

REPORT TO THE 2000 MEETING OF THE VOORBURG GROUP

This report contains information about the statistical activities of the OECD undertaken as part of the Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry.

ICT Sector Statistics

OECD is about to release the results of its statistical data collection on the ICT sector in a publication entitled "Measuring the ICT Sector". This is based on the ICT sector definition established by the Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS) in mid 1998. The publication is a little later than envisaged at last year's Voorburg Group meeting - when it was reported that OECD would publish in the first half of this year.

As reported last year, there was considerable difficulty in obtaining detailed data from member countries, and the scale of the publication has been reduced. The publication now contains sets of data about employment, value added, wages and salaries, production, capital expenditure, number of business units, imports, exports and research and development. While the data content of the publication has been substantially reduced from that originally planned, there are now country profiles prepared for 28 countries, although not all of them have complete sets of data. Nevertheless, the publication provides a much greater set of country data than has been available previously.

More details on the contents of the publication are available on request.

The OECD has also recently published a paper entitled "A New Economy? The Changing Role of Innovation and Information Technology in Growth" which was produced as part of the OECD work on measuring growth in OECD Member countries. It has also recently issued "OECD Information Technology Outlook 2000", which is a two yearly report produced by OECD.

Research and Development and Innovation Measures

The OECD will continue its review of the research and development survey framework (Frascati Manual) over the next twelve months. A key aspect of the work to date has been an examination of the measurement of R&D in the services sector. This examination showed that the deficiencies thought to exist in this aspect were not as serious as first thought. Member countries had made significant improvements in this area over recent years. A paper summarising this aspect is available on the OECD website.

OECD and Eurostat have combining to review the concepts, definitions and questionnaire for the next round of Innovation surveys to be conducted in 2001. It is expected that the 2001 surveys will contain a greater range of more comparable information about technological innovation in Services sector business enterprises.

Biotechnology Statistics

OECD conducted an initial meeting to start development of internationally comparable methodologies and statistics concerning biotechnology in March 2000. That meeting endorsed the need for further work in this area. In particular, it asked the OECD Secretariat to:

- Publish an Inventory of available biotechnology statistics from round the world,
- Compile a compendium publication on the results currently available,

- Develop a set of international definitions for the measurement of biotechnology, and
- Develop a statistical framework for the future development of biotechnology statistics.

The first of these has now been completed. It was published in paper form by OECD last week and is available electronically on the OECD website. The second has now been commenced, but will not be completed in 2001. Work has just started on the third and work on the fourth will start at a meeting of the Working Party on Biotechnology in two weeks time.

OECD, DSTI
September 2000