

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

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A New Forum for OECD Statistics

By Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician of the OECD

Networks, the free exchange of ideas and the sharing of information on national “best practice” are essential tools of OECD work not just in economic and social policy areas, but also in statistics. In this way OECD continues to pioneer statistical development work, encouraging Member and Non-member countries to produce new information, to revise statistical methods, and cooperating with other international organisations in establishing standards. The OECD Statistics Directorate plays an important role in this process and in coordination of statistical work throughout OECD.

Electronic exchange of data and the Internet have dramatically changed the relationships between national and international bodies. There is much more available information, but this aggravates the problem of selection. Managing this is a considerable problem for an organisation like the OECD, which operates in a very wide range of public policy fields, collecting and disseminating statistical information and analytical reports for each.

This “new” OECD newsletter sets out to become one means for the “OECD Statistical Network” (OSN) to find and to exchange relevant information, to know more about current activities and future plans, to reinforce cooperation between statistical agencies, and to offer OSN an opportunity to improve its effectiveness. The Newsletter is part of a major revision of OECD communication and dissemination policy for statistics, which will also include:

- the reorganisation of the web site to facilitate access to available statistics in different fields;
- the launch of a new short publication “Statistics Brief”, on statistical topics relevant for policy makers;
- the creation of “OECD working papers in statistics”, which will host significant papers from the OSN;
- adoption of a calendar of press releases for the dissemination of OECD calculated economic indicators.

The monthly Newsletter (in English and in French) is being disseminated throughout the OECD network - an electronic version, by email, to an initial list of about 300 people and institutions and will be available via OECD Direct. There is a paper version too, for those who do not use (or like) the electronic media.

It will typically include the following sections:

- **feature articles** (in this issue “the new economy and measurement of GDP growth”) which report relevant new work developed in OECD or in Member (and Non-member) countries. On occasion, this section may host debates on issues of importance;
- news on **OECD research projects**, data releases, the outcome of international meetings, etc.; from Member and Non-member countries;
- new **OECD publications and forthcoming statistics meetings**;
- the “**database of the month**”, which is a detailed description of an OECD database, to show potential users the characteristics of the statistics made available by the Organisation.

Colleagues in agencies involved in the OECD Statistical Network and throughout the OECD itself can submit news or articles of international interest (by email to STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org): the success of this initiative depends heavily on the enlargement of the circle of contributors. I really hope that readers will enjoy this initiative and that the OECD Statistics Newsletter will become an effective instrument to improve the quality of statistics at national and international levels.

In this Issue

	Page
Feature:	
The New Economy and Measurement of GDP Growth Articles by Paul Schreyer, OECD and François Lequiller, INSEE	2
Harmonisation of Seasonal Adjustment Methods in the European Union	3
Handbook for Measurement of the Non-observed Economy	4
News in Brief	5
New Data Collection	6
Recent Publications	6
New OECD Data on Central Government Debt	6
Forthcoming Statistics Meetings	9
The database of the month The OECD Trade and Tariffs Database	11

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Computer price indices and international growth comparisons: some observations

By Paul Schreyer, OECD

Recently, several newspaper and research articles have revived a discussion about the international comparability of the rates of economic growth and productivity. Each of these publications points to differences between how the United States and some European countries compute price indices for information and communication technology (ICT) products, especially computers. Because a different price index translates into a different measure of volume growth, it has been asked whether some, or all, of the measured growth differences between countries are a statistical illusion rather than reality.

Computer prices are indeed tricky to measure. The main challenge for statisticians is to accurately account for the quality changes in these high-tech goods. The necessary quality adjustments are calculated differently in different countries. As a result, between 1995 and 1999, one observes for example a more than 20% annual drop in the United States' office accounting and photocopying equipment price index (which includes computers) compared with 13% in the United Kingdom and a mere 7% in Germany. Because computers are internationally traded, there are reasons to believe that their price changes should be similar between countries. Thus, at least parts of the differences in measured price declines are due to methodological differences. The natural question is: how would GDP growth in Germany, the United Kingdom, or any other country turn out if US methodology was applied?

Clearly, if the US price index is applied to Germany's or the United Kingdom's investment expenditure, their volume will show more rapid growth, as will the volume measures of the computer industry's output. Consequently, one would observe a different pattern of industries' contributions to growth in GDP volume and of the role of ICT investment. This is important and policy-relevant information. But can we make a clear-cut statement how such a transposition of price indices carries over to the single most important

measure of growth, economy-wide GDP? Unfortunately not, and there are three reasons for this, often overlooked in the debate.

Three Key Considerations

First, it is important to know whether the ICT investment goods whose volume growth measure is adjusted upward, are imported or produced domestically. If imported, we also need to correct upwards the volume growth of imports. But registering a larger volume of imports means offsetting the upward impact of investment volumes on real GDP because imports are produced abroad, not domestically. Thus, the net impact on measured real GDP growth may well be zero or very small.

Second, are the ICT commodities whose price measures we change used as final or intermediate goods? The latter are delivered to downstream industries where they become part of another product (such as semiconductors that are bought by a mobile phone factory). The former are products that are directly used in private consumption or as investment goods (such as a personal computer). Changing the measure of volume growth of an intermediate product, for example semiconductors, has no effect on measured economy-wide GDP, if these semiconductors are produced domestically. What one *would* observe is a boost to the semiconductor industry's volume output measure and an equivalent rise in the mobile phone factory's volume input measure – but the aggregate picture remains unchanged. Of course, this assumes that only the semiconductor price index has been adjusted and all other price indices are correct and remain unchanged.

Third, index number formulae have to be taken into account. Volume measures of GDP reflect changes in the quantity of a large number of goods and services. Each quantity change is weighted with the prices of some base period and these weights have to be updated periodically. This becomes particularly important if there are large shifts in the price structure. But this is exactly what happens in the presence of computer prices that drop radically relative to other commodities and is one of the reasons why the United States' national accounting system employs price weights that are changed annually. Many European countries, including the United Kingdom and Germany, update price

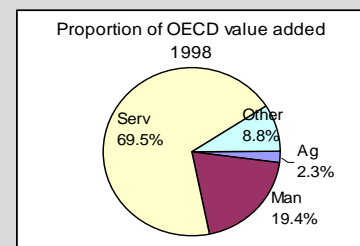
weights about every five years. This is quite acceptable as long as the price structure does not change too radically. But using the US computer prices implies adopting a quickly changing price structure that would have to be accompanied by frequent updates of price weights, lest our GDP adjustment would be *overstated*. Thus, it would be misleading to simply transpose price indices from one country to another without due regard to index number formulae.

In conclusion, no easy, straightforward statement can be made about the effects of computer price indices on overall measures of GDP growth – in particular in the case of European countries that tend to be net importers of final and intermediate information technology products and that, more often than not, use fixed-weight price indices in their national accounts. National statistical offices and international organisations have been aware of these issues for several years and launched a number of initiatives to advance on the measurement of ICT products. This includes the OECD where analyses have been carried out to quantify potential biases. Existing data are used with the necessary caution and methodological work is underway, for example a handbook on quality adjustment for computer price indices.

Statistics to note

More services activity in OECD countries

Services contributed 69.5% of total value added in OECD Member countries in 1998 compared with 19.4% for manufacturing and 2.3% for agriculture. The services contribution *increased* by 1.9 percentage points in the five years from 1993.



Source: "OECD Historical Statistics 1970-1999"

The New Economy and Measurement of GDP growth

By François Lequiller, INSEE

In connection with a surge in the “new economy” that is statistically difficult to measure, some commentators have cast doubts both on European growth and its comparability with that of the United States. A Working Paper recently published by INSEE explores measurement problems in the case of France.

The data at current prices seem to be reliable, but information by product is becoming increasingly difficult to establish. Contrary to widely held belief, the differences in the application of hedonic pricing methods have only a small impact on the French data. On the other hand, there seems to be a difference in the treatment of data between France and the United States, or rather between several European countries and the United States, regarding the distinction between final consumption and intermediate consumption of IT products. The United States national accounts record more gross fixed capital formation in software, *ceteris paribus*, and this automatically produces a higher measure of GDP in recent years.

The difference may be the result of different industrial processes, but it cannot be ruled out that it may be merely the result of applying a different statistical convention. In that case, one might speak of a comparability bias. The method most widely used in Europe, and which therefore maintains comparability within Europe, is consistent with the results of private accounting, whereas the American method diverges from it, according to the working Paper.

The use of “net domestic product” instead of the usual “gross domestic product” improves comparability between France and the United States. Taking net domestic product reduces the growth differential between France and the US in 1999 by half a point.

The whole article can be found at http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/doc_travail/liste_doc_travail.asp

N.B. INSEE Working Papers reflect the views of the author and not necessarily that of INSEE

What Else is Happening on Measurement of the New Economy?

The new economy has been attracting the attention of statisticians and national accountants both in terms of measuring new economic developments and in terms of impact on the international comparability of measures of GDP growth. As well as the two articles featured this month, two other recent developments deserve mention.

The first is a paper from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) by J. Steven Landefeld and Barbara M. Fraumeni “Measurement of the New Economy”, which was published in the “Survey of Current Business” March 2001 edition.

This paper seeks to identify the main changes that define the new economy, their importance and impact on GDP, where they show up in the national accounts and to assess how well these new aspects of the economy are being recorded. Finally the paper proposes what should be the priorities of BEA in meeting the challenge of measuring new changes in the economy.

The paper associates the new economy with technological innovation and reducing prices of computers, cell phones, the internet, and a host of other new goods and services, innovation in financial markets, new methods of payment, reductions in production costs, and improvements in quality and efficiency.

The article concludes by proposing improvements to the US accounts designed to better capture changes in the economy including:

- An index of investment in e-business/high tech;
- Revised and new output and price indices for a range of e-business using high tech industries such as banking and financial services and telecommunications equipment and services;
- New measures of saving, wealth, international trade and finance to reflect the impacts of stock options and capital gains and to fill in gaps in coverage;
- Reduction in levels of measurement error in GDP and GDI;

- Other work including implementation of NAICS in the BEA.

The second development is a call for papers for a special issue of “The Review of Income and Wealth” which will be entitled “Measurement of the New Economy”. This issue is planned for December 2001.

For more information go to <http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/pubs.htm> and <http://www.nyu.edu/econ/iariw/newecon.htm>

Harmonisation of Seasonal Adjustment Methods in the European Union

By Ronny Nilsson, OECD

Since the start of European Monetary Union there has been an increasing interest in monitoring the cyclical movements of the European economy. In particular, the European Central Bank needs a large set of short-term indicators to decide its policy and financial analysts focused their attention on the evolution of indicators for Euroland as a whole, using some national data as leading indicators for the latter. For these reasons, the harmonisation of seasonal adjustment methods in the European Union has become a hot issue and Eurostat has decided to invest more resources in this field.

Eurostat has built during the last few years a software package called DEMETRA in which the two major seasonal adjustment (SA) methods, TRAMO-SEATS, on the one hand and X-12-ARIMA on the other hand, are accessible in the same environment. TRAMO-SEATS is a model based seasonal adjustment method developed by Prof. Maravall at the Bank of Spain and X-12-ARIMA is the latest version in the X-11 family of seasonal adjustment methods based on fixed filters developed by Prof. Findley at the US Bureau of Census.

In January 2001, a Task Force was set up by the European Union’s Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB), with a mandate to find a solution for harmonisation of seasonal adjustment methods within the network of

statisticians in the European Union. OECD is participating in the Task Force, bringing the expertise of its researchers and the experiences of non-European countries.

In particular, the mandate of the Task Force, Seasonal adjustment Co-ordination Group (CG), is focused on two issues:

- Investigating the possible integration of X-12-ARIMA and TRAMO-SEATS procedures
- Use of DEMETRA by National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and National Central Banks (NCBs)

A questionnaire on seasonal adjustment procedures to evaluate user needs was sent out in February 2001 to NSIs and NCBs within the EU. Following this initiative, the OECD decided to circulate to OECD non-European statistical agencies (and some selected research institutes) a reduced version of the European questionnaire, in order to have a full picture of the situation in the OECD countries.

The results of the survey for EU countries were presented to the CG at a meeting on 1-2 March, in which the OECD participated. The sample covered 15 NSIs and 16 NCBs with a response rate of close to 90% for NSIs and about 60% for NCBs.

The preliminary report on user needs based on the survey results indicated among others the following partial conclusions:

- TRAMO-SEATS and X-12-ARIMA was unanimous choice for the future;
- Confidence in the version of the SA routines:
 1. X-12-ARIMA in continuation of the X-11 is easier to implement at the production level and to keep the continuity of the service to the customers;
 2. TRAMO-SEATS is highly considered and improvements with regard to confidence in the SA routine would help to accept it at the production level.
- Different environments in the countries and institutions –

complexity for a harmonised solution;

- Some environments are in competition with DEMETRA for the computation of seasonally adjusted data;
- DEMETRA gives easy access to SA for non experts, powerful research tool, but limited management of metadata;
- DEMETRA has unique interface to both SA methods, but better merging of the methods would increase acceptance, but instability in seasonal adjustment and ARIMA modelling

Further information on DEMETRA, TRAMO-SEATS and X-12-ARIMA can be found on:
<http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/eurosam/home>

For information on OECD work related to the Seasonal Adjustment Co-ordination Group, please contact:
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Handbook for Measurement of the Non-Observed Economy

By Michael Colledge, OECD

The non-observed economy (NOE) comprises production activities that are illegal, underground, informal, or otherwise missed by the statistical system. Unless efforts are made to deal with the NOE, economic indicators are underestimated. Given the miscellany of possible approaches to NOE measurement, there is a need to identify and promote international best practice. This is the aim of the Handbook. It presents an integrated approach that is consistent with international standards and, in particular, with the 1993 System of National Accounts. Its use will help to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and across country comparability of the main economic indicators included in the national accounts.

The measurement approach described in the Handbook is in three stages. The first stage is to assess the national accounts and the statistical system that feeds them and identify the data problems. The second stage is to supplement the incoming data by special surveys and by modeling during the compilation and balancing of the production accounts and

supply and use tables. This provides short-term solutions to the data problems. The final stage is to modify the conceptual framework and basic data collection infrastructure as required to bring them into line with international standards and best practices, thus providing long-term solutions to the problems.

The Handbook is being put together by a team of experts from OECD, ILO, IMF, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Italian Statistical Office, Statistics Netherlands, Russian Federation State Statistical Committee, University of Versailles, led by the OECD. The team members communicate mostly by email, getting together for face to face discussions every six months or so.

A preliminary version of the Handbook was completed last August and discussed at the NOE Workshop organised jointly by the OECD, Eurostat and the Russian Federation State Statistical Committee in October 2000. A copy is publicly available at www.oecd.org/std/dnm (click on Meetings). Incorporating feedback from the Workshop, Eurostat and the World Bank, an updated version is now being drafted and will be distributed widely for comments at the end of April. The aim is to prepare the final version by the end of August and to publish it soon afterwards.

Further information is available from:
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<http://www.oecd.org/hrm>

News in brief

OECD – UN Trade Data Accord Reduces Response Burden on OECD Member Countries

After successful testing for 13 OECD countries, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the OECD Statistics Directorate and the United Nations Statistics Division. UNSD undertakes to progressively source all trade data of all OECD countries from OECD instead of requesting it from national sources. OECD undertakes to furnish UNSD the data in a timely way.

This will ensure harmonised trade data, reduce duplication and the reporting burden on countries.

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First General Meeting of OECD Statisticians

At the suggestion of the OECD Secretary-General Mr Donald Johnston, a first general meeting of OECD statisticians and other staff involved in statistical work in the various Directorates was held on 12 April 2001. Over 100 staff attended.

The meeting heard a presentation by Mr Enrico Giovannini, the new Chief Statistician, "Towards a New Strategy for OECD Statistics: A Working Plan for 2001-2002", and a talk from Mr Pierre Lebleu, Head of Human Resources Management, on the need to review career structure and training for statisticians in OECD.

This was followed by an open and lively exchange of views from the floor and Mr Seiichi Kondo (Deputy Secretary-General) closed the meeting stressing the OECD's intention to invest more in this area.

Territorial Statistics Progress

The Working Party on Territorial Indicators met on 15-16 February 2001. Important progress was made in these areas.

Regional typologies. Because they permit comparative analysis and territorial benchmarking, typologies have a direct application to policy-making. Two criteria based on regional accessibility and economic specialisation were discussed. Due to the importance of the structural factor in any territorial analysis, concrete proposals for typologies based on the economic specialisation of regions will be presented at the Working Party's meeting next year.

Territorial disparities. The OECD Secretariat had shown that regional socio-economic differentials were still high in most Member countries and that the disparities within regions were often tending to widen. By and large, delegates endorsed these findings, which would be published in Territorial Outlook 2001. A few countries proposed contributions on disparities issues that could be finalised in 2002.

Functional regions. On the basis of the questionnaire to which 17 Member countries had replied, the Secretariat presented a

synthesis of the definitions and practices of regions corresponding to local labour market areas. The document will be modified with a view to publication. Because they are based on a similar principle of commuting conditions, functional regions opened up new possibilities for comparisons at sub-national level. Two directions for future work: 1) intra-national comparison of socio-economic analysis of administrative and functional regions, 2) international comparison of territorial analysis of several countries with similar definitions of functional regions.

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International Cooperation: A key to improving oil data transparency

Many oil analysts have put the blame on statistics for the oil market volatility experienced over the recent years. Is this blame well-founded? Are oil statistics deteriorating? Is there a lack of data quality? Is there a need for more transparency?

These are some of the questions that were addressed at the recent meeting "Improving Oil Data Transparency", held in Bangkok on 2-3 April 2001. Representatives from 20 major oil producing and consuming countries as well as six international organisations were present: the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC), Eurostat, the IEA, the Latin American Energy Organisation (OLADE), OPEC and the United Nations Statistics Division. The experts met to discuss the problems they face and to identify possible solutions. They agreed to conduct a joint six-month data reporting exercise. Results of the exercise will be discussed in a follow-up meeting at the end of the year. Such a cooperation should lead to better quality and more timely data, and therefore improve the transparency in the largest commodity market.

New International Trade in Services Manual

The United Nations Statistical Commission, meeting in New York from 6-9 March, approved the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services as an international manual. The Manual has been prepared by an interagency task force comprising Eurostat, IMF, UN, UNCTAD, WTO and OECD which convenes it.

The Manual provides a statistical framework for a more detailed and comprehensive reporting of trade in services which will amongst other things help inform trade negotiations and monitor trade agreements.

The draft manual is available at:
<http://www.oecd.org/std/tradhome.htm>

Capital Stock Manual

A final version of the publication "*Measuring Capital. A Manual on the Measurement of Capital Stocks, Consumption of Fixed Capital and Capital Services*" was sent for printing at the end of March. Work on the Manual started in 1997 with the first meeting of the *Canberra Group*. Other meetings of the *Group* were held in 1998 (Paris) and 1999 (Washington).

Nearly 100 statisticians and economists from 24 countries – OECD and non-OECD – took part in these meetings as well as staff from several international organisations. The Manual thus reflects a wide range of both theory and experience in measuring capital.

An important feature of the Manual is that it explains the links between capital assets as a component of wealth and the services that capital assets provide as inputs into production. Hitherto relatively few official statistical agencies have attempted to measure these capital services. The Manual shows how the perpetual inventory method, or PIM, can be adapted to provide measures of capital services that are consistent with the net and gross capital stocks and capital consumption. By doing so the Manual provides a direct link with the OECD Productivity Manual, a final version of which is also now available.

The Manual accepts that the PIM will continue to be the most commonly used method of measuring capital, but it also describes direct measurement methods – enterprise surveys and the use of administrative records. While there is clearly scope for refining the critical parameters of the PIM, greater improvements in the reliability of capital statistics are likely to come about by combining PIM estimates with directly observed data.

The Canberra Group members believe that the Manual makes a significant contribution to solving the conceptual and practical problems of capital measurement, but it recognises that there are still several areas where further research is required. The Manual includes a Research Agenda identifying these. A final version of the Manual is now available on the site of the Canberra Electronic Discussion Group. It can be accessed via <http://www.oecd.org/std/nahome.htm> under the “Meetings” button.

New Data Collection

Trade in Services by Partner Country

OECD Statistics Directorate is to start collecting trade in services by partner country data in 2001, at the request of the Trade Directorate, in order to help inform trade negotiations and trade analysis. This was agreed at the December 2000 meeting of OECD-Eurostat Experts in Statistics of International Trade in Services.

OECD plan to cooperate with Eurostat in the data collection from European Union Member States. It is estimated that about 17 OECD Member countries already have such data, covering more than two thirds of world trade in services.

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Selected Recent OECD Publications

☐ New OECD Data on Central Government Debt

OECD have recently published for the first time data on Central Government Debt for 29 Member countries. “Central Government Debt, Statistical Yearbook 2000” is produced by the Directorate for Fiscal, Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAFFE).

Governments are some of the biggest issuers of debt instruments in the global financial market. This publication provides quantitative information on central government debt instruments to meet analytical requirements of policy makers, debt management experts and market analysts and other users. Statistics are presented according to a comprehensive standard framework to allow cross-country comparison. Country notes provide information on debt issuance in each country as well as on the institutional and regulatory framework governing debt management policy and selling techniques.

Outstanding central government debt of OECD countries reached \$US 13.7 trillion dollars in 1999 a rise of 7% on 1998. The publication will soon be also available on CD-ROM, and on-line for government users only on OLIS or publically available at www.sourceoecd.org.

For further information contact ester.bolton@oecd.org

☐ International Development Statistics CD-ROM and Online Database (2001 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 recipient countries

Available on CD-ROM + Free annual subscription to IDS online

☐ National Accounts of OECD Countries. Main aggregates Vol. 1 (1988-1999)

☐ OECD Historical Statistics 1970-1999

☐ Trends in International Migration: SOPEMI (2000 Edition)

This book presents an analysis of recent trends in migration movements and policies in OECD countries as well as in certain Non-member countries. It highlights the contribution of immigration to increases in the total population and the labour force and describes the changes that have taken place in the sectoral distribution of foreign workers.

❑ Structural Statistics for Industry and Services - Volume 1: Core data; Volume 2: Energy consumption" (2000 edition)

Previously published as Industrial Structure Statistics, Volume 1 presents official annual data for detailed ISIC revision 3 sectors of industry and services, covering such variables as production, value added, investment, employment, wages and salaries, number of enterprises, exports and imports according to ISIC revision 3, while Volume 2 presents annual energy consumption data in manufacturing sectors.

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Online Access Developments

Online Access to OECD Statistics

by Peter Lübkert OECD

Some Background

Offering easy online access to OECD statistics is one of the Organisation's strategic management and communications objectives, as well as a medium-term information technology direction.

The modernisation of statistical information management and dissemination systems plays a vital role in reinforcing the Organisation's position as a major provider of up-to-date international statistics. Users of OECD statistics can today benefit from timely online access through a single entry point (portal) to the majority of data and metadata published by the Organisation as result of our recent investments in dissemination technology. In addition and over time, this system is likely to generate knock-on benefits such as an increased frequency of updates for selected data sets.

Design Considerations & Functionality

The implementation of a system to render virtually all OECD statistics accessible on-line offered challenges at different levels. A number of technical and some significant substantive issues had to be tackled to achieve this important milestone in the history of OECD statistics.

- First and foremost, a technical solution had to be found to leverage our existing investments in data dissemination.
- Secondly, and no less important, the question of nomenclature had to be addressed so that potential users of OECD online statistics would be presented with a common set of definitions, labels, and other metadata.

- The last step was to develop an easy-to-use and attractive web interface.



The OECD plays a central role as a compiler of internationally comparable statistics. The Secretariat offers these statistics to Government officials in its Member countries and to those officials in other countries, who participate in OECD work, via the OLISnet portal service and to paying customers via SourceOECD.

The process to produce and disseminate statistical publications in IVT format have been revised and streamlined with the objective of creating a single source of information regardless of the channel of distribution.

Online access for all

The first version of the system today is available to the following user communities:

- OECD staff via the OECD Intranet,
- Officials in Member and non-Member countries via OLISnet, and
- Paying customers via SourceOECD.

The online interface offers rapid access to statistical data via the following search paths:

- Subject (theme)
- Keyword (predefined by the authors)
- Database (name of the database)
- Directorate (according to the OECD internal organisational structure)
- Full text (all textual meta information fully indexed)

The user interface.

The ease of navigation to a wide range of statistical (or other) information is greatly influenced by the design of this interface. Particular attention was paid to ergonomic aspects as well as to give an attractive look-and-feel in line with the new OECD graphical charter. As a result of the layered system architecture, changes to the present interface can be introduced with relative ease. The system is also fully bilingual.

The rollout of the statistics online portal is a major step in making official OECD data more accessible. At the same time it has brought to the surface apparent inconsistencies between OECD data sets, a crucial issue which is currently being addressed by a specialised internal task force.

Coming up

The scope of the service will be extended both in terms of its functionality and content. New features to increase the quality of the service will include:

- **“Rolling Updates”** - This will enable the release partial updates of specific sets of data and metadata. The release frequency could for example be determined by the timing of submissions by member countries.
- **Subscriber alerting** - this service will send out an electronic message to registered subscribers (using OECDdirect) whenever a publication in their area of interest is updated..
- **Graphs and charts** - will be allow users to tabular data in a variety of graphical formats.
- **“Virtual tables”** - will allow users to dynamically create cross-sections from different source tables.
- **Geographic navigation** - search tools using mapping features will also be considered where applicable.

Contributions for June edition by 21 May 2001 are invited

As a guide:

Article length 400 words maximum

News in brief 150 words maximum

Recent Publication 100 words maximum

Letters to the Editor

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

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Accessing OECD publications has never been easier

SourceOECD Statistics – OECD Data, Right Here, Right Now!

The OECD’s innovative online subscription service ‘SourceOECD’ was launched just over a year ago. In November, the final and most important element of the service was put in place, with the addition of ‘SourceOECD Statistics’. At last, all OECD publications – journals, books and databases – were now easily searchable and accessible in a single location.

Having talked to current customers, we knew that the Statistics would be popular; initial feedback had been extremely positive at the prospect of the data going online. But even we were surprised by the level of demand. The latest sales figures show that more than two-thirds of all SourceOECD customers subscribe to a Statistics title, with 90% of these taking the complete Statistics package. Predominantly from the academic market, we also have customers from the private sector, government departments and research institutions, from all around the world. SourceOECD Statistics uses the database browser software ‘Beyond 20/20’. Selected for its functionality and ease of use, the software is already used by a number of other important data providers, including UNCTAD, UNESCO, ILO and National Agencies in (among others) Canada, France, United Kingdom and United States. Now, as soon as the latest figures are validated and published, end-users can access the data, create an enquiry, and export the results as a CSV or Excel file. In conjunction with our free email alerting service, ‘OECD Direct’, which instantly notifies recipients of the availability of new figures, never before has OECD data been so easily and readily accessible.

www.sourceoecd.org

For further information and a free trial, please contact james.kitchen@oecd.org

Forthcoming OECD conferences and workshops

14-16 May

OECD Forum 2001: Sustainable Development in the New Economy. Paris, La Villette. Open to journalists
Go to <http://www.oecd.org/forum2001>

5-7 June

Second Conference on Agricultural and environmental Statistical Applications in Rome (CAESAR), organised by OECD, FAO, Eurostat, UN/ECE, ISI, NASS/USDA and hosted by ISTAT. Rome, Italy
Go to <http://www.istat.it/caesar>

Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

3-4 May

Ad hoc meeting on Biotechnology statistics – Committee on scientific and technology policy. OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI)

7-11 May

Meeting on the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA), Voorburg, Netherlands

9-11 May

Conference for the preparation of the revision of the “*Frascati Manual*”. Rome, Italy.

14-15 May

Working Party of National Experts on Science & Technology Indicators (NESTI), Rome, Italy.

21-23 May

Education Statistics and Indicators (INES) Technical Group (ELS)

28-30 May

Meeting on SNA for CIS countries. Joint OECD-ECE. Statistics Directorate (STD)

4-8 June

Joint Statistics Singapore-OECD Workshop for countries of the ESCAP region to review the draft Manual ILO on Consumer Price Indices, Singapore

5-7 June

Workshop on Foreign Direct Investment Statistics, OECD Directorate for Financial, Fiscal, and Enterprise Affairs (DAFFE)

6-7 June

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – Working Party on Statistics, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD)

12-14 June

Working Party no. 2 on Tax Policy Analysis and Tax Statistics of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs, OECD (DAFFE)

20-22 June

Workshop on waste prevention indicators, OECD Environment Directorate, (ENV)

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

Questions you ask us

Q. What are the official OECD size definitions for “small” and “medium” size firms?

A. In most cases size definitions for “small” or “medium” are made by national governments so that policies in favour of these specific firms can be defined. Thus definitions are different according to the country (and often depending on the size of the country and the structure of its economy)

International Organisations, such as OECD and the European Commission have differing approaches:

The OECD has no official definition of SMEs.

The European Commission defines SMEs as: 1-9 employees: **micro** or **very small firms**; 10-49 employees: **small firms**; 50-249 employees: **medium firms**

The OECD statistical database for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (currently under development), is broken down by size classes (up to eleven classes) so that we can aggregate data and use them according to our analysis and aims.

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Deadline for material for the June edition is:

Monday 21 May.

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DATABASE OF THE MONTH

TARIFFS & TRADE

Tariffs & Trade (T&T) is a query and reporting system for trade flows and corresponding tariffs. It is a user friendly analytical tool that allows trade negotiators and analysts to access and examine tariff and trade flow data relevant to exporters the world over. It allows trade negotiators to examine their trading interests and define their negotiating agenda.

The CD-ROM includes a Microsoft Access database together with a query and reporting software. T&T is designed to provide an easy-to-use query and reporting facility for accessing more than 6 million data points. It provides raw data at the detailed 6-digit HS level as well as a number of useful indicators: export/import shares, trade intensity indices and indices of revealed comparative advantage. Tariffs can also be compared by stage of processing (allowing examination of tariff escalation issues), and by major product groups (agriculture and industry). It provides information on tariffs and trade that apply to specific products and aggregate tariff information by any one OECD country.

T&T follows a dual approach. It provides information on tariffs and trade that apply to specific products and aggregate tariff information by any one OECD country. The software includes an on-line help function that provides information on definitions of the indicators viewed.

These data were analysed and reproduced in a 1999 OECD publication entitled *Tariff Regimes in the Post Uruguay Round, Achievements and Outlook*.

Running T&T

Available selections

OECD exports to any OECD market or OECD imports from all countries (possibilities include all of the world's 260 countries and 18 pre-defined country groupings) can be selected for any number of products at different levels of detail (2-, 4- or 6-digit Harmonised System, Revision 2). Alternatively, tariff and trade flow information can be viewed for 19 pre-defined product groups. Products are grouped under total agriculture and total industry, according to the Uruguay Round definitions.

Agriculture:

1. agriculture,
2. food and animal feeds,
3. processed agricultural products,
4. raw agricultural materials.

Industrial products:

5. Industry,
6. Ores and other minerals,
7. fuels,
8. non ferrous metals,
9. Iron and steel,
10. chemicals,
11. pharmaceuticals,
12. machinery and transport equipment,
13. power generating machinery,
14. office machines and telecoms equipment,
15. electrical machinery and apparatus,
16. automotive products,
17. other transport equipment,
18. textiles,
19. clothing.

Within these large categories, product groups are not mutually exclusive, i.e. the shares in total trade add to more than 100%. For example, product HS 870310, which includes snowmobiles and golf carts, is included in the groups "Machinery and equipment" and "Automotive products".

Selection results

Query results are presented in tabular form. Any given selection yields the following indicators, by product, and also for the aggregation of selected products for each supplier/market:

- Value of exports/imports expressed in thousands of US dollars
- Tariffs applied in the market (MFN rates as declared in 1996).
- Bound tariffs in the market (post-Uruguay Round bound duties).

- Share of market in supplier's exports/ Share of supplier in market's imports.
- Share of product in supplier's trade with market/Share of product in market's imports.
- Trade intensity index
- RCA (revealed comparative advantage index).
- average tariff levels of the corresponding product group (agricultural/industrial).
- average applied and bound tariff levels for products at the selected stage of processing.
- supplier's top markets (destination countries) in the OECD area for each product selected.
- product's top suppliers to the market.

For all OECD countries and for all HS sections as well as for aggregated agricultural products and industrial products:

- number of tariff lines,
- percentage of bound lines,
- simple bound mean,
- maximum tariff rate,
- standard deviation,
- percentage of tariff lines with 0% tariff,
- percentage of tariff lines with over 100% tariff,
- percentage of tariff lines with no AVE
- percentage of non-AV lines.

For the aggregation of all commodities, agricultural products and industrial products, tariffs are broken down into seven groups from duty free to above 50%: the share of tariff lines per tariff group is given for all OECD countries.

Other facilities

Selection results can be graphed at any point. By default, data used in graphs are applied and bound tariffs and the share of the product in the supplier's trade with the market. Selections may also be printed or exported to Excel at any point.

Data sources and information

The applied and bound tariff rates were submitted to the WTO by member countries in the form of schedules following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. Applied tariffs refer to the most-favoured nation (MFN) rate applied in 1996. Bound tariffs are those submitted to the WTO after full implementation of the Uruguay Round tariff commitments. Most bindings become effective in 2000, although implementation of some tariff lines will take up to 2005.

Trade flow data are submitted by OECD countries to the OECD Statistics Directorate. They are for 1998, the latest year for which comprehensive data were available for all OECD countries at the time the CD-ROM was prepared. Trade flow data refer to imports CIF and exports FOB in thousands of US dollars. The trade flow data provided here are available in a separate set of CD-ROMs entitled International Trade by Commodity Statistics (ITCS).

All products are classified according to the Harmonised System of classification that was adopted on 1 January 1996.

Hardware recommended requirements

IBM compatible equipped with a CD-ROM drive
 Hard disk: 120 MB free space
 32 MB of Ram
 Windows 95,98,NT

Contacting us

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

For data related comments and questions, please contact:

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