

Methodological Research

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Data and Metadata Presentation and Reporting Handbook

Purpose

To compile a Handbook containing international recommendations and guidelines on the presentation of data and metadata in various dissemination media, including the Internet.

Objectives and outputs

The major areas of real difference in the comparability of data produced by various international organisations and national statistical agencies are: conceptual differences arising from the use of different variable definitions, units and classifications; and operational differences flowing out of differences in data collection and processing practices. However, even where differences from these factors are minimal, data disseminated by different countries, etc., may actually look different because of the use of different data presentation and reporting practices.

The proposed Handbook will bring together guidelines and best practice on data presentation from existing international standards and draft new standards as appropriate into the one single document. The presentation issues to be included in the manual include those relating to: different types of data (absolute figures, indices, growth rates) and different forms of data (non-seasonally adjusted, seasonally adjusted, trend cycle).

It will also provide recommendations on a number of key data reporting presentation that also have a significant impact on data consistency. These comprise: data revision practices, presentation of series breaks, linkage of time series; data citation practices, presentation of information on sampling and non-sampling errors, presentation of metadata; presentation of administrative data.

Following the submission of the proposal for the Handbook at the March 2004 meeting of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) the OECD prepared draft versions of the Handbook which have been discussed at and comments received from participants at several working groups. National and international participants at both forums strongly supported the development of the Handbook.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

The Handbook will be submitted to the UNSC for comment and further input received from national agencies and international organisations will be incorporated into a final version to be submitted to the OECD Committee on Statistics in June 2005.

Following this a web version of the Handbook will be created which will allow the incorporation of emerging data presentation and reporting issues following the publication of the paper version in the second half of 2005.

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Handbook on Economic Globalisation Indicators

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is not to evaluate the many consequences of globalisation, but rather to measure its extent and intensity. The handbook defines the concepts and puts forward guidelines for data collection and the fine-tuning of globalisation indicators. The proposed indicators apply by and large to multinational firms -- the major players in the process of globalisation -- particularly in the areas of trade, international investment and technology transfer.

Objectives and outputs

The initial version of this handbook will cover four areas: foreign direct investment; activities of multinational enterprises; technology and trade.

The first version of the Handbook will be released this year.

It has two primary activities:

- Identify a set of relevant globalisation indicators to gauge the magnitude and intensity of the globalisation process, and to enable policymakers and other analysts to track how it evolves over time.
- Provide national data compilers with the methodological and statistical guidelines needed to construct the chosen indicators and make them compatible with international standards.

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

Release of the first version of the handbook.

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Handbook on Useful Practices for Constructing Composite Indicators

Purpose

Produce a handbook to guide both users and developers through the pros and cons of composite indicators. For users, the handbook will provide a list of critical questions users have to ask in order to judge the quality of a composite indicator. For developers, the handbook will illustrate and explain the necessary steps needed to construct high-quality composite indicators. This includes, for example, testing for robustness.

Objectives and outputs

This joint project between the OECD and the EC Joint Research Centre stemmed from the benchmarking analysis in the CIBE project on Micro-Policies for Growth and Productivity. It began with a workshop in Ispra in May 2003 followed by a workshop in Paris in February 2004. The Handbook was drafted and edited during 2004 and will be circulated for comments to technical experts and published in 2005.

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

Publication of the Handbook.

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Key Indicators for Assessing National Performances

Purpose

To catalyse, sustain and promote a global community of practice – involving both professionals and leadership from multiple sectors and multiple disciplines – on how to develop indicator systems for democratic political units (from communities to regions, and from countries to the world) on major areas of interest (economy, society, environment, etc.).

Objectives and outputs

Users' needs of looking at economic, social and environmental phenomena from a "horizontal" perspective is becoming more and more evident, both at national and international levels. Policy makers and civil society, in particular, are demanding integrated views of various phenomena to make decisions and to evaluate the overall situation of a country, a region, or a local community. To address these issues, several OECD countries, as well as the European Union, have undertaken specific actions to develop sets of statistics (especially indicators) for measuring the "national progress".

These initiatives have been developed with a limited exposure to the international debate. Therefore, the OECD has decided to establish an initiative to promote the international debate on these issues, to help OECD member countries, as well as non-members, to develop indicator systems for monitoring economic, social and environmental developments.

The first "OECD Forum on Key Indicators" was organised in November 2004 as kick-off event of a medium-term initiative in this field.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Asia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Estonia, Europe, Georgia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Other, Peru, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yugoslavia

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

The proceedings of the Forum will be published in Spring 2005. A proposed follow-up to the first Forum will be prepared for the June 2005 meeting of the Committee on Statistics.

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OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

Purpose

The aim of the OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms are:

- to provide a highly visible and readily accessible source of statistical terminology and definitions that are derived from international standards for use by OECD author areas in the development of questionnaires and other data collection instruments and for inclusion in published output. The Glossary also has wide application for external government and non-government agencies;
- to provide a set of target definitions based on existing international statistical standards that will ultimately be linked to data located in the OECD's Statistical Information System (SIS);
- to be the catalyst for the development of consistent international statistical standards by highlighting existing inconsistencies between existing standards.

Objectives and outputs

The OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms contains a comprehensive set of definitions of the main data items collected by the Organisation. The Glossary also contains definitions of key terminology and concepts and commonly used acronyms.

Around 6 000 definitions currently included in the glossary are primarily drawn from existing international statistical guidelines and recommendations that have been prepared over the last two or three decades by international organisations such as the OECD, IMF, ILO, Eurostat, United Nations working with national statistical institutes.

Work in 2004 entailed the addition of new definitions prepared by a number of OECD statistical working parties and expert groups, as well as definitions published by other international organisations, and the insertion of extensive information into the "context" field of the glossary, explaining the uses and limitations of many of the definitions included.

New Glossary facilities developed in 2004 included the possibility to identify new definitions included in the Glossary or existing definitions modified. The facility to download the entire Glossary from the web in as a WORD file and PDF was also developed. Limited numbers of CD-ROM versions were also compiled.

References to the Glossary is now included in over 1 000 web pages of national statistical agencies, central banks and academic institutes.

Databases

OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

Insertion of new definitions reflecting the continuing activities of various expert groups and working parties both within the OECD and other international organisations.

Linking key definitions to OECD.Stat and MetaStore. This will help facilitate the use of consistent terminology and definitions across the OECD.

Development of new download facilities that will enable users to download sub-glossaries from the main Glossary database.

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Official Statistics for E-government Policies

Purpose

To evaluate the official statistics that can support and facilitate the design and the implementation of e-government policies at national level.

Objectives and outputs

Almost all OECD countries launched e-government strategies to innovate the way in which public administrations work and provide services to citizens. Statistics can play a fundamental role in providing guidance and support to the design and implementation of such strategies. Areas in which statistics are relevant are: dissemination of information about facts and trends in the economy, the environment and the society; exchange of data among public administrations based on common metadata; compilation of statistics based on administrative sources; protection of confidentiality.

The main objective of the initiative is to identify recommendations in this area based on good practices already existing in OECD countries.

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

A workshop will be organised in co-operation with the British Office for National Statistics to compare current practices and strategic plans identified in OECD countries, from which recommendations will be prepared.

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Statistical Classifications

Purpose

To contribute to more relevant, more useful international economic and social classifications for use in OECD member countries and elsewhere. To encourage greater convergence of regional and national activity as well as product and trade classifications in OECD member countries. To coordinate OECD input into the revision of international classifications that are actively used in OECD.

Objectives and outputs

Specifically to contribute to the development of 2007 revisions of ISIC, CPC and the 2009 revision of EBOPS.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

Main Developments for 2005

General aspects:

The OECD (virtual) sub-group of Statistical Policy Group (SPG) was established to co-ordinate OECD inputs to UN Expert Group on Social and Economic Classifications and to other guardians of International Classifications.

OECD will prepare proposals for a top-top classification of ISIC rev 4 for national accounts data reporting in consultation with OECD users, UNSD and OECD +Eurostat+Big6 National Accountants, by September 2005