

AUSTRIA

Progress Report to the 19th meeting of the Voorburg Group in Ottawa, 27th Sept. – 1st October 2004

1- The main achievements of the country or organization for the recent period 2002-2003;

PPI for Business Services

At the background of lacking Producer Price Index (PPI) for business services in Austria Statistics Austria started to participate in European-wide programmes for developing PPI's for business services. In the first phase of this development program (2003), the already existing price indexes have been analysed and the fundamentals and data sources for the development of several services producer prices have been investigated. The current second phase concentrates on the collection of the first prices and the installation of the survey routine in order to get the first time series.

At national level a working party dealing with price statistics has been constituted by ST.AT. November 2003. During that event first results of our preparatory work were presented to a broader audience of national experts and users.

Statistics Austria has finished the preparatory work for:

ÖNACE 62.1	Scheduled Air Transport Services
ÖNACE 64.1	Post and Courier Services
ÖNACE 74.11	Legal Services
ÖNACE 74.4	Advertising Services

At present ST.AT is calculating experimental indices for scheduled passenger air transport and advertising services. Due to the experimental character of both indices and due to confidentiality reasons none of these indices is published at the moment.

Furthermore, a few additional priority one (according to definitions of the Eurostat/OECD task force) service sectors will be investigated in order to provide the National Account unit with appropriate deflators in the future.

Statistics Austria has so far started with preparatory work for:

ÖNACE 71.1	Renting of Automobiles
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The major basic data (structure of market, major suppliers of services, specification of services, pricing method, stratification and sampling) have been investigated and a meeting with the respective industry bodies is planned. First results will be presented at this years Voorburg mini presentation.

In further phases of this Pilot, a stepwise broadening of the available PPI's in cooperation with Eurostat and national main users is planned.

2- The main issues and challenges facing the country or organization;

PPI for Business Services

The data collection in the field of advertising services didn't cause too many problems. Concerning passenger scheduled air transport a part of the service structure has been changed by the Austrian Airline Group. Therefore it was necessary to make the "rules" of the old and new ticket categories comparable and to adapt the sample. For legal services the data situation and the willingness of enterprises to cooperate is much more complicated

A major challenge is to ensure the willingness of enterprises to co-operate because the Austrian circumstances do not oblige them by law to give information. This means a high amount of effort (time, money, etc.) has to be spent to convince producers of services to support the project. More resources can only be expected as soon as the amended EU regulation on STS is released.

3- The priorities of the work program for the next years

PPI for Business Services

The progress of work will be rather slowly due to budgetary reasons. It is intended to follow the priority list of the OECD/Eurostat TF on service prices at moderate speed. (priority 1 issues are e.g. computer services, road freight transport services, auditing and tax consultancy services, business consulting services, architectural and engineering services, etc.).

4- Future topics which are of interest to the Voorburg Group for inclusion in the next program.