

Wikigender: Initiating a bottom-up dialogue on gender statistics

by Denis Drechsler and Johannes Jütting,
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“Tradition is a guide and not a jailer”, wrote W. Somerset Maugham. Could it be that some traditions, however rooted in great histories and cultures, are now trapping countries in poverty? This certainly appears to be the case when it comes to the influence of social and cultural norms on the status of women. Discrimination through social institutions is often hidden, but nevertheless an important source of gender inequality; especially in countries with weak formal institutions and governance structures. In order to shed light on these issues, the OECD Development Centre created an innovative information platform: Wikigender, an interactive Internet portal to share and exchange information on gender equality (www.wikigender.org).

Why does gender equality matter?

For many people, especially in the developed world, discrimination is mostly a moral issue and must be resisted as a matter of principle. What is often overlooked, however, is the economic impact of preventing women from participating actively in the economy. If the issue is starting to attract attention in OECD countries, it has been sorely neglected in poorer parts of the world, where discrimination and repression often have deep cultural and religious roots. Yet, the success with which developing countries integrate female workers into their economies will be a key factor in building their competitiveness in the global economy.

According to the World Bank’s World Development Report 2000/01, closing the gender gap in schooling would have significantly increased and sometimes more than doubled economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), South Asia (SA), and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Despite international declarations on gender equality, as for example in the Millennium Development Goals, few countries have actually achieved gender equality in primary and secondary education. The differences are even more pronounced in higher education. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, for example, girls only make up half the number of male students in tertiary education.

Equally alarming are labour market indicators, which clearly highlight that countries do not adequately use their available human resources, in particular those of the female population. In many developing countries, women’s economic activities are marginalised to the informal sector, small-scale farming and/or domestic work. Cases in point are South Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa: in both regions only around 20 percent of all wage employment outside agriculture is held by women.

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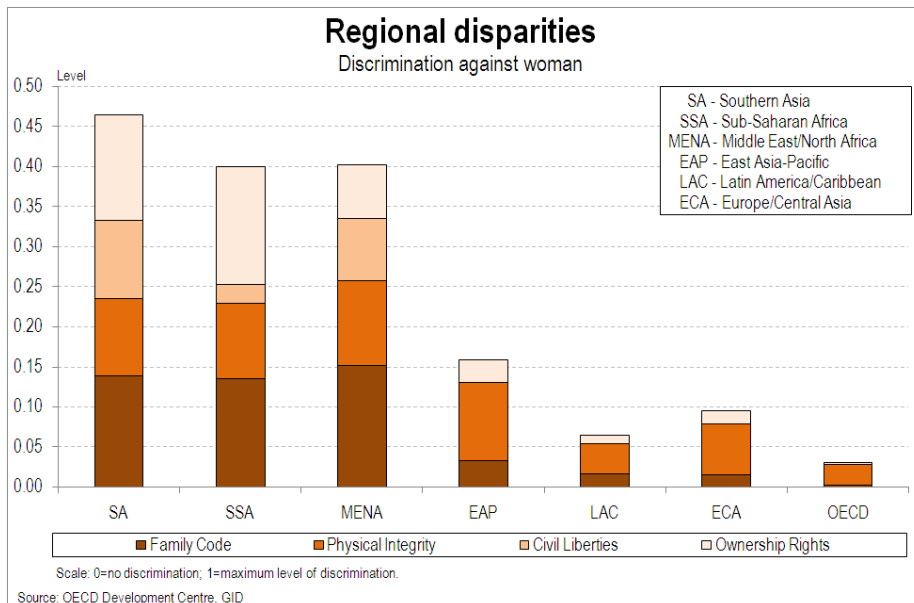


Changing social institutions is cumbersome, but possible

From Morocco and Tunisia to some states in southern India, efforts are under way to change the institutional frameworks that limit women's employment and skills, and thereby their contribution to growth. These efforts are paying off: in Tunisia, 30-50% of judges, physicians and schoolteachers are now women. In India women have risen to the highest levels of politics and business in recent years. However, these are relatively isolated cases, and there have been setbacks. Even in India, there are strong pockets of resistance, particularly in the north of the country and amongst migrants to major cities, with women being murdered in some states over disputes about dowries.

In order to strengthen reforms, many development experts have called for more funding, to build schools, for instance. The trouble is that many shiny new classrooms would remain empty because girls are sometimes simply not allowed to attend them. Extra spending, while badly needed, will generate real returns only if the fundamental causes of discrimination are dealt with too.

That may mean institutional and legal reforms, as well as better enforcement of existing laws. Similarly, the fight against gender discrimination needs to involve men much more than is currently the case. Too many reform programmes fail due to their heavy focus on women's needs, overlooking the fact that societies based on persistent discrimination generate advantages that men will not sacrifice easily. Engaging men in reform, providing incentives and perhaps even financial compensation, is important. Such a debate is now taking place in Kenya in view of reforming discriminatory inheritance laws.



Inequalities are often rooted in social institutions

As illustrated by these figures, women face serious inequalities in many regions of the world. While discrimination against women has multiple facets, traditional research in this area has generally focused on examining (i) the economic status of women; (ii) women's access to resources such as education and health; and/or (iii) the political participation and empowerment of women. Less attention has been given to the role of social institutions such as norms, traditions and family law. The OECD Gender, Institutions and Development (GID) Data Base shows that persistent discrimination and repression are most marked in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East and North African. It is interesting to note that some of the richest countries in the world, such as Saudi Arabia, show high levels of gender inequality. On the other hand, discrimination is considerably lower in many poor Latin America countries. In other words, higher economic development does not directly imply more gender equality.

Another finding of the data base emphasizes the important

influence of social institutions on the economic role of women. Female participation in the workforce is low in areas where discrimination through social institutions is high, for example. Add to this the fact that women who are denied ownership rights cannot easily take on an entrepreneurial role, and the problem becomes clear.

While religious affiliations may have an effect on the institutional framework of a country, the important question is how rules and norms are applied and implemented. Although social norms that discriminate against women appear less important in Christian and Buddhist countries, some predominantly Christian countries in Africa and Latin America still apply several customs that reduce women's rights. Conversely, some Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco, have changed within the overall institutional framework, granting women more rights with respect to marriage, authority over children, divorce, freedom of movement, dress and access to property. This suggests that persistent discrimination can be removed without undermining religious customs or beliefs.

Many countries are willing to change, having signed the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and, more recently in 2000, the UN millennium goal of empowering women and combating discrimination. Helping countries improve gender equality is therefore not only important, but an international commitment as well. The question is where to begin, and how? Investing in better information and high quality data is a good starting point. The GID and other statistical resources have helped to gradually come to grips with the scale of female discrimination. More importantly, lasting change has to be coaxed from within the communities themselves.

Wikigender – Fostering Dialogue to Promote Gender Equality

Wikigender, the new Internet portal of the OECD Development Centre, will be instrumental in reaching out to the public and fostering a bottom-up dialogue on the importance of gender equality. The website provides an open forum to share and exchange information on the situation of women and encourages a frank discussion on the elements that prevent women's social and economic empowerment. It welcomes an active participation of users who can contribute to the content of the website by posting comments, editing articles or creating new entries into this knowledge database.

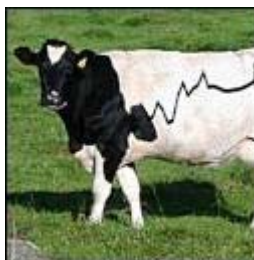
Providing a forum to reveal people's experiences with local customs and laws will have two important effects. First, it will help improve the information that is available on the situation of women around the world; some facts and figures may well feed back into existing databases like the GID. Second, involving

people in this mutual learning experience will bring forth local allies such as workers' unions, business associations and teachers who can help build pressure for change, as well as garnering wider public support and dispelling inevitable fears of change amongst citizens.

In the long run, this process will help break down stubborn social attitudes and mindsets, while enabling policy makers to tailor their strategies to the specific situation in a country or community. Encouraging greater openness can help tackle the prejudice and distrust that underpin persistent discrimination. It will also raise public awareness, from the international press, for example, but also the local media that can strengthen the willingness to reform.

Reducing gender disparities may not be an easy task, but is a feasible and necessary one. With coherent, sensitive and inclusive strategies, the kind of wasteful discrimination that denies women their rights and blights the development potential of whole countries can one day be removed for good.

Only by involving the public in the debate will we have a better understanding of the elements that prevent gender equality and the policies that will be able to counter them. The GID Data Base and Wikigender are two important initiatives in this endeavour.



Conference on International Macro-Finance

24-25 April 2008

Washington, DC

The International Monetary Fund and the World Economy and Finance Research Programme of the UK Economic and Social Research Council will hold a conference on international macro-finance at the IMF headquarters in Washington, DC, on April 24-25, 2008.

The conference will provide a forum to present recent theoretical and empirical research narrowing the gap between "open-economy macro" and "finance" approaches to international financial issues.

This conference aims at stimulating the innovation process and its diffusion to the analysis of relevant policy issues.

For further information, visit:

<http://www.imf.org/External/NP/seminars/eng/2007/macrosfin/index.htm>

or contact:

RESIMF@imf.org

20th International Round Table on Business Survey Frames

*By Anke Rink, Ines Rafael and Peter Schmidt
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The International Round Table on Business Survey Frames will now be known as: Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers. From October the 21st to 26th, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany hosted the 20th International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames. This international expert group under the patronage of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) is engaged in further developments of business registers, survey frames and associated topics.

Around 70 delegates from 40 countries and international organisations attended the conference, meaning the highest number of participants since the first meeting of the group in 1986 in Ottawa.

During five conference days and divided over six sessions, experts discussed several aspects of business registers and register based business statistics. An extra session was held to discuss the future of the group and the preparation of the next meeting. For the first time, a workshop was held discussing business registers from the specific point of view of developing countries.

As is the tradition, participating countries presented their progress reports during the first day. Each country described recent progress made and current problems in the framework of the business register, highlighting their key aspects. Also, the newcomer nations reported on their state of affairs and recent developments.

Session 2 focused on the "Introduction of new business register tools or systems". It could be seen that several national

statistical offices had carried out a re-engineering of their business registers in recent years and/or are still conducting or planning to do this in the near future. The main reasons for re-engineering business registers are the more exhaustive and intensive use of them and an increasing demand to support the production of business statistics. Delegates exchanged experiences and discussed different aspects of re-engineering like strategies, objectives, conceptual frameworks, administrative sources, computer architecture and software.

Session 3 dealt with "Classification systems within business register". One of the core functions of Statistical Business Registers is to assign and maintain various classification codes to the relevant units covered in the register and to provide these codes to the users for their statistical purposes. The correct activity code in the business register is one of the basic dimensions for high quality. The International System of Industry Classification (ISIC) was recently revised and this will have a large impact on statistics and registers.

Session 4 had a forward-looking perspective on "The Role of the business register in a future statistical system". Statistical offices are under considerable pressure from policy makers. Rising requirements nowadays are contrasted by continuously decreasing budgets and shrinking resources in statistical offices. Data collection strategies are changing rapidly. Availability and accessibility of administrative data are increasing. This has led to a decrease in the need for direct surveying of enterprises. The economic, social and technological developments assign new tasks to business statistics and especially to business registers.

Session 5 was split into parallel sessions, one of them on "Benchmarking tools for business registers". Delegates stressed the importance of benchmarking

indicators in order to improve the quality of business registers, and to provide a basis for allocating scarce resources for quality improvement more systematically and increase staff motivation. Under the topic of "Business profiling", two countries shared their experiences. Profiling is a method to analyse the legal, operational and accounting structure of an enterprise group at national and international level, in order to determine the statistical units within that group, their links, and the most efficient structures for the collection of statistical data. The papers presented in session "Entrepreneurship indicators, business demography, SME statistics" showed the developments in different countries. Over the last years, continued and increasing political interest in entrepreneurship has given rise to new demands for business demography and related data.

The increasing importance of "Multinational enterprise groups" is a specific aspect of globalisation. It is a challenge for business registers to record the relevant links between units of different countries in a correct way. The session on this topic discussed ways to develop business registers in respect of multinational groups and to meet the increasing demands for data in relation to globalisation. There is a clear need for continuing cooperation and exchange of ideas. Sharing of data is vital but needs to ensure confidentiality of data supplied by businesses.

In the concluding session the future of the meeting was discussed. From 2008 the meetings will take place biennial, alternating with the joint meeting of the United National Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), OECD and Eurostat (next meeting in 2009). The OECD offered to host this next meeting in 2008 and several potential hosts showed interest in hosting the next meeting in 2010.

The participants of the "20th International Roundtable on

Business Survey Frames” agreed on renaming the conference to the “Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers“. The additional subtitle of future conferences “International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames” will ensure a link to the historical context of this international expert group. The new name is intended to reflect the changing role of business registers increasingly being seen as the backbone of business statistics and as a source of statistical data in their own right and more clearly underline the status of the Roundtable as a United Nations City Group as well.

Following the conference, a special workshop for developing countries was held. The workshop brought together 18 developing as well as developed countries to discuss prospects of supporting other nations in their developments in the field of business registers and register-based business statistics. In future, a session within the official agenda of the conference will deal with the needs of the countries starting up business register and register-based business statistics. Further information on the “Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers” can be found at: <http://www.destatis.de/roundtable/>

The Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics
By Nadim Ahmad, OECD

The creation of new businesses and the decline of unproductive ones are often regarded to be key to business dynamism in OECD economies. Understanding business behaviour and (Schumpeterian) creative destruction, identifying successful and failing businesses and fostering entrepreneurship and innovation have become increasingly important objectives for policy makers in many OECD economies in recent years. Business churn (i.e. entry plus

exit rates) is commonly viewed as a measure of the ability of economies to expand the boundaries of economic activity, to shift resources towards growing areas and away from declining areas and to adjust the structure of production to meet consumers’ changing needs. Moreover, higher rates of business creation and churning are generally held to benefit economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation via increased productivity and innovation.

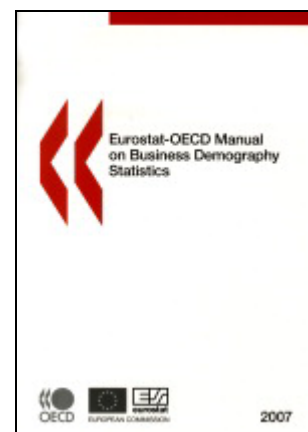
The growing interest in these issues, and in entrepreneurship more generally, has also influenced statistical development in this area and many national statistical offices now provide official statistics on the exit and entry of businesses, typically, using information contained within statistical business registers and/or administrative tax sources. The Statistical Office of the European Union, Eurostat, has also developed an enterprise demography database that includes many EU countries, an initiative that has greatly improved the comparability of business demography data from European countries. But, until recently, comparisons of these statistics outside of the EU were more difficult, partly due to the fact that national definitions and concepts of business demography statistics usually reflected domestic data availability and also to the fact that fully internationally recognised definitions and concepts were non-existent.

To bridge this gap, and improve international comparability, the OECD and Eurostat, worked together over the last two years, under the umbrella of the joint OECD/Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme (EIP), www.oecd.org/statistics/entrepreneurshipindicators, to develop a common framework for the measurement of business demography indicators - The Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics. The Manual, which was discussed in various statistical and policy fora, and which

was circulated to all OECD national statistics offices for final approval in July last year, was finalised and released in December 2007: see http://www.oecd.org/document/34/0,3343,en_2825_497125_39913698_1_1_1_1,00.html

The Manual includes, and provides harmonised definitions for, indicators that are of high-policy relevance, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship, such as birth, death, survival, high-growth enterprise and gazelle rates. It is important, in this context, to note the distinction between ‘births’ and ‘deaths’ and ‘entries’ and ‘exits’; the latter refer to appearances and disappearances of businesses from statistical business registers, irrespective of the reason. For example a business may appear/disappear from a register because of a merger between two companies. Such events, on their own, are not treated as births/deaths in the Manual.

The Manual defines a business, and thus the statistical unit for the calculation of business demography indicators, on the basis of an enterprise, as defined in the 1993 System of National Accounts, EC Regulation 696/93, and the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC). Policy makers are interested in understanding what makes a successful business. The



www.oecd.org/std/industry-services/businessdemographymanual

factors and business characteristics that determine this are inextricably linked to operational control. And operational control resides at the enterprise level.

From this basic idea the Manual develops the concepts and definitions for the core indicators. In developing these rules the approach has been to ensure relevance, whilst all the while being pragmatic. Given the variety of statistical information systems that exist across OECD countries and beyond, the Manual describes three types of births (and by extension deaths) – these are Enterprise Births; Employer Enterprise Births and Economic Enterprise Births. Going from first to last, the subsequent measures describe smaller populations of enterprises but populations of increasing economic significance with increasing scope for international comparability.

In simplified terms, the first measure includes all enterprise births, the second captures enterprises when they hire their first employee and the third registers enterprises when they recruit more than one employee for the first time.

Three different measures may appear strange but the rationale is cogent. In practice defining a birth of a business necessarily needs to reflect one convention or another. Indeed many alternatives exist - when the business idea was first thought of, when financing was first sought, when the first sale occurred, when premises were acquired, when machinery was first acquired, when the company was first registered, when the first employee was recruited, etc. The three measures proposed in the Manual reflect, therefore, different, increasingly later, but economically relevant and measureable, stages in this process/conception.

However, the core measure identified by the OECD-Eurostat EIP is the Employer Enterprise Birth, reflected in the core

framework paper developed under the auspices of the EIP : A Framework for Addressing and Measuring Entrepreneurship – OECD Statistics Working Paper STD/DOC(2008)2; see http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1090374#PaperDownload. This reflects the fact that the broader measure of Enterprise Births will also include creations of many micro, (hobby/recreational/part-time), businesses with little viable growth potential and less relevance for entrepreneurship studies and also the fact that the Employer Birth definition provides for much greater cross-country comparability.

The Manual builds on the Birth concepts to develop analogous definitions of Deaths and Survival rates. The final Chapter of the Manual deals with the Measurement of High-Growth Enterprises, which was the subject of a recent special Workshop organised by the OECD. Further information, including all papers and presentations provided at the Workshop, is available at http://www.oecd.org/document/31/0,3343,en_2825_495649_39151327_1_1_1_1,00.html.

In conjunction with Eurostat, the OECD has already begun to collect these statistics as part of its regular collection on Structural Business Statistics and as part of the EIP. Data currently available can be accessed on the OECD website at <http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/default.aspx?datasetcode=BDI>. With the advent of the Manual, and the continuing high policy relevance of these statistics, it is expected that country coverage and comparability of this database will increase considerably in coming years. OECD non-member countries that do not form part of this data collection programme but who would like to be involved should contact Benoit.Arnaud@oecd.org for further information and copies of the standard questionnaires.

Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics

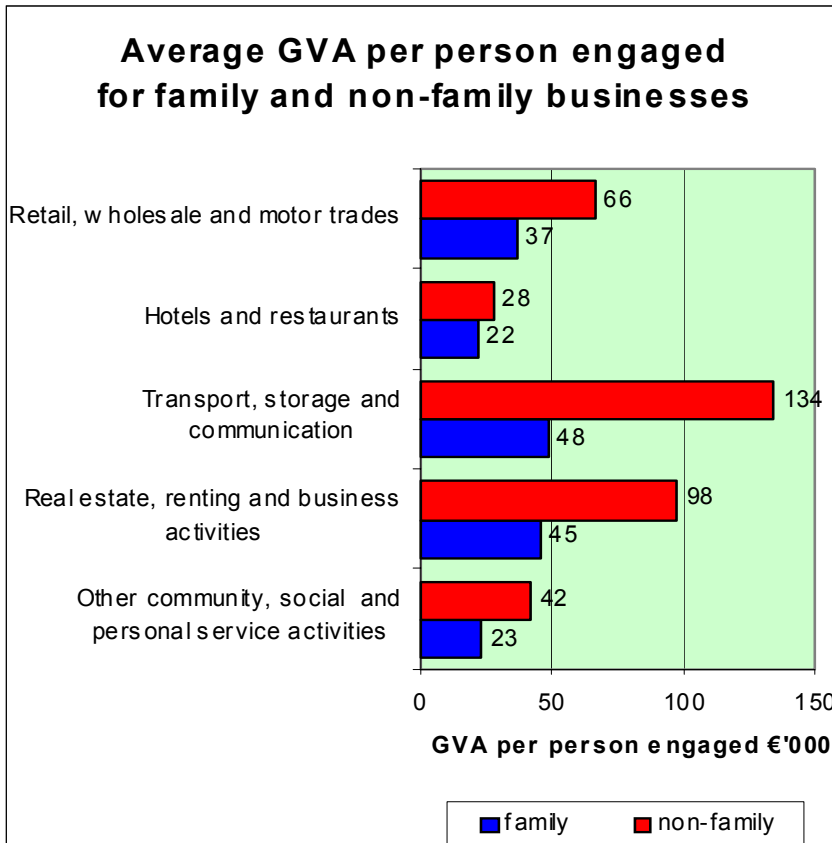
You can download the [whole version of the manual in PDF format](#) and each chapter in PDF format:

- [Preface](#)
- [1. Introduction](#)
- [2. Data Sources](#)
- [3. The Population of Active Enterprises](#)
- [4. Typology of Demographic Events](#)
- [5. Births](#)
- [6. Survival and Growth](#)
- [7. Deaths](#)
- [8. High-growth enterprises](#)
- [Glossary](#)

Business Statistics Seminar – Dublin, 26 February 2008
By Steve MacFeely, Director of Business Statistics, Central Statistics Office, Ireland

Recent years have seen the demand for business statistics steadily increasing in tandem with the growing emphasis on evidence informed policy. While this is a welcome development, the requirement for more and more robust statistical data presents a significant challenge for the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland. Specifically, how can the CSO meet the demand for additional data without increasing respondent burden to statistical surveys and remain within budget?

Given Ireland's small size and relatively small industrial base, few statistical economies of scale exist, often making the compilation of statistics proportionately more expensive relative to many other countries. Poor statistical infrastructure, such as the absence of a postal or spatial code or a unique business identifier also contribute to



the inefficiency of the Irish statistical system.

Consequently, given the significant cost of producing statistics, both to the taxpayer and to the many respondents who take the time and effort to complete our questionnaires, it is vitally important that the statistics we have are used to the full. This can be quite a challenge, given the high level of Foreign Direct Investment in Ireland, which often exacerbates the high level of confidential data that naturally occurs with a small enterprise population.

The CSO must play a central role if we are to maximise the potential of existing data, not only by providing good quality primary and metadata but ensuring those data are disseminated in an efficient and user friendly way. In recent years we have also begun to take a more active role in demonstrating how those data might be used e.g. by facilitating data matching or data linking.

The Business Statistics Seminar in Dublin, 26 February 2008, was another important step along this path. This was the first seminar dedicated to business statistics hosted by the CSO. No formal theme was adopted but maximising the use of existing data was definitely the key message of the day. The purpose of the seminar was wider however; it afforded CSO the opportunity to showcase some new data we are working on, such as International Sourcing statistics. It also allowed CSO to re-present existing data in a new light, such as Family Business or Business Costs and thus demonstrate how powerful and versatile official statistics are. Perhaps most importantly, the seminar provided an ideal opportunity for statisticians and data users (and perhaps a few data suppliers too) to meet and discuss issues of interest.

The seminar comprised of CSO speakers, outlining key results from CSO data and three guest speakers who use CSO data and demonstrated how researchers can use those data to great effect. On the day, two new

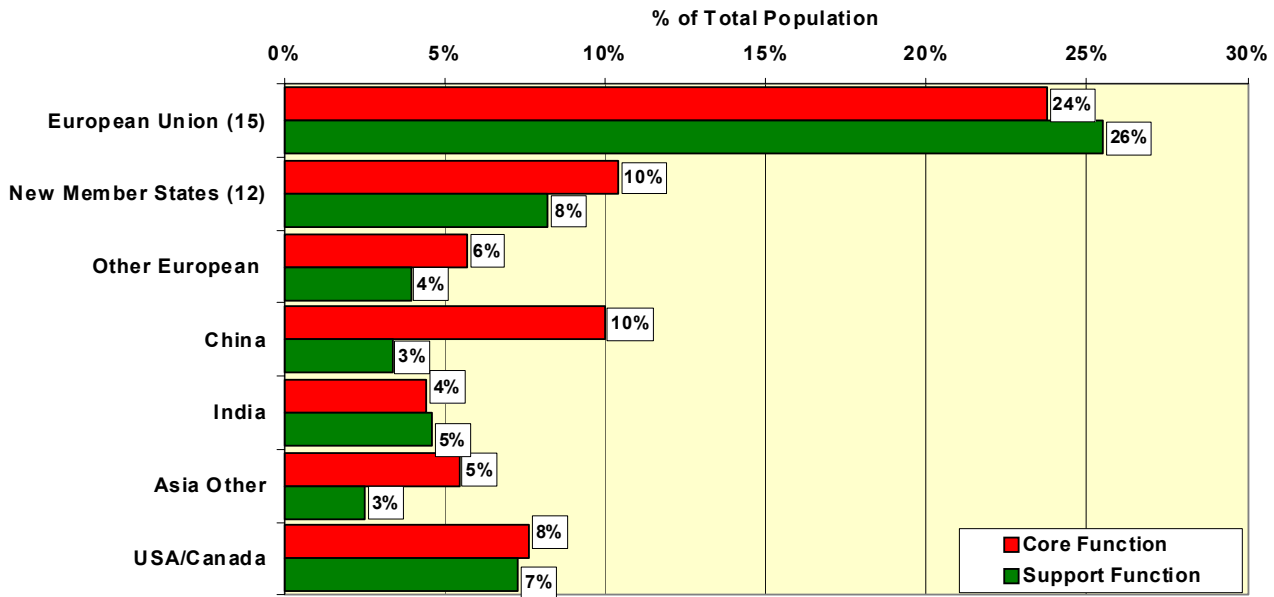
products were also launched. A new Airport – Pairings database was launched as was a new report on Family Businesses in the services sectors.

The full list of speakers and presentations was:

1. Airport – Pairings Database: An Introduction – Niall O’Hanlon, CSO.
2. Estimates of productivity growth in retail and wholesale trade in the Irish economy, 1999-2005 - Dr. Mary Keeling, IBM & Dr. Rita Buckley, University of Limerick.
3. Profiling family businesses in the traded services sector - Caitriona O’Brien, CSO.
4. ICT adoption in Irish manufacturing: An example of merging two CSO business microdata sets - Dr. Stefanie Haller, Economic and Social Research Institute.
5. International Sourcing: Are Irish enterprises relocating activity abroad? - Patrick Foley, CSO.
6. Northern Ireland economic and labour market statistics and sources - Dr. James Gillan, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland.
7. Overheads and costs incurred by business - Richard McMahon, CSO.

The Airport – Pairings Database is a particularly important project for CSO, as it is completely based on existing administrative data, automatically provided by the airport authorities in Ireland. The database details all air passenger traffic in and out of Ireland by route (i.e. airport to airport). Typically each month, the database contains about 5,000 data cells. The data is disseminated via PC-AXIS, providing search functionality at four strata, airport, city, country and continent. Users can construct their own tables and graphs on the CSO

Destination of Production Sourced Internationally



website or download the entire database free of charge.

The Family Business statistics is another project of significance for CSO because the data are sourced from the Structural Business Statistics dataset. By adding a single categorical variable, an entirely new avenue of research has been created from an existing data source. This type of approach, where existing data can be re-used or recycled in a new way, is at the core of the CSO approach to developing business statistics. This presentation and publication showed that family businesses are most prevalent in the more traditional sectors like distributive trades and Hotels & Restaurants. It also demonstrated that indicative productivity (GVA per person engaged) was higher for non-family businesses than for family businesses, although when multi-national enterprises were excluded the differential reduced noticeably.

Overall, the seminar seemed to work well and in particular the mix of CSO and guest speakers made for an interesting and varied afternoon. For example, the presentation by Dr. Stefanie Haller of the Economic and Social Research Institute, was

interesting as it highlighted not only the issue of ICT adoption by Irish industries but also the importance of being able to link datasets. This presentation gave a graphic illustration of how much more powerful individual datasets can become when linked together. Some key conclusions arising from this paper were that enterprises with more skilled employees, enterprises in ICT-related industries or enterprises located in the Dublin area were the most successful in adopting ICT. There was also a positive association between the share of employees using computers and ICT adoption and this association also held for the share of turnover due to online transactions.

Along with a number of other EU Member States, Ireland has been involved in piloting a new inquiry on International Sourcing or what is often referred to as 'Offshoring'. Preliminary findings were presented to what the appetite for a more comprehensive report scheduled for publication at the end of 2008. Overall, enterprises seem to have found offshoring a positive experience, particularly as a mechanism for improving competitiveness or reducing costs. The most common destination for

outsourced core production and support function activity was to countries in the EU, and most particularly to countries in the old EU-15.

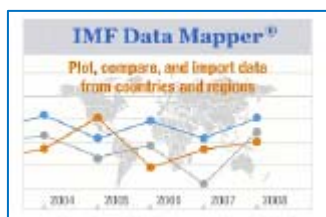
Dr. Mary Keeling & Dr. Rita Buckley summarised some very preliminary findings on labour productivity in the distributive trades and outlined their research plans for using the SBS services sector data. Dr. James Gillan from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland presented an interesting review of sources in Northern Ireland and the Republic, contrasting available data and warning users of some of the pitfalls and asymmetries that exist.

Overall my assessment is that our 1st Business Statistics Seminar achieved its main objectives. It showcased some important business datasets and reports and highlighted some examples of how those data could be used. It also allowed users to meet CSO business statisticians face to face, to discuss the aspects of data collection and dissemination of particular interest to them. Roughly a third of our guests completed the feedback questionnaires circulated and overall feedback was very positive. All respondents found the

seminar useful and encouraged CSO to run more in the future. The most common topics requested for future seminars were: Earnings, Globalisation, Tourism, Consumer Prices, Enterprise Demography, Knowledge Economy, Services Prices, Small Business and Transport. Following the seminar, a number of public and private institutions have asked CSO to represent some of the talks presented at the seminar to their members and in particular, there have been a number of requests to repeat the talk on International Sourcing.

A new way to visualize IMF data

*By Catherine Willis
International Monetary Fund*



IMF Data Mapper, a new interactive data visualization tool, allows web users to select data across countries, regions, and groups at the click of a mouse...

The first version of the IMF Data Mapper, a new interactive data visualization tool, is now available from the International Monetary Fund's Internet home page (www.imf.org). Users can select and compare data across countries, regions, and groups, using the world map or a pull-down menu. The Data Mapper displays the selected data in chart form and the map and charts are interactive. For example, changing the time period by sliding along the time axis on a line chart causes the annual data displayed on the map and the map colors to change. The data can also be printed or exported to other applications in the form of chart or map images.

The first version of the Mapper, launched with the release of the October 2007 World Economic Outlook (WEO), contains selected data from the latest WEO. Selected indicators from the Balance of Payments Yearbook 2007 and Government Finance Statistics Yearbook 2008 are now also available through this application.

The development of this tool was the product of close collaboration between the software vendor, Mapping Worlds, and an internal Working Group in the IMF, comprising representatives from several departments. "Everyone involved in the project was prepared to work hard to find solutions to meet the launch date and make sure that the overall functionality of the application would be first-rate," said Patrick Hinderdael, who led the IMF technology team. Jonathan Palmer, CIO of the Technology and General Services Department (TGS) adds, "This was a collaborative effort and a great example of how projects can be delivered successfully when there is teamwork and a sense of urgency; in this case the goal to deliver by the 2007 Annual Meetings."

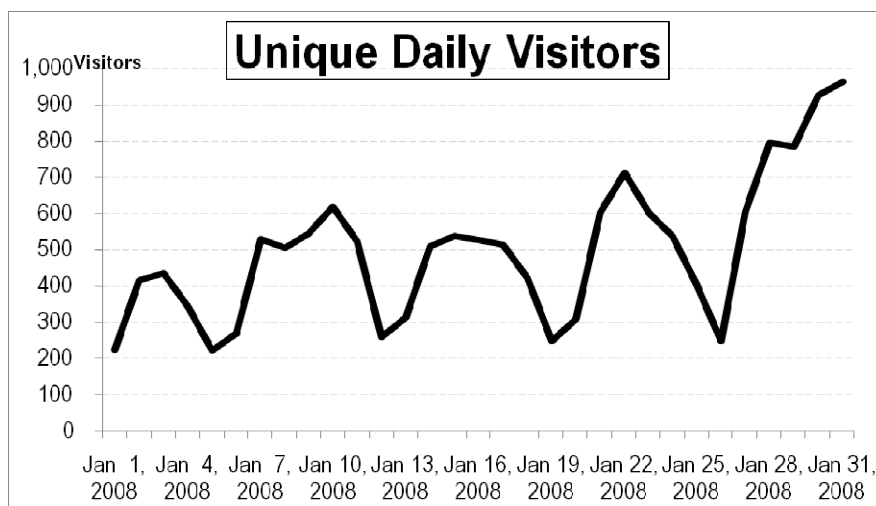
Enrique Gelbard, who led the team from the External Relations Department (EXR), notes that "The Data Mapper project has been a priority for EXR in light of the need for wider dissemination of the Fund's data and forecasts (commonly regarded as one of our key products) and the urgency to

continue upgrading our external website." The Mapper fits within a larger capital project to improve data dissemination. Cathy Wright, division chief of the Statistical Information Management Division in the Statistics Department (STA) and sponsor of the project, believes that "This is a significant step toward making the Fund's data more accessible to users and a clear way to present our data."

The IMF Data Mapper was displayed in December 2007 at the London Online Information Show. "Many attendees who stopped by the IMF booth to find out about the Fund's data were very interested in this tool and impressed by its functionalities," says Cathy Willis, Marketing Manager (EXR). The IMF Data Mapper now ranks in the top 20 most visited links on the IMF's external Web site. Usage of the tool has been increasing slowly and steadily and in December 2007, it ranked 20th overall on the external site, with 8000 visitors. In January 2008, it moved to 14th, with 15,000 visitors.

Who is using Data Mapper, and what has changed? While Data Mapper has only been live for a short time, the graph clearly shows that visitors from not only the United States but also the rest of the world are taking off.

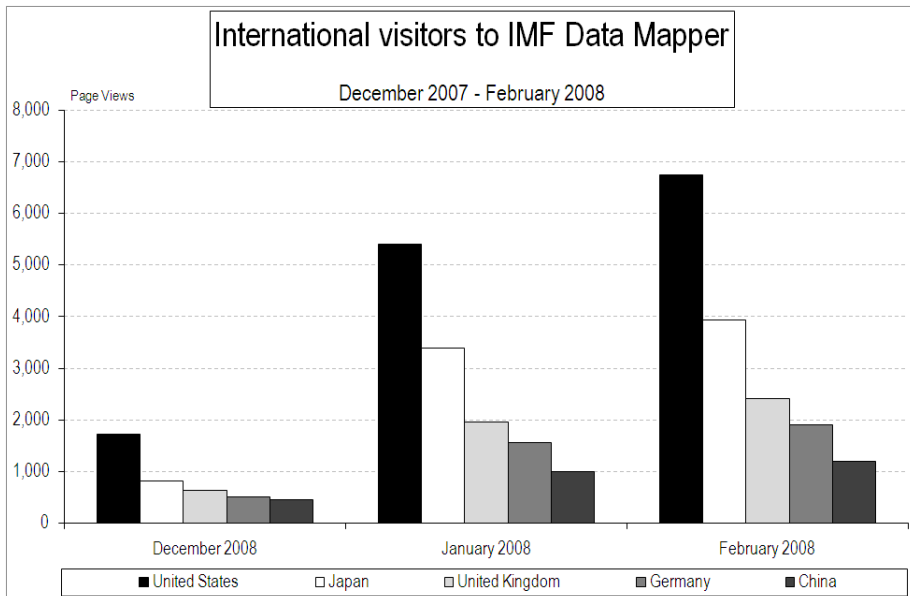
The second version of the application will be released in Spring 2008 and will contain



improved chart capabilities as well as enhanced presentation features – allowing to link key messages to map/chart combinations and to compare variables over time in a playback mode. In addition, the data

the ONS reports as an agency to a Government Minister in the Treasury, the UKSA will answer only to Parliament, represented by an all-party select committee.

Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, acted and announced that there would be legislation to make official statistics independent of government Ministers. Now that this proposal is just weeks away from fruition what will it mean in practice?



will be expanded to include additional variables and other databases, including from the IMF’s Regional Economic Outlooks as well as the OECD’s Main Economic Indicators. The Data Mapper will also be made available from IMF.Stat, a central repository for internal and external economic data and metadata, which is currently under development.

The creation of UKSA is a result of The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, which is the most significant piece of statistics legislation for 60 years, and is designed to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics.

Firstly, the new UK Statistics Authority has been appointed and has held its initial meetings as a ‘shadow body’. The Authority is chaired by Sir Michael Scholar who has a strong background as a leading Civil Servant and as President of St John’s College, Oxford and he is supported by a body of seven non-executive members as well as three executive members who work within the ONS, including National Statistician, Karen Dunnell.

Sir Michael is clear that it is the responsibility of the Authority to earn the trust of the public through the quality of the statistics and the transparency of their publication. “Good statistics are the foundation of good decision-making, and of the proper understanding of our society and economy. We aim to ensure that UK statistics are of the highest quality and free from any political spin,” he says. “The new UK Statistics Authority has already begun its task of building trust in UK statistics.”

Independence beckons for statistics in the United Kingdom

By David Marder, Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom

The governance of UK statistics will be independent of ministerial control for the first time within the next few weeks.

The underlying reason for the legislation is the worrying lack of public confidence in official statistics. Research carried out in 2004 and 2005 indicated that as few as one in seven (14 percent) believed that the government used figures honestly. In addition only 17 percent thought figures were produced without interference, although less than a third of people disagreed that the figures were generally accurate.

One area where Sir Michael and his colleagues have ventured opinion already is on limiting pre-release access to statistics. This is a system whereby ‘in order that government ministers can account immediately for the implications of statistics about policy areas for which they are democratically responsible, they are given access to those statistics ahead of publication’.

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) takes up its powers on 1 April and will govern the operations of the UK’s National Statistical Institution – the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Whereas at present

These data, from research carried out by the ONS itself in conjunction with the soon to be disbanded Statistics Commission, represented a clear scepticism amongst the public about the presentation of official statistics despite in reality minimal interference by government ministers in the production and publication of statistics.

The UK government has just completed a consultation on proposals to limit pre-release access to 24 hours (reduced from up to five working days currently applied for some statistics). While welcoming the review, the Authority has made it plain that the matter should be a decision for them and that the UK

should follow internationally-accepted practice.

The quality of official statistics is vital to the success of the Authority and the key element of this will be the new role for a 'Head of Assessment' who will report directly to the Authority and will not be a member of ONS staff. This officer will be responsible for overseeing the statistical quality of all the nearly 1300 official statistics that aspire to the kitemark of approval that makes them 'National Statistics'. The rigour and professional standards to achieve this accolade are substantial and demanding and the award by an independent authority should go a distance towards giving the public confidence in their quality and independence.

The Head of Assessment will oversee the standards applied in producing official statistics originating not only from the ONS but from the statistical divisions of all Government Departments. It is in this area that the strongest tensions might be perceived to exist, where statisticians work closely with departmental officials and remain within a department controlled by a Minister. All of the statisticians responsible for national statistics are members of a professional group called the Government Statistical Service which provides guidance and support to ensure that its members are able to maintain the highest professional standards.

It is sometimes seen as a weakness with the existing system that statistical reports, professionally produced by statisticians are published and publicised by communication officers whose prime role is to present the government's policies in the best light. These officers are in a difficult position of publishing both the statistics and then a very short time afterwards, the Minister's policy response to the data. To get round this it has been suggested in Parliament (although it is not actually within the Act) that there should be a single point of

publication that would come under the control of UKSA.

This has become known as the 'Publication Hub'. All new National Statistics will be formally published on the Hub which will act as a central repository for new national statistical releases. The statistics will continue to be 'owned' by the department that produced them, who in turn will be assessed by the UKSA, and the main function of the Hub at least at its inception will be as a portal to the statistics held on websites of individual government departments and the ONS.

This will help ensure that there is a clear degree of separation between the presentation of the statistics and any political commentary or interpretation of the statistics made by departments or ministers.

Taking this a step further, is the idea of the statisticians who have produced the statistics talking directly with the media and communicating the meaning of their data. This already happens at the ONS where direct briefings from the statisticians to the media and public have been part of the culture for more than a decade.

This is not a culture though that is common in other UK government departments where there are very specific rules and guidance about who can speak to the media. Following independence, it is proposed that the ONS's premises and independent media briefing facilities should be made available to statisticians working in other departments, with support from the ONS's or UKSA's independent media relations staff, so that they too can present the most important new statistics to the media in an environment that will not appear to be a part of the political or governmental machine.

The arrival of statistical independence on 1 April 2008 and the launch of the new Publication Hub are only the beginning of a range of developments that aim to

enhance the provision of UK national statistics over the web and thereby help to enhance the confidence of users of statistics.

The Hub itself will be further enhanced over the course of the next 12 months, to provide in due course a fully searchable release calendar and much better search facilities. The UKSA also plans to introduce a new National Statistics Catalogue, based around new statistical themes that will provide statistics users with a much clearer view of the statistics that are produced across the government and how to access them.

The ONS is also looking to enhance the way in which its data are disseminated, ensuring that it takes advantage of the power of the new search facilities and NS Catalogue to ensure all of its products are readily findable by users and the public. It is also looking to harness the power of new internet technologies to allow users greater direct access to summary information and published data sets. Micro data will also still be available to researchers, who need to access this data, through the normal application process.

In all of this, the ONS will continue to aim to maintain its high standards for the quality of its statistics whilst preserving the security and integrity of the data it holds. It will also aim to ensure it continues to produce relevant and insightful reports that enhance political and policy debates, from its new independent institutional setting.

Whether or not this degree of independence and the hoped for rise in public confidence is achieved, UK statistics is going through one of the most exciting times in its history. There is no doubt there is a big mountain to climb if the public's sceptical attitude towards statistics is to be improved but the creation of the new UKSA, its powerful assessment role and transparency created by the new Publication Hub will enable big steps to be taken.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Using input-output tables to measure globalisation

Economic globalisation has typically been measured using trade and FDI statistics. However, the emergence of global value chains with products often fabricated in one country, assembled in a second and sold in a third country, challenges these traditional indicators. [This paper](#) shows how international input-output tables can be used to provide complementary indicators on the growing importance of these global value chains.

Call for Papers

Inequality Beyond Globalization: Economic Changes and the Dynamics of Inequality

**June 26-28, 2008
University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland**

Midterm Conference of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Economy and Society

In sociological research on inequality, globalization has been a central focus for over a decade now. Nevertheless, globalization's effects on intra-national, international, and interregional social inequality remain highly contested. At the upcoming ISA-RC02 Midterm Conference in Neuchâtel, researchers will have the opportunity to discuss the current state of the debates and to contrast them with recent research on the distributional effects of economic change in general.

The working language of the conference is English

For more information, including details of conference registration fees:

<http://www2.unine.ch/iNEquality08>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

All OECD publications can be ordered on line at:
www.oecd.org/bookshop

▲International Development Statistics on CD-ROM, 2008 Edition

Published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), this CD-ROM provides economists and researchers with a unique source of up-to-date comparative statistics and information on international development. Time series cover: volume, origin and types of aid and other resource flows to over 150 recipient countries; individual aid activities on bilateral and multilateral Official Development Assistance commitments by sector type, donors, recipient, with textual and numerical information on projects; key development indicators; numerous Aid charts for DAC members, recipient countries/territories and regions. Further information is available on the OECD web site at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idscd

▲National Accounts of OECD Countries on CD-ROM, Volume IV

The 2007 edition of National Accounts of OECD Countries: General Government Accounts is an annual database, dedicated to government finance, which is based on the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993). It includes tables showing government aggregates and balances for the production, income and financial accounts as well as detailed tax and social contribution receipts and a breakdown of expenditure of general government by function, according to the harmonised international classification, COFOG. These detailed accounts are available for the general government sector. Data also cover the following sub-sectors, according to availability: central government, state government, local government and social security funds. The database covers 29 of the 30 OECD countries. Data are expressed in national currencies and cover the years 1970-2006.

▲Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages, Policies, Statistics and Indicators - 2007 Edition

This book provides an internationally comparable set of indicators on educational provision for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and disadvantages (DDD). It highlights the number of students involved, where they are educated – special schools, special classes or regular classes – and in what phases of education – pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. It also includes information on the physical provision and on student/teacher ratios and discusses policy implications concerning special

education. This edition also presents for the first time trends in the data for students with DDD (1999-2003).

▲ OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030

The OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030 provides analyses of economic and environmental trends to 2030, and simulations of policy actions to address the key challenges. Without new policies, we risk irreversibly damaging the environment and the natural resource base needed to support economic growth and well-being. The costs of policy inaction are high. But the Outlook shows that tackling the key environmental problems we face today -- including climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and the health impacts of pollution -- is both achievable and affordable. It highlights a mix of policies that can address these challenges in a cost-effective way. The focus of this Outlook is expanded from the 2001 edition to reflect developments in both OECD countries and Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa (BRIICS), and how they might better co-operate on global and local environmental problem-solving.

OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy

**Seoul, Korea
17-18 June 2008**

For ministerial logistics,
registration and more see:

www.oecd.org/FutureInternet

OUT SOON

▲ OECD Factbook 2008

OECD Factbook 2008 is the fourth 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. This year, the OECD Factbook features a focus chapter on productivity. Data are provided for all OECD member countries with area totals, and in some cases, for selected non-member economies. For each indicator, there is a two-page spread. A text page includes a short introduction followed by a detailed definition of the indicator, comments on comparability of the data, an assessment of

long-term trends related to the indicator, and a list of references for further information on the indicator. The next page contains a table and a graph providing - at a glance - the key message conveyed by the data. A dynamic link (StatLink) is provided for each table directing the user to a web page where the corresponding data are available in Excel® format. OECD Factbook 2008 is a key reference tool for everyone working on economic and policy issues.

▲ More Than Just Jobs, Workforce Development in a Skills-Based Economy

What should be the goal of labour and employment policies? "Job placement" has been the traditional answer, but this report argues otherwise. To stay competitive in a globalised economy, governments must also strive to enhance the skills of workers, increase their productivity and provide upward mobility to immigrants and the disadvantaged. This report provides valuable insights into how labour policies can be expanded to meet economic development and social cohesion goals, while also reconciling national and local concerns. Studies from seven OECD countries are presented (Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States), each analysing attempts to expand workforce development policies and bridge the gap between national and local initiatives. Included are various types of government/private sector partnerships in the United States, regional training in France and Australia's efforts to customise policies to local needs. Based on the country studies, the report then makes specific recommendations and suggestions on how workforce development policies can be expanded and improved.

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Forthcoming OECD Meetings

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

2008	
25-27 March	Working Group on International Investment Statistics (WGIIS), Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF), Paris, France
7-8 April	6 th meeting of the International Safety Data and Analysis Group (IRTAD), Joint OECD/ITF Transport Research Committee, Paris, France
14-15 April	OECD Expert Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange, Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France
21-23 April	Expert meeting on the Electronic Exchange of Pesticide Data, Environment Directorate (ENV), Arlington, United States
21-22 April	Workshop of the Working Party on Nanotechnology, Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI), Paris, France
23-24 April	Working Party on Nanotechnology, Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI), Paris, France
29-30 April	Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS), Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI), Paris, France
15-16 May	Ad Hoc Group on Biotechnology Statistics, Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI), Paris, France
26-27 May	International Seminar on Innovative Approaches to Turning Statistics into Knowledge, Statistics Directorate (STD), OECD and Statistics Sweden, Stockholm, Sweden

Other Statistics Meetings

2008	
24 March-4 April	Accelerating Progress Towards the Health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other Health Outcomes, Washington, D.C, United States
2-3 April	Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, Geneva, Switzerland
8 April	Presentation of the WDR 2008 at a Conference on "Rethinking Rural Economic Development", Copenhagen, Denmark
7-9 April	UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems, MSIS 2008, Luxembourg
9-11 April	UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Work Session on Statistical Metadata, METIS 2008, Luxembourg
9-11 April	ECE/UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics, Geneva, Switzerland