

Foreword

More attention is being paid to “entrepreneurship” today than ever before. Entrepreneurship has become a buzzword both in the media and in political debate. It is almost impossible to imagine a discussion about any aspect of economic policy without mention of the contribution of, or impact on, entrepreneurs.

Despite the exalted views of entrepreneurship, measurement of the phenomenon, particularly at international level, has long been an issue. While the OECD has addressed entrepreneurship through various analytical studies and reports, no systematic effort was made to establish an ongoing database specifically devoted to comparing entrepreneurship across OECD countries. There have been numerous initiatives at a local, regional or national level, and even a few at the international level, but internationally comparable data are scarce. Moreover, National Statistics Offices have seldom been directly involved in developing data on entrepreneurship.

The joint **OECD-Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme** (EIP) addresses this gap. It is the result of a strong collaborative effort by Eurostat and the OECD and a willing commitment by many National Statistics Offices to harmonise methods and produce results. A number of other events and actors are also responsible for the success of the EIP and their contributions must be recognised.

In 2004, the 2nd OECD Ministerial Conference on SMEs in Istanbul, **Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovative SMEs in a Global Economy**, concluded that the statistical base for entrepreneurship research was weak, especially in terms of international comparability. The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration urged the OECD to develop “a robust and comparable statistical base on which SME policy can be developed”.

While the Ministerial recommendations were a strong incentive, other supporters and sponsors were needed to make the work possible. In 2005, the Kauffman Foundation provided the OECD the financial support for a feasibility study to explore what could be done to improve entrepreneurship data. A Danish-led consortium of seven OECD countries – Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United States – known as ICE, added financial and intellectual support for the work.

Encouraged by the feasibility study, the OECD launched the Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme (EIP) in late 2006. Twelve OECD countries plus the World Bank and Eurostat joined the Entrepreneurship Indicators Steering Group to develop definitions, methods and a list of core indicators. In 2007, Eurostat formally joined forces with the OECD to create the joint **OECD-Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme** whose aim is to create a durable long-term programme of policy-relevant entrepreneurship statistics.

This report presents the first fruits of the efforts of the last three years. It was prepared by Nadim Ahmad, Benoit Arnaud, Tim Davis and Koen De Backer of the Structural Economic Statistics Division of the OECD Statistics Directorate. They benefited from comments by Joaquim Oliveira Martins. The contributions of many others were also instrumental, notably those who served on the steering group. Their names and affiliations can be found at the end of this report. Last, but not least, co-operation with the National Statistics Offices in the different countries was crucial.

In the first round, the results of which are found here, 18 countries contributed data corresponding to the new “entrepreneurship” concepts. This is a promising start and we look forward to engaging more countries, and to producing more indicators, in the years to come. We will release new data and update indicators on a regular basis through www.oecd.org/statistics/entrepreneurshipindicators. The OECD will continue its work on measuring entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship indicators have become an integral part of the activities of the Structural Economic Statistics Division of the OECD Statistics Directorate.



Enrico Giovannini
Chief Statistician
and Director of the Statistics Directorate