 2% of total sales, while computer mediated sales reached 6% in UK partly owing to differences in access costs. The ICT sector also makes a substantial contribution to the economy. In 1999, ICT value added represented between 5% and 14% of business sector value added in OECD countries. The ICT sector is also a major source of employment growth. OECD employment in the sector grew by over 12% in the 1995-99 period, *i.e.* an average annual rate of over 3% a year, double that of overall business sector employment. ICT services are

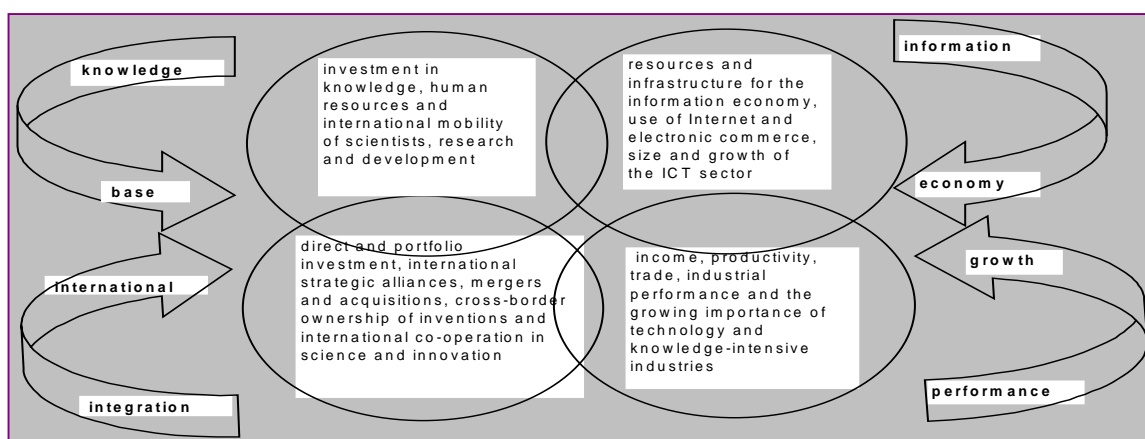


Figure 1 - The four themes of the Scoreboard 2001

living. As the *STI Scoreboard 2001* indicators show, the knowledge-intensity of OECD economies is increasing. Investment in knowledge, particularly in R&D and software, is rising, as is investment in ICT. Moreover, the composition of investment is changing, particularly in R&D where a growing proportion is funded by business. Knowledge flows within and across OECD economies are increasing as well, as shown by growing co-operation in science and innovation, greater international mobility of high-skilled workers and continued globalisation of trade and investment.

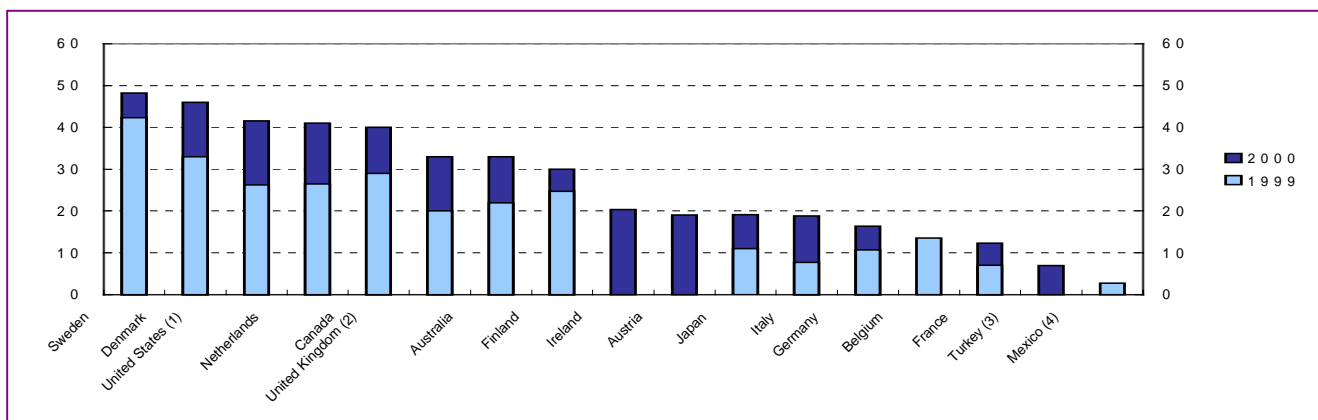
Information and communications technologies are also spreading quickly and support more rapid knowledge creation and diffusion. The Scoreboard 2001 includes for the first time indicators that measure countries' readiness for the new information technologies, their diffusion and impacts. Access to

driving this growth.

The knowledge based economy is also reflected in the economic performance of several OECD countries. High-technology sectors contribute to more rapid growth in some, and the share of these sectors – both in manufacturing and services – continues to grow. Moreover, the overall efficiency of capital and labour has increased in some OECD countries in the 1990s, partly owing to more rapid technological progress. Indicators of patenting confirm the swift pace of innovation.

While the overall trends are clear, large differences remain within the OECD area. The Nordic countries, notably Finland and Sweden, and the United States appear to be in the lead in the transition to a knowledge-based economy, as high investment in knowledge, rapid innovation and the pace of diffusion of ICT indicate. Countries such as Japan and several large European countries appear to lag in important

Figure 2 - Households with access to Internet, 1999 and 2000



Source: OECD, Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard, 2001, based on the ICT database.

Footnotes: For Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, access to the Internet via a home computer; for the other countries access to the Internet through any device (e.g. computer, phone, TV, etc.). (1) 1998 instead of 1999; (2) Last quarter 2000; (3) Households in urban areas only; (4) Households in urban areas with more than 15 000 inhabitants only.

areas, including investment in knowledge, innovation and growth of a high-skilled workforce. For certain OECD countries, openness to international knowledge flows also seems to lag. This suggests scope for further progress. However, the transition to a knowledge-based economy requires progress in many areas, and even countries that are ahead in many of them lag in others.

NEW Indicators in the Scoreboard 2001

About 60% of the indicators in the Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard are new with respect to the previous 1999 edition. Here are some particularly interesting indicators:

Patent indicators based on patent families. Patent-based indicators provide a measure of the output of a country's R&D: its inventions. However, the methodologies used can influence the results. Simple counts of patents filed at an intellectual property office are affected by various sources of bias, such as weaknesses in international comparability ("home advantage" bias as a country will take more patents in its domestic market than in another region) or high heterogeneity of patent values within a single office. Patent families indicators, defined as a set of patents taken in various countries to protect a single invention (when a first application in a country – the priority – is then extended to other offices) have been compiled. The patent family thus includes patents applied for at the European Patent Office (EPO), the US Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO) and the Japanese Patent Office (JPO). The geographical influence on patenting disappears as the measures are not longer influenced by the region in which the patents are taken.

Use of the Internet and electronic commerce and the size and growth of the ICT sector. A new set of high quality indicators shows the significant progress made by National Statistical Offices in the area of measuring the information economy. It also reflects OECD efforts to improve international comparability by developing definitions (OECD definitions of the ICT sector and of electronic commerce transaction) and propose

harmonised methodologies to survey the use of ICT in the business, households and government sectors).

Activities of foreign affiliates in the service sector. Firms are increasingly adopting global strategies. While foreign direct investment data capture the magnitude of financial flows between firms in foreign locations, data on the activity of foreign affiliates can be used to analyse the weight and economic contribution of such firms in host countries. For the first time, activities of foreign affiliates in the service sector are presented in the Scoreboard 2001. Although the collection of data only started in the second half of the 1990s, the available statistics so far confirm the increasing role of foreign firms both in terms of turnover and employment.

An improved classification of technology and knowledge-intensive industries. The Scoreboard 2001 relies on an improved OECD classification of manufacturing industries according to technology intensity and of the "knowledge-intensive" services sectors. The technology classification of manufacturing industries has been revised based on ISIC Rev. 3 R&D intensities. The main feature is the transfer of "Medical, precision and optical instruments" (ISIC Rev. 3, division 33) from the medium-high- to the high-technology group. The classification of "knowledge-intensive" services has proved more challenging. A narrower definition owing to improved data availability has been developed. The 1999 Scoreboard used the broad group "Finance, insurance, real estate and business services" (ISIC Rev. 2, division 8). In the 2001 edition, "Real estate activities" (over 10% of total OECD area value added) are excluded, as a significant proportion consists of "Imputed rent of owner-occupied dwellings."

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News in Brief

Treatment of Euro in OECD Statistics

In January 2001, a small group was set up at OECD to take a closer look at the implications of the introduction of the euro in 2002 for statistical work at the OECD. Two main issues arise in this context: (a) the presentation of national data of EMU member countries in OECD publications and databases; (b) the aggregation of national data to totals for the euro area.

Presentation of national data. As from 2002, EMU member countries will start reporting national statistical data in euro (EUR). Consequently, EUR-denominated series will be transmitted to OECD and other international organisations. For national statistical offices as well as for OECD the question arises how to present time series of data that cover years *prior* to a country's accession to the EMU. The OECD taskforce opted for converting the data in national denomination into 'national euro' by applying the irrevocable conversion rate between the national currency and the EUR (as for example, established on January 1st 1999 for the EU-11 countries). This procedure has the significant advantage of preserving the time profile of all historical national series – conversion back and forth is easily carried out by multiplication with a fixed coefficient. Also, current and constant price data can be treated without distinction. Many national statistical offices favour this option.

While simple and useful, the results are susceptible to mis-interpretation when national and international currencies are not well distinguished. More precisely, a conversion of national data to euro for pre-EMU years (typically before 1999) by applying the irrevocable conversion rate is conceptually equivalent to changing the denomination of the *national currency*. Generating Euro area totals on the basis of fixed conversion rates for observations regarding the years prior to 1999 is only a valid option under very specific circumstances and otherwise has little, if any economic meaning.

For presentational purposes, and to distinguish the so-obtained euro denomination of the national currency from a true conversion into an international currency, OECD will use the label '*[year of accession] [ISO currency code] euro*', e.g., **1999 FRF euro** for data converted with the irrevocable rate and relating to years prior to EMU accession.

From **January 15, 2002 onwards**, OECD statistical publications and databases will use the EUR or the '1999/2001 [ISO code] euro' as the currency unit for individual EU12 countries.

Zone aggregation. In parallel, OECD is undertaking further steps towards providing data relative to the Euro area to users. One particular objective is to establish, in co-ordination with the European Central Bank and Eurostat, and in response to analytical requirements, a set of national accounts for the Euro area, thereby treating it as one country. Contact paul.schreyer@oecd.org

The Voorburg Group 2001 in Sweden

The 16th Voorburg Group meeting of Experts on Services Statistics was held in Örebro Sweden 17-21 October, hosted by Statistics Sweden (SCB). Delegates from 17 countries in four continents and four international organisations attended.

The mood was sombre and reflective in the wake of the events in the US the week before, and in the consequent absence of a number of delegates, who were prevented from travelling. These absences caused some improvisations in the programme. The main casualty was the postponement of the IMF led Technical Expert Group on the PPI Manual, which was to have met in parallel with the Voorburg Group

Services Producer Price Indices

The work on services producer price indices has taken centre stage at the last three meetings of the Voorburg Group following guidance from the UN Statistical Commission in 1999. It has helped to generate and harmonise the growing activity in this area. An impressive amount has been achieved.

The aim has been to produce specific and useful outputs in the form of principal papers, which for specified service activities identify a business model, theoretical considerations such as definitions of industry outputs and alternative pricing methodologies. Recommendations for 'good practice' and a number of country case studies are included. These principal papers, which are coordinated and produced by volunteer lead countries, are intended to link into the PPI Manual development work to illustrate pricing methods in 'difficult' industries.

Four draft principal papers were submitted to the meeting on PPIs for telecommunications, accounting, real estate and legal services. Comments to the lead authors on all four principal papers are welcome. Some studies on pricing insurance, road freight, advertising and banking services were also discussed.

The preliminary report on the 2001 OECD survey of national services PPI data collection and development activity was presented showing details of the growing national activity, with 19 countries now active in this field.

Information Society Statistics

The Information Society Statistics work is conducted in coordination with OECD's Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society. Papers discussed included: a) model surveys of ICT use i) in enterprises (now finalised) ii) by households and individuals and iii) in the public sector;

b) proposals for industry classification definition of the ICT sector and the Content sector.

Classifications

The UN described the planned changes made for ISIC and CPC in 2002 and the process for revisions in 2007. A UN questionnaire on the scope of the 2007 revision has been sent to countries for comment.

INSEE presented a paper setting out a conceptual basis for defining an ICT sector and a Content sector.

Future Voorburg Group Programme

The work programme for the next three years was discussed in broad terms and there was support for keeping the above three main themes with the possibility of taking occasional ad hoc themes as needs arise. The next two meetings are planned for France (2002) and Japan (2003).

For more information: papers are available at <http://www.voorburg.scb.se/sessions.asp> also contact william.cave@oecd.org

Selected Recent OECD Publications

□ Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators – 2001 Edition

OECD social indicators include both context indicators that illustrate national differences in social trends, and social status and response indicators, categorised in four broad and interdependent areas of social policy: self-sufficiency, equity, health and social cohesion. This publication captures in a nutshell information covering a wide range of topics, amongst others: fertility rates, asylum seekers and refugees, employment, retirement ages, early childhood education and care, replacement rates, relative poverty, the gender wage gap, social expenditure, potential years of life lost, health infrastructure, suicide, group membership and prisoners.

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[Now available online \(PDF\) from SourceOECD \(for subscribing institutions\)](#)

□ National Accounts of OECD Countries: Detailed Tables 1988/1999, Volume 2 – 2001 Edition

The 2001 edition of the National Accounts of OECD Countries: Detailed Tables, Volume II covers, in addition to main aggregates, detailed national accounts data for most OECD countries. It includes detailed breakdown by kind of activity for gross value added (current and constant 1995 prices) components of value added, gross fixed capital formation and employment. It also includes final consumption expenditure of households by purpose and simplified accounts for general government. This issue also includes provisional data for 2000.

[Now available in paperback and/or PDF E-Book from the Online Bookshop](#)
[Now available online \(PDF\) from SourceOECD \(for subscribing institutions\)](#)

□ Research and Development Expenditure in Industry: 1987/1999 – 2001 Edition

This annual publication reflects efforts made by the OECD to improve the quality and availability of industrial R&D expenditure data. The publication presents R&D expenditure data (ANBERD) for 19 OECD countries, as well as a zone total for the European Union.

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□ Health at a Glance

Health is essential for individuals to flourish as citizens and health systems are of growing size and importance in OECD countries. Indeed, the health system is now the largest service industry in most OECD countries. Health at a Glance tells many stories, concerning changes in health status and health systems across OECD countries covering: life expectancy, health care resources, health system activities, health care financing, and health expenditure. At the same time, it provides striking evidence of the sheer size of the variations across countries in most indicators of health system resources, activity and expenditure, as reported to the OECD. Tentative explanations for some of these variations are brought out in the commentaries. This book poses questions and challenges to all health policy experts, managers and statisticians. This book presents in an easily accessible, printed form some of the key indicators which are otherwise published in electronic form on a CD-ROM: OECD Health Data.

□ OECD Statistics on International Trade in Services 1990/1999 – 2001 Edition

This joint OECD-Eurostat publication includes detailed data on international trade in services for the 30 OECD countries as well as definitions and methodological notes. Data are broken down by type of service according to the OECD-Eurostat classification. It will soon also be available on line and on CD-ROM.

□ Revenue Statistics 1965/2000 – 2001 edition

Data on government sector receipts, and on taxes in particular, are basic inputs to most structural economic descriptions and economic analyses and are increasingly used in international comparisons. This annual publication gives a conceptual framework to define which government receipts should be regarded as taxes and to classify different types of taxes. It presents a unique set of detailed and internationally comparable tax data in a common format for all OECD countries from 1965 onwards.

Also available on CD-ROM and online at www.SourceOECD.org

□ Monthly Statistics of International Trade Vol. 2001, Issue 9

This up-to-date source of statistics on international trade of OECD countries provides a detailed insight into the most recent trends in trading patterns for OECD countries with the rest of the world. Data are broken down by economic groupings, by country and by region, and include seasonally adjusted series as well as calculated indicators. The series shown cover data for the last eight months, four quarters and two years available. Also available on CD-ROM and online

On Line Access Developments

New OECD Statistics Portal

By Gérard Salou, OECD

On September 24th 2001 the OECD launched a new Internet site www.oecd.org. An important feature of this new site is a Statistics Portal which provides, for the first time, an OECD web site exclusively dedicated to statistical information, see www.oecd.org/statistics. In addition, a Statistics button at the top of the screen permits access with a single click to the statistical information available for any particular OECD activity.

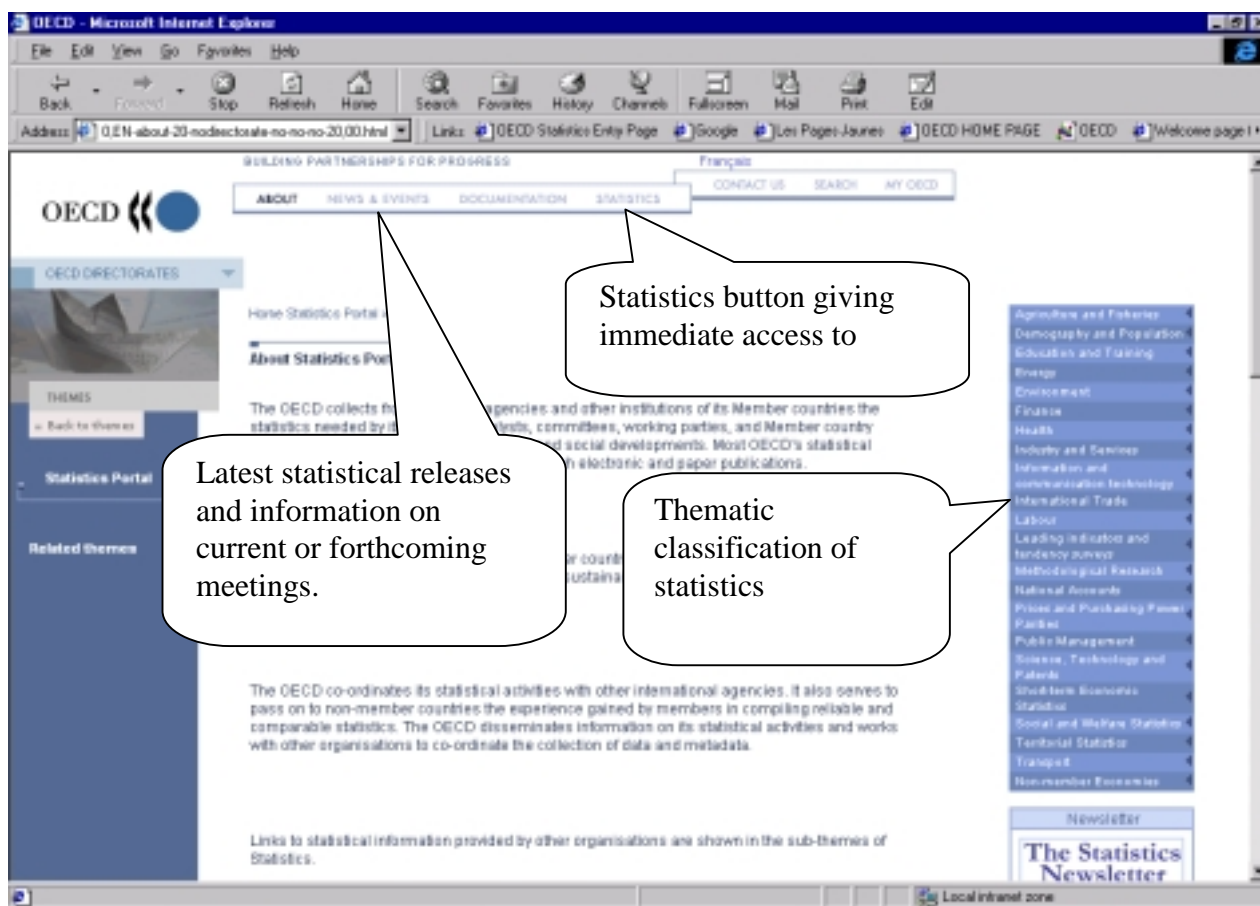
Also always present at the top of the screen are buttons giving access to the latest news and events and to documentation. Under news and events users can find the latest statistical releases of the OECD and information on current or forthcoming meetings and conferences.

In the coming months the OECD Statistics Portal will become a one-stop shop for data, indicators and other statistical information as we continue to add content. A particular effort is under way to enrich the site with free access to on-line OECD databases. In that context, for the next two months, the OECD Statistics Portal provides free access to the on-line databases of SourceOECD. Work is also underway to complement the data with the documentation required to facilitate the interpretation of data for non-experts and new users of OECD statistics.

The new Statistics Portal also offers features which will facilitate cooperation amongst the world-wide statistical community working with the OECD. Electronic Discussion Groups and detailed pages on OECD Statistical meetings are already available. Visitors can tailor the OECD site to their own needs and get email alerts to keep up-to-date on specific topics ("My OECD"). More features will be added in the Autumn, such as a glossary of statistical terms and a detailed view of OECD statistical activities. The OECD Statistics Portal informs users on the other ways of accessing OECD data, OLISnet for government agencies of OECD Member Countries and SourceOECD for institutions.

The migration of the information to the new structure started in Spring 2001. It involved a complete reorganisation of the way statistical information was made available by the OECD on the web. An important challenge, given the decentralised organisation of OECD statistical activities, was to present OECD statistics not only by departments but, independently of the Organisation's internal structure. On the Statistics Portal information is presented using a thematic classification derived from that used by the United Nations for its statistical activities. This same classification will be used to present all OECD statistical information, either internally or externally.

Feedback from users will be used to refine the content of the Statistics Portal and the quality of service delivered (stat.contact@oecd.org).



Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

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

8-10 October

OECD Workshop on Waste Prevention: Toward Performance Indicators organised jointly by the Working Group on Waste Prevention and Recycling (WGWPR) and the WGEIO, OECD, Paris, *Environment Directorate* (ENV)

9-12 October

Meeting of National Accounts Experts, OECD, Paris, *Statistics Directorate* (STD)

17-19 October

Meeting on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe. Joint OECD-ECE-Eurostat-FAO, Geneva, *Statistics Directorate* (STD)

17-19 October

Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks (WGEIO), OECD, Paris, *Environment Directorate* (ENV)

22-23-24 October

Network B Meeting, Indicators of Education Systems (INES), Prague, *Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs* (ELS)

25-26 October

Network A Meeting, INES, Budapest, *Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs* (ELS)

26 October

Statistical Working Party of the Tourism Committee, OECD, Paris, *Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry* (STI)

12-14 November

Working Party on Financial Statistics, OECD, Paris, *Directorate for Financial, Fiscal, and Enterprise Affairs* (DAFFE)

13-15 November

Working Party no. 2 on Tax Policy Analysis and Tax Statistics of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs, OECD, Paris, *Directorate for Financial, Fiscal, and Enterprise Affairs* (DAFFE)

16 November

Joint meeting of environment and tax experts, OECD, Paris, *Environment Directorate* (ENV)

22-26 November

Workshop on Composite Leading Indicators and Business Tendency Surveys. 3rd Joint ADB-OECD-ESCAP, Bangkok, *Statistics Directorate* (STD)

28-29 November

Statistical Working Party of the Committee on Industry and Business Environment, OECD, Paris, *Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry* (STI)

Other International Statistical Meetings

12-14 November

Consultation on the European Comparison Programme, *Statistical Commission and Economic Commission for Europe, Conference of European Statisticians*, Geneva.

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The Statistics Newsletter

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***Contributions for the November Newsletter are invited
by
26 October 2001***

As a guide:

Article length 400 words maximum

News in brief 150 words maximum

Recent Publications 100 words maximum

***Please send contributions, comments or questions to
STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org***



DATABASE OF THE MONTH

OECD Health Data 2001 A Comparative Analysis of 30 OECD Countries

OECD Health Data 2001 is an interactive database providing data on key aspects of the health care systems in the 30 OECD Member countries, within their general demographic, economic and social contexts. This tenth edition of the software provides an effective tool for performing comparative analyses of health statistics among the 30 OECD countries.

OECD Health Data 2001 uses fast, user-friendly Windows™-based software that enables you to carry out data extractions and build customized graphs and tables. Available in English, French, German and Spanish, this CD-ROM includes a unique, interactive database as well as sophisticated query modules. The database contains over 1200 variables, which can be expressed in numerous terms, such as per capita values, percentages and monetary conversions. Most recent data are available for 1998/1999, with some time-series as far back as 1960.

The wealth of quantitative data presented in a powerful software makes *OECD Health Data 2001* an essential tool for analysis, research and decision-making.

Items covered in the database

Health Status presents data on mortality and morbidity, such as life expectancy and cancer rates;

Health Care Resources presents data on hospital beds or health employment;

Health Care Utilisation presents data on admissions, surgical procedures, and immunisation rates;

Expenditure on Health presents data on the public/private mix of health expenditure in various fields (in-patient, out-patient, pharmaceutical, therapeutic expenditure, among others);

Financing and Remuneration presents data on the flows-of-financing in health care systems (including health profession incomes and medical service fees);

Social Protection shows excerpts from the *Social Expenditure* database, as well as social security coverage;

Pharmaceutical Market presents data on pharmaceutical consumption as well as pharmaceutical industry production and sales;

Non-medical Determinants of Health presents data on food, alcohol and tobacco consumption, as well as obesity rates;

Demographic References presents data on population by gender and age groups, as well as main statistics on labor force and education;

Economic References presents data on main economic indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as conversion rates, such as Purchasing Power Parities (PPP).

A complete list of indicators (in English and French) is available on our web site under the item "Fields covered".

Database interface and new functions

Users of *OECD Health Data 2001* will find a range of new features and improvements. The structure of the database has been revised with new indicators. New chapters in "Health Expenditure" have been added in order to integrate the classifications of the OECD manual, *A System of Health Accounts* (SHA). Three-dimensional output tables have been introduced to facilitate data analysis. Thus, it is now possible to display, at the same time, multiple indicators for several countries and years. The configuration of the main menu has been upgraded with links that provide direct access to relevant Internet sites. A right-click option has been added for quicker access to the "Sources and Methods". Finally, the "Sources and Methods" chapter has been thoroughly updated and translated (English-French) and features direct web links.

Data can be analysed in the form of tables, charts and maps. The software also offers the option of exporting data to other software packages (Excel, SAS, Statistica).

Data update

Users have access to free technical assistance and data updates via the Internet. The OECD Health Policy Unit organises a second round of data collection every year in order to update series published in the CD-ROM. The latest update, including more than 4800 new or corrected data, was made available on August 3. For a free download of the updated data, go to the *OECD Health Data 2001* web site under the item "Data updates".

Data sources and information

The database includes detailed Definitions, Sources and Methods, available in English and French, with a direct access from any output table. The metadata offers a wealth of information on the methodology and the coverage of data.

In addition diagrams displaying the flows of health financing are available for most countries. Some countries display two or more charts to show the long-term evolution of the health care reforms.

System requirements

CD-ROM drive for installation

Pentium® processor

Windows™ 95/98/2000/NT/Me

32 MB RAM (64 MB recommended)

VGA card 65 000 colours

Free hard disk space of 40 MB

Contacting us

We welcome any comments, feedback and questions you may have.

For data-related comments and questions, please contact:

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- by fax: +33 (0) 1 44 30 63 61,

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For other requests regarding prices and how to order the CD-ROM, please contact sales@oecd.org

Please visit our Internet site at www.oecd.org/els/health/software/ for detail information on *OECD Health Data 2001*.