

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

December 2001

Issue No. 6

Seasons Greetings to all our readers from The Statistics Newsletter

Manuals on Macroeconomic Statistics: A Stocktaking to Guide Future Work

By Carol S. Carson and Lucie Laliberté, IMF

Over the last decade, international and supranational organizations made major advances in methodological work. Much of this work was generated from the research agenda established in the *System of National Accounts 1993*. The resulting manuals, which are taken as the embodiment of the methodological work, range across national accounts, input-output tables, balance of payments, monetary accounts, government finance, household accounts, expenditures classification, price and volume measures, tourism, trade in services, non-observed economy, globalization, and environment accounts.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the various macroeconomic sets should be fully integrated as they shed light on aspects of the same macroeconomic reality. For a number of reasons, however, such as their large number, the span of time over which they are produced, their multiple authorship, and the increasing variety of subjects they cover, the manuals on these datasets could be viewed as fragmented, disconnected, and branching in various directions.

The time had come then to step back from all this activity. This is the objective of *Manuals on Macroeconomic Statistics: A Stock Taking to Guide Future Work*. The intent is to raise questions to help guide the future work on manuals.

The paper focuses on a critical mass of the manuals (almost 40) that have been published since 1993 or that are nearing completion. It groups the manuals by topic, assembled by broad category, with a focus on their common and specific features. Each manual is reviewed by providing a short synopsis on how it relates to others. Viewing the manuals in an organized framework prompts a reflection on issues that need to be addressed if the future work is to proceed in a systematic fashion.

The paper raises a number of issues to be considered by heads of national statistical offices and other leaders of the international statistical community. Now that the manuals on most macroeconomic sets have been developed or are being finalized, a logical next step would be to promote their awareness and accessibility, inclusive of facilitating their implementation. The focus having been on methodological issues, the next priority should be established as to whether to proceed further on methodology, or on implementation, or on focusing on the analytical needs to which the manuals purport to respond. The process that was used to harmonize the manuals would need to be assessed to see if more harmonization could be achieved in the future. To ensure that the gains from harmonization are maintained, and further promoted, procedures in terms of updating the manuals would need to be developed. The paper concludes by raising specific questions in each of these areas.

The entire paper can be found at

http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/wp1_sp.cfm?s_year=2001&e_year=2001&brtype=default

N.B. IMF Working Papers reflect the view of the author(s) and not necessarily that of the IMF.

Also see a related article on statistical glossary on page 3

In this Issue

Page

Features

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Manuals on Macroeconomic Statistics: A Stocktaking | 1 |
| First results from PISA | 2 |
| Developing a Common Understanding of Standard Metadata Components Using a Statistical Glossary | 3 |
| Measuring Australia's Progress | 4 |
| News in Brief | 5 |
| Recent Publications | 6 |
| Online Access Developments | 8 |
| Statistical Meetings | 9 |
| Database of the Month: OECD Agricultural Databases | 11 |

The Statistics Newsletter seeks to provide news on OECD statistics activities and to provide a forum for national statistical agencies, who wish to promote new work of potential international interest to a wider audience.

Please send articles for the February Statistics Newsletter to STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org

*by
21 January 2002*

First Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

By Andreas Schleicher, OECD

The OECD has launched the **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)** to assess how well young adults approaching the end of compulsory schooling are prepared to meet the challenges of today's knowledge societies. The assessment is forward-looking, focusing on young people's ability to use their knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges.

More than a quarter of a million students, representing almost 17 million 15-year-olds enrolled in the schools of the 32 participating countries, were assessed in 2000. Another 13 countries will administer the same assessment in 2002 and future surveys are planned for 2003, 2006 and 2009. The report *Knowledge and Skills for Life*, published on 4 December 2001, provides first results from the survey.

PISA looks at young people's ability to use their knowledge and skills in key domains such as reading literacy, mathematics and science with an emphasis on the mastery of processes, the understanding of concepts, and the ability to function in various situations within each domain. But it looks also at looks more broadly at student attitudes and their engagement with and approaches to learning. PISA is the most comprehensive and rigorous international effort to date to assess student performance and to collect data on the student, family and institutional factors that can help to explain differences in performance.

Decisions about the scope and nature of the assessments and the background information to be collected were made by leading experts in participating countries, and steered jointly by countries on the basis of shared, policy-driven interests. Substantial efforts and resources were devoted to achieving cultural and linguistic breadth in the assessment materials. Stringent quality assurance mechanisms were applied in translation, sampling and data collection. As a consequence, the results of PISA have a high degree of validity and reliability, and can significantly improve our understanding of the outcomes of education in the world's most developed countries.

The results show wide differences between countries in the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in reading literacy. For example, in some countries, a fifth of students reach

the highest level of proficiency in reading literacy, demonstrating detailed understanding of complex texts, inferring which information in the text is relevant to the task, and being able to evaluate critically and build hypotheses. In other countries, only a few per cent of students reach such levels of proficiency; while large proportions of the student population in these countries shows serious difficulties in using reading literacy as an effective tool to advance and extend their knowledge and skills. Such students may be at risk not only of difficulties in their initial transition from education to work but also of failure to benefit from further education and learning opportunities throughout life.

While the gap in mean performance across countries is large, disparities in student performance within countries tend to be many times as large as those between countries: PISA shows that in most countries there remains a significant minority of students not reaching basic learning goals.

To what extent is the variation in student performance a reflection of the innate distribution of students' abilities and thus a challenge for education systems that cannot be influenced directly? Such questions are difficult to answer. However, the fact that in some countries high-quality learning outcomes are already a reality for most students is, in itself, an encouraging result that shows that the challenges ahead can be tackled successfully. In particular, PISA shows that the price for high performance levels does not have to be a large gap between the best and poorest performing students: Across countries, there is no relationship between average performance and disparities in learning outcomes, with some countries reaching high average performance levels with small disparities while others struggle with low average performance and large gaps between the best and poorest performing students. Showing that countries differ not just in their mean performance, but also in the extent to which they are able to close the gap between the students with the lowest and the highest levels of performance and to reduce some of the barriers to equitable distribution of learning outcomes is an important finding from PISA which has direct relevance to policy making.

Many factors contribute to variation in student performance. Disparities can result from the socio-economic backgrounds of students and schools, from the human and financial resources available to schools,

from curricular differences, and from the way in which teaching is organised and delivered. As the causes of variation in student performance differ, so too do the approaches chosen by different countries to address the challenge. Some countries have non-selective school systems that seek to provide all students with the same opportunities for learning and require each school to cater for the full range of student performance. Other countries respond to diversity by forming groups of students of similar levels of performance through selection either within or between schools, with the aim of serving students according to their specific needs.

How do such policies and practices affect actual student performance? Again, it is hard to give a clear answer since such policies and practices are often applied informally within schools and difficult to compare transnationally. Nonetheless, the data from PISA 2000 suggest that both overall variation in student performance, and the relative proportion of that variation that is found between schools, tend to be greater in those countries with explicit differentiation at an early age between types of programme and school. PISA also suggest that the effects of social clustering are larger in school systems with differentiated types of school than in systems in which the curriculum does not vary significantly between schools.

While many background factors cannot themselves be changed directly by education policy, PISA results suggest that school policy and schools themselves can play an important role in raising performance levels and moderating the impact of social disadvantage on student performance. Successful performance is often attributable to a constellation of factors, including school resources, school policy and practice, and classroom practice. It will require much further research and analysis to identify how these factors operate, interact with home background, and influence student performance.

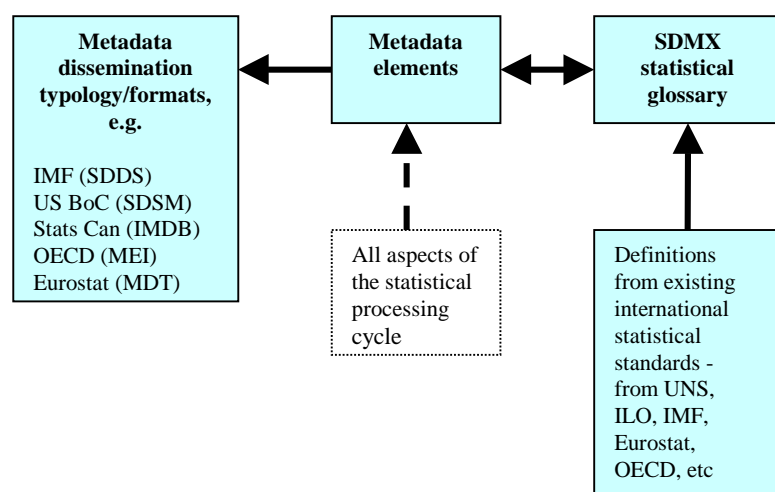
In pursuit of this deeper understanding, PISA will publish a series of thematic PISA reports in 2002 and 2003 that will analyse the impact of school and system-level factors on student performance more extensively, and will seek to understand in more detail *why* some countries achieve better and more equitable learning outcomes than others.

For further information see *Knowledge and Skills for Life*, or go to www.pisa.oecd.org or contact Andreas.Schleicher@OECD.org.

Developing a Common Understanding of Standard Metadata Components Using a Statistical Glossary

Denis Ward (OECD) and Marco Pellegrino (Eurostat)

Over the last few months staff at the OECD and Eurostat have been exploring ideas on how the development of a statistical glossary containing definitions of metadata elements describing all aspects of the statistical production cycle, and the use of those definitions by metadata authors in different organisations, could further the cause of the exchange of comparable metadata between national and international organisations that would facilitate comparisons of national statistical practice. Improvements in the efficiency of such exchanges is one of the objectives of the SDMX Group created earlier this year.



Membership of the group comprises Bank for International Settlements (BIS), European Central Bank (ECB), Eurostat, IMF, OECD and the UN. The work of the SDMX Group entails the development of a common set of guidelines and recommendations that will enable participating institutions to take maximum advantage of exchange protocols such as GESMES/CB and e-standards such as XML.

The last ten years have seen a proliferation of different metadata dissemination typologies developed by both international organisations and national agencies. Such typologies simply describe a format for the presentation and dissemination of metadata (the term “typology” is used synonymously in this context with the term “format”). The IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) is perhaps the most well known

example of such a typology/format¹. Examples of other formats includes Statistics Canada’s Integrated MetaData Base (IMDB), the OECD Main Economic Indicators (MEI), Eurostat’s Metadata Dissemination Typology (MDT) and the US Bureau of Census Survey Design and Statistical Methodology (SDSM). Given the diverse requirements of different national and international organisations, reaching agreement on a common format for metadata collection and dissemination has proven to be an almost impossible task. It is probably more realistic to develop more open standards that each organisation can implement according to their own requirements.

Recent thinking by the authors therefore is that the focus of cooperation between international organisations in this area should not be the development of common metadata templates, prompt points, content

models, etc., perhaps impossible to achieve universal implementation, but instead on the identification of a comprehensive list of discrete and unambiguous metadata elements covering the entire statistical production cycle. A glossary of such elements and their related definitions would provide sufficient information on the content of each metadata element. Metadata authors in national agencies (and international organisations) would then be

¹ The SDDS does what it is designed to do quite well, though it does not attempt to be a fully comprehensive framework covering the whole range of metadata types and metadata elements, nor does it attempt to cover all statistical subjects. For these reasons, the SDDS dissemination format is only a partial solution for the metadata needs of the OECD, Eurostat and NSOs, whose range of statistical subject responsibilities is invariably broader.

encouraged to base the contents of their metadata dissemination typology on the elements and accompanying definitions contained in the glossary. The range of metadata elements in each typology may be comprehensive or narrow depending on the needs and objectives of the agency responsible for its preparation and dissemination.

This approach would provide the flexibility for each organisation to manipulate these elements to derive a variety of specific dissemination outputs whilst at the same time providing metadata that is at least consistent with regards content between countries. As mentioned above, this is essential if metadata provided by different organisations is realistically to be used for comparing national statistical compilation practices. A glossary of such standard metadata elements should also take into account the need for inter-operability between different national, international or supranational statistical institutes.

The authors have commenced work on this glossary in conjunction with the SDMX project. Its focus is on statistical content, and on the semantics of statistical metadata elements. The glossary is a subset of a more comprehensive glossary also being developed jointly by OECD² and Eurostat that contains a large number of definitions relating to statistical terminology and concepts as well as definitions of variables commonly used in economic and social statistics. Both the SDMX glossary and the more comprehensive OECD/Eurostat glossary, draw heavily on definitions contained in existing international statistical standards³ developed by international organisations in cooperation with national statistical institutes and other national agencies. In fact, the authors emphasise the need to utilise existing standards rather than developing a new set of definitions.

² For further information on the OECD Glossary refer article “Development of OECD glossary of statistical terminology and variables” in the October 2001 Newsletter – <http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M00018000/M00018951.pdf>.

³ A comprehensive list of current international statistical guidelines and recommendations is maintained by UNSD on their website, *Methodological Publications in Statistics* (<http://esa.un.org/unsd/progwork/>). Details of the main international classifications are provided on the Eurostat website at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon>

The relationship between the various issues referred to above is illustrated in the following diagram. It shows how the SDMX statistical glossary derives definitions from existing international statistical guidelines and recommendations developed by international organisations in cooperation with national agencies, how these definitions describe the metadata elements covering the entire statistical processing cycle and finally how various national and international organisations base their statistical metadata on the metadata elements (and accompanying definitions) for inclusion in their metadata dissemination typology/ format. The range of metadata elements used in individual formats may be comprehensive or narrow according to the specific requirements of each organisation.

Measuring Australia's Progress

Jon Hall ABS

After more than two years' work, the first issue of a new publication, *Measuring Australia's Progress*, is planned to be released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in April 2002.

Recent years have seen growing public interest in the inter-relationships between economic, social and environmental aspects of life. There have been debates about the sustainability of economic growth and a recognition that the environment is neither an inexhaustible source of raw materials nor capable of absorbing an unlimited amount of waste. And there is interest too in whether and how economic growth affects health, education, crime and other social concerns. *Measuring Australia's Progress* (MAP) is an ABS contribution to this discussion.

MAP considers some of the key aspects of progress side by side and discusses how they are linked with one another. MAP does not purport to measure every aspect of progress that is important. Nor does it consider all of the many different ways that parts of Australia and groups of Australians are progressing. But it does provide a national summary of many of the most important areas of progress, presenting them in a way which can be quickly understood. It will, we hope, encourage Australians to assess the bigger picture when contemplating progress in all its forms.

MAP is aimed at the general public, and has three main goals -- readers should be able to:

- realise that progress and well-being are multidimensional (*ie*, not just equivalent to changes in GDP) and that the dimensions are intertwined;
- form a quick, clear and balanced picture of the state of the nation and how it is progressing; and
- understand where there is reason to celebrate and where there is cause for concern.

The publication will be arranged in three main sections:

- ◆ An introductory essay, which discusses the ABS's approach to measuring progress and highlights the links between the different areas of progress.
- ◆ An indicator section, which will present headline measures of progress for the key areas and discuss why and how they have changed.
- ◆ Technical appendices which will contain data item definitions, links or pointers to the underlying data and more detailed tabulations (such as by geographic area), supplementary indicators (which will be necessary to paint a fuller picture) and further information about the ABS's rationale for choosing MAP's indicators.

Each headline indicator will be presented in the same format. The commentary begins by discussing why the dimension is important to progress and what an ideal measure of progress might be for that area (for instance, some form of quality adjusted life expectancy would be an ideal indicator to summarise health progress). But for many areas, our ideal indicator is not yet available (although in the longer term the ABS hopes to develop some of them) so we explain how the indicator we have chosen differs from our ideal. Life expectancy at birth for example, tells us a lot about length of life but rather less about how healthy those lives are.

After discussing change in the indicator at the national level, we examine the data for heterogeneity, highlighting differences in the rates or even directions of progress of different population subgroups or areas of Australia. We go on to discuss the factors that influence change in that dimension, and conclude by noting the links to those other dimensions that are most strongly influenced by (or influence) the dimension in question.

MAP's headline dimensions and indicators of progress

| Headline dimension | Headline indicator |
|---------------------------|--|
| National Income | Real net disposable income per capita |
| National Wealth | Real net national worth per capita |
| Crime | Recorded crime rates: assault and unlawful entry |
| Education | % of 25-64 year olds with a vocational or higher education qualification |
| Economic Disadvantage | Real mean equivalised disposable income of households in the bottom quintile |
| Work | Unemployment and underemployment |
| Biodiversity | Extinct, endangered and threatened birds and mammals |
| Health | Life expectancy at birth |
| Land: land clearance | Area of land cleared per annum |
| Land: land degradation | Area of cropland with mild or worse biophysical decline |
| Air quality | Number of days when fine particle concentrations exceed health standards |
| Greenhouse | Net greenhouse emissions (CO equivalent) |
| Inland waters | % of water management areas where water use is above 70% of sustainable yield |
| Social attachment | No headline indicator: data presented includes suicide rates, people living alone, drug deaths, attendance at cultural and sporting events and voluntary work. |
| Housing | No headline indicator: indicators of overcrowding and housing stress (affordability) are presented |

Dennis Trewin, the Australian Statistician, was the instigator of the project and chairs the project board. MAP has been developed by the ABS Methodology Division, but such a cross-cutting project has demanded input from all around the Bureau. We were also fortunate enough to have received advice from a panel of experts, with whom we consulted throughout the project's development. These people, all from outside government, are each expert in MAP will be launched by the Australian Statistician on 4 April 2002.

For more information please contact jon.hall@abs.gov.au

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia-OECD Memorandum of Understanding on Statistical Cooperation.

On the 22nd of October this year, Vladimir L. Sokolin, Chairman of Goskomstat Russia, and Enrico Giovannini, OECD Chief Statistician, signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* on cooperation in statistics between Goskomstat and the OECD Statistics Directorate.

Cooperation in statistics between the two organisations has a long history and began with a visit in 1988 by Peter Hill and Derek Blades to what was then the Goskomstat of the Soviet Union. The purpose of that visit was to explore possibilities for bridging the gaps between the two main systems of national accounts – the SNA and the Material Product System. As a result, an international meeting was convened the following year in Moscow which contributed substantially to the development of the 1993 SNA.

The *Memorandum of Understanding* lists the areas for present and future cooperation. These include continued adaptation of Russian statistics to OECD and international standards, regular supply of Russian economic statistics for *Main Economic Indicators*, calculation of PPPs as a full participant in the OECD-Eurostat comparisons, revision of capital stock statistics, further development of business tendency surveys, compilation of composite leading indicators and improvement of ways to measure informal and underground activities in the national accounts.

Cooperation with Russia is by no means a one-way process. Goskomstat Russia works as an equal partner with OECD staff in helping CIS countries to calculate PPPs and to develop business tendency surveys. Goskomstat, the Centre for Economic Analysis and OECD recently published a joint report on business tendency survey in Russia. Finally, Goskomstat national accounts experts have acquired great expertise in finding ways to capture the “non-observed” economy and they have made important contributions to the forthcoming *STD Handbook on the Measurement of the Non-Observed Economy*.

Biotechnology Statistics

In November, the OECD Working party on Biotechnology met and discussed the statistical definition of biotechnology that had previously been adopted by the 2nd *Ad Hoc* National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators (NESTI) meeting on biotechnology statistics on 3-4 May 2001. As a result of the discussion from the working party, several suggestions or amendments were made to the definition.

The Working Party on Biotechnology adopted the biotechnology definition, with the understanding that the definition be provisional only. Thus the provisional single definition is:

“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 (indicative, not exhaustive) list based definition is:

- 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 glyco-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, bio-pulping, bio-bleaching, biodesulphurization, bioremediation, and biofiltration.
- Sub-cellular organisms: gene therapy, viral vectors.

The 3rd *Ad Hoc* meeting on biotechnology statistics will take place in Finland from the 13th to the 15th of May 2002. The results of pilot surveys, which are currently taking place in five countries, will be presented and the biotechnology definition will be reviewed in light of the results of the pilot surveys.

For further information contact andrew.devlin@oecd.org.

OECD Experts on Tourism Statistics Meeting

The OECD Experts on Tourism Statistics met on 26 October 2001.

They examined France's statistics policy for measuring, evaluating and forecasting tourism. The in-depth review pointed out the strong legislative foundation of the French system and the large implication of local authorities in the production of tourism statistics. It also discussed possible strategies to overcome the disappearance of controls at borders and the arrival of Euro while maintaining some important French surveys.

An exchange of views on the impact of the 11 September events for tourism and their aftermath made clear to all that there is a lack of early-warning indicators in tourism; it was not possible for most of the countries to make - at that early stage - a precise assessment of the impact.

A large part of the meeting focused on Tourism Satellite Account's best practice (Austria, Italy, Norway) and current developments towards regional TSAs. International co-ordination on TSA with APEC, Eurostat and WTO-OMT was examined. At the invitation of Hungary, OECD experts agreed to support the organisation of the 6th OECD-Eurostat-Hungary International Forum on Tourism Statistics to be held in Budapest on 25-27 September 2002.

Finally, experts had a preliminary debate on a proposed OECD system for environmental indicators in tourism. For further information, please contact Alain.Dupeyras@oecd.org.

Interested in Working for OECD?

Information about jobs and employment conditions can be found at

<http://www.oecd.org/hrm>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

❑ OECD Social Expenditure Database 1980/1998 – 2001 Edition

The OECD Social Expenditure Database (SOCX) has been developed in order to serve a growing need for indicators of social policy. It includes reliable, up-to-date and internationally comparable statistics on public and private social expenditure at programme level. SOCX provides a unique tool for monitoring trends in aggregate social expenditure and analysing changes in its composition. It covers 29 OECD countries for the period 1980-1998 (and until 1999 for eight countries).

Changes introduced in this new edition are as follows: countries have intensively revised their national systems since 1990; the generalisation of the SNA93 (System of National Accounts 1993) has been introduced for GDP series; and the conversion in euro is now being used. In addition and for the first time, data are available for the Slovak Republic. The main social policy areas are as follows: Old age, Disability, Occupational injury, Sickness benefits, Survivors, Family benefits, Labour market programmes, Health, Housing, etc.

The database uses Beyond 20/20TM, a user-friendly WindowsTM-based software that allows the user to extract data and build customised tools for analysis such as graphs and tables. Technical documentation is included in AcrobatTM format. Also available on line at www.SourceOECD.org.

❑ OECD Economic Outlook – Preliminary Edition to No. 70, November 2001

This preliminary edition of the OECD Economic Outlook analyses the major trends that will mark the next two years. It provides in-depth coverage of the economic policy measures required to foster high and sustainable growth in each Member country. Recent measures and forthcoming developments in major non-OECD economies in East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe (particularly Russia), and South America are also evaluated in detail. Each edition of this Outlook provides a unique tool to keep abreast of world economic developments.

Subscribers and readers at subscribing institutions to the OECD Economic Outlook can now access the online Preliminary Edition No. 70 via SourceOECD.

Non-subscribers can now purchase and download directly the complete version or individual chapters of the Preliminary Edition in either English, French or German from the [Online Bookshop](http://OnlineBookshop).

❑ Institutional Investors Statistical Yearbook 1999/2000 2001 Edition

Institutional investors (insurance companies, pension funds, and investment companies) are major collectors of savings and suppliers of funds to financial markets. The role of institutional investors as financial intermediaries and their impact on investment strategies has grown significantly over

recent years along with deregulation and globalisation of financial markets. This publication provides a unique set of comprehensive statistics on institutional saving and investment in the OECD area and updates the statistics published in 2000 under the same title. As from beginning 2002, the database of Institutional Investors will be available on CD-ROM and on line at www.SourceOECD.org.

❑ Trends in International Migration SOPEMI 2001 Edition

This report presents an analysis of recent trends in migration movements and policies in OECD countries as well as in certain non-member countries. It includes a detailed description of the flows, the different channels of immigration and the nationalities of the migrants concerned. It highlights the contribution of immigration to increases in the total population and the labour force and describes the changes that have taken place in the sectoral distribution of foreign workers. Particular attention is given to recent measures implemented by several Member countries to facilitate the recruitment of skilled and highly skilled foreign workers.

The report notes that the control of flows remains a high priority on the agenda of migration policies, as does the integration of immigrants into the labour market and society as a whole together with the extension of cooperation with countries of origin. In addition to this overall analysis, the reader will also find in this publication: - Two sections on immigration flows from Asia and recent developments in migration movements in central and eastern European countries. - A special chapter devoted to a comparative analysis of student mobility between and towards OECD countries. -

Country notes describing in detail recent developments in migration flows and policies - A statistical annex containing the most recent available data on foreign and immigrant populations, foreign workers, migration flows and naturalisations.

❑ Quarterly National Accounts Volume 2001 Issue 3

The OECD's Quarterly National Accounts spans the last 14 years and contains a selection of the accounts most widely used for economic analysis: GDP by type of expenditure and by kind of activity, gross fixed capital formation by sector and by type of goods, and private final consumption by type of expenditure and by object are all shown at both current and constant prices. Financing of capital formation and GDP by cost structure at current prices are also provided.

The data cover 23 OECD countries, and totals are provided for the following groups: OECD, OECD-Europe, the European Union, the Euro zone and the Major 7 (G7). The CD-ROM edition provides a more comprehensive data set. All statistical series cover several decades and some of them even start from 1955.

The database is in user-friendly software Beyond 20/20TM for WindowsTM that allows the user to extract data and build customised tools for analysis such as graphs and tables. The database is also available online at www.sourceoecd.org.

□ International Mobility of the Highly Skilled

The international mobility of highly skilled workers, in particular human resources in science and technology (HRST) such as scientists, engineers and IT experts, is currently an important policy issue in the majority of OECD countries. Accompanying the booming demand for skilled labour, especially from the information technology-related industries and professions, there is apparently a growing shortage of such workers in a number of OECD Member countries.

In order to meet these shortages, an increasing number of countries are implementing measures to facilitate the recruitment of foreign skilled workers. Considering that improved knowledge and understanding of these issues are necessary for informing the policy agenda, the OECD held a seminar on "International Mobility of Highly Skilled Workers: From Statistical Analysis to the Formulation of Policies", in Paris on 11-12 June 2001. This seminar was organised by the Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (DSTI) and the Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DEELSA).

The seminar targeted three main objectives, which are mirrored in the structure of the book:

1. Provide data on the scale and characteristics of flows and stocks of skilled and highly skilled foreign workers in the OECD Member countries and certain non-Member economies: South Africa, China, India, Israel, Russia and Chinese Taipei.
2. To assess the quality of the data available and the concepts used, and to help improve their comparability. Analyse the mobility of skilled workers and HRST and their impact on the economy through case studies covering most of the major regions sending and receiving these workers.
3. Examine appropriate migration policies aimed at facilitating the mobility of skilled workers in ways that are beneficial both to receiving and sending countries.

Links:

- To order *International Mobility of the Highly Skilled*, visit the OECD Bookshop [here](#).

Press Release: First Estimate for GDP Growth in the OECD Area in Third Quarter of 2001 is Zero

In the third quarter of 2001, GDP growth in the OECD area came to a halt (0.0%) according to preliminary estimates. Annual growth (third quarter of 2001 compared to the third quarter of 2000) slowed down to 0.8% from 1.2%.

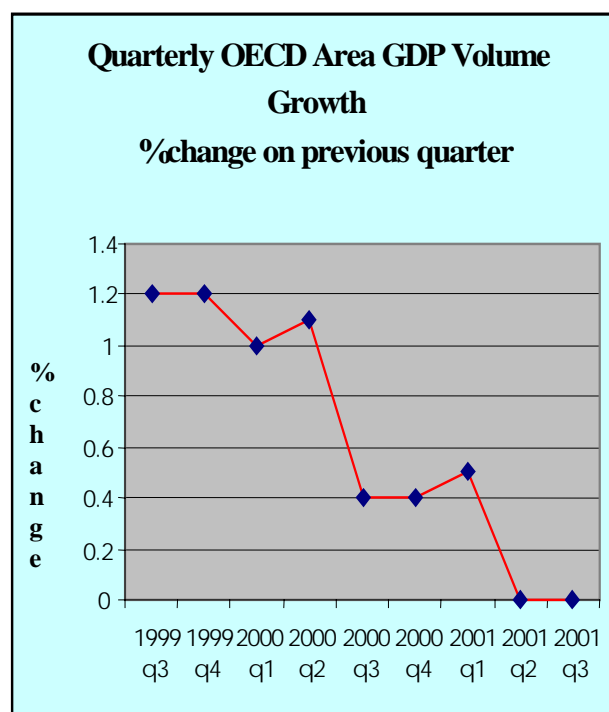
Overall growth in the OECD area came to a halt in the third quarter (0.0%), for the second consecutive quarter. Annual growth in the third quarter (0.8%) was the lowest since the beginning of 1995, the first year in which comparable OECD data was available for all 30 Member countries.

In the United States, GDP fell by -0.3% in the third quarter of 2001, its first decline since the beginning of 1991, while annual growth slowed down markedly to 0.6% from 1.2% in

the previous quarter. Japanese GDP fell again in the third quarter of 2001, registering a 0.5% decline following the 1.2% contraction in the previous quarter, and was 0.5% lower than a year earlier.

In the Euro area, GDP was broadly unchanged from the previous quarter (0.1%) and growth over the year slowed down to 1.3% from 1.7% in the second quarter of 2001.

Among the G7, four countries showed negative growth in the third quarter of 2001 compared to the preceding quarter, namely Canada (-0.2%), Germany (-0.1%), Japan and the United States. Positive growth rates were observed for France (0.5%), the United Kingdom (0.5%) and Italy (0.2%). Country or area contributions to OECD area growth: between the third quarter of 2000 and the third quarter of 2001, the United States contributed 0.2 percentage points to the 0.8% OECD-wide growth, Japan contributed -0.1; the countries in the Euro area 0.4 and the other countries 0.2 percentage points.



The next press release for OECD quarterly national accounts will be published the third week of March 2002.

For more information on OECD press releases email news.contact@oecd.org

How do I find out about OECD publications? Stay informed with the latest statistical and other publications with OECDdirect, our free email alerting service.

Free registration at www.oecd.org/OECDdirect

To see our complete catalogue of statistical and other publications, visit the OECD Online Bookshop www.oecd.org/bookshop

ON LINE ACCESS DEVELOPMENTS

Statistics Finland 88WebStat – Access to Statistics on the Web

<http://www.stat.fi/webstat>

WebStat is a service provided by the Library of Statistics Finland. It helps you to find relevant statistics on the WorldWideWeb.

WebStat is a database of official statistical sources from all over the world, available free via the Internet. The database is quality controlled and edited by information service experts. The selected material is produced by national statistical authorities, international organisations, and business and research institutes. Statistics are provided in English language versions, if available.

WebStat is a link database. The described sources can be statistical tables, graphs, documents, entire publications or, in some cases, a database. The selected statistical sources are described in the database. The material is classified by subject and by country. In addition to the country and subject field, the references also give the name of the producer and a description of the contents of the material. It is indexed using the OECD Macrothesaurus.

The WebStat user interface is compiled in both Finnish and English. When you perform searches in WebStat, please note that the search focuses on the words included in the fields (title, publisher, description, keywords, subject) described in the references, not on the text in the resource itself. You can combine several search options. The country and subject field can be selected from a pop-up menu. In addition, you can use free text search. The Help option provides you further assistance and tips for searching. The search result is a list of references with direct hyperlinks to relevant sources.

At the moment there are about 3,200 sources described in the WebStat database. The contents of the descriptions are continuously checked and new sources are described in the database. All the links are tested once a month by a link checker program and non-functioning links are replaced or removed.



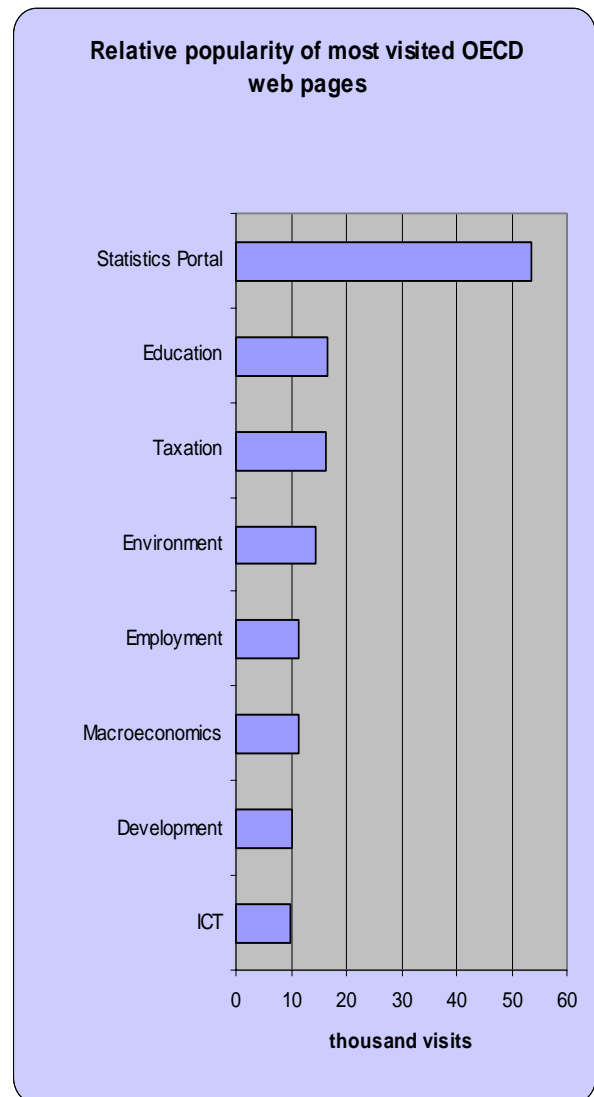
For further information, please contact:

Statistics Finland, Library of Statistics, tel. +358 9 1734 2220

E-mail: library@stat.fi

OECD WEB – Statistics Portal is Most Visited

During the period October - November 2001, apart from the OECD home page www.oecd.org, the most popular of the theme homepages was the Statistics Portal followed by the OECD Education home page.



Forthcoming OECD Statistics Meetings

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

2002

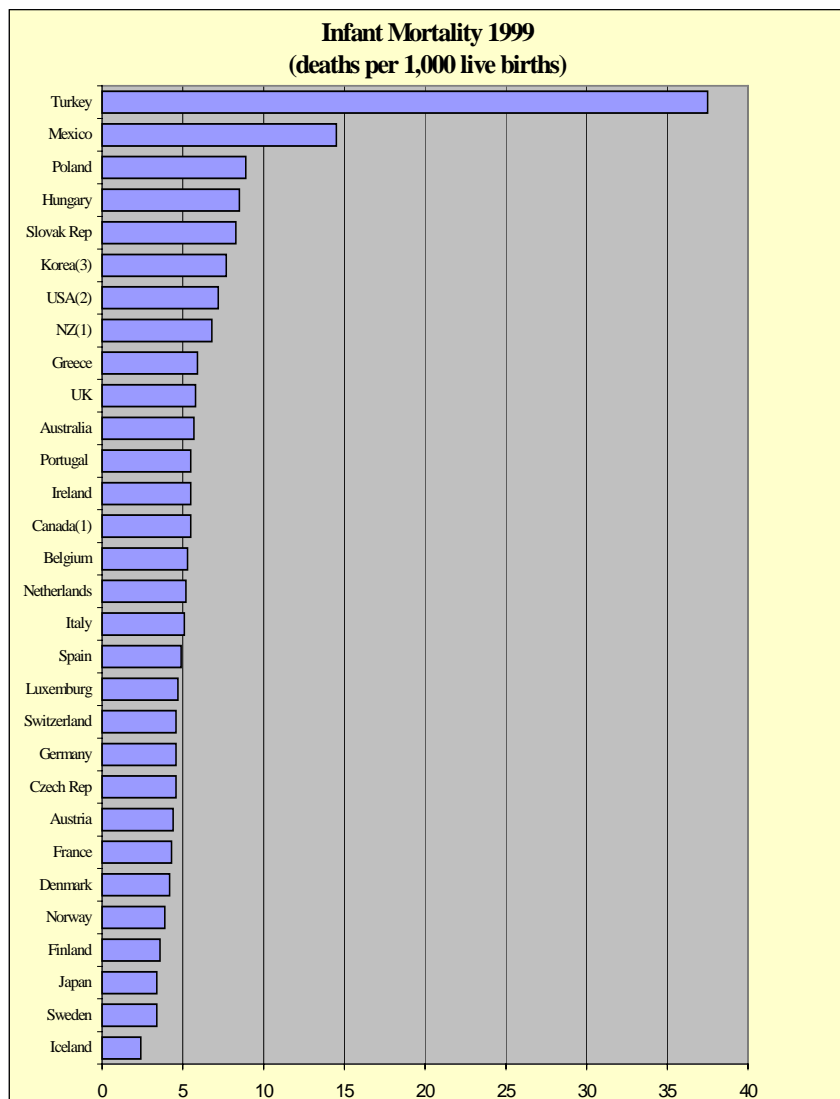
24-25 January Third Session of the Working Party on Territorial Indicators, *Territorial Development Service (TDS)*

25-26 February Annual Meeting of OECD Health Data National Correspondents *Directorate for Education Employment Labour and Social Affairs (DEELSA)*

8-9 April Meeting Of Country Representatives On SEN Statistics And Indicators *Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI)*

Health Statistics to Note

Infant mortality rates are lowest in Iceland amongst OECD Member countries at 2.4 deaths per 1000 live births.



Notes: (1) 1997; (2) 1998; (3) 1996.

Source: *Health at a Glance* OECD Paris 2001

The **Statistics Newsletter** is published by the Statistics Directorate of the OECD

Editor in chief: Enrico Giovannini

Editor: William Cave

Editorial team: Béatrice du Boÿs, Marie-Line Noonan, Carrie Pottinger

Technical advice and assistance
Joscelyn Magdeleine

Distribution
Anne Hamilton

For further information contact:
The Editor
The Statistics Newsletter
email STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org

Readers are invited to send their contributions or comments to:

STD.STATNEWS@oecd.org

Contributors in this issue:

Derek Blades, OECD/STD

Carol S. Carson, IMF

Andrew Devlin DSTI

Catherine Duchene, OECD/CERI

Alain Dupeyras, OECD/DSTI

Jon Hall, Australian Bureau of Statistics

Gaëlle Gouarin OECD/AGR

Lucie Laliberté, IMF

Marco Pellegrino, EUROSTAT

Andreas Schleicher, OECD/ELS

Denis Ward, OECD/STD

**Articles for the February Newsletter are invited by
21 January 2002**

As a guide:

Article length 600 words maximum

News in brief 200 words maximum

Recent Publications 150 words maximum

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



DATABASE OF THE MONTH

OECD Agricultural Databases – 2001 Edition (On CD-ROM and on-line/internet)

The OECD Agricultural Databases provides a unique collection of policy-relevant agricultural statistics, as well as detailed support estimates for both OECD and transition economies. It is in Beyond 20/20TM user-friendly software that enables you to export data, build graphs and carry out your own analysis.

1. OECD Agricultural Commodities Outlook Database, 1970-2006

The OECD Agricultural Commodities Outlook Database is a reliable and up-to-date source of international statistics on Agricultural Commodities. It provides users with detailed statistics for agricultural commodities for production, consumption, trade, stocks and prices in OECD countries and selected information on other countries, including China, Argentina and the NIS*. Aggregate results are also provided for the OECD and non-OECD areas as well as for the World. Series start usually in 1970 and include projections to 2006.

This updated edition includes the database for the baseline, and the results of three scenario analyses reported in the OECD Agricultural Outlook report. These scenarios highlight: a) the market impacts of European Union and United States cereal policy responses to a world price shock b) a preliminary analysis of the impact of the United States' area payments and c) a multiplier analysis of the impact of selected exogenous shocks. The OECD Agricultural Commodities Outlook Database is an essential tool for all those involved with agricultural policies and markets.

Statistical series start from 1970 and provide the user with unique and valuable information on market trends. The OECD Agricultural Commodities Database is an essential tool for all those involved with agricultural policies and markets.

COUNTRIES AND COUNTRY GROUPS COVERED: Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States, the European Union, Slovak Republic, the Former Soviet Union, plus totals for the OECD, non-OECD area and the World

2. OECD Agricultural Support Estimates Database, 1986-2000 (2001 Edition)

The Agricultural Support Estimates database provides the most up-to-date statistical series on agricultural support in OECD countries*.

This new edition covers the period 1986-2000. It monitors changes in the level and composition of support and includes detailed information on sources and definitions, methods of calculation of support and criteria for classification of policy measures. Data are provided according to the classification scheme adopted in 1998 which integrates environmental expenditure and greater detail for general services.

COUNTRIES COVERED: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, European Union, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Turkey and United States

3. Agricultural Policies in Emerging and Transition Economies, 1990-2000

This OECD database provides a unique collection of internationally comparable and policy-relevant macro-economic and key agricultural indicators. It spans 21 emerging and transition economies covering the period 1990-2000. The data include detailed support estimates for seven transition economies for the period 1986-2000.

COUNTRIES COVERED Albania*, Argentina, Belarus*, Brazil, Bulgaria, Central and Eastern Europe Countries Region, China, Croatia*, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, India, Kazakhstan*, Latvia, Lithuania, New Independent States Region*, Poland, Romania, Russia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Ukraine* (*through 1999)

Hardware recommended requirements

IBM compatible equipped with a CD-ROM drive
Hard disk: 120 MB free space
32 MB of Ram
Windows 95,98, NT

Contacting us

We welcome any comments, feedback and questions that you may have. For data related comments and questions please contact:

by email: AGR.Contact@oecd.org

by fax:+33 (0) 1 44 30 61 16, attention to AGR contact

by regular mail: OECD, Food Agriculture and Fisheries Directorate, AGR contact
2 rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris cedex 16, France