



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTION DES STATISTIQUES
STATISTICS DIRECTORATEDivision des Statistiques économiques à court terme
Short-term Economic Statistics DivisionLe Chef de Division
Head of Division

To: Heads of Statistical Offices of OECD Member Countries
 Heads of Statistical Divisions of BIS, ECB, ECLAC, ILO, IMF, UNECE,
 UNESCAP, UNSD, World Bank
 Heads of Non-member National Statistical Offices
 STESEG 2005 participants

STD/STES(05)15

6 September 2005

Dear Colleague,

Request for Administrative Data Papers

The Task Force on Administrative Data was established after the 2004 OECD Short-term Economic Statistics Group (STESEG) meeting. During 2004-2005 a strategy for task force activities was finalised, various papers were received from task force members, and an updated set of strategies were written and presented to STESEG delegates at the beginning of May 2005. This paper generated over 18 pages of comments which were discussed both by the task force, which met on the margins of the STESEG meeting, and during the plenary STESEG meeting itself. The discussion by both the task force and the plenary group agreed on a future direction for the administrative data project, including a set of timelines for future work.

It was decided that the administrative data task force should aim for two outputs, with the first result leading directly into the second. Nearly all STESEG members agreed that the administrative data project should have a dynamic web-based framework, similar to the timeliness framework, which brings together all issues associated with using administrative data based on national experience to date. From this first resource it should then be possible to create a very small guide summarising best practice when using administrative data for short-term economic statistics.

This letter is a direct request to yourself and your organisation to provide to the task force (via: david.brackfield@oecd.org) with as many relevant and useful papers whose subject covers 'Administrative Data' in the context of Short-term Economic Statistics. The first step in the task force's work is to collect such previously published papers on administrative data use and / or program improvements associated with the use of administrative data.

Guidelines for Providing Papers

As a definition, Administrative Data can be said to have the following features:

1. the agent that supplies the data to the statistical agency and the unit to which the data relate are *usually* different: in contrast to most statistical surveys;
2. the data were originally collected for a definite non-statistical purpose that might affect the treatment of the source unit;
3. complete coverage of the target population is the aim;
4. control of the methods by which the administrative data are collected and processed rests with the administrative agency.

In most cases it is normal to accept (and expect) that the administrative agency will be a government unit that is responsible for implementing an administrative regulation.

The use of administrative data for short-term economic statistics has usually been associated with three key challenges: timeliness, quality, and coverage. These challenges are normally outweighed by the three key advantages in using administrative data for short-term economic statistics: reduction of response burden, census coverage, and cost savings. It is expected that any administrative data papers will be related to these topics / issues.



Examples of possible papers could cover how:

- organisations overcame challenges of timeliness, quality, and coverage associated with administrative data use;
- organisations fully utilised the administrative data advantages of cost savings, census coverage and reduced response burden;
- the administrative data were first implemented in program activities such as sample design, benchmarking, sampling frame, non-response control, imputation, and substitution of surveyed businesses; and,
- the usefulness of administrative data was enhanced through statistical techniques, process, and IT improvements.

A good example of what the task force is hoping to achieve can be seen on the Short-Term Economic Statistics (STES) Timeliness Framework that was completed in 2004. The STES Timeliness Framework is a structured collection of documentation on a range of methodological and operational good practices currently used by national statistical organisations for improving timeliness, reducing costs or improving accuracy in the production of short-term economic statistics from business surveys and/or administrative sources. It can be accessed via this link: <http://www.oecd.org/std/research/timeliness>

A small part of this Framework covers administrative data, and this part will be integrated within this project for efficiency.

It would be appreciated if you could send this request to appropriate people within your organisation, and that papers be sent to David Brackfield (at david.brackfield@oecd.org) by 30 November 2005. All questions and queries should also be referred to Mr Brackfield.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis Ward', with a horizontal line underneath.

Denis Ward
Head of Short-term Economic Statistics