



STATISTICS DIRECTORATE

STD/NAES(2004)8
For Official Use

National Accounts and Economic Statistics

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY OF THE OECD COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS

This document has been prepared by François LEQUILLER - OECD (Statistics Directorate)

WORKING PARTY ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

To be held on 12-15 October 2004

*Tour Europe, Paris La Defense
Beginning at 9:30 a.m. on the first day*

For further information please contact:
François Lequiller
E-mail: Francois.lequiller@oecd.org

English - Or. English

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY OF THE OECD COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS

Introduction

1. In its first meeting (7-8 June 2004), the OECD Committee on Statistics expressed its agreement on the proposal to transform the “Expert Group on National Accounts” into a subsidiary body (Working Party) of the Committee. The Secretariat was asked to prepare the Terms of Reference for this Group, which are now submitted to the Committee for endorsement by written procedure. The proposal will be then submitted to the Council.

Background and proposed arrangements

2. The “Expert Group on National Accounts” has met annually since the beginning of the 1980s. Historically, it has been the pivotal international meeting for the development of the System of National Accounts and of other manuals and handbooks on national accounts adopted worldwide. Currently it plays a key role in the process of updating the 1993 version of the System of National Accounts, whose conclusion is envisaged in 2008. In addition, it represents the most important forum for OECD national accountants to improve the quality and comparability of the statistics they produce. The Group meets annually in October, while its task forces work throughout the year. The meeting of the Group is organised in conjunction with the meeting of the “Working Party on Financial Statistics” (WGFS), where financial accounts issues are discussed.

3. The transformation of the Expert Group into an official Working Party belonging to the Committee on Statistics would reinforce the authority of the body in carrying out its work. Recommendations prepared by the Working Party would be submitted to the Committee for discussion and endorsement. The transformation would be budget neutral.

4. The Secretariat has drafted the mandate for the Working Party.

5. The Working Party would elect its Bureau comprising one chairperson and two vice-chairs. The Bureau is elected with a two year mandate. The chairperson can be re-elected for a second term.

ANNEX 1

WORKING PARTY ON national accounts

Mandate

The Committee on Statistics,

Having regard to Articles 1, 2, 5a) and 12 of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

Having regard to the resolution of the Council creating the Committee on Statistics and granting it the responsibility to “ensure that OECD statistics are produced according to high quality standards” and “officially approve methodological recommendations elaborated on specific subjects” [C(2003)217 and C(2003)217Corr1];

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Organisation;

Considering that comparable quantitative information on national accounts across OECD Member countries is indispensable for carrying out national and international economic analysis;

Emphasising the importance of the System of National Accounts as a guide for the development of all economic statistics;

Recognising the historical role played by the OECD in the development of standards to compile national accounts data worldwide;

DECIDES:

1. The Working Party on National Accounts is established;
2. The Working Party will undertake work to improve the quality of national accounts data in accordance with priorities established by the OECD Committee on Statistics;
3. In particular the Working Party will:
 - facilitate the development and improvement of internationally comparable methodologies in order to allow users to better compare the growth and the levels of national accounts variables between OECD countries, including satellite accounts;
 - monitor, in coordination with the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), the changes and clarification needed in the Manual of the System of National Accounts to increase the relevance and the international comparability of national accounts statistics;

- monitor by regular studies the comparability of the data in all domains of national accounts, including price/volume issues, quarterly accounts, general government and institutional sector accounts, and employment and productivity analysis;
 - encourage the implementation of international guidelines and recommendations by Member countries, including those regarding compilation methods and accurate measurement of key phenomena;
 - encourage the timely availability of statistical series and monitor their prompt transmission to the OECD in order to better serve international users of national accounts data;
4. The Working Party will seek the maximum practicable conformity of its own work with relevant statistical work undertaken by other parts of the OECD, and in particular the Working Party on Financial Statistics (WPFS) which covers financial accounts; and also with related work on national accounts undertaken by other competent international and supranational organisations. To avoid duplication of efforts, a particular attention has to be paid to the co-ordination of the activity of the Working Party with that carried out by other working groups active at international level;
 5. Finally, the Working Party will act as a forum in which Member countries will be able to exchange information and experience on new concepts and methods of compilation of national accounts and on new experiences on the use of national accounts data;
 6. The duration of the present mandate shall be four years ending 31 December 2008. The Committee on Statistics will review the results obtained every year before the end of the mandate.