

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

September 2004

Issue No. 22

Improving Timeliness for Short-Term Economic Statistics

By Richard McKenzie, OECD

In recent years there has been a lot of pressure on national statistics organisations (NSOs) to better serve their users by improving the timeliness of release for their short-term economic indicators. In response to this demand, NSOs have focused on improving the efficiency and methodology of their statistical production processes. So this begs the question: where would one look to find comprehensive documentation on good practices used by NSOs to improve the timeliness of their short-term economic statistics? The answer is the newly created *STES Timeliness Framework*, now available on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/std/research/timeliness.

The Short-Term Economic Statistics (*STES*) *Timeliness Framework* is a structured collection of documentation on a range of *good practices* currently used by NSOs for improving timeliness, reducing costs or improving accuracy in the production of STES, for those indicators produced from business surveys and/or administrative records of businesses. It was created by a taskforce of the OECD Short-Term Economic Statistics Expert Group (STESEEG), as a tool to assist NSOs in improving the timeliness of the short-term economic statistics they produce.

Two main approaches were used by the STESEEG task force to collect documentation for inclusion in the framework. The first consisted of a literature search of statistical journals, international conferences and workshop proceedings which have covered issues relating to short-term economic statistics. The second involved a formal request to the STESEEG representative of each OECD country to identify and provide relevant existing documentation within their organisation. This documentation was then assessed by the task force to determine if it was suitable for inclusion in the framework. The key criterion for including a document in the *STES Timeliness Framework* is that it must describe a method for achieving / improving timeliness or reducing costs with proven success.

The *STES Timeliness Framework* is presented as a user friendly website, covering both methodological and operational good practices for improving timelines or reducing costs of production. Both summary and detailed documentation on methods are accessed through the main reference table shown on the following page. The current documentation referenced within the framework comes from 18 different countries, thus it should be diverse enough to be of use to all NSOs that operate under a variety of different circumstances.

Future Updating

Ensuring the *STES Timeliness Framework* is kept up to date with documentation which describes contemporary good practices is essential if it is to be a useful ongoing resource for NSOs. Therefore NSOs are invited to

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submit papers at any time for assessment for inclusion within the framework. This documentation can be in the form of internal documentation on methods used, final project proposals for the implementation of new methods, or other relevant papers describing processes / methodologies.

Contributing to the STES Timeliness Framework provides NSOs with the opportunity to:

- gain wider recognition for their work;
- access information about other countries practices extremely relevant to their daily work which would otherwise be very

difficult to obtain, as this type of information is rarely published in journals etc.;

- closely examine good practises in countries most likely to be similar to their own;
- quickly evaluate different options for implementing new methods to improve the timeliness of their short-term economic statistics with greater certainty of the likely outcomes.

Broad statistical process	Links to documentation on proven operational methods to improve timeliness or reduce costs for short-term economic statistics
1 Frame selection and administrative data use	1.1 Direct Use of Administrative Data for Short-Term Statistics
	1.2 Maintaining Survey Frames from Administrative Data Sources
2 Questionnaire design	2.1 Flexible Questionnaire and Form Design
	2.2 Minimising Data Items Collected
3 Sample design and selection	3.1 Efficient Sample Designs
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4 Reference period & due dates	4.1 Choice of Reference Period
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5 Data collection and validation (editing)	5.1 Efficient Data Collection Methods Using Technology
	5.2 Follow Up of Non Respondents
	5.3 Automated Data Validation (Editing) Methods
	5.4 Selective (or Significance) Editing
	5.5 Effectively Combining Technology and Staff Resources
	5.6 Relationships with Respondents
6 Estimation	6.1 Data Imputation Methods
	6.2 Preliminary Estimates from Sub Samples
	6.3 Estimation Based on Lower Response Rates
	6.4 Preliminary Estimates Based on Statistical Models
7 Evaluation & dissemination	7.1 Assessment of User Requirements
	7.2 Analysis of Revisions
	7.3 Quality Assessment of Timeliness Improvements
	7.4 Use of Benchmarking Techniques
	7.5 Efficient Dissemination Processes
8 Overview	8.1 Papers Covering Several Methods to Improve Timeliness
	8.2 All Papers Sorted by Country

For more information on the *STES Timeliness Framework*, including information on guidelines for submitting papers for inclusion, please contact Richard McKenzie at richard.mckenzie@oecd.org, or visit the framework at www.oecd.org/std/research/timeliness.

Producing High Quality Long Time Series
By Richard McKenzie, OECD

The OECD Main Economic Indicators (MEI) database has long been regarded as one of the best sources of high quality comparable statistics for short-term economic indicators across OECD Member countries. One of the key principles of the MEI database, and that which gives it a comparative advantage over other sources of international statistics, is its policy of maintaining long time series to support empirical analysis.

During 2004, the OECD has undertaken a major project to review the quality of long time series maintained in the Main Economic Indicators database. The results of this review are now complete, and changes to improve methodologies and thus the quality

of the time series in the database have recently been introduced.

Linking Time Series

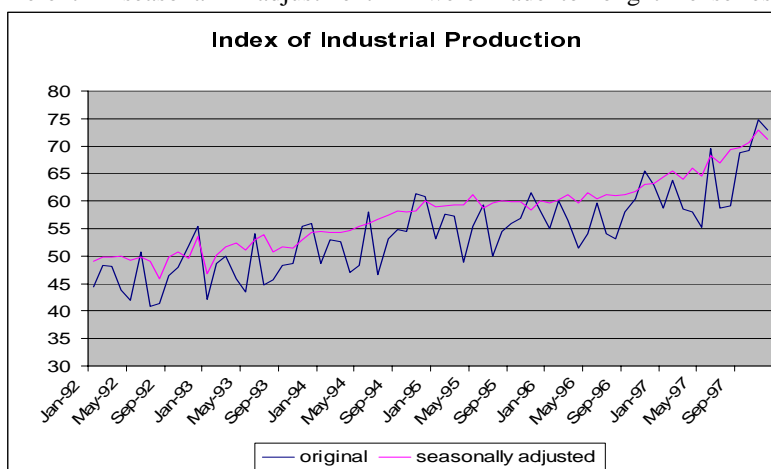
The first major issue tackled in the project was to review the method used to link different vintages of historical time series (expressed in index form) in order to create long time series in the MEI database. The need to link different vintages of countries time series for a particular subject arises when there may have been a change in methodology, classification or base year for a subject and the country only provides a short time series on the new basis. In most cases the country provides a new time series that has some period of overlap with the former series. Provided the overlap in the old and new time series is for a period of at least one year, the following two methods are the most common for linking the series:

- The 12-month (or 4-quarter) link method, which calculates a linking factor as the average of the first common year of observations of the new series divided by the equivalent observations of the old series;
- The first common period link method, which calculates a linking factor as the ratio of the first observation of the new series to the equivalent observation of the old series.

The first common period link method is also known as a 'chain link'. It preserves the monthly (or quarterly) growth rate at the linking point from the old series. This method was previously the preferred method for linking time series in the MEI database. However, where both an original and seasonally adjusted version of the same series requires linking, this method can produce a spurious

relationship between these two series if their linking factors are not identical. This problem was identified for several series, with an example of the impact shown in the graph below.

This problem often arises if there has been revisions to the monthly growth rates in the new version of the time series for the overlapping period with the old version, or if different seasonal adjustment



methodologies have been used for the old and new versions of the time series. Under these circumstances, the 12-month link method is more likely to produce linking factors for the seasonally adjusted and original series which are very close, and thus the problem of inconsistencies in these two series is avoided by using this method. This result can also be shown to hold (approximately) algebraically, and a detailed paper on this issue is available from the OECD on demand.

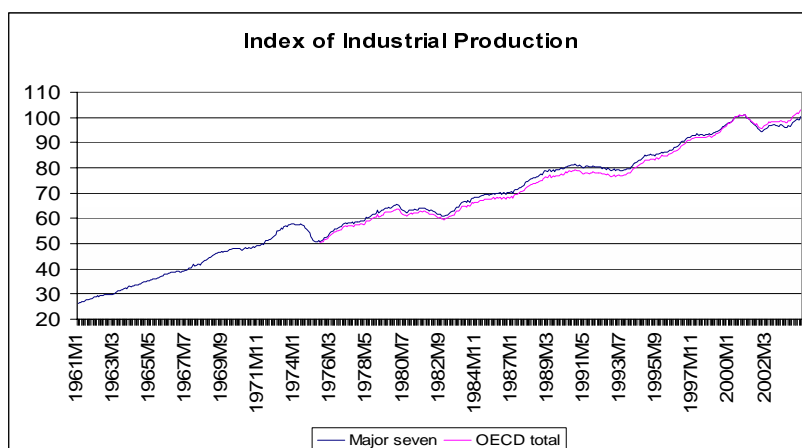
Where revisions to monthly growth rates have been made to the new version of the time series for the overlapping period with the old version, the 12-month link method provides the most robust method for linking the time series provided the revisions are not biased in a particular direction. In the case where there is no revision to the monthly growth rates between the

old and new versions of the series for the overlapping period, the 12-month link method and the first common period method yield the same result.

As a result of both theoretical and detailed empirical analysis, the 12-month link method is now the preferred method for linking different vintages of time series in the MEI database. Several changes were made to long time series on

the MEI database containing links to adopt this new method, which has corrected the problem of the spurious relationship between seasonally adjusted and original versions of the same time series which existed in some cases.

However an exception to this rule is made in the case of price indices, where use of the first common period link method is preferred. This is due to the fact that in general price indices do not exhibit seasonality, and empirical analysis also revealed that revisions to monthly growth rates to the new version of the time series for the overlapping period with the old series were more likely to be biased in a particular direction.



For more information on OECD methodology for linking long time series, see http://www.oecd.org/document/21/0,2340,en_2649_33715_2073813_1_1_1_1,00.html

OECD Main Country Groupings

The MEI publishes the following set of 'OECD Main Country Groupings' or 'area totals': OECD Total; OECD – Europe; EU 15; Euro area; Major Seven (United States, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy) for the following subjects: Industrial Production, Composite Leading Indicators, Passenger Car Registrations, Retail Trade, Consumer Prices, Producer Prices, Hourly Earnings, Standardised Unemployment Rates, Civilian Employment, Monetary Aggregates and International Trade.

The process for calculating these OECD area totals was the second major activity of the recent review, and it had the following key aims:

- introduce country weights for the year 2000;
- review the methodology for weighting the historical time series;
- increase the length of historical time series where possible.

The weights used to combine country data in forming area totals differ depending on the subject. Industrial Production, Composite Leading Indicators, Retail Trade, Consumer Price Indices, Producer Price Indices and Monetary Aggregates all use relevant aggregates in the base year (e.g. GDP in industry, Household Private Final Consumption Expenditure, Money Supply) adjusted by Purchasing Power Parities. Other series using weights that are not adjusted by Purchasing Power Parities are Passenger Car Registrations (number in the base year, smoothed) and Hourly Earnings (manufacturing employment in the base year). Other subjects area totals (Standardised Unemployment Rates, Civilian Employment and International Trade) are simply based on the sum of contributing countries data.

Where weights are used, area total series are now chain-linked Laspeyres indices. The series are chain-linked every five years when new weights are introduced, coinciding with the introduction of a new base year, which is currently 2000. The exceptions are area totals for Consumer Price Indices and Producer Price Indices which are annually re-weighted chained Laspeyres indices.

The historical time series for area totals were extended by two methods. The first involved restricting the period that transition economies (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovak Republic) could contribute to area totals to 1990 onwards, at which point the series is chain linked to a 'reduced country' version of the area total. The second involved estimating some countries data to extend the period for which the area total could be calculated.

As an example of the outcome of this process, the historical OECD Total series for the Index of Industrial Production has been extended from 1995 to 1975, and the Major Seven series for Retail Trade from 1990 to 1975.

For more detailed information on OECD methodology for estimating area totals, see: http://www.oecd.org/document/56/0,2340,en_2649_33715_2073848_1_1_1_1,00.html

For information about the OECD Main Economic Indicators publication and online dataset, including access to free data, see <http://www.oecd.org/std/mei>

Improving the Measurement and International Comparability of SMEs Data By Andreas Lindner, OECD

As part of the 2nd OECD Ministerial Conference on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), jointly organised by the OECD and the Turkish Ministry of Industry and Trade, in Istanbul, Turkey 3-5 June 2004, OECD organised a special Workshop on SME statistics,

systematic statistical measurement of SME behaviour”.

In recognition of OECD’s specific role and capabilities, this Workshop concentrated on systemic and specific needs of both producers and users of statistical data on SMEs and analysed strengths and weaknesses of SME statistical systems in OECD countries and in participating Non-member economies. The Workshop brought together high-level officials and experts from both the producer and user communities and achieved its stated objectives, namely to elaborate key policy recommendations for endorsement by Ministers as well as an OECD Action Plan for achieving concrete and tangible results within a tight time schedule.

Five *Statistical Key Policy Recommendations* were elaborated, namely to:

- Promote international convergence of statistical concepts and processes;
- Foster greater international comparability of statistics;
- Develop an integrated business statistical register;
- Promote data linking to make better use of existing data and reduce respondent burden on SMEs and;
- Carry out policy-relevant empirical analyses to underpin evidence-based policy making

Workshop delegates strongly endorsed the five key policy recommendations, elaborated together with country experts. These policy recommendations represent a unique opportunity for statisticians to push ahead statistical research and improve the present state of empirical evidence. The Statistical Workshop outcome has been reflected in the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration with the

following Ministerial Acknowledgement relating to Statistics:

...”[Ministers]... invite the OECD to consider...developing a robust and comparable statistical base on which SME policy can be developed. The Action Plan emerging from the Istanbul Conference Special Workshop on SME Statistics provides a good basis for this work”

The Action Plan from the Statistical Workshop also received strong support from delegates. OECD has been invited to implement without delay the proposed Action Plan to improve the quantitative underpinning of SME’s and entrepreneurship by:

- Promoting harmonization, of statistical business registers, key characteristics and classifications;
- Promoting unique business identification in countries to enable better data linking and tracing of businesses;
- Harmonizing statistical methodologies and concepts through the formulation of target definitions;
- Prioritizing amongst data collections, promote data linking (e.g. enterprise performance and trade, strengthening the co-ordination role of NSOs to enable better use of existing information sources and their use;
- Exploring ways to integrate business structures with business dynamics and to undertake longitudinal analyses;
- Investigating possibilities to develop up-to-date indicators (e. g. quarterly) and to develop new partnerships with stakeholders (e.g. pilot surveys in line with OECD quality standards).

Delegates unanimously welcomed this particular OECD initiative and stressed its fundamental importance for SMEs and policy makers. They also underlined the necessity that each country develops a comprehensive strategy for the measurement of SMEs behaviours, which may also require actions to improve the legal, administrative and organisational conditions in which NSOs operate (such as access to administrative data, incompatible or conflicting classifications and so forth).

Delegates invited OECD to continue to facilitate dialogue between producers and users of data, to organize the demand for statistical information and analyses, and to advance the statistical and analytical research agenda through the Electronic Discussion Forum *SBSNet (Structural Business Statistics Network Discussion Group)*. This group which operates under a Ministerial Mandate and under the auspices of the SWIC, the Statistical Working of the Industry Committee, and the newly created OECD Statistics Committee is addressing the following issues:

- a) Foster convergence of definitions and conventions (variables, basic units etc., interface administrative registers statistical registers);
- b) Address difficult measurement issues (e.g. services output) and propose possible solutions;
- c) Coverage issues (in particular for services);
- d) Thresholds, Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), pertinent SME Indicators;
- e) Bridging the methodological gap and “translating” terminologies and terms used between EU and Non-EU countries;
- f) Issue TARGET definitions and guidelines/recommendations to facilitate intra-country comparability (sectored stove pipe

approach vs. transversal) as well as facilitate international comparability (statistical register, common or comparable IDs, “traceability” of statistical units);

g) Impact analysis of different thresholds, size classes, etc. used in OECD and other countries;

h) Explore linkages to trade data and deepen the understanding of the interface Manufacturing Services.

This is a vast, complex and difficult list of issues to be tackled which will require very active co-operation from countries and also time.

For more information on the Istanbul Workshop, please see www.oecd-istanbul.sme2004.org

If you wish to work with OECD on these issues using the electronic discussion platform SBSNet, please contact andreas.lindner@oecd.org with Std.IndServStat@oecd.org on copy.

Non-Observed Economy: Issues of Measurement

By Vladimir Sokolin, Federal Service of State Statistics, Russia; Tadeusz Toczyński, Central Statistical Office, Poland

In the period 23-25 June 2004 the Federal Service of State Statistics (Russian Federation) and the Central Statistical Office of Poland organized in Saint-Petersburg the International Seminar “Non-observed economy: issues of measurement”. The Seminar was attended by leaders and specialists from state authorities of the Russian Federation and Republic of Poland, experts of international organizations and national

statistical offices, and other experts in the field.

The Seminar was aimed at sharing experience on measurement of the non-observed economy. Improving the quality in statistics has recently become a priority task for the majority of statistical offices as well as international organisations. We can also assume that the indicator which largely determines statistics’ quality is the quality of national accounts. One of the most important parameters of national accounts’ quality is its exhaustiveness. To obtain this exhaustiveness we must face a very complicated problem which is non – observed economy, as well as, its measuring. As we already know a lot of achievements have been made in this field but the identification of the phenomena existing in the non – observed economy and its measuring still constitutes a big challenge for statisticians. In this context any form of exchanging experiences and promotion of so called “best practice” is very useful.

The Seminar discussed international experience of estimation of non-observed economy, legal and illegal activities, regional and sectoral features and the impact of the informal sector on economic development. Experts from international organizations: UNECE, ILO, OECD, World Bank, CIS-Stat, national statistical offices of Poland, Russia, Germany, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Finland, Estonia, China, representatives from Russian state authorities and regional statistical offices of Poland and Russia presented papers and addressed the seminar. Discussions and the exchange of views, which were organized at the Seminar, made a contribution to extending the knowledge on the non-observed economy and became a noticeable

step in the process of improving the current methodological approaches on measurement of the phenomenon.

More detailed information about the Seminar is available on the web: www.gks.ru/news/seminar/agenda.htm.

27th CEIES Seminar "Producing Business Statistics – Costs and Efficiency, recent developments and experiences"

CEIES, the European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres and Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities is organising the above-mentioned seminar on 14 and 15 October 2004 in Dresden, Germany. The key aims of the seminar are to discuss how the efficiency of processes used for official statistics could be measured and how burden on respondents can continue to be reduced. All information on the seminar including a call for papers can be found at <http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc//dsis/ceies/library>

**Statistics Canada's 2003
General Social Survey: An
Exciting New Source of
Social Capital Data**

By *Grant Schellenberg,*
Statistics Canada

In Canada, as elsewhere, there is widespread interest in social capital. Government departments, researchers and practitioners from many quarters are interested in how social networks and norms of trust and reciprocity may contribute positively to individual and social outcomes. Until recently, however, information on social capital has been sparse in Canada. Earlier surveys fielded by Statistics Canada collected data on certain aspects of the issue, such as volunteer activities or social supports, but no single survey collected information on a wide range of social capital measures. Consequently, the opportunity for quantitative research on this issue was limited.

Statistics Canada's 2003 General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Engagement addresses this data gap by providing information on the outlooks, activities and networks of a representative sample of almost 25,000 Canadians. Among the issues addressed by the survey are: the extent to which Canadians are part of social networks and reciprocal relationships; the involvement of Canadians in organizations, in volunteer work, and in political activities; and the extent to which Canadians trust others, have confidence in public institutions, and feel a sense of belonging to the nation. The richness of the data allows researchers to define social capital in various ways and to examine the inter-relationships between different dimensions of the concept.

The target population for the 2003 GSS on Social Engagement was all

persons 15 years of age or older residing in Canada's ten provinces, excluding institutional residents. All respondents were contacted and interviewed by telephone, with survey estimates weighted to account for the 2% of the target population in households without telephones. Data were collected over the 11 months from February to December 2003 to take into account any seasonal variation in the information. Usable responses were obtained from 24,951 completed interviews, producing a response rate of 78%.

Survey findings show that the outlooks and activities of Canadians vary considerably across regions of the country and across socio-economic characteristics. In terms of trust, 53% of respondents said that, generally speaking, most people can be trusted while 43% said that one cannot be too careful in dealing with people. (About 4% of respondents were either unable or unwilling to answer the question). The views of people in Quebec were very different from those elsewhere, as 35% of Quebecers said that people can be trusted compared with about 60% of people in the Atlantic provinces, the prairie provinces and British

Columbia. Within Quebec, feelings of trust were significantly lower among French-speaking than English-speaking individuals. The same patterns were evident when individuals were asked what they thought would be the likely outcome if they lost a wallet or purse containing \$200. French-speaking individuals in Quebec were the least likely to say that their wallet or purse would be returned with its contents if found by a complete stranger. Levels of trust were also positively correlated with educational attainment and household income.

In terms of organizational involvement, 61% of Canadians belong to at least one group or organization, with sports and recreational clubs the most frequently cited affiliation. Among individuals aged 25 to 54, individuals with a university degree were about twice as likely to be involved in a group or organization as those who had not completed high school (at 78% and 40% respectively). The largest share of individuals who were involved in a group or organization (40%) participated in activities or meetings on a weekly basis, while 20% participated a few times each

United Kingdom Review of Government Output Measures

In the United Kingdom, a year-long review is in progress on the measurement of government output and productivity within a national accounting framework. Sir Tony Atkinson from Nuffield College, Oxford, is leading the review. In addition to recommending a general framework and principles, the intention is to focus on practical solutions for measuring the key functional areas of health, education, public order and safety and social protection. The Review's Interim Report, for which comments are sought, was published on 19 July and is available together with other information on the review at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/methodology_by_them/e/atkinson/

month. The remainder had participated a few times over the previous year (15%) or had not participated at all. About one-quarter of Canadians (23%) who were involved in a group or organization conducted at least part of their involvement through the internet.

Although the majority of Canadians said that religious or spiritual beliefs are 'very important' (36%) or 'somewhat important' (33%) to the way they live their life, far fewer were regular participants at religious services. Aside from special occasions, such as weddings or funerals, just under one-third of Canadians (30%) had attended religious services or meetings at least once a month over the previous year. Among individuals aged 25 to 54, immigrants who had arrived in Canada during the 1990s were more likely to have attended religious services on a monthly basis than persons born in Canada (at 39% and 22% respectively).

When asked about their 'more immediate neighbourhood', 43% of Canadians said they know many or most of the people in the area. Just under half (48%) said they know a few of the people in the area, while 7% said they know nobody else. The 2003 GSS confirms the image of rural areas and small towns as places where people are most 'neighbourly'. In contrast, two-thirds of respondents in Canada's largest cities said they know only a few people or nobody else in their immediate neighbourhood. In these cities, individuals residing in apartments were far less likely to know their neighbours than were individuals in single family homes. This relationship remained even after other factors, such as duration of residence in the area, were taken into account.

The 2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement public use file will be available in fall 2004. For more information about the survey, contact susan.stobert@statcan.ca.

The restructuring of the ISAE Business Survey on the Manufacturing Sector

By Marco Malgarini, ISAE

The Institute for Studies and Economic Analysis (ISAE, formerly ISCO) has performed since 1962 the monthly Business Survey on the manufacturing sector

in Italy, within the framework of the Joint Harmonised Project of the European Commission. ISAE has recently undertaken a project to significantly improve the overall

quality of the survey, in the sense of increasing internal and international comparability of the results and transparency about the methods used in the elaboration of survey data (see OECD, Business Tendency Surveys: A Handbook, 2003). In this respect, a detailed description of the process will be provided in a paper that will be presented in the 27th Cires Conference in Warsaw (Malgarini M., Margani P., Martelli B., Re-engineering the ISAE Manufacturing Survey, 2004).

The main objectives of this project were to update industry classification to NACE Rev. 1.1, implement a new weighting pattern using 1999 data on value added in the manufacturing sector and backcast the series on this basis to January 1991. The survey is designed at the 3 digit industry level which reflects local demand for detailed level industry data.

In order to improve the comparability between data released at the national and local level, ISAE has also completely restructured the weighting system used to elaborate survey results. Following the OECD recommendation, the new procedure progressively calculates survey percentages aggregating the firms' answers in 4 stages: in the first step, percentages of answers specific for each sector, region and size group are calculated, using firm employee as weights. Then, aggregated percentages for each sector in a given region are calculated summing with respect to size groups, using size-specific value added weights. In the third step, industry-aggregated

Dutch 2001 'Virtual Census' Results Now Available

The Dutch 'Virtual Census' is based on combined information from sources available to Statistics Netherlands: registers which the bureau uses to make statistics and its own surveys. This makes the Virtual Census cheaper and quicker than censuses in most other European countries. Results for the 2001 Virtual Census and information on the methodology used and comparability with past conventional censuses are now available at: <http://www.cbs.nl/en/publications/articles/general/census-2001/census-2001.htm>

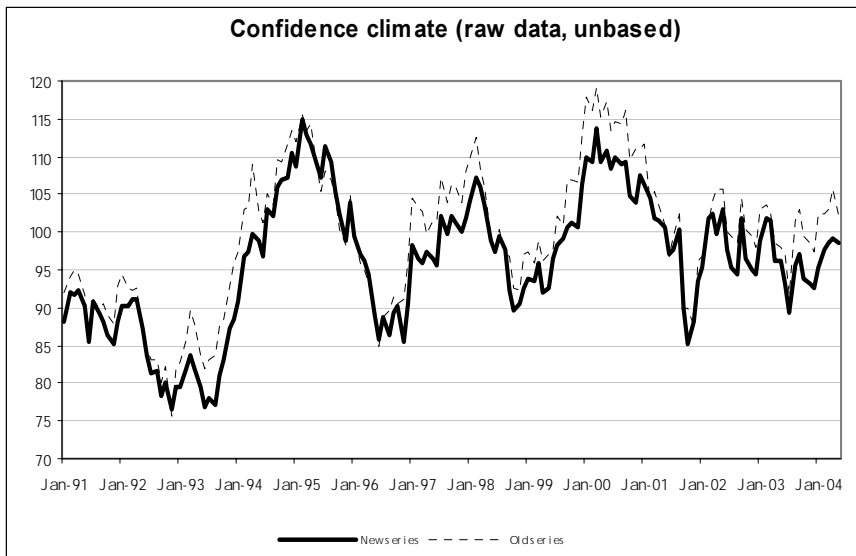
percentages are calculated, summing with respect to both regions and size. In the final step, the overall percentage for all the firms of the manufacturing sector in Italy is calculated, aggregating all the industries previously calculated with their respective value added weights. The new procedure ensures that data provided at the regional level are thoroughly homogenous with that obtained for

the aggregates, in that improving on the previous “regionalisation” of the ISAE survey implemented in 1986.

Cyclical features of the new data

Figure graph below presents the resulting new ISAE Confidence Index (CI) and compares it with the old series. Analysis has shown that the series on the new basis exhibits

desirable leading properties with respect to the reference series, Italian industrial production. In particular, on average the CI leads the industrial production cycle by more than two months, showing a lead of more than 4 months for positive turning points.



Interactive World Trade Statistics

Interactive access to statistics on merchandise trade in goods and series is now available for close to 60 countries world wide on a new on-line database provided by the World Trade Organisation at:

http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statistics/statistics_e.htm#database

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Deadline for articles for the next issue **27 September**

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NEWS IN BRIEF

OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

Now available on the Internet in downloadable PDF and WORD versions

The *OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms* is designed to promote the use of concepts and definitions from international statistical guidelines and recommendations by increasing their visibility, and through making them readily accessible to users.

The Glossary contains a comprehensive set of definitions (around 6 000) of key terminology and concepts and commonly used acronyms. The definitions are quoted word for word from international statistical standards and a detailed reference is provided to enable the user to refer to the complete source document to obtain further information/context where needed.

benchmarking. Delegates at the meeting believed this work continued to be of high national priority and strongly supported the finalisation of the manuals, etc., over the period July 2004 to June 2005. Work over this period will therefore entail:

- The preparation of a more comprehensive draft *Index of Services Production Manual*. The Manual will outline both concepts and practical information on the compilation of an index of services production. The intention is to prepare a final version of the Manual for submission to the OECD Committee on Statistics for approval in early 2006.
- Finalisation of the *Data and Metadata Presentation and Reporting Manual*. The Manual will contain recommendations for the presentation of different forms and types of statistics, and guidelines for the reporting of data revisions, series breaks, metadata,

Statistics, Knowledge and Policy OECD World Forum on Key Indicators

Palermo, Italy 10-13 November 2004

This Forum represents the first opportunity to catalyse, promote and sustain a global community of practice on how to develop and use indicator systems for political entities on major areas of interest in OECD countries and other "global players". Around 500 highly qualified experts from OECD countries and some non-member countries will meet to support capacity building for all sectors of government and society in general in pursuit of better information to guide decision making.

To learn more about the Forum please visit the website at www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum. For specific questions regarding the event please address them to oeecdworldforum@oecd.org.

Where to access the OECD Glossary?

The OECD Glossary has been available free of charge on the Internet as a read-only database since January 2002 at <http://cs3-hq.oecd.org/scripts/stats/glossary/index.htm>

Since the summer 2004 the Glossary has also been available on the Internet in PDF and WORD that can be downloaded to your system.

Preparation of New OECD Manuals and Frameworks for Short-Term Economic Statistics

The main items of business at the third meeting of the OECD Short-term Economic Statistics Expert Group (STESEG) held in Paris on 28-30 June were the draft / prototype manuals, frameworks, etc, prepared by the three STESEG task forces on: services; data presentation and seasonal adjustment; and timeliness and

etc, as well as good practice for citation. A final version of the Manual will be submitted to the OECD Committee on Statistics for approval by the end of June 2005.

- Finalisation of the *STES Timeliness Framework* before the end of 2004. The Framework website contains a collection of good practices used in OECD countries for improving timeliness, reducing costs of production and improving accuracy across all phases of the statistical production process for short-term economic statistics. The Framework is available at www.oecd.org/std/research/timeliness

Work will also start on a new topic on methods to expand the use of administrative data for short term economic statistics. The focus of the new task force on this topic will be the identification of specific statistical processes that could be used to transform administrative data to overcome problems of timeliness and other quality concerns, and hence expand the use of such data.

The agenda for the STESEG meeting, background information, meeting papers and draft manuals, etc, are available on the meeting website at <http://www.oecd.org/std/steseg2004>. For further information, contact denis.ward@oecd.org

CODACMOS Project: Seminar on Effective Data Collection Methods

The "Cluster of Data Collection Integration & Metadata Systems for Official Statistics" project is holding a seminar on 7-8 October in Bratislava, Slovak Republic on the most effective ways for data collection and the effects of standardisation of metadata on the selection and design of solutions for data collection.

The CODACMOS project aims at providing tools and strategy for improving the quality of official statistics, lowering the burden and the costs for both data collectors and providers. The way for reaching this goal is to improve the efficiency of data collection and integrate the data exchange between National Statistical Institutes, Public Administrations and other data providers. CODACMOS has already analyzed produced integration models and recommendations, new technologies and many practical demonstrations on interoperability, integration and interchange of metadata, by bringing together the key researchers and actors from relevant projects, as well as the representatives of international organizations and forums. The European Seminar on the matter will be organized by CODACMOS Project in order to disseminate further the findings of demonstrations and the work carried out during the project. For further information, download the programme and the registration form from the "Public documents" of the CODACMOS web site at <http://www.codacmos.eu.org>. For further information, please contact Mr Alberto Sorce (sorce@istat.it).

Seventh International Forum on Tourism Statistics, 9-11 June 2004, Stockholm, Sweden

The forum illustrated a mosaic of statistical projects that exist in the public and private sectors in tourism. It proved very useful in advancing further key tourism statistical issues by putting together industry, government and consumers perspectives. Presentations are available on <http://www.tourismforum.scb.se/>.

Measuring sustainable tourism development is a critical issue to assess and improve further the sustainable performance of tourism policies. A lot of progress has been made to build new tools for developing indicators but too little advancement is seen on the measurement front. A co-operative process of development associating environment and tourism, public and private stakeholders is a prerequisite for success. The indicators selected

should be coherent, comparable over time and space, reliable and measurable.

Making greater use of the potential of the information society for the collection and dissemination of tourism statistics is vital, notably to increase the timeliness of tourism statistics, to improve the data management and to better serve the needs of all users through direct user access. New information technologies have the ability to significantly increase the timeliness of the data and to provide a better feedback to the providers of information (tourism entrepreneurs), thus encouraging them to play a more active role in the development of tourism statistics.

The Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) is a growing priority in many OECD/EU countries. The TSA is at very different levels of development in countries. Advanced TSA countries have shown very good ways in using this tool (e.g. government revenues attributable to tourism, extensions on human resources and regional estimates). The numerous studies published by the public and the private sectors in this area sometimes generate contradictory figures which undermine the status, credibility and value of the TSA. The forum indicated that there is a need to clarify further what is a TSA (reference to the Tourism Satellite Account: Reference Methodological Framework) and what it is not.

The forum also addressed in detail issues related to consumer surveys for tourism purposes and shared views on the development of new statistical methods aiming to better meet the existing and future users' needs.

Among the many challenges for the future, the forum notably highlighted the need to allocate more resources to certain new areas of tourism statistics (e.g. sustainable development); to increase the sharing of experiences, research and know-how; to look at tourism statistical issues with a wider perspective by associating all

-- NEW --

International Comparison Program Newsletter

ICP News is a quarterly e-newsletter published by the International Comparison Program global office. ICP is a global statistical initiative producing internationally comparable price levels, expenditure values, and Purchasing Power Parity estimates that inform national policy makers, economists, international organizations and academicians about the relative purchasing power of citizens of countries. ICP News contains regional and global status reports, information about new methodologies, forthcoming events and research papers, etc. It is available at <http://www.worldbank.org/data/ICP>. To subscribe please email ICP@worldbank.org.

stakeholders; and to improve the credibility of the available figures on the economic impact of tourism.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

□ OECD Agricultural Outlook, 2004-2013

The tenth edition of the *OECD Agricultural Outlook* provides a medium term assessment of future trends and prospects in the major agricultural commodity markets of OECD countries. The *Outlook* for agricultural markets is for a gradual strengthening in market conditions for all commodities over the period to 2013. Stronger global economic growth is expected to lead to increased consumption and trade and firmer agricultural product prices in nominal terms. But these outcomes are highly conditional on the geopolitical and global economic situation, as well as a continuation of domestic policies and policy settings, particularly in OECD countries. This database is also available on CD Rom and On line. To access the complete database, which contains series going back as far as 1970, consult the OECD Agricultural Databases, available on CD-ROM and on line at www.SourceOECD.org and www.oecd.org/agr

□ Trade and Migration: Building Bridges for Global Labour Mobility

(Co-edited with the World Bank, International Organisation for Migration (IOM))

Expectations are running high for significant outcomes on the temporary movement of natural persons to supply services – known as mode 4 – in the current WTO services negotiations. Powerful drivers for liberalisation exist, such as increased trade and investment, strengthened global business networks, shortage of skills in developed countries, and increasing export capacity in skilled labour in developing countries. The book explores possible ways forward for building greater understanding between the trade and migration policy communities on this important and timely issue. It suggests ways to unleash the potential of the temporary movement of service suppliers to bring significant gains to developed and developing countries alike.

□ China in the Global Economy Income Disparities in China: An OECD Perspective (publication date 09/09/04)

China has experienced spectacular economic growth since 1978, averaging 8 to 9% per year. As a result, on average, people's standard of living is far higher than ever before in China's history. However, economic disparities have also widened very significantly during this period, raising questions about the appropriateness and sustainability of existing policies. This book includes the papers from a seminar held in Paris on 20-21 October 2003 to explore the causes of China's growing economic disparities. This book is part of the OECD's ongoing co-operation with non-member economies around the world.

Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

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

15-18 September	27 th Ciret Conference, Economic Tendency Surveys, and Cyclical Indicators, economic situation in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, <i>Statistics Directorate (STD)</i> Warsaw, Poland
27-30 September	The Non-Observed Economy for Western Balkan Countries workshop, <i>Statistics Directorate (STD)</i> Paris
29 Sep-1 Oct	Paris Group meeting on Working Time Measurement, <i>Statistics Directorate (STD)</i> Lisbon, Portugal
7-8 October	Workshop on Revisions Analysis for National Accounts, <i>Statistics Directorate (STD)</i> Paris
11-15 October	OECD Meeting of National Accounts Experts and Working Party on Financial Statistics, <i>Statistics Directorate (STD)</i> Paris
12 October	Workshop on International Investment Statistics, <i>Directorate for Financial, Fiscal and Enterprise Affairs (DAFFE)</i> , Paris

Other non-OECD Statistical Upcoming Meetings

29 Sep- 1 Oct	UNSD/ECE Regional (CIS and Balkan countries) Meeting on Revision of Economic Classification, Geneva
November	Third Word Conference on Agricultural and Environmental Statistic Application, Cancun