

28th Meeting of Voorburg Group held in Tokyo

The 28th meeting of Voorburg Group (VG) on Service Statistics was held from October 7 to 11 2013 in Tokyo, Japan. The VG was established in 1986 as a forum where experts on service statistics from national statistical offices (NSOs), etc. meet to exchange their knowledge. The group was founded in response to a request from the United Nations Statistical Office on developing services statistics. The purpose of the VG is to discuss an internationally comparable methodology for measuring turnover/output and prices for services and to develop the methodological guidelines for each service industry, etc. The meeting has been held annually since the first meeting in 1987.

This was the second meeting in Tokyo, and the first in 10 years. There were about 70 participants from NSOs, central banks, and the OECD.

Because the shutdown of the U.S. Federal government caused the U.S. participants including the chair, Mr. David Friedman, to miss the meeting unexpectedly, Mr. Michael Morgan from Australia acted as the chair. Other participants, including those from Japan, also filled roles as session leaders and presenters, and presented the slides prepared by the U.S. participants. Mr. Friedman delivered his message to the participants by internet videophone during the meeting.



In the VG meetings, each service industry is discussed as follows: In the first year, several participants give Mini-presentations on their method for measuring turnover/prices and their outcomes. The following year, the VG prepares a Sector Paper summarizing the best practices and recommendations, based on the Mini-presentations and the discussion in the previous year. The VG also deals with common issues for service industries as Cross Cutting Topics. The 28th meeting included the following presentations and discussions:

i) Mini-presentation

Presentations and discussions were given on “Programming and broadcasting activities”, “Software publishing activities”, “Other publishing activities”, “Warehousing and support activities”, and “Postal activities”.

ii) Sector Paper

Papers were submitted and adopted on “Commercial and industrial machinery”, “Arts, entertainment, and recreation services”, “Consumer and households goods repair and maintenance”, and “Water treatment and distribution services”.

iii) Cross Cutting Topics

Participants introduced various methods for efficiently producing statistics with less burden on respondents and methods for quality adjustment of price statistics.

The VG also discussed suggestions for the next ISIC and CPC revision and methodologies for producing service statistics on turnover/prices linking to the national macroeconomic framework, etc.

The next meeting (scheduled to be held in Ireland in September, 2014) will include the preparation of Sector Papers on industries covered by Mini-presentations in the 28th meeting and the discussion on various Cross Cutting Topics.

iv) Presentations by Japan as the Host Country

On 9th October, the SBJ gave a presentation on turnover statistics on service industries in Japan and the Bank of Japan (BOJ) made a presentation on price statistics.

Social Programs

As parts of the conference, a cocktail reception and a reception hosted by the Director-General of SBJ were held on October 7 and 9 respectively. On October 9, the participants went on an excursion around Tokyo, taking an opportunity to get a taste of the history and culture of Japan.

***** Agenda of the 28th Meeting *****

7th October

Morning Welcoming Remarks (Mr. Masahiko Sue, Director-General of SBJ)
Opening Remarks & Country Progress Reports (Mr. Michael Morgan, Acting Chair)
Sector Paper

Afternoon Cross Cutting Topics – Part 1-3

Evening Cocktail Reception

8th October

Morning Mini-presentation (Programming and Broadcasting Activities)

Afternoon Mini-presentation (Software Publishing Activities)
Cross Cutting Topics – Part 4

9th October

Morning Cross Cutting Topics – Part 5
Update on the Work of the OECD-Eurostat Taskforce on the Revision for the SPPI Manual
Presentation by Japan
- Statistical Approach to Diversifying Industries - Focusing on the MSSSI Revision
(Mr. Naruhiko Yamagata, SBJ)
- Rebasng Japan's Corporate Services Price Index (Ms. Hina Kikegawa, BOJ)

Afternoon Excursion

Evening Reception hosted by the Director-General of SBJ

10th October

Morning Mini-presentation (Other Publishing Activities)

Afternoon Mini-presentation (Warehousing and Support Activities, Postal Activities)

11th October

Morning Future Agenda
Closing Remarks (Mr. Michael Morgan, Acting Chair)



For further information, please refer to the following link:

<http://www.stat.go.jp/english/info/meetings/vg2013/vg2013.htm>