Fith Meeting of the Voorburg group on Service Statistics
Paris, 1 - 5 October 1990

NORWEGIAN STATISTICS ON SERVICES

By Liv Hobbelstad Simpson

Central Bureau of Statistics

NORWAY

Oslo, September 1990

1. Introduction.

Central Bureau of Statistics, Norway (CBS) is now in the process of reviewing its economis statistics. In the next five-year programme for 1991 - 1995, development of statistics for services will be given high priority. Even if CBS is facing budget - constraints in the year ahead, it is planned to transfer more resources to the field of service statstics.

The ojectives is to develop a statistical programme for services which takes into account the following requirements:

> Optimal statistical information on services, with the minimum cost by utmost use of information availale in registers and other administrative data.

> Cover the data need for the adaption of the revised SNA (and depending on an European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, the revised ESA).

> Implemention of the new activity classification NACE/ Rev.1 from 1992/1993.

> Possible use of CPC (CPC COM) as product classification both in the structure statistics for services and in the revised national accounts.

> Prepare for a change from establishment to enterprise as the basic statistical unit.

2. The European Economic Area (EEA) Statistical System

The framework for an EEA statistical system is now taking shape within the Oslo - Brussels process. The EFTA - countries have the fixed objectives to harmonise with the relevant part of EC statistics from 1995.

Relevant "acquis" for statistical cooperation are Council regulations, directives and decisions covering statistics which are important as basic statistical infrastructure for the EEA.

Important relevant statistical fields are NACE Rev 1, ESA, Industry and Transport statistics and Transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality.

Documents from EUROSTAT, submitted for discussion at the Voorburg Group meeting, shows the priority EUROSTAT is giving to the area of service statistics. It might only be a question

of time before guidelines, "gentlemens agreement" and decisions for statistics will also be relevant for the EFTA - countries.

With this background, it is important for CBS to take into account the EUROSTAT methodological work and draft manuals for statistics on services, when planning Norwegian service statistics.

3. The national accounts system as a tool for co - ordinating and developing economic statistics

A Norwegian paper presented at the "Voorburg group " meeting in 1988, stressed the role of having the national accounts play a central role in the planning of future development of statistics for services.

The SNA Review has introduced the full sequence of accounts for institutional sectors. According to SNA Review, it is suggested to introduce production accounts for institutional sectors with the enterprise as the statistical unit. The production accounts are suggested made up of output, intermediate consumpion and value addee (as residual), but without any specification by product. This means higher priority to the compilation of statistics of non-financial enterprises, both for good producing activities and for service activities.

CBS has started the work of implementing NACE/Rev.1 in the Establistment and Enterprise register from 1992/1993. This will expand the number of levels for services substantially, compared with the old classification based on ISIC/Rev.2. NACE/Rev.1 will also become the basis activity classification in all economic statistics.

In Norway, HS is used as a common commodity classification both in the statistics for external trade and in the production statistics for good producing industries. For services no product clasification has been used, and the work of examine the CPC and the CPC/COM classification has just started.

After the planned revision of the Norwegian national accounts, the activity classification will be based on NACE/Rev.1 and the commodity classification might be based on CPC, which again will rise the demand for detailed data for services, both in relation to activity and product classification.

4. Use of registers and administrative data

In CBS, a Central Register of Establishments was established already in 1956, based on information from the 1953 Census of establishments. In 1976 the Central Register of Establishments and Enterprises was implemented as an on line data base. New dataprocessing routines were introduced in 1988, making a clearer distinction between information related to the establistment and to the enterprise. Of great importance was that also information from other administrative registers was linked to the data base.

All firms which are obliged to pay value added tax, must register at the county tax offices, and the registrations are reported to the VAT register. Copies of the registration forms are sent to CBS. Similarly all enterprises that employ wage-earners have to report to local social insurance offices, and they continually send reports to CBS.

A new important sources for registration of new units will be a new administrative register over firms and companies which recently has been established in Norway. This new administrative register is given the responsibility to register and give all new companies an identification number. The same number will be used in CBS as the number for enterprises and will be linked to the establishment number in CBS. The number will also by law be used to identify the enterprises in other administrative registers.

5. Statistical censuses and surveys

5.1 Accounts statistics for enterprises

For the accounts statistics, the aim has been to collect basic information readily availble from the annual profit and loss accounts and balance sheets of the enterprises or government units.

For central and local government, financial corporations and public non - financial corporations, CBS has since around 1960, had a well developed finance statistics based on annual accounts and quarterly and monthly reports.

For private non - financial corporations, annual accounting statistics, based on the enterprise as statistical unit, have been limited to mining, manufacturing, trade and hotels. A detailed questionaire is send to all large enterprises (defined as more than 50). The information on the income statement and balance sheet, corresponds to the figures given in the annual financial state ments from the enterprises, which

they report to the tax authorities.

For mining and manufacturing, CBS also have a well developed annual production statistics based on the establishment as the statistical unit. A close link between the infor mation given from the enterprise and from the establishments within the enterprise, is established.

For other services than trade and hotels, no annual accounting statistics have been produced.

In connection with the review of the economec statisics, CBS is now proceeding to establish statistics for service industries, based on the enterprise as the basic statistical unit instead of establishments which is used for private services.

5.2 Production statistics for establishments-private services

The last Census of establishments was carried out in 1974, giving information on the number of establishments, employment and value of production. In the following years, high priority was given to utilize the information from the value added tax register for statistical purposes, but at that time there was serious weakness in the information available.

From 1979, annual statistical surveys for the most important private non-financial service industries have been carried out, based on the establishment as the statistical unit.

The statistics have been expanded and are now covering the following activities:
Real estate services, business services, architectu ral and other technical services connected with construction, sanitary and similar services, laundries, laundry services and cleaning and dyeing plants.

The questionaires are designed for the purpose of giving basic information for setting up the production accounts and capital formation accounts for these service industries in the national accounts. The statistics give information about number of establishments, employment, type of ownership, gross value of production, cost of goods and services consumed, value added, purchase and resale of merchandise, compensation of emploeés and gross fixed capital formation and also export.

The statistics are published for each activity group, close to 4-digit ISIC/ Rev.2 and without any breakdown by products.