

HARMONISATION BETWEEN OECD NON-EU COUNTRIES AND EU MEMBER AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

Ronny Nilsson
Statistics Directorate
OECD

1 INTRODUCTION

The harmonisation of business tendency surveys is very important if the results are to be used for international comparisons of short-term economic developments. Lack of harmonisation with regard to definitions, question format, periodicity etc. creates difficulties when comparing data from different countries. The system of harmonised business tendency surveys by the European Commission (EC) therefore represents useful progress in this field since it makes it possible to compare countries within the European Union (EU).

The development of harmonised business tendency surveys in transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe is a further step in this direction which enables the compilation of data comparable between transition countries and with OECD Member countries located in Europe and European Union. Progress with implementation of harmonised business tendency surveys in Asian/Pacific countries and Latin America and the Caribbean region is underway and will give comparable data with surveys conducted in Europe. Introduction of harmonised business tendency surveys in OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries would represent further progress in establishing comparable data on an international level.

The requirements needed to obtain harmonised business tendency surveys in OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries comparable with the harmonised business tendency surveys in EU Member and Candidate countries cover the following aspects:

- Content (questions or variables included in the questionnaire)
- Definitions and specifications
- Type of variable (form of question);
- Period covered by variable;
- Frequency and;
- Timing of survey
- Classifications;

Implementation of above requirements would give as a result fully harmonised surveys. However a first step in harmonisation is the adoption of a core set of standard questions in the business surveys in OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries to make inter-country comparisons possible. For this purpose the harmonised business tendency and consumer survey in EU Member and Candidate countries is used as reference frame. This would make business tendency survey results comparable across countries on a broad international level.

A standard set of business survey questions would require harmonisation in the following aspects:

- content (questions or variables included in questionnaires);
- type of variable (form of question);
- period covered by variables.

The list of target indicators requested by the OECD for enlargement of OECD database of business tendency surveys in industry will be used as the reference to review the inter-country comparability across OECD Non-EU Member countries and the Big 6 Non OECD Member countries. The questions considered and their information contents are set out in the tables below. It should be noted that the two questions on future and expected business (activity) situation are not included in the harmonised business survey in industry in EU Member countries and only a question on present activity is asked in the construction and retail trade surveys in EU Member countries. However, these questions are included in the retail trade survey in EU Member countries and in national surveys in EU Candidate countries for all sectors as a result of harmonisation efforts by the OECD and EC. In addition, questions on business situation are also included in the harmonised survey industry proposed by the OECD for implementation in regions outside Europe.

Harmonisation of business tendency and consumer surveys

1 Harmonised questions: Business surveys in industry

Question	Variable	Type of Variable/Period Covered
1	Business situation	present situation
2	Business situation	future tendency, (6 months ahead)
3	Production	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)
4	Orders inflow or demand	present tendency (3-4 months ago)
5	Order books, total	present level
6	Order books, export market	present level
7	Stocks of finished goods	present level
8	Rate of capacity utilisation	present rate
9	Employment	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)
10	Selling prices	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)

2 Harmonised questions: Business surveys in construction

Question	Variable	Type of Variable/Period Covered
1	Business (activity) situation	present situation
2	Business (activity)situation	future tendency, (6 months ahead)
3	Demand/orders inflow	future tendency, (3-4 months ago)
4	Employment	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)
5	Selling prices	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)

3 Harmonised questions: Business surveys in retail trade

Question	Variable	Type of Variable/Period Covered
1	Business (activity) situation	present situation
2	Business (activity) situation	future tendency (6 months ahead)
3	Volume of stocks	present level
4	Employment	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)
5	Order intentions or demand	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)

4 Harmonised questions: Business surveys in other services sectors

Question	Variable	Type of Variable/Period Covered
1	Business (activity) situation	present situation
2	Business (activity) situation	future tendency (6 months ahead)
4	Employment	future tendency, (3-4 months ahead)

5 Harmonised questions: Consumer opinions

Question	Variable	Type of Variable/Period Covered
1	Expected inflation	future tendency, (12 months ahead)
2	Expected economic situation	future tendency (12 months ahead)

The general principles, the type of variables (form of questions) and period covered by variables, noted below with reference to the questions listed above should be followed in order to ensure comparability of survey results. Most of these recommendations do not apply to the consumer opinion variables and it should be noted that the reference period for questions concerning future tendency is the next twelve months.

General principles:

- unless otherwise stated, all information should be *qualitative*;
- unless otherwise stated, all questions refer to the *unit being surveyed* and not to the industry or economy as a whole;
- unless otherwise stated, all questions on *present/future changes* should be evaluated on a 3–4 month basis;

Form of questions:

- The exact formulation of the questions may differ from country to country, but the following basic principles concerning the form of the questions should be applied.
- All questions referring to an *assessment of the current situation* should imply a comparison with the normal. The pre-printed answers would be of the form: above normal/normal/below normal

- The question and *present business situation* should however use the following form: good/sufficient/bad.
- All questions referring to an appreciation of past/present and future changes should imply a comparison between the situation at the time of the survey and an earlier or an expected later situation, i.e. the pre-printed answers should be of the form: up/unchanged/down.

Period covered by variables:

The time period covered by the different variables or questions should use the following general principles for questions referring to an appreciation of past/present and future changes.

- Questions concerning *past/present tendency* should compare the previous month or quarter, depending on survey periodicity, against the current month or quarter.
- Questions concerning *future tendency* should compare the next 3 to 4 months or quarter, depending on survey periodicity to the current month or quarter.

The only *exceptions* to these principles should be:

- the question on business situation which should use *the next six months* as the reference period.

2 REVIEW OF CURRENT BUSINESS TENDENCY SURVEYS IN OECD NON-EU MEMBER AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

The review in this section of the main characteristics of the surveys conducted by the different institutions is based on methodological information available at the OECD and papers prepared by country experts for meeting on BTS organised by the OECD for developing countries in Asia and Pacific over the years 1999-2002 in co-operation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the UN Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and meetings for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in co-operation with UN Economic Council for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The review is restricted to surveys in industry and to countries for which information on the content of the surveys are available.

2.1 Frequency and Coverage of Harmonised Core Questions

The first issue to consider when checking current inter-country comparability is that of coverage of a common set of questions or variables. The coverage and frequency of the harmonised set of core questions are set out in Table 1 and 2.

The main aim of the business tendency surveys is to monitor and forecast short-term economic developments. For this reason it is necessary to conduct the surveys regularly with a quarterly or preferably monthly frequency. Among OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries, the surveys are conducted on a quarterly basis in six of the countries and four countries conduct the surveys with a monthly frequency. In the case of Switzerland, the survey is conducted on a monthly basis with an extended coverage each quarter. The situation among the Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries is also in favour of quarterly surveys with four countries while two countries conduct surveys on a monthly basis. This means that less than half the number of countries in both groups conduct surveys with a monthly frequency.

The coverage of the harmonised core questions is quite different across countries and groups of countries. Among OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries the coverage is weak in Mexico and Canada with only four and five of the ten harmonised questions covered. On the other hand a good coverage with nine or eight of the harmonised questions covered is noted in Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland. The coverage among the Big 6 Non-OECD Member countries is more homogenous with six or more of the harmonised questions covered in all countries.

The format of the questions is, however, not considered in above results and the picture may be quite different if this is taken into account. This is the subject of the next section.

**Table 1 Business surveys in industry in OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries
Coverage and frequency of harmonised core questions**

	Frequency standard question	Canada	US	Mexico	Australia	New Zealand	Japan	Korea	Norway	Switzer- land	Turkey
Source	EC	BCS	ISM	BM	ACC	NZIER	BOJ	BOK	SN	KOF	SIS
Business situation: present	M						Q	M			
Business situation: future	M			M	Q	Q	Q	M	Q	Q	
Production: future tendency	M	Q	M		Q	Q		M	Q	M	Q
Orders inflow or demand: tendency	Q	Q	M		Q	Q			Q	M	Q
Quarterly Order books: level	M	Q	M		Q	Q			Q	M	Q
Export order books: level	M		M		Q	Q				M	
Finished goods stocks: level	M	Q	M	M	Q	Q	Q	M	Q	M	Q
Rate of capacity utilization	Q			M	Q		Q		Q	Q	Q
Employment: future tendency	M	Q	M	M	Q	Q	Q	M	Q	Q	Q
Selling prices: future tendency	M				Q	Q	Q	M	Q	Q	Q

BCS	Statistics Canada						BOJ	Bank of Japan
ISM	Institute for Supply Management United States						BOK	Bank of Korea
BM	Bank of Mexico						SN	Statistics Norway
ACC	Australian Chamber of Commerce and WestPac Banking						KOF	KOF/ETH Switzerland
NZIER	New Zealand Institute of Economic Research						SIS	State Institute of Statistics Turkey

**Table 2 Business surveys in industry in Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries
Coverage and frequency of harmonised core questions**

	Frequency standard question	Brazil	China	India	Indonesia	Russia	South Africa
Source	EC	FGV	NBS	NCAER	BI/BPS	CEA	BER
Business situation: present	M		Q		M		Q
Business situation: future	M	Q	Q	Q	M		Q
Production: future tendency	M	Q	Q	Q	M	M	Q
Orders inflow or demand: tendency	Q					M	Q
Order books: level	M	Q	Q	Q	M		
Export order books: level	M	Q			M		
Finished goods stocks: level	M	Q	Q	Q	M	M	
Rate of capacity utilization	Q	Q	Q	Q	M	M	
Employment: future tendency	M	Q	Q	Q	M	M	Q
Selling prices: future tendency	M		Q	Q	M	M	Q

FGV	Fundacao Getulio Vargas Brazil
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics China
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research India
BI/BPS	Bank of Indonesia/Statistics Indonesia
CEA	Centre for Economic Analysis Russia
BER	Bureau for Economic Research South Africa

2.2 Format of Harmonised Core Questions

The format of the questions concerns two main issues, first the basic form of the question which could be level form or change form and second the period covered by the question. The **level form (L)** concerns the following questions and answer modes:

- order books, total and exports (above normal/normal/below normal)
- Stocks of finished goods (above normal/normal/below normal)
- Business present situation (good/satisfactory/bad)

The change form concerns the following questions on appreciation of **past/present changes (T)** and **future changes (F)** with the following answer modes:

- Production, past/present and future (up/same/down)
- Selling prices, future (up/same/down)
- Employment, future (up/same/down)
- Order inflow/demand (up/same/down)
- Business future situation (better/same/worse)

The period covered by change questions is the same for all questions concerning **past/present changes (T1)** and is one month or quarter depending on survey periodicity. For questions concerning **future changes (F3)** the period covered is 3-4 months. The only exception concerns the question on business future situation, which covers the **next 6 months (F6)**.

The questions on **capacity utilisation (R)** is answered in quantitative terms as the per cent rate of utilisation.

The form of the questions including period covered by change questions are set out in Table 3 and 4. These tables shows the format of questions as defined for the harmonised core questions and the format of corresponding questions asked in current surveys in OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries and the Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries. How well individual questions correspond to the harmonised format is examined in the following by country and survey for which information is available.

Canada (Statistics Canada)

The Business Conditions Survey conducted by Statistics Canada covers five of the ten harmonised core questions and all of them use the harmonised format.

United States (ISM)

The survey conducted by the Institute for Supply management (ISM) covers six of the ten harmonised core question, but two of them use a format different from the harmonised format.. The actual ISM format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for the two questions are:

	<i>ISM format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Export order books	Change over 1 month ago (T1)	Normal level (L)
2 Finished goods stocks	Change over 1 month ago (T1)	Normal level (L)

Table 3 Business surveys in industry in OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries
Format of questions in individual countries corresponding to harmonised questions

	Format of standard question	Canada	US	Mexico	Australia	New Zealand	Japan	Korea	Norway	Switzer-land	Turkey
Source	EC	NSO	ISM	CB	ACC	NZIER	BOJ	BOK	SN	KOF	SIS
Survey frequency	M,Q	Q	M	M	Q	Q	Q	M	Q	M,Q	Q
Business situation: present	L						L	L			
Business situation: future	F6			F6	F6***	F6***	FL	F1	F3	F3	
Production: future tendency	F3	F3	T1		F3	F3		F1	F3	F3	F3
Orders inflow or demand: tendency Quarterly	T1/T3	T3	T1		T3	T3			T3	T1	F3
Order books: level	L	L	L		T3*	T3*			L	L	T3
Export order books: level	L		T1*		T3**	T3**			L	L	
Finished goods stocks: level	L	L	T1	L	T3	L	L	L	L	L	T3
Rate of capacity utilization Quarterly	R				L				R	R	R
Employment: future tendency	F3	F3	T1	F6	F3	F3	FL	F1	F3	F3	F3
Selling prices: future tendency	F3			F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3	F3

Table 4 Business surveys in industry in Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries
Format of questions in individual countries corresponding to harmonised questions

	Format of standard question	Brazil	China	India	Indonesia	Russia	South Africa
Source	EC	FGV	NBS	NCAER	BI/BPS	CEA	BER
Survey frequency	M, Q	Q	Q	Q	M	M, Q	Q
Business situation: present	L		L		L		T12
Business situation: future	F6	F6	F3	F6	F6		F12
Production: future tendency	F3	T3	F3	F6	F3	F3	F12
Orders inflow or demand: tendency Quarterly	T1/T3					T3	T12
Order books: level	L	L	L	L*	L		
Export order books: level	L	L			L		
Finished goods stocks: level	L	L	L	L	L	L	
Rate of capacity utilization Quarterly	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Employment: future tendency	F3	T3	F3	F6	F3	F3	F12
Selling prices: future tendency	F3		F3	F6	F3	F3	F12

T1 = Past/ present change compared to 1 month ago
T3 = Past/present change compared to 3-4 months ago
T6 = past/present change compared to 6 months ago
T12 = Past/present change compared to 12 months ago
F1 = Future change for 1 month ahead
F3 = Future change for 3-4 months ahead
F6 = Future change for 6 months ahead
F12 = Future change for 12 months ahead
L = Present level

FL = Future level
R = Present rate
N = Nominal list of alternatives
na = Not available
* New orders
** Export deliveries or sales
*** Business situation in country

In addition, the two questions on production and employment expectations are not asked only questions on current production and employment tendency i.e. past/present change over 1 month ago

Mexico (Bank)

The survey by the Bank of Mexico (BM) covers four of the ten core questions, but one of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual ISM format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for the question is:

	<i>BM format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Employment	Change over 6 month ahead (F6)	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)

Australia (ACC)

The survey by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and WestPac Banking Coirporation (ACC) covers nine of the ten core questions, but four of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual ACC format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for these questions are:

	<i>ACC format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Order books	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)
2 Export order books	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)
3 Finished goods stocks	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)
4 Capacity utilisation	Normal level (L)	Rate (R)

In addition, the two questions on total and export order books refer to new orders and export deliveries respectively. Finely, the question on business situation refers to the situation in the country and not to the enterprise as requested in the harmonised question.

New Zealand (NZIER)

The survey by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) covers eight of the ten core questions, but two of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual NZIER format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for these questions are:

	<i>NZIER format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Order books	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)
2 Export order books	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)

In addition, the two questions on total and export order books refer to new orders and export deliveries respectively. Finely, the question on business situation refers to the situation in the country and not to the enterprise as requested in the harmonised question.

Japan (BOJ)

The survey by the Bank of Japan (BOJ) covers five of the ten core questions, but two of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual BOJ format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for the two questions are:

	<i>BOJ format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Business situation	Future level (FL)	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)
2 Employment	Future level (FL)	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)

Korea (BOK)

The survey by the Bank of Korea (BOK) covers six of the ten core questions, but three of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual BOJ format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for the two questions are:

	<i>BOK format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Business situation	Change over 1 month ahead (F1)	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)
2 Production	Change over 1 month ahead (F1)	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)
3 Employment	Change over 1 month ahead (F1)	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)

Norway (SN)

The survey by Statistics Norway (SN) covers eight of the ten core questions, but one question uses a format different from the harmonised format. The actual ISM format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for this question is:

	<i>SN format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Business situation	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)

Switzerland (KOF)

The survey by the Swiss Institute for Business Cycle Research (KOF) nine of the ten core questions, but one question uses a format different from the harmonised format. The actual ISM format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for this question is:

	<i>SN format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Business situation	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)

Turkey (SIS)

The survey by the State Institute of Statistics (SIS) covers seven of the ten core questions, but two of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual NZIER format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for these questions are:

	<i>NZIER format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Order books	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)
2 Finished goods stocks	Change over 3-4 month ago (T3)	Normal level (L)

In addition, the question on orders inflow/demand tendency is not asked only a question on future orders inflow/demand i.e. change over 3-4 months ahead.

Brazil (FGV)

The survey by the Fundacao Getulio Vargas (FGV) covers seven of the ten core questions, but two of them do not refer to the future situation as specified for the harmonised questions. This concerns the questions on production and employment which are only requested for the present tendency i.e. change over 3-4 months ago.

China (NBS)

The survey by the national Bureau of Statistics (NBS) covers eight of the ten core questions, but one question uses a format different from the harmonised format. The actual ISM format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for this question is:

	<i>SN format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Business situation	Change over 3-4 months ahead (F3)	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)

India (NCAER)

The survey by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) covers seven of the ten core questions, but three of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual NZIER format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for these questions are:

	<i>NZIER format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Production	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)	Change over 3-4 month ahead (F3)
2 Employment	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)	Change over 3-4 month ahead (F3)
3 Selling prices	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)	Change over 3-4 month ahead (F3)

In addition, the question on orders books refer to new orders in the NCAER survey..

Indonesia BI/BPS)

The survey conducted jointly by the Bank of Indonesia and Statistics Indonesia covers nine of the ten harmonised core questions and all of them use the harmonised format.

Russia (CEA)

The survey conducted by the Centre for Economic Analysis in co-operation with the Russian Statistical Agency covers six of the ten harmonised core questions and all of them use the harmonised format.

South Africa (BER)

The survey by the Bureau of Economic Research (BER) covers six of the ten core questions, but all of them use a format different from the harmonised format. The actual NZIER format (indicated in bold in Table 3) and the corresponding harmonised format for these questions are:

	<i>NZIER format</i>	<i>harmonised format</i>
1 Business situation	Change over 12 months ago (T12)	Present level (L)
2 Business situation	Change over 12 months ahead (F12)	Change over 6 months ahead (F6)
3 Production	Change over 12 months ahead (F12)	Change over 3-4 month ahead (F3)
4 Orders inflow	Change over 12 months ago (T12)	Change over 3-4 months ago (T3)
2 Employment	Change over 12 months ahead (F12)	Change over 3-4 month ahead (F3)
3 Selling prices	Change over 12 months ahead (F12)	Change over 3-4 month ahead (F3)

2.3 Summary of inter-country comparability

The current situation, as noted above, concerning format of core questions would imply that inter-country comparison would be possible between certain countries and surveys for the harmonised target questions. An overview of individual country questions which follow the harmonised format is set out in Table 5.

Table 5 Country questions with harmonised format

Harmonised questions	Country/survey with harmonised format			
	OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate Countries		Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries	
		Number of countries		Number of countries
Business situation: present	Japan, Korea,	2	China, Indonesia	2
Business situation: Future	Mexico	1	Brazil, India, Indonesia	3
Production: future tendency	Canada, Australia, New-Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey	6	China, Indonesia, Russia	3
Orders inflow or demand: tendency	Canada, United States, Australia, New-Zealand, Norway, Switzerland	6	Russia	1
Order books: level	Canada, United States, Norway, Switzerland	4	Brazil, China, Indonesia	3
Export order books: level	Switzerland	1	Brazil, Indonesia	2
Finished goods stocks: level	Canada, Mexico, New-Zealand, Japan, Korea, Norway, Switzerland	7	Brazil, China, India, Indonesia	4
Rate of capacity utilization	Norway, Switzerland, Turkey	3	Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia	5
Employment: future tendency	Canada, Australia, New-Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey	6	China, Indonesia, Russia	3
Selling prices: future tendency	Mexico, Australia, New-Zealand, Japan, Korea, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey	8	China, Indonesia, Russia	3

Among OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries, inter-country-comparisons are possible for five questions across six to eight of the ten countries in the group. The question on selling prices is the most standard question (8 countries) followed by finished goods stocks, production expectations, order inflow and employment expectations. On the other hand, the most non-standard

questions relate to export orders and current business situation. The question on future business situation is not asked in any country in this group.

The situation among the Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries is not so good with inter-country comparisons possible for only the two questions on finished goods stocks and capacity utilisation across 4 and 5 countries in this group of six countries. The most non-standard questions relate to orders inflow, current business situation and export orders.

Inter-country comparisons among all 16 countries in above groups are also possible for five questions across more than half the number of countries. The most non-standard questions relate to Current and expected business situation and export order books.

3 REVIEW OF CURRENT CONSUMER SURVEYS IN OECD NON-EU MEMBER AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

The review in this section of the main characteristics of the surveys conducted by the different institutions is based on methodological information available at the OECD. The review is restricted to countries for which information on the content of the surveys are available.

3.1 Frequency, Coverage and Format of Harmonised Core Questions

The frequency and coverage of the two requested harmonised questions on expected inflation and economic situation are set out in Table 6. Among the seven OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries investigated, the surveys are conducted on a monthly basis in five of the countries. The situation among the two Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries investigated is split between monthly and quarterly frequency. This means that a majority of the countries surveys in both groups conduct surveys with a monthly frequency.

The coverage of the harmonised questions is rather homogenous across countries and groups of countries. The question expected inflation (price developments) is cover by six of the seven OECD Non-EU Member and candidate countries and by the two Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries investigated. The question on expected economic situation is covered by surveys in all countries in both groups.

The form of the questions including period covered by the change questions are also set out in Table 6 which shows the format of questions as defined for the harmonised core questions and the format of corresponding asked in current surveys in OECD Non-EU Member and candidate countries and the Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries investigated in this section.

The format of the two questions across the investigated countries corresponds to the harmonised format for all countries with exception of Japan and Korea. This means that inter country comparisons are possible across seven countries regarding the question on expected inflation and across eight of the ten investigated countries concerning the question on expected economic situation. In Japan and Korea, the period covered by the two change questions is the next 6 month while the period covered is the next 12 months in the harmonised format.

Table 6 Consumer surveys in OECD Non-EU Member and candidate countries and Big 6 OECD Non-Member countries
Format of questions in individual countries corresponding to harmonised questions

	Format of standard question	US	Mexico	Australia	New Zealand	Japan	Korea	Switzerland	China	South Africa
Source	EC	M	INEG	MIAESR	WPMM	ESRI	KNSO	OFQC	NBS	BER
Survey frequency	M	M	M	M	M	Q	M	Q	M	Q
Expected inflation	F12	F12		F12	F12	F6	F6	F12	F12	F12*
Expected economic situation	F12	F12	F12	F12	F12	F6	F6	F12	F12	F12

Table 5 Coverage of harmonised questions and questions with harmonised format

	Number of countries/surveys					
	OECD Non-EU Member and Candidate countries	Big 6 Non-OECD Member countries		TOTAL		
	Coverage of harmonised questions	Questions with harmonised format	Coverage of harmonised questions	Questions with harmonised format	Coverage of harmonised questions	Questions with harmonised format
Business situation: present	2	2	3	2	5	4
Business situation: future	6	0	5	3	11	3
Production: future tendency	9	6	6	3	15	9
Orders inflow or demand: tendency	7	6	2	1	9	7
Order books: level	7	4	4	3	11	7
Export order books: level	4	1	2	2	6	3
Finished goods stocks: level	10	7	5	5	15	12
Rate of capacity utilization	5	3	5	5	10	8
Employment: future tendency	10	6	6	3	16	9
Selling prices: future tendency	8	8	5	3	13	11
TOTAL	68	43	43	30	111	73