OECD OCDE

The Statistics Newsletter

for the extended OECD Statistical Network

Implementing the OECD Statistics Strategy for 2007-2008

By Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician, OECD

Introduction

In January 2006 the OECD Committee on Statistics (CSTAT) endorsed the document "Challenges and Future Directions for OECD Statistics" (STD/CSTAT/WA(2006)1), focussing in particular on the actions to be undertaken in 2007-2008. Since then, the OECD Secretariat has undertaken several actions to implement the strategy. These are summarily described below.

The bridge function of the OECD
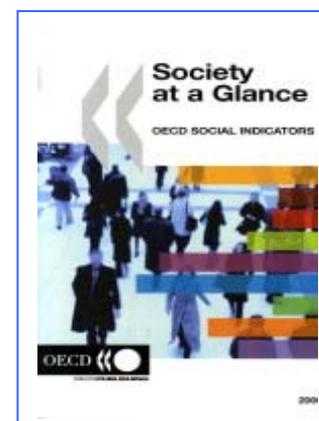
Comparability issues concerning key statistics

A lot of work has been done in 2006 to improve metadata organisation and presentation. For several activities, metadata have been transferred to MetaStore (the OECD corporate metadata management system) and therefore in the corporate data warehouse OECD.Stat. In particular, for short-term economic statistics the new repository of metadata available on the Internet makes OECD short-term economic statistics extremely visible in Google and other Internet search engines. Moreover, it allows users to easily evaluate the key characteristics of data in different countries and assess their comparability. Finally, for short-term economic statistics several "data cubes" have been created presenting indicators that, although not produced according to the same definition, can be considered the most comparable data for a certain subject matter domain.

An important development was incorporated in the *Factbook*. Since 2006, the paper version of the *Factbook* illustrates, in a simple way, comparability issues that may arise for key economic, social and environmental data, whilst the on-line version contains all the detailed footnotes. The same approach has been adopted for *OECD in Figures*, significantly improving the readability of the paper version.

Ex-post harmonisation of national data

In addition to on-going work to link time series expressed in different base years or to overcome series breaks, a major project has been undertaken by the Statistics Directorate to produce a new set of annual and quarterly Unit Labour Cost series. The results of this work are due for publication in early 2007.

In the area of national accounts a lot of work has been done to minimise series breaks due to the new treatment of Financial Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM). Similar work has been completed to minimise the impact on long-time series of the adoption of chain-linking for the estimation of constant prices aggregates.

The revision of the databases on Structural Business Statistics (SBS) and on Small and Medium Enterprises (BSC) was carried out in 2006. A lot of work was devoted to overcome series breaks and comparability issues due to different size class breakdowns. The result of this work was a brand new paper publication and the development of two new data cubes in OECD.Stat, which also include data on business demography.

New methodological work on horizontal issues

With respect to the extension of accounting frameworks to new domains, the Environment Directorate is working on material flow accounts and a first report is due in 2007. Moreover, the joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD working group on sustainable development is examining the possibility of developing an integrated framework, covering all forms of capital.

In the context of the revision of the System of National accounts, an activity undertaken in close co-operation with other international organisations, two new OECD handbooks are envisaged over the next two years: "Measuring Intellectual Products" and "The measurement of the volume of health and education services", as well as the revision of the Manual on "Measuring capital".

To better organise the work undertaken by the OECD on appropriate indicators a horizontal project has been launched, with the involvement of all substantive

directorates, on "Indicators for measuring progress and indicators for policy making". The project is also responsible for the preparations for the second World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy". In this context, a handbook on how to measure progress is envisaged.

Quality improvement of OECD statistics

The implementation of the Quality Framework and Guidelines for OECD statistics

A revised version of the 2003 Framework is under way and the new version will be presented to CSTAT in the first half of 2007. The Quality Reviews program is also being carried out according to plan. The revision of all the major statistical activities will be completed by the end of 2007. Moreover, all activities are benefiting from the adoption of the new OECD Statistical Information System (SIS).

Reducing the burden on national data providers and improving the timeliness of OECD statistics

An increasing amount of data is now extracted from national web sites or data bases rather than via electronic questionnaires. This has both reduced the burden on National Statistical Offices and facilitated a move towards rolling updates of many databases. The focus is now on on-line products, with paper products representing snapshots at certain points in time, resulting in a clear improvement in terms of timeliness and efficiency of OECD statistics.

As a result of the NAWWE (National Account World Wide Exchange) project, in 2007 some non-EU countries will transmit national accounts data according to SDMX-ML format. In addition OECD, UNESCO and Eurostat are working towards the creation of a "joint hub" for Education statistics, using SDMX standards.

Cross-cutting statistical issues facing the OECD

Contribution of the OECD to the improvement of the international statistical system

In 2006 the OECD was deeply involved in work carried out by the Committee on Co-ordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA). In particular, the OECD contributed to the organisation of the second CCSA conference on quality of statistics for international organisations. Moreover, the OECD is involved in follow-up actions for the development of the Principles for International Statistics, namely the:

- development of a quality framework for international organisations (led by Eurostat);

- development and implementation of SDMX standards;

- establishment of a network for training initiatives tailored to international organisations.

The relationships between the OECD and PARIS21 have been strengthened in the context of the preparation of the second World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy". Regional meetings have been organised or planned, in close co-operation with PARIS21, World Bank and United Nations in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Russia and CIS, and Middle-East. Additionally, the OECD is involved in the "Friends of the Chair" group of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the development of a harmonised system of economic statistics.

The dissemination of statistics to a wider audience

CSTAT indicated two main directions of work, namely the use of statistics to promote evidence-based decision making at all levels

and the development of a new class of products and services using innovative tools and concepts. In 2006 the OECD was very active in both areas. The preparation of the second World Forum represents a key opportunity to promote evidence-based decision making.

The 2006 *Factbook* was an even greater success than the previous edition - the number of external downloads of *Factbook* files in 2006 was 560,000 (+280% on the 2005) – and is available English, French, German, Japanese and Portuguese. Contacts have also been established to translate it in other languages.

The dissemination of several "views" of the different data cubes contained in the data warehouse OECD.Stat has dramatically increased the number of accesses to the OECD Statistics Portal. Since July 2006, when the cubes were progressively made available for free on the OECD web site, the number of clicks on the "view data" button increased from 80,000 to 300,000 in November. The "Statlink" service (which provides Excel tables corresponding to e-book tables) is also very popular, with 612,000 Excel files delivered in 2006 (172,000 in 2005). The number of downloads of statistical datasets from SourceOECD (mainly in Beyond20/20 format) increased by 19% to 160,000 in 2006.

Two completely new publications were also released in 2006: "*Women and Men in OECD Countries*" and *Understanding National Accounts*, both of which were very well received. Indeed following on from the success of the latter it is planned to produce a similar publication in 2007 using OECD economic statistics to present how to analyse the characteristics and the evolution of the world economy. The content of the book will also be used to enrich and improve the OECD Statistics Portal.

In March 2007 a workshop will be organised to review the most recent

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2007 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) Research Conference 5-7 November 2007

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2007 FCSM Research Conference will be held at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, on 5-7 November 2007. The conference provides a forum for experts from around the world to discuss and exchange current research and methodological topics relevant to Federal government statistical programs. Each day of the conference will offer papers on a wide range of topics. The conference will feature mostly contributed papers with formal discussion and software demonstrations on topics related to a variety of statistical research issues. Papers and demonstrations should address methodology, empirical studies, relevant issues, or needs for statistical research. Papers must be original and not previously published or disseminated.

Overall Topic Areas Include:

- Survey Design and Data Collection;
- Statistical Analysis
- Evaluation;
- Cross-Cutting Topics;

To submit a paper or demonstration for consideration, **submit the abstract online by 8 March 2007.**

Conference information including a full list of possible topics can be found at the FCSM site:

www.fcsm.gov/events

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graphical ICT tools to present statistics and indicators. After the workshop, the OECD will choose the most suitable solution to present its statistics on the web. The OECD web site will be re-designed in 2007, taking into account results of the recent user satisfaction survey. As far as statistics are concerned, the main issue identified by the survey is the difficulty of discovering where the data are.

Facing the demand for free access to statistical data and metadata

The OECD Council endorsed the inclusion in the Programme of Work and Budget 2007-2008 the establishment of a fund for improvements in the dissemination of OECD statistics. The proposal agreed to by the Council entails the reorganisation of OECD statistical products in three broad categories:

- **OECD Facts and Figures**: a series of simple tables, with commentary, aimed at non-specialists and specialists. To be freely available to all;

- **OECD Core Data**: up to 1000 ready-made tables, with metadata, drawn from all OECD databases, aimed at students, informed and specialist audiences. To be freely available to all;

- **OECD Statistics**: a portal giving access to all complete OECD databases. To be available on subscription using the free-at-the-point model but subject to some Access Principles.

A work programme is currently being prepared for CSTAT consideration at the June 2007 meeting.

Improving Public Confidence in Inflation Measures
By Matthew Powell, UK ONS

Motives

Like many national statistical offices the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) has faced persistent public and media claims that official inflation measures do not reflect people's personal experience. In the 2005 survey of public confidence in statistics (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/public_confidence/project.asp) ONS figures on changes in the cost of living were ranked fourth out of six areas of statistics in the survey for the overall level of trust. They had the second highest score (31%) for contradiction with personal experience. The finding is certainly influenced by the fact that every adult member of the population feels directly affected by, and able to comment on, price changes, however this only reinforces the need to improve public confidence in their measurement. The ONS has therefore launched a package of measures to directly address the reasons why people's inflation perceptions might differ from published averages. The measures aim to deal with both the differences from person to person in experienced inflation and the reasons why perceived inflation might differ from that experienced inflation.

The Package

The package launched on January 15th consisted of:

- Measures to reduce public misunderstandings about exactly what we are measuring by improving public access to metadata including:

  - reorganising the relevant sections of the ONS website
    www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=19

  - publishing articles on updating the basket of goods and services used in inflation measurement and interpreting the inflation figures
    www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=1703&Pos=1&ColRank=1&Rank=1www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/Interpreting_inflation_figures.pdf

- Producing an on-line personal inflation calculator that allows users to re-weight the price indices used in calculating inflation to obtain an estimate more appropriate for their own spending patterns
  www.statistics.gov.uk/pic/

- An article to explain the reasons why individual's inflation perceptions may differ from their experienced inflation. This focuses on the way in which price movements for frequently purchased items differ from those for all goods and services.
  www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=1706

The frequently purchased items analysis and the personal inflation calculator both rely on a simple re-weighting of the price indices used for producing the UK's traditional inflation measure, the Retail Price index or RPI (the Consumer Price Index or CPI is an HICP consistent measure used for inflation targeting).

In the article about perceptions of inflation, it is argued that perceptions can be heavily influenced by changes in the prices of those goods and services that are bought most frequently. In particular, people may not notice or give sufficient weight to changes in the cost of infrequently purchased items, such as household appliances (e.g. cookers), and audio-visual equipment (e.g. digital cameras, televisions). These items are being bought every week in the shops and although not necessarily purchased by any one individual at a given point in time, it is important continuously to measure their price change so that they are represented in the overall inflation rate. But a change in price is irrelevant to the individual until they make a repeat purchase of a particular product.

Table 1: RPI goods and services classified by frequency of purchase

At least monthly		
Food	Chemists' goods	Books and newspapers
Catering	Most household services	TV licences and rentals
Alcoholic drinks	Motoring running costs	Entertainment and recreation
Tobacco	Bus and rail fares	Pet care
Most housing costs	Household consumables	Fuel and light

At least quarterly but less frequently than monthly		
Clothing	Gardening	Personal services
Discs and tapes	Toys, photo and sports goods	

At least annually but less frequently than quarterly		
DIY goods	Fees and subscriptions	Air fares and other travel costs
Footwear	Personal articles	Vehicle maintenance
Holidays		

Less frequently than annually		
Consumer durables	Housing repairs	Motor vehicle purchase costs

Figure 1: RPI percentage change over 12 months by frequency of purchase 1997- 2006

Figure 2: the Personal Inflation Calculator

Thus there are two factors at work which will influence perceptions:

- From the point of view of the individual, infrequently purchased items do not form part of a typical monthly, or perhaps even annual, shopping basket.

- Even if they are included, an individual may find it difficult to judge how prices have changed because of the passage of time since they were last purchased and how technology has advanced so that it is only possible to find a product of better "quality". An example of this is personal computers.

The classification of items for the frequent purchases analysis is shown in table1. Inevitably there is a degree of judgement involved in deciding where some categories should be classified, particularly for those containing a mixture of products with different frequencies of purchase. However the finding that infrequently purchased items have typically shown lower than average price increases, or in some cases price falls, in the recent past is too clear to be sensitive to small changes in the classification. Figure 1 which shows weighted averages of the price indices for the different categories aggregated to produce price indices for the items purchased at least monthly, those items plus the ones purchased at least quarterly but less frequently than monthly, and all those items purchased at least annually or more frequently. The results clearly demonstrate that price increases for frequently purchased items have been more rapid than those for all RPI goods and services for most of the past decade.

The twenty three expenditure categories used in the personal inflation calculator are shown in the screen shot in Figure 2. The calculator requests users to enter their expenditure in each of the boxes and then estimates annual

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Measuring Protection by Numbers, 2005.

Measuring Protection by Numbers is the outcome of a cooperative effort by the Division of International Protection Services and the Division of Operational Services at UNHCR Headquarters to compile global data relevant to core protection functions. Its intention is to illustrate, primarily by numbers, the state of international protection measured through the programmes both of UNHCR and its partners.

Measuring Protection by Numbers is available from the UNHCR statistics webpage:

www.unhcr.org/statistics

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weights. In most cases expenditure estimation is as simple as multiplying monthly estimates by twelve but there were also areas where it was felt that the concepts were too remote from everyday experience to ask users to estimate them directly and indirect estimation is needed. These fall into two areas:

- mortgage interest payments and housing depreciation are calculated from user's estimates of the value and location of the property owned and the outstanding mortgage on it

- the annual average vehicle expenditure estimate assumes that users with no expenditure on fuel for transport spend nothing in this category and all others have an average annual vehicle expenditure proportional to their total expenditure

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The resulting expenditure weights are used to weight together national price indices for each category. These indices are derived using the same national average lower level weights and price indices used in the RPI. It is important to note that no set of expenditure data will completely replicate the RPI as it is a chained index with weights updated every year.

The calculator uses the Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) format which, unlike other interactive formats, is recommended as an open 'Web standard' by the World Wide Web Consortium. The format also has the advantages that it uses a relatively small file size and all calculations on the final user's computer without any need to transfer information to the ONS's own systems.

Results

The launch of the package generated a large amount of activity on the ONS website. In normal circumstances the ONS website received 30,000 to 35,000 visits a day. On the day the "Improving Public Confidence in Inflation" package was launched it received just under 95,000 with 85,000 the following day. The on line version of the personal inflation calculator received approximately 30,000 visitors on the launch day while the downloadable version received approximately 14,000. Interest in the calculator has since dropped to about 500 visits a day but we would expect it to peak each time the monthly estimate is released.

The package also generated a substantial amount of media interest with articles in all the major national newspapers and interviews on national radio and television stations. The vast majority of coverage was strongly positive – e.g. "In praise of the RPI" – *Guardian 06/05/2007*). Even the negative coverage - e.g. "Official: inflation figure isn't trusted " - *Daily Telegraph 05/01/2007*, welcomed the ONS' new initiative, and more

recent criticism of our inflation indices has complained that they do not reflect the experiences of all people rather than claimed systematic bias. The initiative was also welcomed by our statistics user groups – e.g. "Congratulations on the new RPI personal index, a superb innovation." – *letter from Ian Maclean, Chairman, Business Statistics User Group*.

In short the we view the launch of the personal inflation calculator as a substantial success and are keen to develop it further and explore other opportunities to create tools for "personalising" our data as our resources permit.

SDMX conference in Washington 9-11 January 2007
By Lars Thygesen, OECD

In spite of the timing, just after the beginning of the new year, the conference on SDMX gathered 200 participants mainly from the world of official statistics. This indicates a considerable interest in the subject. How can that be?

What is SDMX?

SDMX is an acronym for "Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange" (see: www.sdmx.org); it refers to an international cooperation initiative aimed at developing and employing more efficient processes for exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata among international organisations and their member countries. The initiative, started in 2001, is sponsored by seven international organisations who are committed to establish, implement and comply with common standards: Bank for International Settlements, European Central Bank, Eurostat, IMF, OECD, United Nations and the World Bank.

The rationale of SDMX is standardisation for statistical data and metadata access and exchange.

With the ever increasing ease of use of the Internet, the electronic exchange and sharing of data is becoming more and more easy, frequent and important. This stresses the need for a set of common standards for exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata, and making processes more efficient. As statistical data exchange takes place continuously, the gains to be realised from adopting common standards are considerable both for data providers and users.

SDMX establishes a set of commonly recognised standards, adhered to by all players, making it possible not only to have easy access to statistical data, wherever these data may be, but also access to metadata that makes the data meaningful and usable. The standards allow national organisations to fulfil their responsibilities towards users and partners, including international organisations, in a very efficient way, among other things by using their general online databases to give access as soon as the data are released.

Several dimensions of statistical quality can be improved through the use of SDMX standards, notably timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, coherence, as well as cost-efficiency.

The standards

The first version of SDMX standards has been in use for a couple of years and is recognised as ISO technical specification 17369. The SDMX technical standards now exist in version 2.0. They comprise:

- formats for exchange and sharing of statistical data in the form of multidimensional tables, also called cubes

- formats for sharing of metadata describing statistical data.
- standards for a registry, i.e. a directory keeping track of data kept by different data providers

The formats are based on XML (extensible mark-up language).

In addition to the standards, the SDMX work also aims to support standardisation of contents, for instance the concepts and terms used by different organisation. This work is more difficult and therefore less developed than the technical standards but in many ways even more important for the future standardisation process. The content oriented guidelines, which can presently be found on the web site, are therefore rather limited and need to be much further enhanced.

The conference

The conference fell in two parts. The first two days were dedicated to presentations and discussions, while the last day was a "capacity-building" workshop, more like lectures taking participants through all parts of the standards, tools and guidelines in SDMX.

Presentations are posted on www.sdmx.org

The conference highlighted presentations of a substantial number of successful and/or promising implementation projects in the statistics and central banks domains. Many of them were well advanced. Some implementations were about international data sharing, while others dealt with data sharing between different actors within a country. Ideally the international and intra-national arrangements should be able to converge over the coming years.

An important trend in the implementations is the move from "push" mode, meaning that the party who provides the data takes the necessary action to send them to

the party collecting them, to "pull" mode, implying that the data provider simply makes the data available via the Internet for the users or collectors to fetch. This could also be called "from data collection to data sharing". In the full implementation of this model, there are several data providers and several data users (some of them the same), and the availability of data is registered in a central registry where users can be made aware, or notified, of the presence of data. In this way, the whole sharing arrangement can turn into one "virtual database" spread among many participants.

A number of important projects involve the OECD: The Joint External Debt Hub (JEDH) is a model implementation involving several international organisations and countries, sharing data using SDMX; data are pulled by users from the web sites of data providers, and a central registry makes it possible to locate the pieces of information in the network. Other OECD implementations presented include the NAWWE project (National Accounts World Wide Exchange) and the ComTrade world trade database, where data on trade are replicated between the partners of the project (OECD and UNSD) using SDMX.

Another project which is expected to demonstrate the potential of SDMX was the plan of making a joint SDMX "hub" for education statistics between UNESCO, Eurostat and OECD. A joint questionnaire and data collection has been agreed among the three organisations for some years, but using the full SDMX arsenal will make it possible to reap considerable gains in quality and efficiency.

The general impression from this conference was that SDMX has now gained critical mass. There is a considerable amount of implementation and support for

SDMX in a large number of organisations.

The technical standards are well established, and the difficulties in starting new data sharing arrangements are not technical but rather organisational and related to contents. SDMX Data Structure Definitions (that is agreements of the data and metadata to be exchanged) are still lacking for the vast majority of "official statistics" domains. During discussions, some participants argued that SDMX should provide a generic model for contents analysis to help this process and make coherence between Data Structure Definitions of different domains. OECD is engaged in such a development.

Entrepreneurship Indicators Steering Group - Summary Record of the 1st Session, Rome, Italy, 5-6 December 2006
By Julia Gauch, OECD

Background

Between May 2005 and June 2006, the OECD Statistics Directorate undertook the first phase of an Entrepreneurship Indicators Project, which consisted largely of a Feasibility Study, funded by the Kauffman Foundation, to determine the degree of interest in OECD countries in developing better international statistics on entrepreneurship. Considerable interest was expressed and a number of OECD countries showed a willingness to participate directly in the development of definitions and measurements pertaining to entrepreneurship.

A Feasibility Study and Action Plan were presented to the OECD Committee on Statistics in June that endorsed the work envisaged for Phase II ("The Indicator Development Phase") of the Project. The Committee also established a Steering Group to

oversee the work of the EIP and to help ensure that international agreements are reached on various aspects of the Programme, including priorities for indicators, definitions, surveys and other measures.

The Steering Group consists of some twenty-five members with representation from national and international statistical offices, relevant government policy departments and entrepreneurship research bodies. The Steering Group includes representatives from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States and also includes Eurostat and the World Bank

The Italian National Statistics Office (Istat) hosted the inaugural meeting of the Entrepreneurship Indicators Steering Group. The main proceedings of which are described below. See also http://www.oecd.org/document/7/0, 2340,en_2825_495649_37719559_ 1_1_1_1,00.html.

Election of the Bureau

Anders Hoffman, Denmark, was elected as Chair. Rick Clayton, United States, and Axel Behrens, Eurostat, were elected as Vice Chairs.

Entrepreneurship Indicators Project (EIP) Work Program

The discussion of the Work Program generated a lengthy exchange of views between members on the format and content of the proposed Measurement Manual but also on the definition of entrepreneurship, and the list of key indicators, that should be endorsed. The EIP recognised however that the two objectives could proceed concurrently, particularly given the recognition that defining entrepreneurship would not be trivial; scholars have attempted to define it, and differed, for centuries. The Steering Group recognised however that the definition should

not be influenced by any single, current political agenda since those agendas change over time, and that it needed to be based on a long-term perspective that embraced a broad scope entailing some socio-economics characteristics of entrepreneurs including social values, regional and ethnic differences, etc.

Current Entrepreneurship Data Activities in the Member Countries

The Steering Group received presentations on a number of indicators and the corresponding data sources currently used to guide entrepreneurship policy-making. An OECD presentation provided additional information on various sources of international data that are available to study entrepreneurship. Anders Hoffman from the Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs presented the Danish (FORA) Framework and Model for researching entrepreneurship and establishing policy as well as a detailed list of their national indicators used to measure entrepreneurship. Rick Clayton from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics presented a profile of sources of data on entrepreneurship in the United States. Ian Kay from the Small Business Service (SBS) of the UK Department of Trade and Industry presented data available from various survey sources used to establish and assess UK policies on Entrepreneurship. Julia Gauch from the OECD Statistics Directorate presented a number of international sources of data on Entrepreneurship, highlighting the various differences in definitions and methodologies that preclude inter-source comparisons.

Indicators priorities

It was agreed that a Task Force on definitions and Indicators be established to develop and assist the SG on reaching a decision regarding definitions and indicators. The role of the Task Force is to prepare a document that will propose:

Re-launching of the FAOSTAT subscriber site

The FAOSTAT subscriber site has been a flagship dissemination product of FAO since 1991.

The new version follows the redevelopment of FAOSTAT during the last two and half years and the official launch of the website in the summer 2006.

Members of the CCSA have been given access to the site and they can log in using their email address (official).

In order to go the log on the page members should click on the following address:

http://faostat.fao.org/site/584/default.aspx

Then use the log on button with your email address;

Click on button "Sent Password" to receive your new password at the supplied email account.

- A definition of entrepreneurship that includes the notions of "creation" and "growth";
- A structure of Indicator Categories; and,
- A draft list of core entrepreneurship indicators, reflecting both short- and long-term perspectives.

The countries and/or Bodies participating on the Task Force are: Australia, (Richard Seymour); Canada, (T. Evers); Denmark, (A. Hoffmann and P. Bøegh Nielsen); Eurostat, (Axel Behrens and Manfred Schmiemann) and the United States (Rick Clayton and Jim Spletzer). The plans are for the Task Force to prepare a draft proposal for circulation to all EISG members by the end of March 2007 that would be presented for review

and approval by the EISG at its next meeting, scheduled to be held in Istanbul on June 25-26 2007. A large part of the next EISG Meeting agenda will be dedicated to the Task Force work with sessions organised between smaller groups of countries to further discuss the structure of Indicator Categories and the outline for an Entrepreneurship Measurement Manual.

Assembling Existing Data: An Inventory of Current Entrepreneurship Measures

The Secretariat proposed a number of possible questions that could be distributed to National Statistics Offices as part of a Fact-Finding Survey to determine what entrepreneurship-related data sets currently exist and also what information is currently used by policy makers to guide the development and monitoring of entrepreneurship policies. After considerable discussion, members agreed that, while it will be useful to develop an inventory of existing data, the data survey should be postponed until the Steering Group completes its initial work on the core indicators that are to be developed by the Project. It was agreed that the Secretariat could continue to develop possible questions and a list of potential respondents for presentation at the next Steering Group meeting.

For further information on the Entrepreneurship Indicators Project, please contact Mr. Tim Davis, Project Manager, Entrepreneurship Indicators, OECD Statistics Directorate at: tim.davis@oecd.org.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Objectives and Main Findings of the www.oecd.org Online Survey

To achieve a better fit between the OECD website and its visitors' needs, the OECD has launched an online survey in order to compile typical user profiles, gauge satisfaction and find out what people are looking for on the site.

The initial findings show that the average age of visitors to the site is 33 years, and that 40% of them come from academia (teachers, researchers, students). The bulk of the remaining respondents comprises visitors from government agencies and from the private sector (20% each), with a less significant percentage representing visitors from NGOs or international organisations.

Searching for statistics is among the main goals of most of our users:

- 80% of online respondents say they have looked for statistics during their visits to the site; 15% come to www.oecd.org only to look for statistics; 12% say they look for statistics each time they visit.

Among those seeking statistics:

- 7% say they are after data only; 28% want methodological descriptions as well; 65% are hoping to find OECD analysis.

The survey shows that the overall perception of the site is positive, with 80% of online visitors rating it as either "very good" or "good", and 79% reporting having found the information they were looking for during their visit. Despite these favourable perceptions, many users also felt that the search for information could be further improved, especially in the realm of statistics, where only 69% report having found the information they were seeking.

The need to simplify browsing and improve the search engine and to optimise searches for statistics in particular, is one of the major findings of this survey.

For further information on the www.oecd.org Online Survey please contact Vincent Gallart, OECD Directorate for Public Affairs and Communication at: vincent.gallart@oecd.org.

Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators - 2006 Edition

Social problems rarely have a single cause. For example, tackling social exclusion involves simultaneously addressing barriers to labour market integration, health problems and low education. Coping with an ageing society requires new approaches to health care and employment, as well as to pensions. Social indicators provide the broad perspective needed for any international comparison and assessment of social trends, outcomes and policies. By linking status and response indicators across a broad range of policy areas, social indicators help readers to identify whether and how the broad thrust of policies and societal actions are addressing the key social issues that confront OECD societies.

Social indicators provide a concise overview of social trends and policies while paying due attention to the different national conditions in which such policies are being pursued. The social indicators in Society at a Glance may be represented along a two-dimensional classification. The first dimension corresponds to three main goals of social policy, i.e. self-sufficiency, equity and social cohesion. The second dimension corresponds to the nature of the indicators, i.e. social context, social status and societal responses.

The 2006 Edition includes a wide range of information on social issues including demography, family characteristics, employment, working mothers, out-of-work replacement rates, poverty persistence, social expenditure, health care expenditure, subjective well-being and suicides. This report also includes a "guide" to help readers in understanding the structure of OECD social indicators and an attempt to take stock of the role of social indicators for the broader agenda of measuring the well-being of OECD citizens and societies.

Further information and data files are also available on the Social Indicators webpage at: www.oecd.org/els/social/indicators/SAG

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

All OECD publications can be ordered on line at: http://www.oecdbookshop.org

▲OECD Journal on Development: Development Co-operation - 2006 Report - Efforts and Policies of the Members of the Development Assistance Committee

This year's OECD Development Co-operation Report by the OECD DAC Chair, Richard Manning, looks at overall aid volume and examines whether donors are on track to reach their goal of increasing aid to USD 130 billion globally and doubling aid to Africa by 2010.

The report looks at major trends which reveal where aid is going - which regions are getting the most, which the least; which sectors (health, education, etc.) attract aid;

and what impact are debt relief and emergency aid continuing to have on total aid flows.

Ideas are offered on how donors can do more to encourage greater domestic accountability for public expenditure (which includes aid) in developing countries. It also reports on some key measures of development co-operation, including the progress countries are making - or not - in implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and looks at how increased Aid for Trade can have the best impact.

The statistical annex of the report can be found at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/dac/dcrannex.

▲Economic Policy Reforms: Going for Growth 2007

Going for Growth is an OECD flagship publication alongside the OECD Economic Outlook and OECD Economic Surveys. First published in 2005, this annual periodical provides an overview of structural policy developments in OECD countries from a comparative perspective. Based on a broad set of indicators of structural policies and performance, this edition takes stock of the recent progress made in implementing policy reforms and identifies, for each OECD country, five policy priorities to lift growth. It calls for reforms in areas such as product and labour market regulation, taxation, pension, income support, health and education to boost labour productivity and employment.

Further information is available at: www.oecd.org/growth/goingforgrowth2007

▲Understanding National Accounts

This manual explains what GDP and GNI and their components are and what they mean. It shows how they are used and what they are used for. And it does this in an easily understood way. Opening with a chapter showing how national accounts concepts relate to macroeconomics, the books goes on to systematically deal with volume and prices, international comparability, production, final uses, household accounts, business accounts, government accounts, and financial accounts. It also has chapter on how national accounts data are gathered and the history of the national accounts system. Three special chapters examine national accounts in China, India, and the United States. Previously published only in French, this manual has been revised and expanded to have a truly global perspective.

National accounts data as well as answers to exercises and supplementary material are available online via www.SourceOECD.org/understandingnationalaccounts.

▲OECD in Figures 2006: Statistics on the Member Countries

The 2006 edition of OECD in Figures contains key data ranging from economic growth and employment to education and migration. There are comparable tables on the environment, science, public finances, and on every theme the organisation is working on. For added perspective, OECD in Figures includes a selection of graphs, highlighting key challenges, such as youth unemployment, climate change, development aid to water and road crashes.

OUT SOON

▲OECD Factbook 2007

OECD Factbook 2007 is the third edition of a comprehensive and dynamic statistical annual from the OECD. More than 100 indicators cover a wide range of areas: economy, agriculture, education, energy, environment, foreign aid, health and quality of life, industry, information and communications, population/labour force, trade and investment, taxation, public expenditure and R&D. Data are provided for all OECD member countries with area totals, and for selected non-member economies. The 2007 edition includes a special focus on migration data.

Forthcoming OECD Meetings

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

2007	
01 March	Meeting of the Bureau of the OECD Committee on Statistics, Statistics Directorate (STD), New York, United States
05-06 March	Expert Meeting on Government Indicators, Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV), Paris, France
05-06 March	Dynamic Graphics to Present Statistics, Statistics Directorate (STD) and ISTAT, Rome, Italy – (http://www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum/graphics)
26-27 March	Workshop on International Investment Statistics (WIIS), Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF), Paris, France
29 March	Statistics on Globalisation Indicators, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF), Paris, France
02-03 April	Is happiness measurable and what do those measures mean for policy?, Statistics Directorate (STD), the Bank of Italy, the Centre for Economic and International Studies (CEIS) of the University of Rome and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, Rome, Italy (http://www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum/happiness)
24-25 April	Meeting of Canberra II Group on non-financial assets, Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France
26-27 April	Joint meeting of the Canberra II and NESTI groups on R&D capitalisation, Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France
10-11 May	OECD Expert Group on Statistical Data Metadata Exchange, Statistics Directorate (STD), Geneva, Switzerland
21 May	Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS), Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, London, UK
22-24 May	Working Party No. 2 on Tax Policy Analysis and Tax Statistics, Centre for Tax Policy (CTP),

Other Statistics Meetings

2007	
27 Feb-02 March	Thirty-eighth session of the UN Statistical Commission, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), New York, United States
07-08 March	International Seminar on Strengthening Public Investment and Managing Fiscal Risks from Public-Private Partnerships, International Monetary Fund; Hungarian Ministry of Finance; International Center for Economic Growth-European Center, Budapest, Hungary
18-19 March	China Development Forum 2007: "China: Towards New Models of Economic Growth", China Development Research Foundation, Beijing, China (http://www.cdrf.org.cn/en/)
17-18 May	Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE) 2007, the World Bank and the Government of Slovenia, Bled, Slovenia