

Methodological Research

Methodological Research

Culture and Art-related Activities

Purpose

To build up a framework and detailed methodologies for the statistical measurement of the economic and social importance of culture and art-related activities, including the investigation of 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 project is conducted by the OECD and is currently supported by the Louise T Blouin Foundation.

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

An international workshop was held on December 2006 that endorsed the activities of the OECD in the field of culture and made several other recommendations (see item 14).

The objectives for 2007 will partially depend on whether continued external funding is obtained. Without external funding, the objectives are: coordinate input from the culture sector to the update process of ISCO; prepare comparative tables at the city level for a selection of culture-related measures; finalize the draft paper on the 'Measurement of the Economic and Social Importance of Culture'.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Chile, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand

Main Developments for 2007

General aspects:

An international workshop held in December 2006 endorsed the initial work of the project and recommended that the OECD continue its work in the field, working in cooperation with other international agencies with an interest in culture.

The workshop made additional recommendations in relation to required changes in classification standards and the development of detailed methodologies for collecting truly comparable data.

The project is currently supported by external contributions and its final workplan may depend on whether there is continued external support for the project.

Methodological Research

Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Handbook

Purpose

To develop and disseminate key 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 2007

General aspects:

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

In 2007, 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.

Proposals for additional topics to be included in the portal and on the use of key recommendations in the Handbook to review current national practices will be presented to national delegates at the June 2007 meeting of STESWP.

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.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Asia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Europe, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, International organisation, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Republic of, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Other, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

Main Developments for 2007

General aspects:

A workshop on how to measure life satisfaction/happiness will take place in April 2007 and recommendations on how to measure progress/wellbeing will be prepared.

New solutions to present statistical indicators to the public will be analysed. A new dissemination system for OECD indicators will be designed.

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 Working Party (STESWP) 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 2007

General aspects:

No major changes.

Methodological Research

Metagora - Measuring Democracy, Human Rights and Governance

Purpose

To develop methods, tools and frameworks for measuring human rights and democratic 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. Its implementation is financed through voluntary contributions from the European Union, Canada, France, Sweden and Switzerland.

Metagora is based on a North/South partnership and is being implemented by a community of national organizations and individual experts. It is the first international project on measuring human rights and democratic governance to undertake several pilot experiences in different regions of the world simultaneously and in an interactive fashion.

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 and democratic governance, and develops a network of experts involved in these initiatives.

During its first two years of activity Metagora succeeded to deliver results of all planned pilot surveys and studies. In 2006 the working plan aimed at: (1) consolidating the achievements of the pilot phase; (2) strengthening the policy impact and institutional appropriation of the methods and tools developed by the project; (3) strengthening ties and developing partnerships with other key international initiatives and projects; (4) drawing plans and a Project Outline for a subsequent phase (Metagora 2); (5) delivering an on-line world-wide inventory of initiatives aimed at enhancing evidence based assessment of human rights and democratic governance; (6) producing 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.

In 2006 an Independent Panel of Experts organized an in-depth review of selected Metagora pilot experiences and, on the basis of this, will deliver in 2007 an assessment report on the process, methods and tools developed by the project.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, International organisation, Mexico, Mongolia, Other, Peru, Russian Federation, South Africa, Venezuela

Main Developments for 2007

General aspects:

2007 marks the starting of a new pluriannual phase of the project ("Metagora 2", 2007-2010). The implementation of this new phase will be based on a Strategy and a Project Outline that were both agreed by the Metagora Partner Organizations and the Committee of Donors. The pilot experiences conducted in the pilot phase will be replicated (in new countries) and /or extended (at the regional multi-country level), with particular emphasis on the policy impact and institutional appropriation of the working methods and tools at the national level.

In 2006, a boost was given to a partnership with the UNDP - Oslo Governance Centre that will be materialized in 2007 in concrete joint actions.

In order to ensure proper institutional handing-over of the project's achievements, two networks (with specific profiles and working programs) will gather together National Statistical Institutes and National Human Rights Institutions that are committed in enhancing evidence-based assessment of human rights and democratic governance in their countries.

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 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 170 000 web pages of national statistical agencies, central banks and academic institutes.

Databases

OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms

Main Developments for 2007

General aspects:

The OECD Statistical Programme of Work 2007, 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.

Development of facility to enable users to download Glossary contents into SDMX-ML and XML.

Preparation of a paper Glossary publication.

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 2007 publication and promotion of ISIC (including special SNA and other aggregations), CPC and the 2009 revision of EBOPS.

With analysts contribute to advancing new demands for classifications e.g. on space economy and cultural activities.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

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

Main Developments for 2007

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 to be published by UN. ISIC will include OECD provided annexes on special SNA and ICT aggregations.

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, Eurostat 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 2007

General aspects:

A first version of the recommendations on how to measure sustainable development will be prepared and discussed with national and international experts.

Methodological Research

World Forum "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.

In March 2006 the OECD organised a strategic meeting in Bellagio, Italy to help focus the project's direction. A conference on measuring wellbeing was organised in Milan in June (jointly with the European Commission), and a regional pre-conferences was run in Colombia (for Latin America). The OECD also began organising conferences for other regions (to be run in 2007) and a major World Forum (900 people) will be held in June 2007 in Istanbul. Strong links have been built with a network of international organisations, NGOs, academics, national statistical offices and the private sector.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Europe, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, International organisation, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Republic of, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Other, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

Main Developments for 2007

General aspects:

Work in 2007 will focus on the build up to the next World Forum conference in mid 2007, as well as regional pre conferences for Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia in the first half of 2007, as well as conferences on measuring happiness and on using ICT tools for indicator presentation.

Other activities already planned include preparing a book on measuring progress