

# Methodological Research

## Methodological Research

### Culture and Art-related Activities

#### Purpose

To build up a framework for the statistical measurement of the economic importance of culture and art-related activities, investigating national methodologies and practices. To compile data already available from national and other sources and to present selected indicators in the OECD Factbook.

#### Objectives and outputs

This new project is conducted by the OECD and supported by the Louise T Blouin Foundation. In December 2005, the preliminary results of the work were discussed and decisions made which specified the culture sector to be covered, the terminology to be used, and drew up a timetable for the project in 2006.

New tables on Leisure and Culture statistics drawn from the OECD annual national accounts database were supplied for the 2006 OECD Factbook.

The objectives in 2006 are to:

- draft a Methodological Manual on the statistical measurement of the economic importance of culture and art-related activities. This is already in progress. The manual will define the culture sector. It will set out and evaluate frameworks for producing statistics on the culture sector which will support analysts in addressing policy questions. The draft manual will be reviewed with input from other international organisations (UNCTAD, Eurostat and UNESCO) at an early stage. The final report will be ready at the end of 2006;
- construct, for June 2006, an initial dataset of existing statistics from 6 key countries and 4 cities, adhering as far as possible to the frameworks developed in the Manual. An evaluation of the limitations imposed by current data availability will be made;
- hold an expert workshop in late 2006 to discuss the work conducted to date.

#### Main Developments for 2006

##### General aspects:

New activity.

## **Methodological Research**

# **Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Portal**

### **Purpose**

To develop an internet portal containing international recommendations and guidelines on the presentation of data and metadata.

### **Objectives and outputs**

The major areas of real difference in the comparability of data produced by various international organisations and national statistical agencies are: conceptual differences arising from the use of different variable definitions, units and classifications; and operational differences flowing out of differences in data collection and processing practices. However, even where differences from these factors are minimal, data disseminated by different countries, etc., may actually look different because of the use of different data presentation and reporting practices.

The Handbook and the resultant internet portal bring together guidelines and best practice on data presentation from existing international standards and draft new standards as appropriate into the one single document. The presentation issues included in the Handbook and portal include those relating to: different types of data (absolute figures, indices, growth rates) and different forms of data (non-seasonally adjusted, seasonally adjusted, trend cycle).

The Handbook also provides recommendations on a number of key data reporting presentation that also have a significant impact on data consistency. These comprise: data revision practices, presentation of series breaks, data citation practices, presentation of information on sampling and non-sampling errors, presentation of metadata; presentation of administrative data.

### **Non-member countries involved in the activity:**

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

### **Main Developments for 2006**

#### **General aspects:**

After the publication of "Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Handbook", expected in early 2006, the portal will include additional presentation / reporting issues as they emerge in future.

In 2006 a web version of the Handbook will be created which will allow the incorporation of emerging data presentation and reporting issues following the publication of the paper version.

## **Methodological Research**

### **Feasibility Study on Access to Micro-Data for Research Purposes**

#### **Purpose**

To conduct a feasibility study to assess a number of options by which micro-level data or indicators based on micro-level data could be held or accessed via the OECD.

#### **Objectives and outputs**

Six options will be the subject of this study: (1) Transmission of micro-level datasets, maintained by national sources, to the OECD; (2) Collection of micro-level datasets using private, usually non-confidential, datasets; (3) Coordinated remote access; (4) Decentralised work with longitudinal data; (5) Decentralised work with indicators based on 'snapshot' information; (6) Special bilateral projects.

The first phase in the study will be to establish what can be done, theoretically, subject to the differing legal constraints within each OECD country; at the same time establishing a preference for each option amongst the different National Statistical Offices. Concurrent with this, separate pilot projects are already envisaged for options 3 and 5 to establish in advance the practical difficulties inherent in each of these options. A conference on micro-level data, to be jointly organised with DSTI, is planned for the fourth quarter of 2006, to consider a number of issues related to this project and the applications, potential or otherwise, of micro-level data. A draft report is expected to be presented at this conference with a final report anticipated for the end of the year; which will provide the basis for the Statistics Committee to make an informed decision about follow-up activity.

#### **Main Developments for 2006**

##### **General aspects:**

New activity

## **Methodological Research**

# **Indicators for Measuring Progress and Indicators for Policy Making**

### **Purpose**

To develop guidelines for best practice, develop new cross cutting key indicators (especially indicators of key outcomes) and undertake other research that will assist the OECD and Member Countries to improve the use they make of indicators.

### **Objectives and outputs**

The work of the project will focus on the development and dissemination of statistical indicators and their use for decision making. The methodological nature of the project means that it will not enter into substantive policy discussions, which take place in appropriate committees. The project will deal both with indicators of key outcomes, as well as those more detailed sets of indicators that are used to underpin evidence-based policy making. The ways in which both types of indicators are developed, disseminated and used to enhance decision-making would fall under the aegis of the project.

The main aims of the project are the following:

- foster the improvement of the existing sets of indicators and the development of new indicators through a co-operative effort of OECD analysts and statisticians working on these matters in various directorates;
- address key methodological issues concerning various domains;
- provide recommendations on the processes through which indicators should be built, disseminated and successfully used for decision-making at national and international levels;
- improve the dissemination of OECD indicators and make them more accessible and useful for governments, businesses, individuals;
- improve the coherence of OECD statistics and indicators.

### **Main Developments for 2006**

#### **General aspects:**

New activity.

## **Methodological Research**

### **Journal of Business Cycle Measurement and Analysis**

#### **Purpose**

To exchange knowledge and information on the theory and operation of business and economic cycle research, including both statistical measurement and analytical aspects.

#### **Objectives and outputs**

The themes covered by the Journal comprise: analysis and explanation of cyclical fluctuations; business cycle specification, definition and classification; statistical approaches to the development of short-term economic statistics and indicators; business tendency, investment and consumer surveys; use of survey data or cyclical indicators for business cycle analysis.

The Journal is closely linked to the well known statistical and methodological research work carried out in this area by the OECD and by the Centre for International Research on Economic Tendency Surveys (CIRET), in particular to the work produced by the OECD Short-Term Economic Statistics Expert Group and by joint research in economic statistics with other institutions such as the European Commission and Eurostat, whereas CIRET encompasses a wide variety of researchers whose work results in the most up-to-date insights in this field.

The Journal also provides a calendar of conferences, along with e-information and book reviews which are of interest and within its scope.

#### **Main Developments for 2006**

##### **General aspects:**

No major changes.

## Methodological Research

# Metagora - Measuring Democracy, Human Rights and Governance

### Purpose

To develop methods, tools and frameworks for measuring democracy, human rights and governance. Its strategic goal is to enhance evidence-based assessment and monitoring in these fields.

### Objectives and outputs

Metagora was launched in February 2004 within OECD-PARIS21 for a fixed term of 24 months and was financed through voluntary contributions from the European Union, France, Sweden and Switzerland.

The main objective of Metagora is to develop tools based on well-established statistical methods to obtain data and create indicators upon which policies can be formulated and evaluated. Metagora works on crucial monitoring issues, such as proper matching of quantitative and qualitative data. Metagora acts as a catalyst of expertise: it identifies and documents national and local initiatives aimed at measuring human rights, democracy and governance, and develops a network of experts involved in these initiatives. Metagora should deliver relevant guidelines and training materials adapted to the needs of a large spectrum of beneficiaries, including not only statisticians and analysts, but also decision makers, policy actors and civil society members who need to understand how statistics and indicators are created and how these can be properly used.

The current pilot phase (initially foreseen to be concluded in February 2006) will be extended until the end of December 2006. In the course of this consolidation period the Independent Panel of Experts will draft a substantive in-depth report on the process, methods and tools developed by Metagora, and an external evaluation of the project will be organized and conducted.

The work of the Metagora community will focus on:

- enhancing the analysis and policy incidence of the project's first results, as well as the national appropriation and institutionalization of the tested methods and tools;
- launching WBI/UNDP/Metagora work on democratic governance indicators in selected countries;
- developing Metagora networks of human rights institutions and official statistical offices;
- setting up a triennial working program for Metagora II;
- designing and preparing the activities foreseen in this working program, thus allowing efficient and timely starting of field operations by the beginning of 2007.

### Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Other, Peru, Russian Federation, South Africa, Venezuela

## **Main Developments for 2006**

### **General aspects:**

In 2006 a boost will be given to concrete operational joint actions with the World Bank Institute and the UNDP. Specific networks with NSIs and Human Rights Institutions will be developed and a multi-annual world-wide pluri-annual program ("Metagora 2") will be drafted and agreed by the Metagora community of partner organizations.

## Methodological Research

# OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

### Purpose

The aims of the OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms are:

- to provide a highly visible and readily accessible source of statistical terminology and definitions that are derived from international standards for use by OECD author areas in the development of questionnaires and other data collection instruments and for inclusion in published output. The Glossary also has wide application for external government and non-government agencies;
- to provide a set of target definitions based on existing international statistical standards that will ultimately be linked to data located in the OECD's Statistical Information System (SIS);
- to be the catalyst for the development of consistent international statistical standards by highlighting existing inconsistencies between existing standards.

### Objectives and outputs

The OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms contains a comprehensive set of definitions of the main data items collected by the Organisation. The Glossary also contains definitions of key terminology and concepts and commonly used acronyms.

Over 6 700 definitions currently included in the glossary are primarily drawn from existing international statistical guidelines and recommendations that have been prepared over the last two or three decades by international organisations such as the OECD, IMF, ILO, Eurostat, United Nations working with national statistical institutes.

Work in 2005 and 2006 entailed the addition of new definitions prepared by a number of OECD statistical working parties and expert groups, as well as definitions published by other international organisations, and the insertion of extensive information into the "context" field of the glossary, explaining the uses and limitations of many of the definitions included.

New Glossary facilities include the possibility to identify new definitions included in the Glossary or existing definitions modified. The facility to download the entire Glossary from the web in as a WORD file and PDF has also been developed.

References to the Glossary is now included in over 102 000 web pages of national statistical agencies, central banks and academic institutes.

### Databases

OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

### Main Developments for 2006

**General aspects:**

## The OECD Statistical Programme of Work 2006, Part II

Insertion of new definitions reflecting the continuing activities of various expert groups and working parties both within the OECD and other international organisations.

Linking key definitions to OECD.Stat and MetaStore. This will help facilitate the use of consistent terminology and definitions across the OECD. The Glossary also contains definitions included in the SDMX initiative's Metadata Common Vocabulary (MCV).

Development of new download facilities that will enable users to download sub-glossaries from the main Glossary database.

In 2006 the paper publication version of the Glossary will be released.

# Methodological Research

## Statistical Classifications

### Purpose

To contribute to more relevant, more useful international economic and social classifications for use in OECD member countries and elsewhere. To encourage greater convergence of regional and national activity, product, and trade classifications in OECD member countries. To coordinate OECD input into the revision of international statistical classifications that are actively used in OECD.

### Objectives and outputs

Contribute to the development of 2007 revisions of ISIC, CPC and the 2009 revision of EBOPS.

Develop with analysts, countries, UNSD and Eurostat a top-top and intermediate level ISIC 4 aggregation for SNA data reporting by activity.

### Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

### Main Developments for 2006

#### General aspects:

The OECD (virtual) sub-group of Statistical Policy Group (SPG) co-ordinates OECD inputs to UN Expert Group on Social and Economic Classifications and to other guardians of International Classifications.

The ISIC Rev 4 and CPC Rev 2 will be published jointly with other international organisations.

OECD with IMF and partner agencies, users and compilers will prepare proposals for a revised Extended Balance of Payments Services Classification for the update of the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services planned for 2009.

## Methodological Research

### Statistics for Sustainable Development

#### Purpose

To identify good concepts and practices in order to assist national governments and international organizations in the design of sustainable development indicator sets and in the development of official statistics in the area.

#### Objectives and outputs

A joint working group of the OECD and the UNECE Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has been established in 2005.

The working group should:

- i) articulate a broad conceptual framework for sustainable development measurement. While the starting point of this work should be the concept of capital, the group should also consider other approaches to the extent the capital approach is found insufficient from a conceptual standpoint;
- ii) identify the broad domains that good indicator sets should span;
- iii) develop a menu of good sustainable development indicators in order to help governments and international organizations when they are designing indicator sets;
- iv) identify a small set of indicators from the menu that might become the core for international comparisons;
- v) identify basic data systems necessary for a small set of indicators and identify their possible sources (existing or new statistical surveys, administrative records, information derived from environmental monitoring systems);
- vi) discuss the relationship between integrated environmental and economic accounts and sustainable development indicators.

#### Main Developments for 2006

##### General aspects:

New activity.

## Methodological Research

# World Forum on Key Indicators: Statistics, Knowledge and Policy

### Purpose

To promote research- and information-sharing among countries, allowing them to compare strategies intended to measure and assess the overall “position” and “progress” of a certain political entity (country, region, etc.) vis-à-vis other similar entities. The Forum will be more policy-oriented, rather than technical in nature, as indicator systems are about establishing an agreed set of figures for everyone to use to assess the position and progress of their country.

### Objectives and outputs

Users' need of looking at economic, social and environmental phenomena from a “horizontal” perspective is becoming more and more evident, both at national and international levels. Policy makers and civil society, in particular, are demanding integrated views of various phenomena to make decisions and to evaluate the overall situation of a country, a region, or a local community.

To address these issues the OECD has decided to establish an initiative to promote the international debate on these issues, to help OECD member countries, as well as non-members, to develop indicator systems for monitoring economic, social and environmental developments.

The first “OECD Forum on Key Indicators” was organised in November 2004 as kick-off event of a medium-term initiative in this field.

### Main Developments for 2006

#### General aspects:

Work in 2006 will focus on the build up to the next World Forum conference in mid 2007. Activities already planned include:

- Organising a high level conference in Bellagio (Italy) to discuss and plan the project in March, a conference on measuring wellbeing (mid 2006) and assisting with pre conferences in Latin America and Australia;
- work on indicators of social capital and possibly other cross-cutting areas;
- undertaking various research on the design and dissemination of key indicator sets and how they are used in the decision-making process.