

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

June 2001

Issue No 2

Benchmarking Economic Statistics

By Svante Öberg, Director General of Statistics Sweden and Chairman of the Task Force on Benchmarking in Infra-Annual Economic Statistics

The timeliness of EU short-term economic statistics is not satisfactory. Statistics are released much later than in the United States. This is a great concern for the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN Council). In June 2000, the ECOFIN Council invited the European Commission (Eurostat), in close cooperation with the ECB, to establish an EMU Action Plan identifying areas where progress was urgently required.

The EU's Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) has discussed the present situation. At the SPC meeting in September 2000, Statistics Sweden presented a document containing a number of proposals for improving the timeliness of EU economic statistics. These included a benchmarking study comparing the EU with the US. The SPC approved this proposal and asked Sweden and Eurostat to organise the project. A task force was set up, in which the ECB and OECD were also represented. The group visited the relevant US agencies in February 2001.

The statistical systems in the US and the EU are very different. In the US, the statistical system is centralised at federal level. Statistical work is based on federal programmes and carried out by federal agencies. Usually estimates for the US are only available as a total. In the EU, statistical activities are carried out at the national level. Statistics for the EU and the euro-zone are the result of aggregation of national figures.

In the US, speed has high priority. Essential short-term economic statistics must be released within 22 working days after the end of the period. The whole system has been designed to this end. For example, the first estimates of quarterly national accounts are released after 25-30 calendar days, while the ambitious EMU Action Plan specifies that national accounts should be available within 70 days. Some of the techniques used in the US to ensure timely results draw upon monthly statistics as a basis for quarterly statistics, measuring the mid-point for the month instead of the average for the month, estimating the quarter from just two months of data, and benchmarking systematically short-term statistics against more precise annual statistics. Furthermore, the US agencies have developed competence in economic analysis. Professional economists are involved throughout the process and cooperation with academia is well developed. Moreover, the resources for producing statistics seem to be far in excess of the resources available in European countries, at least much larger than in Sweden.

In Europe there is a long tradition of national statistics. However, national statistical systems have developed differently in the European countries. As a result, the statistical systems vary substantially from country to country. As an example, quarterly national accounts or GDP are released with delays ranging from 45 to 120 days. Consequently some statistics at the EU level are still rather underdeveloped.

To learn more about the differences between European countries, the task force is also carrying out an Intra-EU benchmarking study. Twelve indicators/variables with broad coverage were chosen from the Action Plan. A questionnaire was sent out to all EU members. The results are now being assessed. A report including possible proposals will be submitted to the SPC meeting in September.

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Recent Achievements in ICT and Electronic Commerce Indicators: the OECD Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS)

By Alessandra Colecchia, OECD

The OECD Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS), has been working since 1997 towards the development of internationally comparable statistics for the Information Society. Given the complexity of the issue, the group adopted a “building blocks” approach. Methodological work and data collection have proceeded in several areas at different speeds, in a step-by-step, pragmatic way, by looking first at supply side statistics for the information society, and then at the demand side (usage statistics). WPIIS last met on 26-27 April 2001, here are some of its major recent achievements.

Implementing the OECD's 1998 standard definition of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector

Having developed an OECD definition of the ICT sector based on ISIC Rev.3 in 1998, the group has subsequently moved to implement this definition by developing a set of statistical indicators for the sector. *Measuring the ICT Sector* (October 2000) brings together statistics on employment, value added, production, wages and salaries, number of enterprises, capital expenditure, R&D, imports and exports and presents some indicators of the importance of the ICT sector to OECD economies. Work is underway to update and improve the quality of data on the ICT sector. A new publication, *Measuring the Information Economy*, will be issued later this year and will include not only indicators for the ICT sector (supply data) but also indicators of ICT usage and electronic commerce. A module of the Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard of Indicators (September 2001) will also be entirely dedicated to indicators for the information economy.

The OECD model survey on ICT usage in the business sector

To fully assess the Information Society requires an understanding how the outputs of information economy sectors

are diffused across the economy. WPIIS works with the Voorburg Group and Eurostat to develop model surveys of the use of ICT goods and services for the business enterprise sector, the household sector and the government sector. After two years of experience sharing and testing, a model questionnaire on ICT usage in the business enterprise sector was approved at the WPIIS meeting in April 2001. The survey is intended to provide guidance for the measurement of indicators of ICT, Internet use and electronic commerce and is composed of separate, self-contained modules to ensure flexibility and adaptability to a rapidly changing environment. While the use of “core” modules allows the measurement on an internationally comparable basis, additional modules can be added to respond to evolving or country specific policy needs in this area.

At the April 2001 meeting a proposal for a model survey of ICT use by households/individuals was also discussed. It was agreed that further work was needed and should be coordinated with Eurostat, which is planning to develop and carry out a pilot survey on ICT use in households (first half 2002). It is envisaged that the initial format of this survey will be adopted at the 2002 meeting of WPIIS.

Defining and measuring electronic commerce

Electronic business processes are carried out using ICT technologies and applications. In this respect, the measurement of electronic commerce is one component of ICT use and so can be considered in the context of the model ICT usage surveys referred to above. However, because of the extreme policy and media interest in e-commerce, it has been developed as a

separate stream within the WPIIS work programme. An Expert Group on Defining and Measuring E-commerce was established with a mandate to “compile definitions of electronic commerce that are policy relevant and statistically feasible”. This Expert group has worked on the three inter-related aspects of this problem: a framework for user needs and priorities, definitions, and statistical measurement. In April 2000 the OECD approved two definitions of electronic transactions (electronic orders), based on a narrower and broader definition of the communications infrastructure (see Box 1); and a core list of indicators to measure electronic commerce use and transactions in businesses and households.

At the April 2001 meeting, WPIIS developed guidelines for the interpretation of the electronic transactions definitions, and encouraged Member countries to take such guidelines into account as part of their questionnaire development. Given the rapid pace of technological change the guidelines will be revisited by WPIIS at its 2002 meeting with the benefit of additional experience in the measurement of electronic commerce.

Looking ahead

In the next couple of years WPIIS methodological work will continue in the areas of classification of ICT products, classification of information industries, model surveys of ICT use in the households and government sectors. Resources will continue to be devoted to improving the collection of ICT indicators (supply and usage statistics). Agreed standards and definitions will need to be revisited frequently in such a fast moving area, therefore, rather than developing a manual on statistics for the information society, the group will

Box 1 OECD Definitions of E-Commerce Transactions

Narrow definition

An *Internet transaction* is the sale or purchase of goods or services, whether between businesses, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private organisations, conducted over the *Internet*. The goods and services are ordered over the Internet, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the good or service may be conducted on or off-line.

Broad definition

An *electronic transaction* is the sale or purchase of goods or services, whether between businesses, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private organisations, conducted over *computer-mediated networks*. The goods and services are ordered over those networks, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the good or service may be conducted on or off-line.

continue with its approach of “building blocks”. Individual outputs, such as the ICT sector definition, the definitions on e-commerce, the model surveys etc, once finalised, will be released and accompanied by explanatory and methodological guidelines to help their implementation by the user.

While continuing to develop indicators to measure the “readiness” to the information society and the “use” of ICTs, WPIIS will also strengthen its collaboration with other groups in order to focus on the measurement of impact indicators of ICT use. For example in the areas of the sectoral impact of ICT (e.g. online finance, health, or education) and the micro level analysis

of ICT use, skills, organisational change and productivity (e.g. within the framework of the work on enterprise demography).

Measuring the ICT Sector is available free at:
http://www.oecd.org/dsti/sti/it/prod/measuring_ict.pdf

Biotech Statistics Progress

by Brigitte van Beurzekom, OECD

The second Ad Hoc Meeting on Biotechnology Statistics took place at OECD on 3-4 May. 19 countries were represented. Key issues addressed at this meeting included the establishment of a statistical definition of biotechnology; presentation of a statistical compendium on existing national statistics and a review of alternative methodological approaches taken by countries to measure this activity.

Definition of Biotechnology

A provisional single definition and a list based definition of biotechnology were adopted. It had been previously agreed that both a single definition and a list based definition were needed and would be useful for statistical data collection.

The initial function of the single definition was to serve as a reference for simple data collections. However it is preferable to include the list based definition, or its main headings, in the guidelines as well, to help respondents fill in the survey and to ensure that the data collected are internationally comparable.

The provisional single definition of biotechnology is as follows:

“The application of S&T to living organisms as well as parts, products and models thereof, to alter living or non-living materials for the production of knowledge, goods and services.”

The **list based definition** is based on the following five categories:

- **DNA (the coding):** genomics, pharmaco-genetics, gene probes,

DNA

sequencing/synthesis/amplification, genetic engineering.

- **Proteins and molecules (the functional blocks):** protein/peptide sequencing/synthesis, lipid/protein engineering, proteomics, hormones, and growth factors, cell receptors/signalling/pheromones.
- **Cell and tissue culture and engineering:** cell/tissue culture, tissue engineering, hybridisation, cellular fusion, vaccine/immune stimulants, embryo manipulation
- **Process biotechnologies:** Bioreactors, fermentation, bioprocessing, bioleaching, biopulping, bio-bleaching, biodesulphurization, bioremediation, and biofiltration.
- **Sub-cellular organisms: gene therapy, viral vectors.**

Pilot tests of the provisional definition of biotechnology, will be undertaken by four Member Countries [Australia, Canada, France and Italy]. They will review and circulate a report to group members, making recommendations for revisions if needed.

The Compendium of Biotechnology Statistics

The Secretariat prepared a compendium publication containing currently available statistical data about biotechnology in Member countries. While the data are not all strictly comparable, the compendium begins to address the demand for indicators. The Statistical Compendium will be released as an OECD Working Paper by 31 July.

Framework for the Measurement of Biotechnology

The initial framework for the measurement of Biotechnology is being reviewed and revised. The revised framework will be submitted to the November 2001 meeting of the Working Party on Biotechnology. Comments on the policy issues identified and the indicators selected to address these issues – as well as a ranking of these – will be requested.

A work programme to develop a common methodology for measurement was agreed and includes:

- a) Developing a model methodology for use in R&D surveys;
- b) Developing a model methodology for use in special surveys of biotechnology;
- c) Undertaking a review of the adequacy of classifications for use in measuring biotechnology;
- d) Developing proposals on how to link work on measuring biotechnology to other methodological manuals (e.g. Frascati and Oslo Manuals);
- e) Developing a proposal for a module on measuring social issues as they concern biotechnology.

The future work of this group was approved by the OECD National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators (NESTI) group held in Rome May 14-15.

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http://www.oecd.org/dsti/sti/s_t/biotech/stats/biotech_inventory.htm

OECD Manual "A System of Health Accounts"

By Manfred Huber, OECD

Health accounts are a tool to answer basic questions on the organisation of health care services and their financing. In May 2000, the OECD published the manual *A System of Health Accounts* (SHA) which provides statistical guidance for a system of standard tables on health expenditure. These are structured according to the three dimensions of the *International Classification for Health Accounts* (ICHA), introduced in the SHA manual. These dimensions are functions of health care, categories of providers, and sources of financing.

A matrix presentation of the accounts displays flows of financing to functions and providers, and shows the division of labour of provider industries by functions of health care services. The SHA manual explains boundary issues of health care and classifications in detail. Methodological links and cross-references among SHA, the System of National Accounts, and Satellite Accounts fosters the integration of the SHA with other social and economic statistics.

There are many reasons why comprehensive health accounts have been singled out in many countries as a high priority task for improving national health information systems: health care systems have become more complex and are undergoing rapid technological change; health care is one of the largest "industries" in OECD countries and now accounts for over 8% of GDP on average; in many cases an acceleration of changes in financing mechanisms and experimentation with various forms of alternative care provision make it difficult to monitor the implementation and outcomes of reforms.

A majority of OECD Member countries have started pilot implementation of the SHA manual and are currently at various stages of development. Experts from 12 OECD countries presented results on SHA tables at an experts meeting held in Paris on 29-30 March 2001. Other international organisations have expressed interest and support for the SHA initiative. There is close

cooperation with Eurostat, World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). To assist a growing number of non-OECD countries that have chosen to implement the SHA manual, a collective WHO /World Bank /USAID /OECD project is drafting a "Producer's Guide" for health accounts for middle- and low-income countries.

Once this new accounting standard has been implemented in a large number of countries, it will enable more consistent and reliable comparisons of health care expenditure across countries and more detailed health policy analysis.

For more information go to: <http://www.oecd.org/es/health/>

Contact: manfred.huber@oecd.org

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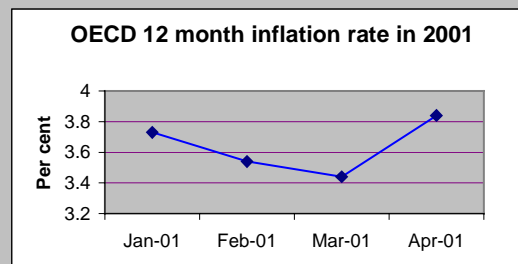
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Questions you ask us

Q. Where can I find the latest inflation rate for the OECD as a whole?

A. The monthly Consumer Price Index for OECD is published in the Hot File free on the internet together with data for each country (**file now in CSV format since 1 June 2001**) at <http://www.oecd.org/std/hot/index.htm>. The inflation rate can be simply derived from the monthly Consumer Price Index for total OECD.

The latest 12 month inflation rate for OECD as a whole is shown in the chart below and stands at 3.8% for April 2001.



Source: Hot CSV File

News in Brief

Data Quality, a Perennial Issue for Statisticians

Data quality is an issue of constant discussion by statisticians in national and international agencies alike. However, the goal of producing statistics of an acceptable or known level of quality is elusive, to the extent that even a universally accepted definition of the term “data quality” has not been achieved. A conference organised jointly by Statistics Sweden and Eurostat on 14-15 May on quality in official statistics covered a broad range of issues in this field. The meeting was attended by several hundred people from national statistical agencies, central banks, academic institutions and other organisations from around the world with an interest in data quality. The conference also provided an opportunity for an exchange of experiences in this area between European and United States agencies.

Although the focus of the conference were discussions on the recommendations of a European Leadership Expert Group (LEG) on Quality, the issues discussed had universal application. These covered things such as: the need for organisations to adopt a systematic approach to quality involving the whole organisation; the importance of disseminating good practice in dealing with issues of data quality within and between organisations; the usefulness of a brief generic checklist for simple program self assessment for use by program managers; the underlying importance of making available to users adequate documentation describing the content of the statistical “product” and the production processes; and the development of quality measures for statistical products. In terms of outcomes from the conference, mechanisms were also set in place for the implementation of the LEG recommendations within the European Statistical System.

More detailed information on the background to the conference, topics discussed and abstracts from the papers presented are available from the Statistics Sweden website at <http://www.q2001.scb.se/>

Tourism Satellite Accounts Promoted at Vancouver Conference

A conference – Tourism Satellite Accounts: Credible Numbers for Good Business Decisions was held in Vancouver, Canada on May 8 – 10, 2001. Attended by over 200 delegates from more than 50 countries, the conference was organised by the Canadian Tourism Commission with the participation of other organisations including the World Tourism Organization, Statistics Canada, the Instituto de Estudios Turísticos from Spain and the Centre for Studies on the Tourist Economy (CISSET) from the University Ca' Foscari of Venice.

Tourism Satellite Accounts are transforming the view of the tourism industry, bringing new recognition and confidence to the industry and greater credibility to tourism statistics. They reveal tourism as a large and complex sector composed of a large number of firms of all sizes, but especially small and

medium sized enterprises, from a range of conventional industries. The tourism industry is characterised by the behaviour of consumers rather than the products of businesses. The conference was held to plan the future course of action to develop and implement tourism satellite accounts as a statistical instrument. It was agreed to pursue a range of actions that will promote the adoption of the newly published international standard “Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA): Recommended Methodological Framework”. The TSA is jointly published by The World Tourism Organization, Eurostat, OECD, and the UN.

For further information on the outcome of the conference go to <http://www.canadatourism.com/tsa/>

Selected Recent OECD Publications

□ OECD Communications Outlook 2001

The sixth edition of the OECD Communications Outlook 2001 provides a comprehensive review of the changes going on in the telecommunications sector. In addition, it provides data and analysis of Member countries policy development, broadcasting, cable television and the Internet.

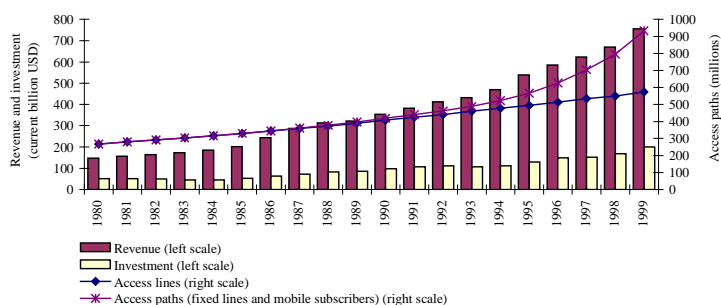
Some highlights of the OECD Communications Outlook 2001:

- Liberalisation of the PSTN (Public switched telecommunication networks) is now the rule in almost all OECD Member countries.
- Wireless (cellular mobile phones) liberalisation has followed the same path, becoming even more open in international competition.
- The number of communication access paths (i.e. including mobile or fixed telecommunications) has almost doubled in the last 10 years, reaching 933 million at the end 1999, which represents nearly one access path per inhabitant.
- The proportion of telecommunications services revenue is growing in GDP, passing the OECD average of 3% of the GDP of Member countries in 1999. Liberalisation has been pointed as an underlying factor of the increase in the telecommunication revenue, together with new technologies, new services and increasing demand for most types of telecommunications services.
- Investment of the public telecommunications operators is also growing, and has almost doubled in the last 10 years.
- Liberalisation, digitalisation and the revolution in wireless technologies are profoundly affecting both the level and nature of employment in telecommunications. Employment is growing, mainly due to new operators.

Employment in cellular mobile operators has more than doubled in the last 5 years. Telecommunications productivity is also improving.

- Tariffs for communication services for residential and business users are decreasing.
- Internet is now a subject of major importance in economic activity. New indicators have been developed, such as Internet subscribers and so forth
- The final chapter is about another major concern of new technologies: the north-south digital divide, showing that the fast development of communications in the north is tending to leave the developing economies behind. A comparison of the telecommunications infrastructures of the OECD countries with non-OECD countries shows that among these countries important differences exist.

Trends in telecommunication revenue, investment and access paths, 1980-99



For further information contact sam.paltridge@oecd.org

OECD Key Publications Catalogue, 2001 - 2002

This newly published catalogue contains all kinds of useful informations about OECD new technology systems: SourceOECD, OECDdirect...It also offers a listing of all titles published in 2000 together with key titles published in 1999 or before, as well as a selection of 2001 titles.

OECD Agricultural Outlook 2001/2006 (2001 Edition)

The seventh edition of the OECD Agricultural Outlook analyses how both global and domestic forces are impacting on the agricultural sector and shaping world and OECD agricultural markets up to 2006. Market fundamentals suggest that the low point of international price cycle has now been reached after a number of years of declining world prices to historical lows. Increasing demand and trade should lead to a steady recovery in prices over the projection period to 2006.

What is the role of government policies and are they influencing farmers decisions? – Which farm prices will benefit the most? – What is the outlook for agricultural trade? – Which countries and products gain the most? – What has been the effect of the Uruguay Round agreement in opening up markets? – What are the implications of the longer term outlook for the environment? – What key issues will OECD policy makers face over the next 5 years? This book is essential reading for all those involved with agricultural markets. It provides the reader with valuable information on market trends and medium term prospects for the main agricultural products, shows how these are influenced by government policies, and highlights some of the risks and uncertainties that may influence the outlook. Tables provide detailed commodity projections to 2006 for production, consumption, trade, stocks and prices in OECD countries and selected information on other countries including China, Argentina and the NIS.

To assess the complete database, with most series going back to 1970 and selected results of scenarios discussed in the publication, please consult the OECD Agricultural Commodities Outlook Database, which is available on CD-ROM.

OECD Economic Outlook Statistics and Projections June No. 69 (Volume 2001 Issue 1)

Published twice a year, the printed edition of OECD Economic Outlook analyses the major trends that will mark the next two years and provides in-depth coverage of the economic policy measures required to foster high and sustainable growth in each Member country.

The CD-ROM includes the full set of historical statistics and projections underlying the OECD Economic Outlook publication. It provides approximately 4000 macroeconomic time series for OECD countries and non-OECD zones*, beginning as early as 1960 and extending to the end of the published forecast horizon. It covers: Gross domestic product and its components, Government and households appropriation accounts, Fiscal and monetary indicators, Labour market and supply indicators, Wages, prices and profitability, International trade and payments, Supply block and structural data. The OECD Economic Outlook database permits a wide variety of analyses and statistical applications, e.g. for modelling and longer-term comparative and graphical analyses. It also includes data from the Fiscal Positions and Business Cycles (FPBC) database with detailed quantitative information on potential output and output gaps, on NAIRUs, on actual and cyclically-adjusted government revenues, outlays and balances, and on government financial liabilities.

*Countries and Country Groups covered by OECD: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States
Country groups: OECD area, Non-OECD zones, Euro area.

NB. CD-ROM Available in English, French and German versions.

□ Indicators of Industry and Services – No 1, 2001

Previously published as *Indicators of Industrial Activity*, this publication provides an overall view of short-term economic developments in a number of industry and service sectors for OECD countries and main economic groupings (European Union, OECD Europe, North America, G7 and OECD-Total). The statistics are classified by category and division of economic activities following the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Revision 3). For industrial sectors, it presents indices of output, turnover, new orders, prices and employment. This publication now shows series on services which refer to turnover and employment, and cover a few sectors only*. Data are published as indices on a 1995 = 100 base. Qualitative data from business tendency surveys carried out among industrial entrepreneurs in OECD countries are also included.

* **NEW:** for the first time, this publication includes series on construction (production and employment), trade (turnover and employment) and services (employment) for a limited number of countries. Additional variables, sectors and countries will be added in future editions, as soon as data become available.

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Online Access Developments

Electronic Dissemination – an International Benchmarking

By Annegrete Wulff, Statistics Denmark

Statistics Denmark has carried out a benchmarking of electronic dissemination during the fall of 2000. The findings from the statistical offices in Denmark, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and UK show more similarities than differences:

- Electronic dissemination is increasingly important. Some countries consider the obligation to publish fulfilled when data are available on the Internet.
- Publications are presented in pdf format on the web.
- Output databases are vital.
- Statistics free-of-charge are promoted.

Scope of exercise

The purpose of the exercise was to compare the performance of electronic dissemination of statistics in some European countries in order to learn some lessons. We looked for “best practice” regarding aspects that we consider important. The intention was never to rank the statistics offices, because the conditions in different countries are so diverse that such a comparison has little meaning. It would be more accurate to say that we were seeking “good practices”, that could be adopted by our own office.

A questionnaire, sent out during the summer, was followed up by interviews with people responsible for electronic dissemination.

With around 90 % of the Danish population, aged 16-54 years, claiming to have access to the Internet either at home or at work this media becomes extremely important for the use of statistics. This is the background for our interest in electronic dissemination, and for studying and learning from other statistical organisations.

Some findings

The number of **visitors** (number of different IP-addresses during the same day) on the web varies from 8 to 113 per 1,000 inhabitants in the countries (see table 1). Please note that other services, like Minitel in France, are not included.

table 1

	Visitors to NSI website per 1,000 inhabitants	Households with web access (%)
Denmark	29	45
Norway	113	50
Sweden		60
Finland	46	30
Netherlands	26	50-60
France	8	20
UK	15	

Most publications on the Internet are free-of-charge in all countries. The number of downloadable titles varies from 12 (Denmark) to 400 (France). In the long-term we aim to have many more publications available for download. France and Norway had no public **output databases** on the Internet.

Netherlands, – and lately Denmark and Sweden – do not charge for use of these databases. UK charges re-sellers only. Finland has both alternatives.

User feedback

The success and relevance of dissemination should be measured through user satisfaction. All benchmarked countries either carry out some user satisfaction survey or plan to do so. They range from user seminars with professional database users – as in Denmark – to web surveys and regular studies of focus groups. This is something for us to consider.

Continuous development

The way we disseminate statistics is never perfect, neither final. It should develop along with the user needs, the technical possibilities and available resources. This is reflected in the long-term corporate strategic plan for our office.

High priorities for Statistics Denmark are now:

- Improved accessibility for the users
- Efforts to reach a larger international audience
- Extended usability for the broad, heterogeneous group of users

The report is available on the Internet at:
www.dst.dk/benchmarking-2000

OECD Forum and Ministerial 2001 Outcomes

If you wish to find out more about what happened at the OECD Forum 2001 and the Ministerial meetings in May 2001 then go to the following webpages:

OECD Forum 2001 on Sustainable Development and the New Economy
Speeches and daily summaries, go to
<http://www.oecd.org/forum2001/briefings/index.htm>

OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial Level May 2001
Final Communiqué.../ More... go to
<http://www.oecd.org/media/release/nw01-48a.htm>

The New IEA On-line Data Service

By Jason Elliott, IEA

In February 2001 the International Energy Agency (IEA) launched its new on-line data services. This service provides on line access to the IEA's energy databases. The data are available either through annual subscription or pay-per-view access, using the Beyond 20/20 software.

Users are able to choose from data services including the energy statistics and balances of OECD and non-OECD countries, annual information on oil, gas, coal, electricity and renewables, and CO2 emissions from fuel combustion as well as quarterly statistics on energy prices and taxes. Pay per view users are able to buy virtual data cards, where a bank of points can be exchanged for access to specific data points from any of the available databases. Subscription users are able to purchase a one year access to one or several databases and to download the Beyond 20/20 browser in order to view the tables on their local hard drives. More information regarding this service can be found at <http://data.iea.org>.

Contributions for the July edition are invited by 25 June 2001

As a guide:

Article length 400 words maximum

News in brief 150 words maximum

*Recent Publication 100 words
maximum*

Letters to the Editor

***Please send contributions, comments
or questions to
STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org***

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Forthcoming OECD conferences and workshops

5-7 June

Second Conference on Agricultural and Environmental Statistical Applications in Rome (CAESAR), organised by OECD, FAO, Eurostat, UN/ECE, ISI, NASS/USDA and hosted by ISTAT in Rome, Italy

Go to <http://www.istat.it/caesar>

Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

4-8 June

Joint Statistics Singapore-OECD Workshop for countries of the ESCAP region to review the draft Manual ILO on Consumer Price Indices, Singapore

5-7 June

Workshop on Foreign Direct Investment Statistics, OECD Directorate for Financial, Fiscal, and Enterprise Affairs (DAFFE)

6-7 June

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – Working Party on Statistics, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD)

11-12 June

International mobility of high skilled workers: from statistical analysis to the formulation of policies. Seminar organised by OECD (DSTI/DEELSA) Paris

This seminar discusses the international mobility of highly skilled workers, in particular human resources in science and technology (HRST). contact: Dominique Guellec (OECD, STI/EAS), dominique.guellec@oecd.org

12-14 June

Working Party no. 2 on Tax Policy Analysis and Tax Statistics of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs, OECD (DAFFE)

20-22 June

Workshop on Waste Prevention Indicators, OECD Environment Directorate, (ENV)

2-6 July

Workshop on Quarterly National Accounts Workshop (Baltic countries), OECD (STD)

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

Other International Statistical Meetings

25-26 June

Technical Expert Group on Consumer Price Indices in Geneva, Switzerland - organised by ILO-ECE

22-29 August

The 53rd Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) is to take place in Seoul, Korea. For more information visit <http://www.nso.go.kr/isi2001>

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Spreading the News

The Statistics Newsletter is a new means for the extended statistical network associated with the OECD, including those in Member and Non-member countries to find and exchange relevant information.

It is a forum for producers and users of official statistics. Colleagues in this extended statistical network and in the OECD itself can submit news or articles of international interest by email to STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org.

The success of the venture depends greatly on enlarging the circle of readers and contributors. If you think your colleagues do not know of it and may be interested then please spread the word. The first edition in May went to over 1000 people in the extended statistical network throughout the OECD, its Member countries and beyond, including over 450, who have this past month subscribed to it via OECDirect (www.oecd.org/oecdirect).

DATABASE OF THE MONTH

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS

(On CD-ROM and on-line/internet)

The International Development Statistics (IDS) CD-ROM is published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. It provides economists and researchers with a unique source of up-to-date comparative statistics and information on international development. Data series cover variables on the volume, origin and types of aid and other resource flows to over 180 countries; aid commitments by sector, type, donor and recipient; the external debt of 170 recipient countries; key development indicators; aid charts for donor and recipient countries.

The CD-ROM (released in March 2001), uses a browser interface and includes the following databases:

1. Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Aid Recipients, 1960-99 (DAC/GEO)

The data contained in this electronic publication provides a comprehensive illustration of the volume, origin and types of aid and other resource flows dating from 1960 to 1999. The publication aims to present a comprehensive record of external financing for each aid recipient country.

The following data categories are available for over 180 developing countries, territories and countries in transition:

- net and gross disbursements of by category of expenditure (official and private flows);
- commitments;
- the sector/purpose allocation of bilateral official development assistance and official aid (ODA/OA) commitments;
- key development indicators;
- DAC country deflators (1998 = 100).

2. External Debt Statistics, 1975-99 (EDS)

This publication provides detailed information on the amount and composition of the external debt of each of 173 countries or territories at the end of 1999. In addition, estimates are provided for amortisation payments due by each country on long-term debt in 2000. These data are reported to the OECD by Member countries' governments, credit institutions and international organisations. Common reporting rules, together with timely reporting, allow for a comprehensive, consistent and up-to-date account of external debt, making it invaluable for all those interested in international comparisons and country risk analysis.

3. Creditor Reporting System, 1973-99 (CRS)

The CRS is an information system comprising data on official development assistance (ODA) and official aid (OA). A subset of the CRS consists of individual grant and loan commitments to developing countries and CEECs/NIS (about 6000 – 30000 transactions per year), submitted by the 23 Members of the DAC and multilateral institutions. The CRS is a major source of information on sectoral and geographical distribution as well as terms and conditions of ODA. This database is designed to respond to needs of aid agencies in particular, in the area of country and sector programming and analysis.

4. Development Co-operation Report, 2000 Edition – Statistical Annex (DCR/STATS)

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the primary forum where bilateral donors meet to discuss their aid programmes and issues related to aid for aid recipients. The Development Co-operation Report provides an annual overview of trends and policy issues. This annual publication contains an important statistical annex. All tables in this annex are included on the CD-ROM as well as the DAC List of Aid Recipients used for statistical purposes and a glossary of key terms and concepts.

5. Aid at a Glance

This section of the CD-ROM includes:

A. Individual aid charts for each DAC Member in recent years (1998-99) showing:

- Net ODA/OA flows
- The breakdown of bilateral ODA by income group and region
- The top ten recipients of bilateral ODA/OA
- Bilateral ODA by sector

B. Individual aid charts for over 180 aid recipient countries and territories in recent years (1997-99) showing:

- Net ODA/OA receipts
- The top ten donors of net ODA/OA
- Bilateral ODA by sector
- Population and GNP per capita

C. Individual aid charts by region (1998) showing:

- The top ten recipients and donors of net ODA/OA
- Aid by sector
- Aid per capita and as percentage of GNP

System and Software Requirements

The CD-ROM runs on a 486 or Pentium processor PC, with a 32-bit operating system (i.e. Windows 95,98 or NT). The user interface of the IDS CD-ROM is designed in html format and will therefore need a browser to run (i.e. any version of Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator), however, if users do not have a browser they may still access the data files directly from the CD-ROM without using the interface.

Both DAC/GEO and EDS publications are in user-friendly software, Beyond 20/20 for Windows, that allows users to build customised tables and charts, export to other software packages and perform analysis. CRS and DCR/STAT are in CSV and/or Microsoft Excel format. Detailed documentation is available in Acrobat format for each database.

IDS On-Line (IDS/o)

The CD-ROM includes a free annual subscription to the International Development Statistics On-line databases on the internet which allows access to the most up-to-date data.

Contact Information

To order: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/htm/idsd2001.htm>

We welcome any comments, questions or feedback you may have.

For data related comments and questions, please contact:

By email: dac.contact@oecd.org

By fax: 33 (0) 1 44 30 61 46, attention to DAC CONTACT

By regular mail: OECD, Development Co-operation Directorate, Reporting Systems Division, 2 Rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.

For other requests please contact sales@oecd.org