

Foreword

Entrepreneurship is even higher on the policy agenda today than in the past, as governments look for remedies and ways out of the economic crisis. The economic dynamism inherent in entrepreneurship is believed to be an important way to safeguard the long-run viability and competitiveness of national economies.

While entrepreneurship has attracted greater attention, measurement of entrepreneurship has long been a problem, and remains so. There have been numerous initiatives at the local, regional or national level, and even a few at the international level, but internationally comparable data are scarce. The OECD has addressed entrepreneurship in the past through various analytical studies and reports, but no systematic effort has been made to establish an ongoing database specifically devoted to entrepreneurship across OECD countries.

In 2006 the joint ***OECD-Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme*** (EIP) was started. Its objective is to develop internationally comparable data on entrepreneurship and to make international comparisons possible and meaningful.

Last year saw the publication of the first results of the EIP and the initiative attracted a good deal of attention from policy makers, researchers and journalists. Encouraged by this, further efforts have been undertaken to develop the EIP programme. The results of these efforts appear in this publication.

First, the geographical coverage has been considerably extended from 18 countries in 2008 to 23 countries in the 2009 publication. Important, too, is the fact that it has been possible to extend the scope of the EIP to emerging countries such as Brazil, which is included in this year's results. Equally important, this publication also presents data at the regional level; for instance, it is very rewarding to see that the region of Andalusia in Spain has applied EIP definitions at the regional level.

Second, this year's publication extends the range of indicators significantly not only by calculating more detailed indicators (by industry and by size class), but also by presenting several indicators of entrepreneurial determinants. This allows countries to benchmark their entrepreneurial performance and entrepreneurial determinants and policies.

Third, this year's entrepreneurship data are more timely. The EIP's close co-operation with national statistical offices had resulted in the collection of high-quality data, but sometimes at the expense of the timeliness. Following the economic crisis, many requests for more recent empirical evidence were received. This publication therefore presents a first set of timely indicators for a subset of countries and the EIP plans further research on this topic.

This report has been prepared by Benoit Arnaud and Koen De Backer of the Structural Economic Statistics Division of the OECD Statistics Directorate. It should be stressed, however, that the EIP is a strong collaborative effort with Eurostat and its achievements are due to a willing commitment by many national statistics offices to harmonise methods and produce results. The continuing financial and intellectual support of the Kauffman Foundation has allowed the EIP to advance the data collection and indicator development work.

In addition, the Entrepreneurship Indicators Steering Group plays an important role in the EIP. It discusses the work programme and explores new directions for further research. The input from national delegates, as members of this group, along with representatives from international organisations such as Eurostat, the World Bank and the OECD, is invaluable. A list of their names and affiliations can be found at the end of this report.

We look forward to further developing the EIP in the years to come by engaging more countries, producing more indicators and doing more analytical research. Measuring entrepreneurship has become an integral part of the statistical activities of the OECD. Data and indicators, publications and working papers, and other background information can be found at www.oecd.org/statistics/entrepreneurshipindicators. The OECD will continue its work on measuring entrepreneurship and welcomes the participation of all countries and regions in this important project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Schreyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Paul Schreyer
Acting Chief Statistician
and Director of the Statistics Directorate