Révision de la méthode macro-économique d'estimation des recettes fiscales

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Abstract

This paper presents the revised forecasting method for federal government tax revenue. The previous methodology, based on work conducted at the end of the eighties, had to be revised for several reasons. Apart from the need of periodical re-estimates, we had to take into account the changes that occurred in national accounting (notably the switchover from ESA79 to ESA95), structural changes in the main tax categories and changes in the transfers of tax revenues and the devolution of taxing powers to other government levels.
We have confined ourselves to the five main tax categories : personal income tax, the final withholding tax on investment income , corporate income tax, VAT and excises duties.

The new methodology has been elaborated for these five categories of taxes, excluding the final withholding tax on investment income. The method is based on a macro-economic approach, in which tax revenue is estimated on the basis of the growth rate or the level of macroeconomic variables for which forecasts are available. For each of the four tax categories the paper presents the conceptual framework, the alternative approaches that were tested and the selection process of the results. We systematically compared the old and new method on the 1990-2003 period and concluded that the estimation errors are lower in the new method are lower than in the previous one.

Personal Income Tax revenue is estimated as a function of the nominal growth of global gross income, including transfer income but excluding financial income of households. Corporate Income Tax revenue is estimated as a function of net operating surplus and long term interest rates. The VAT revenue model is based on the same conceptual framework as the short-term model. This means that VAT revenue is estimated as a function of the macroeconomic proxy of its tax base. The quarterly growth of exports is factored in, since it has a transitory effect on the VAT tax revenue. Excise duties are estimated as a function of the real growth of household's final consumption and of the price of diesel.