

Transport Satellite Accounts: Opportunities and Challenges

Topic: Satellite accounts: tourism, sports and environment

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The need to better understand the transport sector is arising from an increasing number of challenges such as capacity constraints, congestion and CO2 emissions. This has led a number of countries to demand and develop expanded and improved statistics on both the transport industry and transport activity.

Recently, a number of countries have started looking at the feasibility of transport satellite accounts to answer some of the key transport policy questions, such as impact of transport policies (vehicle charges, fuel excise, congestion charges) on industries, regions, different users and consumers. They can also address issues on productivity, energy consumption, and employment, among others.

This paper introduces Transport Satellite Accounts (TrSA) as a promising tool to better measure and analyse the transport sector as they are a flexible way to supplement existing national accounts and to reorganise available information in a consistent way. International work to date on TrSA in OECD countries is reviewed and the possible need for the development of international standards for TrSA is discussed. The transport satellite accounts available are mostly carried out using different definitions and classifications, reducing the comparability of results. On the other hand, too strict standards might reduce the analytical capabilities of TrSA to respond to exactly those questions considered important in the country. Taking into account the need for comparability and need to respond to national needs, this paper concludes with a proposal on steps forward to increase international co-operation and exchange of information on transport satellite accounts.

Finally, it is hoped that this paper provides the impetus for transport agencies throughout the world to discuss the options for a transport satellite account with their own statistical agencies, with a view to expanded and more consistent transport data internationally in the future.