

1999 Customer Satisfaction Report

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE continues to be a top priority for the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). In the past year, we've expanded and improved our accounts to reflect changes in the U.S. economy, and we've worked to ensure the timely, cost-effective dissemination of our statistics.

Program improvements.—We strive to provide our customers with an accurate and up-to-date picture of the evolving economy. To meet this challenge, we've made several improvements in our programs in the past year.

- We are working on the 11th comprehensive, or benchmark, revision of the national income and product accounts (NIPA's), which provides us with the opportunity to improve the estimates; for example, rapidly growing business and government expenditures for software will be recognized as investment for the first time. To help users understand the comprehensive revision, BEA is publishing a series of articles that describe the definitional, classificational, statistical, and presentational changes that will be introduced (see the August, September, and subsequent issues of the SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS). The initial results of the comprehensive revision will be released at the end of October 1999.
- In March 1999, BEA published *International Direct Investment: Studies by the Bureau of Economic Analysis*. This publication presents, in one place, BEA's studies on multinational companies, guides to the statistics, and explanations of the methodology used to prepare the estimates.
- In the August 1999 SURVEY, BEA published "Foreign Direct Investment in the United States: Preliminary Results from the 1997 Benchmark Survey." This survey marks the first use by BEA of a new industry classification system that is based on the new North American Industry Classification System. The new classification system better reflects emerging industries, advanced technology industries, and diverse service industries.
- In this year's annual revision of the balance of payments accounts, the structure of the accounts was modified in order to provide a more focused picture of different types of international transactions and to bring the accounts into closer alignment with international guidelines. The U.S. international transactions are now classified into three groups—the current account, the capital account, and the financial account.

Electronic data dissemination.—Our customers have quick access to more data through our expanded Web site at <www.bea.doc.gov>. In addition, our online *Catalog of Products* now provides links to compressed files of all our diskette products so they can be downloaded for free.

Our customers clearly like what they see. Activity on our Web site—measured by the number of pages viewed and the number of files downloaded—is up almost 50 percent from a year ago.

We have also introduced two new CD-ROM's.

- *Gross Product by Industry for the United States and States* presents nominal and real estimates of gross product originating for 1947–97 for the United States and of gross state product for each State for 1977–97.
- *National Income and Product Accounts, 1929–97* presents the complete set of NIPA tables and four summary tables of the most frequently used series.

We also updated two other popular CD-ROM's.

- *Regional Economic Information System (REIS), 1969–97* presents annual estimates of personal income and employment for all counties, metropolitan areas, States, and regions.
- *Fixed Reproducible Tangible Wealth of the United States, 1925–97* presents summary estimates of net stocks, depreciation, investment, and average age and detailed estimates by industry and type of equipment or structure.

Order-processing operation.—You've noticed that our customer service staff has streamlined the ordering process for our products. (The BEA Order Desk can be reached at 1-800-704-0415, outside the U.S. dial 202-606-9666.) In the past year, nearly 70 percent of our customers rated their experience with our Order Desk as excellent, and over 60 percent of our customers received their orders in less than a week.

Access to our staff.—Our staff are ready to assist you. Send your questions or comments by E-mail to webmaster@bea.doc.gov, or talk to one of our specialists ("BEA's Telephone Contacts for Data Users" is available on our Web site or by mail from the Public Information Office). For customer assistance, contact: Public Information Office, BE-53

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