ANNEX 3. THE OECD MODEL SURVEY OF ICT USAGE IN THE BUSINESS SECTOR

Since 1999, the WPIIS has worked with the Voorburg Group (the United Nations City Group on Service Statistics) and Eurostat to develop a model questionnaire on the use of ICT goods and services in the business enterprise sector. The activity was led by the statistical offices of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), which were the first to establish a project for a common set of guidelines to measure ICT usage in enterprises.

After two years of sharing and testing, a model questionnaire on ICT usage in the business sector was approved by the OECD in 2001 [DSTI/ICCP/IIS(2001)1/REV1]. The questionnaire 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 makes measurement on an internationally comparable basis possible, additional modules can be added to respond to evolving or country-specific policy needs. The five core modules in the current version of the OECD model questionnaire are:

A. *General information about ICT systems.* These questions relate to the type of computer-mediated devices, applications or networks used in the enterprise. They also measure the extent to which employees use personal computers (PCs) and the Internet in their daily work.

B. *Use of the Internet.* The module first focuses on the type of connection used and its speed. It then turns to the business processes for which the Internet is used. At this stage, the indicators mainly relate to information- and communication-intensive activities (*e.g.* information search, banking and financial activities, etc.) and to business processes that involve transactions over the Internet. A distinction is made, and separate questions are asked about, processes relating to purchases (the enterprise as a customer) and sales (the enterprise as a provider) of goods and services. In the case of selling-related activities, the indicators are restricted to the functionality of the enterprise's Web site in order to focus on innovative ways of marketing, managing information, selling and providing payment facilities and other interactive services to customers.

C and D. *Electronic commerce: Internet transactions and electronic transactions via EDI and other computer-mediated networks.* Drawing on OECD work to define and measure electronic commerce (see the box on the definitions of electronic transactions), the questionnaire contains two modules on electronic commerce transactions. **Module C** measures indicators for Internet sales and purchases. Questions relating to the monetary amount of the transactions or their breakdown by customer and geographical destination, are expressed in terms of percentage of total sales or purchases in order to maximise the response rate. In general, statistical offices will be able to use that information to provide estimates of the monetary amount of the electronic transactions. EDI (electronic data interchange) and other computer-mediated networks are traditionally used to conduct electronic transactions. **Module D** aims at better monitoring the development of new forms of sales by separating the turnover of Internet sales from that of other types of computer-mediated networks. The scope of EDI should be restricted to proprietary EDI and EDIFACT. Ideally, EDI transactions transported over the Internet and in the HTML-based format, XML, should be included in module C (electronic commerce via the Internet). This would allow countries to monitor the migration towards Internet technologies and the substitution between computer-mediated transactions and Internet transactions.

E. *Barriers to the use of the Internet to sell goods and services, and barriers to the use of the Internet and ICT in general.* While information about perceived barriers may not traditionally be collected as part of official statistical surveys, it is important for policy makers. For example, indicators on barriers can help in monitoring issues of digital divide, potential bottlenecks related to the technology, lack of appropriate skills, or concerns about security and logistics. Answers about perceived barriers and their evaluation (*e.g.* no importance – some importance – much importance) are inevitably qualitative in nature and limit the use of these indicators for purposes of international

comparisons. Nevertheless, they can aid in detecting common obstacles to the diffusion of new information technologies and may be used with other types of quantitative indicators to explain differences in the intensity of use of new technologies across countries.

The questions presented in the OECD model questionnaire mainly take a qualitative approach to the need for internationally comparable ICT usage statistics. The questions primarily focus on the use of ICT, especially the Internet, as a tool and on the barriers to its use. At the moment, the model does not contain questions on the impact of ICT use on enterprises' organisation, production processes and skills, or quantitative questions such as investment in ICT goods and services. This is because the model has been designed to cover a core set of initial indicators related to the "readiness" and "intensity" of use of ICT and to limit the response burden. As the diffusion and impact of ICT increase, and as experience is gained in the measurement of internationally comparable indicators, new modules covering "impact" and quantitative indicators will be tested and added to the questionnaire. The modules related to "readiness" and "intensity" of use of ICT will need to be revised and updated to take into account the emergence of new technologies and ICT-related services.