

Expenditure Review Report
of the
Business Statistics Directorate
of the
Central Statistics Office

Central Statistics Office
September 2009

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
ASI	Annual Services Inquiry
BERD	Business Expenditure on Research & Development
BMW	Border, Midland and Western
BSDG	Business Statistics Directors Group
BSER	Business Statistics Expenditure Review
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARS	Classifications
CBC	Census of Building and Construction
CBR	Central Business Register
CCI	Chamber of Commerce Ireland
CIP	Census of Industrial Production
CIS	Community Innovation Survey
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRO	Companies Registration Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAST	Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism
DCU	Data Collection Unit
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
DMS	Data Management System
DoT	Department of Transport
ECB	European Central Bank
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EHECS	Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey
EMU	European Monetary Union
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FATS	Foreign Affiliate Trade Statistics
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HICP	Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices
HLGBR	High Level Group on Business Regulation
HLGM	High Level Group on Manufacturing
HPPI	House Purchase Price Index
HTS	Household Travel Survey
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IMDO	Irish Maritime Development Office
ISP	Index of Services Production
ITIC	Irish Tourism Industry Confederation
ITSIP	Information Technology Strategic Implementation Programme
KAU	Kind of Activity Unit
MEETS	Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics

NACE	Nomenclature for classification of economic activity
NCC	National Competitiveness Council
NCT	National Car Test
NDP	National Development Plan
NES	National Employment Survey
NESC	National Economic Social Council
NSB	National Statistics Board
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOH	Owner Occupied Housing
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
PPP	Purchasing Power Parities
PSV	Public Service Vehicle
RAP	Results, Analysis and Publications
R & D	Research & Development
RSI	Retail Sales Index
ROS	Revenue On-Line Service
SBS	Structural Business Statistics
SE	Southern and Eastern
SEI	Sustainable Energy Ireland
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPAR BES	Statistical Potential of Administrative Records – Business & Environmental Statistics
SPAR REV	Statistical Potential of Administrative Records – Revenue Commissioners
SPPI	Services Producer Price Index
SSG	Services Strategy Group
STI	Science, Technology & Innovation
STS	Short Term Statistics
S & T	Science & Technology
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
UBI	Unique Business Identifier
UN	United Nation
WDC	Western Development Commission
WPI	Wholesale Price Index
XBRL	eXtensible Business Reporting Language

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

The Expenditure Review of the Business Statistics Directorate of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) was conducted as part of the general programme of reviews of public expenditure required by Government.

The CSO is mandated under the Statistics Act of 1993 to compile and disseminate official statistical information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State. Towards this end, the CSO statistical work is organised into a number of directorates. Until August 2007 there were three: *Business Statistics*; *Macroeconomic Statistics*; and *Social and Demographic Statistics*. After a reorganisation in September 2007 there are four subject-matter directorates: *Economic Statistics*; *Census of Population*; *Social and Demographic Statistics*; and *Business Statistics*, with two more general directorates: *Statistical Support and Innovation* and *IT and Corporate Services*.

The Business Statistics Directorate had a direct gross expenditure of almost €8.3m in 2007 and a staff of just under 196 full time equivalent persons. The bulk of this expenditure was on wages and salaries. When indirect consumption of central corporate resources is taken into account, expenditure was €16.4m (32% of total CSO €51.2 million budget). The Directorate employed approximately 30% of all core CSO staff.

This is the third expenditure review undertaken by the CSO – the earlier reviews covered the *Macroeconomic Statistics* and the *Social and Demographic Statistics* directorates. The Comptroller and Auditor General also conducted detailed reviews of the 2002 and 2006 Census of Population.

1.2 Review Team and Steering Committee

The work was undertaken by a CSO review team drawn mainly from the Business Statistics Directorate, guided by a steering committee that also had representatives from outside the CSO and from another directorate. The initial membership of the committee was as follows:

Joe Treacy*, Director of Business Statistics (Chairman)
John McCarthy, Department of Finance
David Croughan, IBEC
Paul J. Crowley*, Senior Statistician, Business Statistics
John O'Hagan, Senior Statistician, National Accounts
Ron Twomey*, Corporate Support and Project Office
Richard McMahon*, Statistician, Business Statistics
Kieran Harte*, Corporate Support (Secretary)

* *Member of the review team*

Following the restructuring of the work programmes and directorates in September 2007, Steve MacFeely replaced Joe Treacy as Director of Business Statistics and chairman of the committee.

The steering committee met five times:

- 16 May, 2006
- 1 November, 2006
- 13 December, 2006
- 20 February, 2007
- 25 February, 2008

Thereafter, the report was finalised via written consultation.

1.3 Terms of Reference

In drawing up the terms of reference the Steering Committee had regard to the terms for the other two reviews that had been completed in recent years. The following list was agreed:

1. Identification of the objectives and current demand on the CSO for business statistics; examination of the validity of the demand and its compatibility with the overall strategy for official statistics and mandate of the Office.
2. Statement of the current statistical outputs of the CSO's programme for business statistics.
3. Examination of the extent to which users' requirements are being met; commenting on the *effectiveness* with which they have been addressed, with particular regard to the relevance, reliability, timeliness and accessibility of the statistical outputs.
4. Identification of the mix of staff and other resources required for implementing the programme; commenting on the *cost and efficiency* with which it is undertaken, and if possible, a comparison with the situation in other countries.
5. Examination of the scope for alternative approaches to meeting users' current and likely future demands on a more efficient and/or effective basis, while balancing data collection requirements with the burden on data providers, and taking into account international experience and technological development.
6. Specification of potential future performance indicators that might be used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme for business statistics.
7. The review shall take account of the NSB report on *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises*, which comprehensively reviewed the current requirements for statistics on business.

1.4 Methodology of the Review

During the course of the review, a range of relevant material was prepared or made available by the CSO and discussed by the Steering Committee:

- Briefing material on the organisation of business statistics in the CSO
- Briefing material on the strategic factors impinging on business statistics in the CSO
- Briefing on national and international demands for new business statistics, including emerging EU Regulations
- The National Statistics Board (NSB) *Strategy for Statistics 2003-2008* and its report on *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises* (NSB, 2003)
- The individual departmental reports from the Statistical Potential of Administrative Records Business & Environment Statistics (SPAR BES) project, published by the CSO, *Statistical Potential of Business and Environment Enterprise Data Holdings in Selected Government Departments – Working Report* (CSO, 2006)
- Information on the statistical outputs of the CSO business statistics areas
- Analysis of the resources (staff and other costs) devoted to business statistics
- Comparative information, where available from Eurostat, on compliance with EU statistical regulations regarding business statistics
- Summary results of some Cost-Benefit analysis conducted by Eurostat on Transport and Short-Term Business Statistics
- Some comparative information, to the extent available, on the organisation of business statistics in other EU Member States and on EU developments in relation to response burden
- The conclusions of the NSB's *Survey of CSO Users 2006* (NSB 2007).

Other documents from international organisations etc. were also considered by the CSO review team and the steering committee¹.

Brendan Sheils was commissioned to prepare an independent evaluation of the penultimate draft of the report. This report was received by the CSO in January 2009. As far as is practicable, the findings of the independent evaluator have been taken into account in the final report.

1.5 Report structure

The report is made up of 8 chapters:

Chapter 2 – “Context and Objectives” addresses terms of reference 1 by identifying current demand for business statistics.

Chapter 3 – “Statistical Outputs” addresses terms of reference 2 by summarising the statistical outputs generated by business statistics.

Chapter 4 – “Users’ Requirements” addresses terms of reference 3 by detailing those requirements and assessing how well they are being met.

¹ See References.

Chapter 5 – “Resources” addresses terms of reference 4 by detailing the financial and staff resources required to compile the various statistical outputs.

Chapter 6 – “Scope for Alternate Approaches” deals with terms of reference 5 by examining alternative organisational approaches employed by other NSIs.

Chapter 7 – “Performance indicators” addresses terms of reference 6 by suggesting additional performance indicators that might be used to monitor performance.

Chapter 8 – “Summary and Recommendations” summarises the key points made within the report and makes recommendations on how improvements might be achieved.

Term of reference 7 is addressed in a number of the above chapters and consequently does not require a dedicated chapter.

Chapter 2 – Context and Objectives

2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the objectives of the business statistics directorate and contextualises the environment in which those data are produced. The following headings will be dealt with:

2.2 Strategic and Policy Context

2.3 Organisational Context

2.4 Demand Context

2.5 Objectives of Business Directorate

2.2 Strategic and Policy Context

The CSO was established in 1949 as the national statistics agency. Since then the office has pursued the same basic mandate, as set out in the Statistics Act, 1993:

The collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State.

The CSO mission statement repeats the mandate of providing statistical information, while emphasising a number of key points: efficiency, timeliness and quality. Above all, the mission statement recognises the need to be responsive to change.

Statistics for a modern Ireland
*The efficient and timely provision of high quality
information for a changing society*

The CSO is committed to producing independent, accurate and relevant statistics in a cost-effective manner to meet the information requirements of all customers (i.e. government, business, EU, other international organisations, media, researchers and the public generally) in a changing economic and social environment. Underpinning these commitments is a philosophy, culture and business sense based on a number of fundamental values: statistical professionalism; independence and integrity; excellent service to our customers; respect and understanding for data suppliers; and value for money.

The following five high-level goals are articulated in the *Statement of Strategy 2008 – 2010* (CSO, 2008f) and underpin statistical and organisational support programmes. They encapsulate our fundamental objectives, in terms of *what* the CSO intends to do over the lifetime of the strategy, *how* CSO plans to do it and *why*.

- *Improvement in the scope, quality and timeliness of our statistics*
- *Minimising the burden on survey respondents*
- *Increasing the use of administrative data for statistical purposes*

- *Achieving greater efficiencies using best practices*
- *Raising public awareness and use of statistics.*

The five goals reflect the National Statistics Board's (NSB), thinking on the development of the Irish statistical system, in the *Strategy for Statistics 2003-2008*. The board's strategy set out a new vision for the development of official statistics in Ireland. It promoted a "whole system" approach to support evidence-based policy-making, with a strong emphasis on the need to harness the potential of administrative records as a source of statistics. The Government agreed that the CSO should play a strong central coordinating role in providing guidance for the entire public system on professional statistical matters.

The CSO's strategy for business statistics reflects the goals listed above and views them as necessary if the range of anticipated demands are to be met. Reconciling new statistical demands with the need to minimise burden poses a significant challenge for the CSO. In autumn 2007, the CSO began a new business statistics integration programme, supported by a new management structure. This is designed to better integrate data from business surveys, to make greater use of administrative data and to involve support areas in innovative projects which contribute to meeting our high-level goals relating to statistical outputs and response burden. An important task will be to minimise overlap between business surveys and reduce questionnaire length and complexity. The CSO is also examining the potential for using administrative data sources to supplement the data collected in business surveys. The potential to make it easier to respond to surveys by incorporating statistical reporting modules into accountancy software products (along the lines adopted for the EHECS survey) is currently being examined.

The CSO is actively promoting a co-ordinated statistical infrastructure across the public sector, in line with the NSB strategy for statistics. The NSB's report on *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises* identified the adoption of a unique business identifier across public sector agencies as a key feature of a co-ordinated statistical infrastructure. This has the potential to reduce data demands on business and to allow richer statistical analysis of existing data holdings. The achievement of this objective depends on the involvement of other Departments and Agencies.

Central to the development of all business statistics is a comprehensive and accurate register of businesses. In recent years, the CSO has improved the coverage and quality of its Central Business Register, making greater use of Revenue data and conducting regular surveys of new businesses. These improvements provide a better basis for surveys of business and for co-ordination between surveys. They will also help the CSO to publish more detailed annual statistics on business demography.

The use of administrative data sources, to complement or replace statistical surveys, is being examined across several statistical domains. Between now and 2010 a number of new series will be introduced, using existing data as the primary data source e.g. airport-airport routes data, port-freight traffic, car registrations and house purchase price indices. An EU Regulation requiring a Census of Agriculture in 2010 is currently being finalised. The statistical potential of Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (DAFF) registers will be evaluated in advance of this census and the existing system of farm surveys will be re-designed to optimise the utilisation of available administrative registers. The potential of providing rural development and

sustainability indicators from existing survey and administrative data sources will also be examined.

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for business statistics during the 2008 – 2010 strategy are:

- Establish a Response Burden Barometer, published on the CSO website, demonstrating the burden imposed on business by CSO surveys.
- Compile a number of new price indices, including new house purchase price and house building cost indices and producer price indices for business services.
- Launch revised economic activity classification NACE Rev.2 across all relevant business surveys for reference year 2008 and back-cast data sufficient for time-series analysis.
- Dissemination of enterprise demography statistics during 2008 and participation in the EuroGroups Register project from 2008 onwards.
- Expand coverage of annual construction and manufacturing business surveys to include all enterprise size classes, down to and including sole traders.

2.2.1 NSB Recommendations

The 2005 NSB report on *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises* is the result of work conducted by CSO teams in relation to data needs and sources in eight government departments and their agencies. The report sets out a wide range of recommendations of new data requirements and on strategic issues relating to business statistics. It has formed a very important building block for this expenditure review, as it has identified priority data needs and has made important strategic recommendations to deal with issues of efficiency, effectiveness and respondent burden.

A key strategic issue is the introduction of a Unique Business Identifier (UBI) and registration system, with a centrally managed business register. The recommendations on this point offer the potential for the State to interact more efficiently with the business sector, as well as offering enormous statistical benefits. The implementation of these recommendations will require commitment and co-ordination between several government departments and agencies. The report recommended that an inter-departmental group be established to pursue this. The Government decided at the end of 2006 that the group would be chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) and that it should report on feasibility during 2007. This group met for the first time in June 2007 and has not yet reported.

The 2005 NSB report also made a number of other priority recommendations, grouped into five areas;

- a) Construction;
- b) Transport and Travel;
- c) Energy;
- d) Environment and regional indicators; and
- e) Research & Development and Innovation.

a) Construction

Of the four recommendations with regard to construction, particular emphasis was placed on developing additional statistics on housing completions and on house prices as soon as possible.

b) Transport and Travel

The Board recognised that transport has a crucial position in relation to the performance of the economy and also has a major social, energy and environmental impact. Recommendation 5 called for the setting-up of a broad based National Travel Survey covering all modes of personal travel, even though it would be expensive. The Board also recommended that for transport planning purposes regular statistics be compiled linking place of residence to place of work (Recommendation 6).

c) Energy

The Board articulated the need for improved energy statistics and recommended prioritising the development of annual energy balance sheets and the provision of consistent energy prices. They also stated that agreement should be secured to acquire more comprehensive energy data from the main energy utilities (Recommendations 7 to 9).

d) Environment

The Board recommended improvements in the statistics on the environment, in particular with regard to environmental performance and environmental expenditure and the operation of wastewater and solid waste plants. They noted that this work should be done in cooperation with the EPA. They also recommended that the CSO begin compiling an annual regional indicators report (Recommendations 10 to 12).

e) Research & Development and Innovation

Because of the increasing interest in and importance of R&D and innovation statistics, the Board recommended that relevant legal issues should be examined with a view to the possible development of “shared data collections” from enterprises (Recommendation 13). They recommended that Innovation and R&D surveys should be conducted by the CSO facilitating the development of synergies with existing CSO enterprise surveys but noted that the needs of Forfas should be fully met.

2.2.2 European Demands

The European Union (EU) Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) also play a very significant role in shaping the strategic and policy environment in which the CSO operates. They also generate significant demands for business statistics, for example a number of new

regulations have come into force in recent years (see section 2.4). In particular the adoption of the NACE Rev. 2 classification will have significant impacts on the work programmes of industrial, services, construction and wholesale price statistics over the lifetime of this strategy. The EU programme for business statistics is very much grounded in the Lisbon Agenda in relation to international competitiveness.

The factors identified in the Lisbon process as being important to the success of European business include: competitiveness, entrepreneurship, research and development, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), advanced applications of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in business processes and organisations, flexibility of the labour markets and flexibility of the economic system as a whole. Most of these give rise to new statistical data needs. Globalisation of the economy is also creating significant additional needs for statistics and is also changing the conditions for the production of business statistics. The activities of multinational enterprise groups (e.g. outsourcing of activities, foreign direct investment and other forms of foreign engagement) are key elements in this.

The Community Statistical Programme is a continuously rolling programme that sets the statistical agenda in discrete 5-year programmes. The 2008-2012 programme sets out the following agenda for Business Statistics:

- 1) The further development of transport statistics including the development of modal split indicators for passenger transport and estimates of total road vehicle-KMs (including non-national freight);
- 2) The coverage of the structural surveys on earnings and labour costs shall be extended to cover the whole economy;
- 3) The implementation of the 2008 Labour Cost Survey and the 2010 Structure of Earnings Survey;
- 4) The implementation of the Council Regulation on the structure and activity of foreign affiliates;
- 5) Surveys on Innovation Statistics (Community Innovation Survey) will be carried out in 2008 and 2010;
- 6) The Commission is proposing that new statistics will be developed to deepen our understanding of globalisation;
- 7) The introduction of the revised EU Activity Classification NACE Rev 2 in 2009. This will have a significant impact for all business statistics but in particular services statistics;
- 8) Indicators on the information society will be further developed with increased emphasis on ICT investment and ICT adoption;
- 9) Harmonized Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) and indicators for sustainable tourism shall be developed;
- 10) The creation of a legal basis for energy statistics;
- 11) The further development of Science, Technology and Innovation statistics.

These requirements impose additional responsibility and burden on national statistical institutes such as the CSO. They also pose challenges for other organisations in Ireland involved in the production of official statistics.^{2.3}

2.3 Organisational Context

Until August 2007 the Business Statistics Directorate in the CSO was organised into the following divisions:

- Industry & Building (Head of Division: Joe Madden)
- Services (Head of Division: Steve MacFeely)
- Earnings & Employment Costs (Head of Division: Paul M. Crowley)
- Agriculture (Head of Division: Tom McMahon)
- Business Statistics Integration (Head of Division: Paul J. Crowley)

Following a reorganisation of the organisational structure of the office in September 2007, the directorate has four divisions:

- Industry & Building (Head of Division: Joe Madden)
- Services (Head of Division: Richard McMahon)
- Agriculture (Head of Division: Tom McMahon)
- Prices (Head of Division: Paul J. Crowley)

Other changes have been made over the past decade or so in the way some aspects of the CSO's work on business statistics are organised. These followed an organisational performance review that was conducted in the CSO in 1997². The review highlighted a number of areas where the CSO could improve capability and performance. Key recommendations included:

- Improve customer focus;
- Make the dissemination of statistics more user friendly;
- Ensure that IT requirements and systems are business-driven;
- Replace a *Product* approach with a *Process*-led organisation – Specifically Data Collection Units (DCU) and Reports, Analysis, Publications Units (RAP).

A number of initiatives have been undertaken to implement these, and several have involved the business statistics areas. To the outside user, the most obvious improvements will have been the new release and publication formats introduced in 1997 and the subsequent development of cross-cutting thematic reports. Users will also have noted the development of the CSO website and the facility to construct their own tables using PC-AXIS through the “Database Direct” feature. Since 2002 respondents to some of the business surveys can submit their returns electronically through the secure deposit box; and starting in 2008, many respondents to the business employment surveys have been able to compile their returns automatically from their own accounts systems using commercial “off the shelf” payroll software packages. The CSO has also played a central role, along with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) and the Revenue Commissioners in pioneering the use of XBRL³ in Ireland.

² Deloitte & Touche (1997), Review of the Organisational Performance and Capability of the Central Statistics Office.

³ *eXtensible Business Reporting Language* or XBRL is a language designed to describe and transmit financial information. Internationally, XBRL is slowly becoming the standard for transmitting electronic financial statements.

The other major set of changes relates to the replacement of the product approach by the process approach for the internal management of surveys. Under the older vertical product or “stove pipe” approach a single survey (e.g. a short-term earnings survey of manufacturing industry) is managed from start to finish by a dedicated team: they design the form, select the sample, issue and process the forms, aggregate and compile the results, and publish the results as a standalone product. Such specialist surveys, while of good quality, tend to be rather insular in outlook making a holistic view of the economy more difficult. The alternative process-led approach groups together several surveys directed to the same sector, and divides the teams into two broad groups: a data collection unit (DCU), which designs the forms and conducts the surveys, producing in general one or more linked microdata datasets; and a report, analysis and publication unit (RAP), which generates results and analyses across the subject matter domains for the sector.

In the Business Statistics Directorate, some of the surveys of manufacturing industry have been successfully re-grouped in this way since 2001. However, to date business statistics have not been re-organised as a whole and industrial and services activity are still treated as distinct statistical domains. The next step will be to implement a similar, but more wide-ranging approach across the full range of business survey activities, so that the delineation between services and manufacturing is effectively removed. In particular, the compilation phase needs to be re-organised so that releases and publications move more into line with EU regulations and user expectations, and that the structural statistics in particular are made available as a coherent results package covering the a wider range of business sectors. Over the coming years, business statistics will need to develop in such a way that emerging needs (such as R&D, STI⁴, energy, earnings, employment, business demography etc.) can be incorporated and integrated coherently into the wider business statistics system.

2.4 Demand Context

Historically, most business statistics produced by the CSO relating to the industrial sectors, with most users’ needs being served by the short-term indicators such as the Monthly Industrial Production Index and the quarterly Industrial Stocks and Capital Assets in Industry series, and by the structural data from the Census of Industrial Production and ProdCOM. Since the late 1990s more statistics on services have been compiled: long-standing short-term services series such as the monthly Retail Sales Index and quarterly earnings series for some sectors (public sector, some financial sectors) have been supplemented by extending the earnings series to several other services sectors and structural statistics, which used to be limited to retail and wholesale distribution have been much improved by a greatly expanded and improved Annual Services Inquiry. Nevertheless there are still important gaps in the structural data (especially the non-traded services sectors and the financial sectors (pensions⁵, banking, insurance, financial auxiliary services and other financial intermediation) and the short-term indicators for services are far from comprehensive. Important objectives in the coming years include extending the sub-annual series on stocks and capital assets to cover the important services sectors and

⁴ STI – Science, Technology and Innovation

⁵ An issue highlighted in (DoSFA, 2007), Green Paper on Pensions

developing indexes of services production (ISP)⁶ and of services prices. A deflated turnover index for services will make an important contribution to our understanding of how the traded services economy performs by measuring trends in the volume of traded services output. In addition to the generic structural and short-term statistics discussed above, the Business Statistics Directorate is also responsible for the production of more specialised statistics on transport, tourism, price and agriculture statistics. In recent years there have been a growing number of data demands articulated by the Department of Transport⁷ and Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism⁸, along with other organisations such as the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC). For example, the *Freight Transport Report for the Island of Ireland* (InterTrade Ireland/IBEC/CBI, 2007) recommended that:

Recommendation 21: To support the above studies and to provide a sound evidence base on which to make future policy and investment decisions for both jurisdictions, there is a need for a number of improvements to the assembly and publication of statistical data both in Northern Ireland and across the island of Ireland.

Some cross-cutting needs are also emerging, such as data on: energy security (i.e. production, transformation, consumption, storage and trade in energy products), cross-border tourism and transport flows (particularly freight); rural development and sustainability; and passenger mobility.

Much of the demand for business statistics is influenced by EU requirements. In fact, the vast majority of CSO work on business statistics is done to comply with EU legislation. The focus of business statistics is on compliance with the core EU regulations, such as those on structural business statistics (SBS)⁹ or on short-term statistics (STS)¹⁰. Structural business statistics are based primarily on the CSO's major annual business surveys; the Annual Services Inquiry (ASI), the Census of Industrial Production (CIP), the Census of Building and Construction (CBC), ProdCOM and ServCOM. The short-term statistics regulation deals with a wide range of monthly and quarterly business indicators (production, turnover, orders, earnings, employment and prices) across a range of economic sectors.

However, there are many additional EU demands for new and improved business statistics. Internationally these stem from an updated SBS regulation and new regulations on Foreign Affiliate Statistics (FATS)¹¹, Business Registers¹² and Purchasing Power Parities¹³, which all

⁶ See – OECD (2007) *Compilation Manual for an Index of Service Production*

⁷ See – DoT (2008)

⁸ See – Fáilte Ireland (2004)

⁹ Regulation (EC) No. 295/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2008 concerning structural business statistics (recast).

¹⁰ Regulation (EC) No. 1158/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2005 amending Council Regulation (EC) No. 1165/98 of 19 May 1998 concerning short term statistics.

¹¹ Regulation (EC) No 716/2007 of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 June 2007 on Community Statistics on the Structure and Activity of foreign affiliates.

¹² Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 February 2008 establishing a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 2186/93.

came into force in 2008. These new regulations demand new detailed information, particularly on the services sectors, on turnover, enterprise demography, prices and the impacts of globalisation. There are also new legal requirements in force or pending in respect of the continuous vocational training survey, statistics on science, technology and innovation¹⁴, transport statistics, tourism statistics, farm structure survey¹⁵ and producer prices.

Many new regulations regarding the calculation of Harmonized Consumer Prices Indices (HICP) have come into force in recent years (including, most recently, one on temporal coverage¹⁶), or are being considered (including one or more about the treatment of owner occupied housing. Meeting all of these will put pressure on CSO resources.

A new EU energy regulation also came into force on January 1st 2009¹⁷. Between now and 2010 considerable time and effort will also be invested in adopting the updated economic activity classification (NACE Rev 2)¹⁸. This updated classification will have significant implications for the services sectors, as it distinguishes many new service activity categories. Adoption of NACE Rev.2 will also result in many enterprises being reclassified from manufacturing to services (particularly enterprises in ICT related sectors). These reclassifications will have a significant impact on results and may require considerable backcasting or revisions to existing data in order to compile meaningful time series for users. For further discussion of how these and other developments fit into the EU's overall agenda, please see Section 2.3.

Demands have also grown domestically for business statistics and for services statistics in particular. Users in the national accounts and balance of payments divisions of the CSO need many new data series to meet their own national and EU-driven requirements^{19 20}. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and its agencies such as Forfas and Enterprise Ireland, and other organisations or bodies such as the Chambers of Commerce Ireland have expressed a need for additional or improved data. The topics they have proposed for development include: more robust productivity estimates; regional enterprise and cross-border trade; information on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), research and development (R&D) and science and technology (S&T); outsourcing or offshoring; outward direct investment;

¹³ Regulation (EC) No 1445/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 establishing common rules for the provision of basic information on Purchasing Power Parities and for their calculation and dissemination.

¹⁴ Decision No 1608/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2003 concerning the production and development of Community statistics on science and technology

¹⁵ Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88 of 29 February 1988 on the organisation of Community surveys on the structure of agricultural holdings is currently being updated. It is anticipated that a replacement regulation will be enacted in 2009.

¹⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No. 701/2006 of April 2006 Laying down the detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No. 2494/95 as regards the temporal coverage of price collection in the harmonised index of consumer prices.

¹⁷ Regulation (EC) No 1099/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2008 on energy statistics.

¹⁸ Regulation (EC) No 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 establishing the statistical classification of economic activities NACE Revision 2 and amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3037/90

¹⁹ Council Regulation (EC) No. 2223/96 concerning European System of National Accounts (ESA95)

²⁰ Regulation (EC) No. 184/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics concerning Balance of Payments, International Trade in Services and Foreign Direct Investment

impacts of internationalisation or globalisation; enterprise survival rates; the separation of activity within the European Monetary Union (EMU) and non-EMU zones within the EU; and internationally comparable data.

In September 2008 the Services Strategy Group²¹ published its report *Catching the Wave – A Services Strategy for Ireland* (SSG, 2008a). Recommendation 1 of the report states:

Improve the coverage and quality of services statistics, to better inform public policy in the services economy.

Action: Central Statistics Office

Specifically the Group calls for new or more comprehensive statistics on (SSG, 2008b):

1. Real output of services; (i.e. volume of output)
2. Exports and imports of services by Irish and foreign-owned firms separately; Analysis of relationships between services and the rest of the economy;
3. Productivity in services;
4. Employment, wages/salaries, skill levels and occupational roles; and
5. Increased sectoral and regional coverage.

The importance of these statistics from a policy perspective is also highlighted in recent reports such as *The Irish Economy in the Early 21st Century* (NESC, 2008) and *Innovation in Ireland* (DETE, 2008).

2.5 Objectives of Business Statistics

The objective of Business Statistics is to provide relevant timely information on the structure and performance of Irish businesses, while keeping the reporting burden to the minimum level needed to produce high quality results. Historically, comprehensive statistics have been produced for the agricultural and industrial sectors. With the expansion of the services sector in recent years there has been a growing demand for more detailed and sophisticated statistics on services. The need for more comprehensive statistics on earnings across all sectors of the economy has also been identified as a priority area for development.

As noted in sub-section 2.4 there are demands for many new data streams, coming from Eurostat, the statistical office for the European Commission and domestically, from Government departments and agencies. Some of these demands are specified in recent or forthcoming EU statistical regulations, meaning that Ireland (and therefore the CSO) is obliged to provide these data. For example, recently enacted EU regulations on Short Term Statistics (STS), Structural Business Statistics (SBS), Foreign Affiliate Statistics (FATS) and Energy will require a number

²¹ The Services Strategy Group was established by Forfas in July 2007. The group was made up of representatives of industry, academia, government departments and state agencies. Their aim was to develop a comprehensive, forward-looking assessment of how to maximise the returns to Ireland from services.

of additional statistical series. Some of the main new data requirements (and consequently objectives for the CSO) are:

1. Extended coverage of the traded services sectors;
2. Compilation of detailed turnover by product data for business services;
3. A Services Producer Price Index (SPPI);
4. New inquiries on outward Foreign Direct Investment;
5. Business demography;
6. A turnover index for services sectors;
7. Additional EU/non-EU and EMU/non-EMU splits;
8. Compilation of new surveys covering topics like Knowledge management, Demand for services, Factors of business success, Access to finance, Inter-enterprise relations and Indicators of entrepreneurship.

In addition, forthcoming EU regulations on tourism and transport statistics will require a number of new data streams:

1. Information on total vehicle-KMs (including taxis, buses, coaches, national and non-national freight and cars);
2. More detailed tourism expenditure data;
3. Information on tourism same day visits.

Chapter 3 – Statistical Outputs

3.1 Introduction

In addition to national releases and publications a wide range of statistics are also provided to Eurostat, for inclusion in EU reports and in public access databases and websites. The main outputs of the business divisions are set out in this chapter. Some other divisions that are not part of the Business Statistics Directorate play a central role in the day-to-day production and development of business statistics, and also produce some business-related statistics themselves: i.e. Earnings & Employment Costs Division, Business Statistics Integration Division and e-Government & Business Co-ordination Division (responsible for maintaining the Central Business Register and administering office classifications). Some aspects of the work of these divisions are taken into account in the following chapters (for example their relevant statistical outputs are also listed in this chapter) although the divisions themselves are not formally reviewed (and, for example, are not included in the costs tables in Chapter 5).

This chapter summarises the objectives of the statistical outputs of the directorate. The following headings are dealt with:

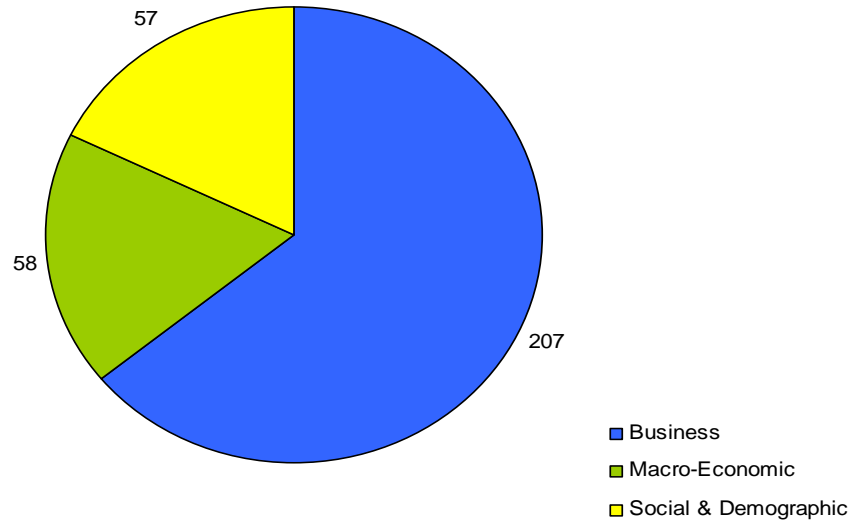
- 3.2 Paper and Electronic Releases
- 3.3 Industry and Building
- 3.4 Services
- 3.5 Agriculture
- 3.6 Prices
- 3.7 Earnings and Employment Costs
- 3.8 Business Statistics Integration
- 3.9 e-Government & Business Co-ordination

3.2 Paper and Electronic Releases

As noted in earlier chapters, while the Business Statistics Directorate includes Industry, Construction, Services, Prices and Agriculture, a number of other divisions in the CSO also compile and report on business statistics. In particular, the Earnings & Employment Costs Division, the Business Statistics Integration Division and the e-Government & Business Co-ordination Division, compile and publish a significant and increasing volume of business statistics. Examples are given in the tables in this chapter.

In 2007, the Business Statistics Directorate proper generated 64% of the regular traditional format paper-based releases and publications disseminated by the CSO. This of course is a simple measure: it gives a single monthly issue of an eight-page Retail Sales Index release, for example, the same weight as a large report such as the annual EU-SILC or National Income and Expenditure reports. Nevertheless it does give an indication of the relative volumes of output.

Figure 3.2.1 – Number of Regular Releases and Publications, 2007



Source: CSO Timeliness Monitor

In addition to the traditional paper-based outputs, which are, of course, also made available for download from the website, more and more datasets are being published exclusively in electronic format via the CSO Database Direct website feature, which allows users to customise the particular combination of statistics they need.

Figure 3.2.2 – Number of Statistical Tables available on Database Direct – May 2008

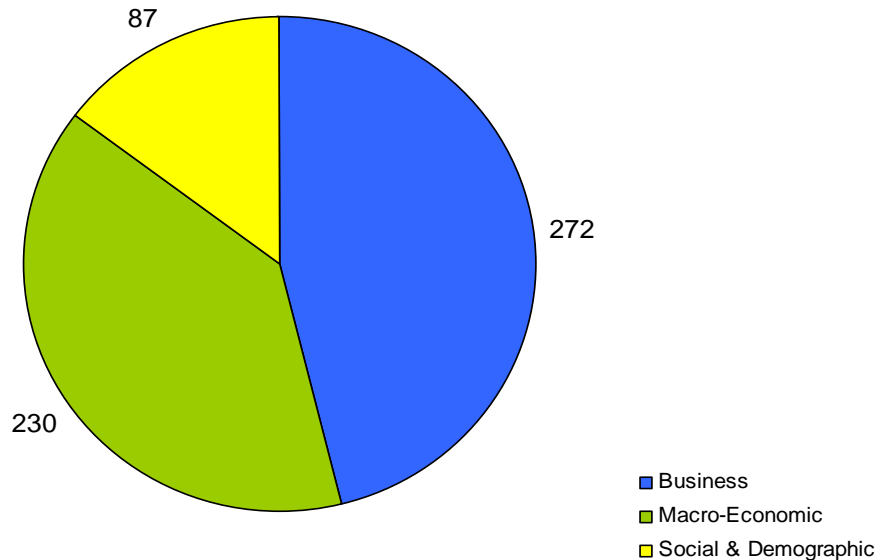
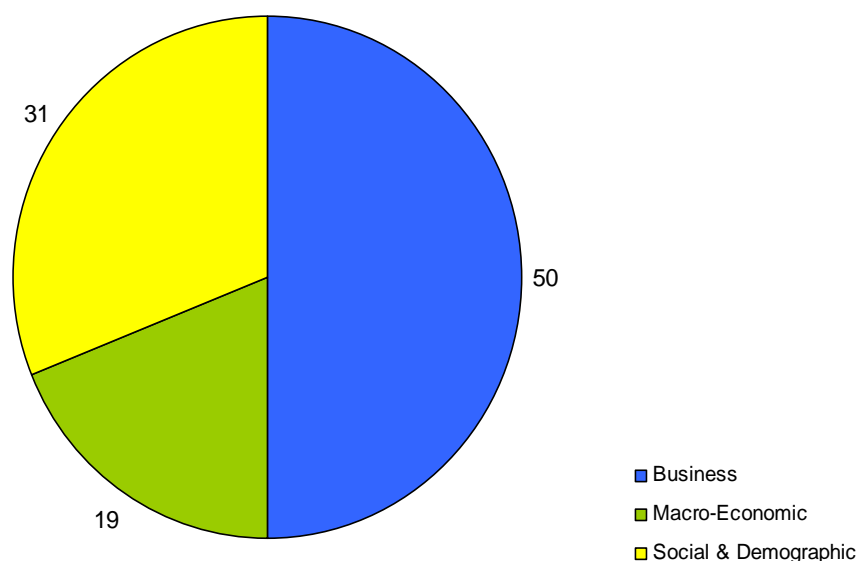


Figure 3.2.3 – Percentage Distribution of Hits²² on Database Direct, Jan – Mar 2007



Source: CSO Database Direct

Many detailed breakdowns that are not published in the national releases are disseminated to Eurostat to comply with a number of EU statistical regulations. Other data is made available via one-off ad-hoc queries, and occasionally access to microdata for specific research purposes is permitted under the 1993 Statistics Act. Business statistics results also feed directly or indirectly into other CSO work, such as thematic reports compiled by the Business Statistics Directorate itself, and the reports produced by Business Statistics Integration, National Accounts and Balance of Payments divisions. CSO business statistics also feed many external statistical and policy reports and analyses produced by international organisations such as Eurostat, ECB, OECD and the UN, and other national organisations ranging from the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), National Economic Social Council (NESC), Forfas, Failte Ireland to the Western Development Commission (WDC).

A detailed description of each CSO business statistics output would be too lengthy for this report. Instead, a summary of the surveys and main paper-based business releases and publications is given in Tables 3.3.1 to 3.6.1. A summary of other business statistics produced outside the Directorate is given in Tables 3.7.1 to 3.9.1

²² Hits on the Database Direct are defined as when a table has been created

3.3 Industry and Building

A large number of surveys and reports are managed from within the Industry and Building Division. Table 3.3.1 summarises the surveys and the statistical outputs directly produced. These data of course also indirectly feed many other CSO outputs and many reports external to CSO.

Table 3.3.1 – Surveys and Reports for Industrial and Building Statistics

Surveys	CSO Outputs (Regular & Thematic)	Periodicity
Census of Industrial Production	Census of Industrial Production	A
	Small Business in Ireland	T
	Information Society Statistics	A
ProdCom	ProdCom	A
Monthly Industrial Production	Industrial Production and Turnover	M
Quarterly Accounts Inquiry	Capital Assets in Industry	Q
	Stocks in Industry	Q
E-Commerce and ICT (All Sectors)	Information Society & Telecommunications	A
	Information Society Statistics - First results	A
Census of Building & Construction	Census of Building & Construction	A
	Construction and Housing in Ireland	T
Earnings & Hours Worked in Construction	Earnings & Hours Worked in Construction	Q
Production in Building & Construction Index	Production in Building & Construction Index	Q
Index of Employment & Construction	Index of Employment & Construction	M
Planning Permissions	Planning Permissions	Q

T: Thematic or cross-cutting report, A: Annual, M: Monthly, Q: Quarterly

3.4 Services

Services Statistics covers a wide range of topics. There are a number of standalone and integrated surveys and reports, summarised in Figure 3.4.1. A considerable amount of development work is underway in this division, such as ServCom (which provides a breakdown of turnover at product level) statistics, Foreign Affiliate activity statistics, developing road vehicle-KMs from administrative sources such as the National Car Test (NCT) and Public Service Vehicle (PSV) files and new short term indicators for services, such as a monthly turnover indices and quarterly estimates for capital acquisitions and disposals. This reflects the development of the services economy in Ireland and internationally.

Table 3.4.1 – Surveys and Reports for Services Statistics

Surveys	CSO Outputs (Regular & Thematic)	Periodicity
Annual Services Inquiry	Annual Services Inquiry	A
	Family Business	one off
	Small Business in Ireland	T
	Information Society Statistics	A
ServCom	<i>ServCom - in development</i>	A
Retail Sales Index	Retail Sales Index	M
Foreign Affiliate Activity	<i>Foreign Affiliate Activity Statistics - in development</i>	A
Trading Day Pattern Survey	Retail Sales Index	M
	<i>Retail Trading Day Patterns - in development</i>	5 years
Retail Turnover x Product	Retail Sales Index	M
	<i>Retail Turnover by Product - in development</i>	5 years
Quarterly Services Inquiry	Earnings in Distribution and Services	Q
	<i>Capital Assets in Services - in development</i>	Q
	<i>Stocks in Distributive Trades - in development</i>	Q
International Sourcing (All Sectors)	International Sourcing	one off
Road Freight Survey	Road Freight Survey	A
	Transport	A
Maritime Port Traffic	Maritime Port Traffic	A
	Transport	A
Aviation	Transport	A
Rail	Transport	A
Vehicle Licensing and Registrations	Vehicle Licensing & Registrations	M
	Transport	A
Household Travel Survey	Household Travel Survey	Q
	Domestic Tourism in Ireland	T
	Tourism Trends	T
Passenger Card Inquiry	Tourism and Travel	Q
	Tourism Trends	T
Country of Residence Survey	Tourism and Travel	Q
	Outbound Travel	T
	Airport-Pairings Database	M
	Tourism Trends	T

T: Thematic or cross cutting report

3.5 Agriculture

The Agricultural Statistics Division is one of the longest established and most comprehensive in the CSO, reflecting the historical importance of agriculture to Ireland's economy. As the relative importance of the sector has declined, the CSO has been steadily reducing the resources devoted to it. Nevertheless, significant resources are devoted to meeting the continuing elaborate statistical requirements of the EU regulations. In addition, the division is continuing to evolve,; it is developing new outputs, such as the new *Aggregate Estimates of the Income of Agricultural Households in Ireland* (CSO, 2008c) report, and is undertaking new work on rural development indicators.

Table 3.5.1 – Surveys and Reports for Agricultural Statistics

Surveys	CSO Outputs (Regular & Thematic)	Periodicity
June Crop and Livestock Survey	Census of Agriculture	10 years
	Farm Structure Survey	2-3 years
	June Crop and Livestock Survey Results	A
	Area Yield and Production of Crops	A
	Agricultural Labour Input	A
	Cereals Supply Balance	A
December Livestock Survey	December Livestock Survey Results	A
	Size of Herd	2-3 years
Pig Survey	Pig Survey Results	6 monthly
Combination of output and input price surveys, Dept. of Agriculture admin. data and other CSO surveys	Agricultural Price Indices	M
	Annual Agricultural Price Indices	A
Livestock Slaughtering	Livestock Slaughtering	M
	Meat Supply Balance	A
Milk Statistics	Milk Statistics	M
	Milk and Milk Products Supply Balance	A
Earnings of Agricultural Workers	Earnings of Agricultural Workers	Discontinued
Combination of Admin. data, industry sources, non-agricultural CSO surveys and all surveys listed above.	Output, Input and Income in Agriculture (Advance)	A
	Output, Input and Income in Agriculture (Preliminary)	A
	Output, Input and Income in Agriculture (Final)	A
Combination of Administrative Data, Industry Sources, non-agricultural CSO surveys and all surveys listed above.	Regional Accounts for Agriculture	A
	Income of Agricultural Household Survey	5 years
Household Budget Survey	Income of Agricultural Household Survey	5 years
Fishery Statistics (Admin. Data)	Fishery Statistics	2 years
Agricultural Land Sales (Admin. Data)	<i>Agricultural Land Sales - in development</i>	Q
Combination of Admin. data, industry sources, non-agricultural CSO surveys and all surveys listed above.	<i>Rural Indicators - in development</i>	A

3.6 Prices

Prices is a relatively new division, established in 2007 to bring most of the price statistics work of the office into a single unit (the only significant exception is agricultural prices, although some minor activities relating to pricing conducted within National Accounts have also been left outside the division), Figure 3.6.1 highlights that a number of new price series are currently being developed, which in time will make a significant contribution to business and economic statistics.

Although not noted in Figure 3.6.1, some personnel in this division also do work on statistical corporate support that is not related to prices. This includes work on fostering and developing relations with other NSIs and international institutions. A current priority is the corporate management of the 2011 conference of the International Statistics Institute, which is being held in Ireland.

Table 3.6.1 - Surveys and Reports for Prices Statistics

Surveys	CSO Outputs (Regular & Thematic)	Periodicity
Consumer Price Index	Consumer Price Index	M
	Detailed Consumer Price Index	M
	Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices	M
	Comparative Prices: Dublin & Elsewhere	6M
	Measuring Ireland's Progress	A
House Price Index	<i>House Price Index - feasibility</i>	M
Wholesale Price Index	Wholesale Price Index	M
Services Price Index	<i>Services Price Index - in development</i>	Q
Purchasing Power Parities	<i>Contributes to International results</i>	A

3.7 Earnings and Employment Costs

The Earnings and Employment Costs Division was established in 2005. It brings together a number of areas of work that had previously been dispersed, and will in time centralise all surveys on earnings and employment that are addressed to employers. The division compiles two enterprise surveys. The annual structural National Employment Survey (NES) collects data on hourly earnings by sector of activity, occupation, educational attainment, age group, length of service, nationality etc. The Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) is a quarterly, short-term indicator series, compiling data on employment, paid hours worked and not worked, earnings, and other labour costs. At present it covers manufacturing industry, public utilities and many branches of services. It is intended to bring the remaining stand-alone sectoral surveys (construction, public sector) into the standardised model.

Table 3.7.1 - Surveys and Reports for Earnings and Employment Statistics

Surveys	CSO - Regular & Thematic Reports	Periodicity
National Employment Survey	National Employment Survey	A
Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey	Earnings and Labour Costs	Q
Public Sector Employment and Earnings Survey	Public Sector Employment and Earnings	Q

3.8 Business Statistics Integration

The Business Statistics Integration division (BSI) was set up in the second half of 2005, to co-ordinate the CSO's implementation of the recommendations in the NSB report on *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises*. Since then, it has begun the publication of a number of new "thematic" or cross-cutting reports, such as the annual *Small Business in Ireland*. It has also taken over the compilation of two joint enterprise surveys with Forfas, on innovation and on R & D.

Table 3.8.1 - Surveys and Reports for Business Statistics Integration

Surveys	CSO - Regular & thematic Reports	Periodicity
Multiple sources	Small Business in Ireland	A
Multiple sources	Information Society and Telecommunications	A
Multiple sources	Construction and Housing in Ireland	2-3 years
Community Innovation Survey (CIS) - Joint survey with Forfas	Community Innovation Survey	2 years
Business Expenditure in Research & Development (BERD) - Joint survey with Forfas	<i>Business Expenditure in R & D - in development</i>	2 years

3.9 e-Government & Business Co-ordination

The e-Government & Business Co-ordination Division is responsible for maintaining the Central Business Register (CBR). In addition to serving as the sampling and grossing frame for all the business surveys, the register will be the source of statistics on Business Demography. Some statistics of this sort will be supplied to Eurostat under an EU Regulation on Structural Business Statistics, and a national publication will also be developed.

Crucially, the CBR is also the platform for managing balanced sampling rotation across all the business surveys, thus playing a central role in managing and measuring respondent burden. Over the coming years the CBR will also be used to develop information on enterprise groups.

The Division is also responsible for the management and development of the CSO's electronic data dissemination and data capture channels (e.g. CSO websites) and the CSO Databank (a comprehensive database of CSO publishable statistics).

Table 3.9.1 - Surveys and Reports for Business Co-ordination Statistics

Surveys	CSO - Regular & Thematic Reports	Periodicity
Combination of output from business surveys and admin. data from Revenue Commissioners	<i>Enterprise Demography - in development</i>	A

Chapter 4 – Users’ Requirements

4.1 Introduction

The business economy is continually evolving and business statistics must too, if they are to remain relevant. Demands have been steadily increasing in recent years for business statistics in general but particularly for more comprehensive data on services. At this point it is somewhat premature to attempt to lay out the full set of demands being made of the CSO in general and of Business Statistics in particular as the policy units of many government departments are preparing their first data statistics strategies, which may contain new and unanticipated data demands. Nevertheless future requirements cannot be ignored when discussing current demands as any changes or developments to processes or systems must take into account both known and anticipated demands.

This chapter summarises internal and external users’ requirements and highlights the challenges these pose in regard to managing response burden. The following headings will be dealt with:

4.2 Measuring the extent to which users’ requirements are being met

4.3 Eurostat Requirements

4.4 Internal users’ Requirements

4.5 Domestic users’ Requirements

4.6 Measuring and Managing Response Burden

4.7 Summary Assessment

4.2 Measuring the extent to which users’ requirements are being met

It is quite difficult to assess objectively the extent to which users’ requirements are being met. Account must be taken of differing demands and priorities. Some users require the highest quality, whereas others need quick indicators and are willing to sacrifice or trade some degree of quality or reliability for timeliness.

The following statistical quality criteria²³ are often used to assess the effectiveness of business statistics outputs:

- ◆ Relevance – in the context of this expenditure review this will be an assessment of whether the most important needs are being addressed within the existing programme
- ◆ Reliability – an assessment of the credibility of the statistical outputs. Reliability might also be viewed as how close preliminary estimates are to final estimates.
- ◆ Timeliness – an assessment of whether stated targets and EU targets have been achieved
- ◆ Accessibility – the extent to which all categories of users can find the statistical outputs in a format and delivery mode of delivery that suits them.

²³ These criteria form part of a wider European Statistical System Code of Practice.

In broad terms, CSO business statistics has three main groups of user (1) internal CSO users, and in particular National Accounts and Balance of Payments (2) Eurostat and (3) other national and international users. Formal frameworks do not exist for assessing the quality of the CSO's output from the perspective of all these types of user. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the performance in respect of our obligations to Eurostat, probably the most extensive and important non-CSO user. The vast majority of the business statistics collected by the CSO, and the definitions and classifications to be used are set out under EU legislation, and Eurostat has set up a formal system of monitoring and evaluating countries' compliance. Although the evaluations do not make allowance for national circumstances or priorities they do provide an independent evaluation of the CSO's performance, a comparison with that of other European member states. Section 4.3 reports some findings from the Eurostat assessments, while sections 4.4 and 4.5 relate to internal CSO and other domestic users respectively.

4.3 Eurostat Requirements

Formal independent assessments are made by Eurostat for many of the outputs from the business statistics directorate, including Short Term Statistics (STS), Structural Business Statistics (SBS), Business Register statistics, ProdCOM, Tourism statistics, Information Society statistics and Transport statistics. For example, under the terms of the SBS and STS legislation, a report must be submitted by the European Commission (Eurostat) to the Parliament of the European Union and the Council on the compliance of European Member States every three years (Eurostat, 2007a and 2008). The practice of submitting "Compliance and Performance" reports to the SBS, STS and Business Statistics Directors Group (BSDG) working groups was recently introduced. As Eurostat is one of the biggest consumers of business statistics, these reports provide a useful indicator as to how well Ireland is meeting the requirements of a major user. For other statistical domains, such as prices or agriculture, no such formal assessments are conducted.

The *Evaluation of Compliance with Legal Acts* (Eurostat, 2007b) and *Compliance 2008* (Eurostat, 2008b) reports submitted to the BSDG in June 2007 and June 2008 give an overall assessment of member states' performance for a number of domains. Table 4.3.1 provides a summary of the most up to date scores for Ireland for some of the main business regulations. Grades awarded by Eurostat range from VG, G, P and N where VG means very good compliance, G is good compliance, P means data is only partly available or deadlines are not respected and N means that a large part of the data are not available.

The reports prepared by Eurostat give an indication of how well Ireland is doing vis-à-vis other EU and EFTA countries with respect to compliance to the regulations. Table 4.3.1 gives a summary of Ireland's relative performance. So for example, Ireland's compliance with the STS is graded G/P overall, placing 22 other European member states ahead in terms of compliance. Not Applicable (-) are exempt countries that do not provide data due to the 1% rule²⁴ or some other longstanding derogation.

²⁴ 1% rule provides a compilation exemption to EU Member States where output for a particular sector, say for example, Distributive trades, contributes less than 1% of the EU total. Over the past number of years, Ireland has crossed all 1% thresholds, resulting in a defacto increase in burden to the CSO and Irish enterprises, as more detailed data must now be provided to Eurostat.

Table 4.3.1 – Eurostat Assessment of Country Performance for Selected Statistical Domains

Country	STS	SBS	Business Register	ProdCOM	Tourism	Information Society	Sea Transport	Road Transport	Rail Transport	Air Transport
BE	P	G	VG	VG	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
BG	P	G	VG	VG	G	VG	VG	G	VG	VG
CZ	VG	P	VG	VG	VG	VG	-	VG	VG	VG
DK	G	G	VG	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
DE	VG	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	G	VG
EE	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	G	VG	VG
IE	G/P	G	VG	P	P	G	VG	VG	VG	VG
EL	VG	P	VG	VG	G/P	P	VG	P	VG	VG
ES	VG	G	VG	VG	G	VG	G	VG	G	VG
FR	VG	VG	VG	VG	G/P	G	G	VG	G	VG
IT	P	G	VG	VG	G	VG	G	N	VG	VG
CY	VG	G	VG	VG	G/P	VG	G	VG	-	VG
LV	G	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
LT	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	G	VG	VG
LU	VG	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	-	G	VG	-
HU	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	-	VG	VG	VG
MT	N	N	P	VG	P	P	VG	N	-	VG
NL	G	G	VG	G	VG	P	VG	G	G	VG
AT	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	-	VG	VG	VG
PL	VG	P	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
PT	P	VG	VG	VG	G/P	VG	VG	VG	G	VG
RO	G	VG	VG	VG	G/P	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
SI	G	P	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
SK	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	-	VG	VG	VG
FI	VG	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG	VG
SE	VG	VG	VG	VG	P	VG	VG	VG	G	VG
UK	VG	VG	VG	G	G	VG	VG	P	G	VG
IS	-	N	-	VG	P	N	G/P	-	-	VG
LI	-	N	VG	-	P	N	-	VG	VG	-
NO	G	G	VG	VG	G/P	VG	VG	G	VG	VG
CH	-	N	VG	-	N	-	-	-	-	VG

While all the reports note significant improvements in Ireland’s data availability and timeliness in recent years they also highlight reservations or problems that Eurostat feel need to be addressed in order to achieve full compliance. For STS, Ireland’s score fell from VG in 2007 to G/P in 2008 as compliance derogations expired. Eurostat noted increasing difficulties with Euro Zone/Non-Euro Zone splits for import prices, gaps for some industrial output prices, lack of working-day-adjusted results and delays in the transmission of turnover and employment data for the services sectors. For SBS, the main difficulties are with lack of results for small enterprises in the industrial and construction sectors. Eurostat also note that Ireland continues to have a number of derogations for both STS and SBS regulations and when these expire, and Ireland may struggle to hold its current grade. For example, the 2007/2008 assessments of the SBS were on the basis of reference year 2004/2005, for which Ireland had full derogations for Annexes 5, 6 and 7 (i.e. Insurance, Credit Institutions and Pensions²⁵) and consequently compliance with these annexes were not taken into account. From reference year 2006, (due to be delivered by June

²⁵ The Report on the Consultation Process for the Green Paper on Pensions has also drawn attention to the data gaps with regard to pensions (DoSFA, 2008)

2008) the derogations will have expired. Ireland has not met these targets and in the case of pensions data is unlikely to meet them before 2010 or 2011 due to infrastructural deficits such as the lack of comprehensive register of pension schemes in Ireland (The Pensions Board are currently developing such a register).

The reports also note a number of other shortcomings, including the following:

- The Business Register does not cater for all of the types of statistical unit that are defined in the regulation (e.g. Kind-of-Activity Units - KAUs). This defect stems from the inadequacy of the administrative sources available in Ireland. Production of new business demography statistics within the deadlines stipulated by the SBS regulation will also present a significant challenge to the CSO. Compilation of ProdCOM results continue to be behind schedule
- Many of the required tourism statistics are not supplied. Many of these difficulties arise due to administrative data deficiencies in Ireland, such as the lack of a comprehensive register of collective accommodation establishments in Ireland.

It should be noted that while Ireland has a VG for Transport statistics not all modes of transport are covered by EU legislation at the moment (such as Bus & Coach, taxi, private road transport and passenger kilometres) and consequently this rating flatters to deceive. Currently there are EU regulations governing aviation, rail, maritime, national road freight and inland waterways. The CSO is very compliant with all mandatory data requirements however for modes of transport not covered by EU regulation, the CSO compiles little or no data. For road freight and maritime statistics Ireland is fully compliant. For aviation and rail statistics the CSO are only partly compliant but the reservations noted by Eurostat are minor in nature and largely arise as these are new legislative requirements that have not bedded down fully yet. For many developing data requirements (which are currently voluntary), such as vehicle-KM, modal split etc. Ireland is completely non-compliant.

For most Price statistic series, and for Agriculture statistics, Eurostat does not compile a formal compliance report, so it is harder to get an independent evaluation of CSO performance. However compliance with the EU-harmonised consumer price index series (HICP) is subject to Eurostat audit. “Compliance Monitoring Visits” are conducted on a country-by-country basis and results are published on the Eurostat website. The compilation of Ireland’s HICP was audited by Eurostat and the ECB in March 2009. The final audit report is expected by November 2009 but on major issues are anticipated.

With demands increasing steadily at both European and National level, it is not clear how well placed the CSO is to meet these emerging additional needs. At a European level new legislation regarding foreign affiliate activity, structural business, demography, economic activity classification and energy have all recently passed into law. Fulfilling these new demands in addition to the existing demands will be very challenging given increasingly constrained resources and the need to significantly reduce respondent burden.

The CSO’s performance in meeting Eurostat needs can be summarised as follows in terms of the four criteria outlined in section 4.2:

- Relevance: while the CSO does provide the “right” data when available (i.e. the data required under EU law) Eurostat have identified and highlighted a number of important data gaps;
- Reliability: Generally speaking CSO business statistics are within the quality parameters specified under EU legislation;
- Timeliness: While acknowledging significant improvements in recent years, Eurostat has drawn attention to a number of series where timeliness needs to be improved to meet best international practice;
- Accessibility: The CSO makes all nationally disseminated results available on the CSO website and provides data in the formats agreed with Eurostat.

4.4 Internal users’ Requirements

As noted above, the heaviest users of business statistics from within the CSO are the macro-economic statistics divisions: National Accounts, Balance of Payments and International Trade. Their use of business statistics ranges from direct use of microdata or aggregated data for inputs into their own estimation procedures, to using business statistics results to validate trends emerging in their own data. In recent years, the requirements to develop an output approach for the national accounts and regional and quarterly accounts have put increasing demands on business statistics both in terms of volume, timeliness and consistency.

The business statistics directorate has responded to these requests by making enhanced use of the improved central business register, which is yielding improvements in the results of the structural and short-term series, by increasing the sample sizes (where necessary) in the structural surveys to allow results to be estimated for more detailed regional breakdown than before (i.e. NUTS 3 instead of NUTS 2) and by comparing the survey results more closely and more regularly with indicators from administrative sources.

4.5 Domestic Users’ Requirements

The CSO’s ability to meet other needs, such as those of other national users, are less straight forward to assess, as they are not always as clearly articulated as EU legislation. However, the NSB’s reports *Survey of CSO Users 2006* and *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises* along with the CSO SPAR report *Statistical Potential of Business and Environment Enterprise Data Holdings in Selected Government Departments* all highlighted gaps in the statistics. Among the gaps in business statistics, important deficiencies were noted in productivity statistics, regional and county level statistics, and statistics on small businesses. The Services Strategy Group and the Chambers of Commerce Ireland have also highlighted these gaps, to which they have added short-term indicators for the services sectors.

In addition to the data gaps already highlighted in sections 2.2 and 2.4 the CSO is also receiving many new requests from Government Departments, ranging from the compilation of Tourism Satellite Accounts, passenger mobility data, information on cross border transport flows and expenditure to thematic reports on services activity in Ireland. The Data Statistics Strategies

currently being prepared by Government Departments are likely to articulate a more concrete set of data requirements than has existed heretofore.

A number of data demands have already emerged nationally. These are a mixture of requests for new data or to improve or expand existing data.

Requests for improved or expanded data

1. Regional breakdowns;
2. Timeliness;
3. Measures of productivity;
4. Sector coverage, both for traded sectors & non-traded sectors;
5. Links between services and manufacturing;
6. Employment and related skills levels.

Request for new data streams

1. Short term services indicators;
2. Business-to-business services price index;
3. Information on secondary and tertiary production activity;
4. Outward foreign direct investment statistics;
5. Dedicated thematic report on Services;
6. Information on “mega-sectors”²⁶;
7. Information on links between employment and transport;
8. Environmental and energy implications on all aspects of agricultural and business activity;
9. Vehicle demography classified by emissions ratings;
10. Cross border tourism and transport data;
11. Inbound (i.e. non national) road freight;
12. Regular transport and passenger mobility, in particular regarding non commuting movements;
13. Environmental and energy implications on all aspects of transport and tourism activity.

Although their official Data Statistics Strategies have not yet been published, the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism, the Department of Transport and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment have all flagged the importance of these data to the CSO. Many of these data gaps were also highlighted by the CSO SPAR-BES reports (CSO, 2006: Chapter 3, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8).

The NSB *Survey of CSO Users 2006* surveyed a wide range of users including State-sponsored bodies, representative bodies and organisations, local administration, media, political, business interests, Government departments, financial bodies and stockbrokers, third level and research

²⁶ Mega Sectors are combinations of existing NACE sectors that are not grouped in adjacent categories in the standard classifications, but that have enough in common to be of analytical interest when combined. An example is a broadly-defined computer sector that includes NACE 2233 and NACE 30 (both are part of Manufacturing) and NACE 72 (Services).

institutions and market research and other consultants. Overall, two thirds of users reported that the level of service had improved in recent years (Table 4.5.1) and appeared to be relatively satisfied with the level of service provided by the CSO (Table 4.5.2).

Table 4.5.1 – Change in level of overall services from CSO, 2006

User category	Level of satisfaction with CSO		
	Improved	Remained the same	Deteriorated
Consultants; Market Research	5	2	0
Third Level; Research	6	4	0
Financial; Stockbrokers	6	3	0
Government Departments	11	10	1
Media; Political; Business	5	2	0
Local Administration	21	11	1
Representative Bodies	13	5	0
State Sponsored Bodies	30	7	0
All	97	44	2

Table 4.5.2 - Overall satisfaction with CSO services by user category, 2006²⁷

User category	Level of satisfaction with CSO		
	2006	2002	Change (1) 2002 - 2006
Consultants; Market Research	3	2.1	-0.9
Third Level; Research	2.3	2.5	0.2
Financial; Stockbrokers	2.7	2.5	-0.2
Government Departments	2.2	2	-0.2
Media; Political; Business	1.9	2.3	0.4
Local Administration	2.3	2.4	0.1
Representative Bodies	2.1	3	0.9
State Sponsored Bodies	2.1	2.1	0
All	2.3	2.4	0.1

(1) A positive figure in this column represents an improvement

Source: NSB Survey of CSO Users 2006

While the NSB report doesn't provide a clear benchmark for business statistics in isolation, it nevertheless provides some clear indications where data could be improved. Some specific shortcomings noted are lack of data on productivity and on small and medium sized enterprises.

²⁷ For Table 4.5.2 a scale of 1 to 7 has been used where 1 denotes "very satisfactory" and 7 denotes "Totally unsatisfactory".

Table 20 (NSB, 2007: page 23) lists the top 10 statistical domains where specific shortcomings were identified, of which five are relevant to business statistics, namely:

- a) Industry;
- b) Regional data;
- c) Services;
- d) Agriculture;
- e) Tourism and Transport.

During 2005, the CSO conducted a series of consultation visits with Government departments as part of the SPAR (Statistical Potential of Administrative records) project. The purpose of this project was to identify data holdings within departments that potentially might be used as a source for official statistics. As part of this process, data needed to support policy formulation and evaluation was also identified. The CSO report *Statistical Potential of Business and Environment Enterprise Data Holdings in Selected Government Departments* discusses the data holdings and needs of each Government department in detail. An expert group chaired by the Chairman of the NSB reviewed all the individual departmental reports and considered other inputs before making a set of recommendations and priorities in the NSB report *Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises*. This report gives a good overview of the data needs and priorities for business statistics identified by the expert group.

A number of the recommendations have been taken up by the CSO since the publication of the NSB report. For example, the CSO and Department of Environment and Local Government are working together to test the feasibility of compiling a House Purchase Price Index (HPPI), based on the administrative data holdings within the Department. This work will also contribute to ongoing developmental work on the treatment of owner-occupied housing (OOH) in the HICP and national CPI. The possibility of compiling a House Construction Price Index (Recommendation 4) is also under consideration but deliberations are only at an early stage.

The CSO and Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) are currently considering how best to develop a number of energy-related statistics. A new EU statistical regulation on Energy statistics has given further momentum and priority to these developments (Recommendation 7). The structural business statistics inquiries have incorporated a new detailed set of questions on energy expenditure. In light of the new Energy regulation, additional questions on energy consumption may also be added unless an alternative source can be found (Recommendation 8).

The CSO has submitted a consultation document on environmental statistics to the NSB for consideration. This was discussed in October 2007 and subsequently presented to the Cross-Departmental Group on Climate Change in April 2008 (Recommendation 10). The CSO are currently awaiting the deliberations of this group.

Recent improvements in making results more user-friendly and accessible have also contributed to meeting users' needs. In addition to improving standard releases and publications, there has been an expansion in the number and range of cross-cutting reports ("thematic reports") that bring together results from different sets of primary statistics. The purpose of these reports is to make data easier to find and contextualise, particularly for non specialist users, and they are

likely to be of interest to national users in particular. Recent examples drawing on business statistics include new reports (which will probably be produced annually in future) on *Small Business in Ireland*; *Information Society and Telecommunications*; *Tourism Trends and Transport*. Once-off reports include *Domestic Tourism in Ireland*, *Family Business in Ireland – Services Sectors* and *International Sourcing – Moving Irish Business Activity Abroad*. The June 2008 report on regional indicators (CSO, 2008d) responds to Recommendation 12 of the NSB report.

The CSO has also begun disseminating large datasets via PC AXIS, allowing users to interrogate detailed data themselves and construct their own tables and graphs on the CSO website. Some of the larger or more detailed datasets are now only published electronically, such as ProdCOM and the Airport-Pairings data.

4.6 Measuring and Managing Response Burden

Any assessment of customer satisfaction would not be complete without considering response burden. Response burden is an issue that the CSO takes very seriously. Sample surveys are carefully designed to reduce overall burden and as far as possible to rotate or share it across enterprises. Particular attention is paid to minimising the burden on small enterprises. Recent developments have refined the CSO's approach to measuring and reducing the burden.

4.6.1 Measuring Burden

In 2004, the CSO started to measure response burden to enterprises from business inquiries, by asking respondents to some of the surveys to report the time it took them to complete the questionnaire. This is the standard approach recommended by Eurostat. In 2004, 2005 and 2006 the Annual Services Inquiry (ASI) and the Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) survey were assessed in this way. The results from the ASI were published in the background notes of the 2004, 2005 and 2006 reports (CSO, 2007a and CSO, 2007b). In 2008 the scope of the project was widened to include most business surveys. The first full report on CSO burden was published in June 2008 (CSO, 2008e).

Tables 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 show the average response burden by NACE section and size class for the ASI in 2005. The results show that this survey imposes a mean burden of 67 minutes on responding enterprises, highest (73 minutes) in Distribution (Section G) and lowest (55 minutes) in Other community, personal and social services (Section O).

Table 4.6.1 – Annual Services Inquiry, 2005: Response Burden (minutes) by NACE Section

NACE Rev. 1.1 Section	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
G	73	50	30	70
H	57	40	30	56
I	63	45	30	59
K	67	45	30	68
O	55	34	30	53
Total	67	45	30	66

ASI 2005

Small enterprises (1 to 9 persons engaged) typically took about 50 minutes to complete the form, compared with 105 minutes for large enterprises (50 or more persons engaged).

Table 4.6.2 – Annual Services Inquiry, 2005: Response Burden (minutes) by Size Class

Persons Engaged	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
01 - 09	50	30	30	48
10 - 19	66	45	30	60
20 - 49	78	60	60	71
50 +	105	60	60	92
Total	67	45	30	66

ASI 2005

To get an estimate of the average burden on all enterprises in the survey population the total burden incurred by the respondent enterprises is averaged over the entire population. On this basis, the average for all enterprises covered was about 9 minutes (about 22 per cent of the population were surveyed and about 12 per cent returned usable returns that reported the burden).

For this type of survey (“Structural Business Survey” in EU terminology), the average burden of 67 minutes per responding enterprise compares quite favourably with other European countries (Eurostat, 2006). For the EU as a whole, the average was 109 minutes per responding enterprise and 6 minutes across the enterprise population. However Eurostat noted that for “small countries” the burden is typically larger: 182 minutes for responding enterprises and 41 minutes across the population. The high value for the population estimate also reflects the high sampling fractions in smaller countries: 22.8 per cent compared with 5.7 per cent for the EU as a whole.

Table 4.6.3 – Response Burden and Sample Size for overall SBS in the EU

	Average time spent by enterprises in the sample	Average time by all enterprises in the population	Sample Size
	minutes	minutes	%
Average (EU)	109	6	6
Small Countries	182	41	23
Ireland	67	9	22

Eurostat & CSO

As noted above, the CSO has now extended this approach to most business surveys. It is hoped that the 2009 report on response burden will include the average time taken to complete most surveys. A few surveys, such as the Road Freight Survey are more difficult to include, as the statistical unit is a vehicle rather than the enterprise itself. The CSO are currently trying to develop a link between vehicles employed by the enterprise and the enterprises themselves so that the overall burden to the enterprise can be assessed.

The 2008 report on response burden indicates the simple volume of burden imposed by each individual survey and the typical aggregate burden being faced by enterprises (in different sectors and size classes) when all CSO business surveys are taken into account. Table 4.5.4 shows, for each size class of business, the percentage of businesses that receive no forms at all, one form, two forms and so on up to twenty or more forms in a year.

Table 4.6.4 –Distribution of All Enterprise Questionnaires by Size Class

Year	% of population receiving n forms						Total
	0 forms	1 form	2-4 forms	5-9 forms	10-19 forms	20 or more forms	
2005							
Less than 20 persons engaged	66.4	27.6	4.7	0.2	1.0	0.0	100.0
20 - 49 persons engaged	29.3	17.3	19.9	18.1	12.6	2.9	100.0
50 or more persons engaged	15.6	12.8	15.3	21.5	25.5	9.3	100.0
ALL employment groups	63.8	26.9	5.5	1.4	2.0	0.4	100.0
2006							
Less than 20 persons engaged	71.7	22.4	4.2	0.5	1.0	0.1	100.0
20 - 49 persons engaged	27.1	19.0	12.2	25.2	7.0	9.4	100.0
50 or more persons engaged	11.6	17.1	11.5	24.2	18.8	16.8	100.0
ALL employment groups	68.7	22.2	4.7	2.0	1.7	0.8	100.0
2007							
Less than 20 persons engaged	61.3	32.3	4.9	0.5	1.0	0.1	100.0
20 - 49 persons engaged	9.1	27.0	20.0	25.7	7.4	10.9	100.0
50 or more persons engaged	3.5	18.6	15.8	24.7	19.8	17.6	100.0
ALL employment groups	58.4	31.8	5.6	1.8	1.6	0.8	100.0

It can be seen that in a given year around 60% of enterprises did not receive any questionnaires from the CSO. On the other hand about 2.5% received ten or more. Efforts in the future will be made to reduce the burden on those.

The measurement of response burden will become increasingly important with the establishment in 2007 of a Cross-Departmental Group tasked with reducing administrative burden to business and in light of the recent decision by Government to adopt a target of a 25% for the reduction in administrative burdens on business arising from domestic regulations (DETE, 2008b).

4.6.2 Managing burden

Respondent burden is an ongoing concern for the CSO and managing it properly remains a key corporate priority (CSO, 2008f). Methods used at present include keeping sample sizes as small as possible, and rotating the samples for small enterprises, in such a way that most of them are exempted from the survey in most cycles.

The European Commission has introduced the MEETS²⁸ project to try to streamline demands for business and trade statistics within the EU. However it must be recognised that an overall reduction in response burden will be very difficult to achieve if the CSO is to comply with the many new EU legislative requirements. This conflict was acknowledged by the ECOFIN committee in 2007 (ECOFIN, 2007: vi):

“Nevertheless, as stressed in the Council conclusions on the reduction of the administrative burden – statistics (published on 28 November 2006), the statistical priorities formulated and monitored in the EFC 2006 Status Report, and reiterated by the 2007 Status Report, may call for new or enhanced statistical surveys and the compilation of statistics that are of vital importance for European policy-making”

4.7 Summary Assessment

Section 4.1 listed four criteria for assessing success in meeting users’ requirements: relevance, reliability, timeliness and accessibility. There have been substantial improvements in *accessibility*, in the form of making the outputs more user-friendly in content and more easily accessible (all CSO outputs that are published on paper can also be found on the website, as well as some series that are not on paper), and users do seem to be making greater use of the online access facilities in particular. Significant steps have also been taken to improve *reliability*: the CSO’s policy is to disseminate results only to a level of breakdown where the data are considered robust and safe to use, and the publication of standard errors for an increasing number

²⁸ Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS)

of series (for example, the Annual Services Inquiry, the monthly Overseas Travel survey and the annual Road Freight Survey) allows users to judge whether the statistics are precise enough for their purpose.

On the other hand, as Table 21 – “General shortcomings of CSO statistics” of the NSB report makes clear, the CSO needs to improve the *timeliness* of the statistics. Finally, there are still some significant gaps in the range of statistics being produced, particularly for services and transport, and thus in the extent to which the *relevance* criterion is being met. The CSO is taking steps to balance this growth in demand with careful management and where possible reduction in respondent burden. Recent initiatives to measure burden will help the CSO to monitor progress in this regard and also provide a useful tool in managing perceived burden.

Chapter 5 – Resources

5.1 Introduction

Examining the main costs incurred by each statistical division and whether best practice methodologies and organisational structures have successfully balanced data quality, response burden and cost to provide overall value for money is a challenging exercise. This chapter outlines the expenditure consumed to produce business statistics and provides some international comparisons where possible. The following headings are presented:

- 5.2 Budget and staffing of the Directorate
- 5.3 Costs incurred by each statistical division
- 5.4 Costs incurred by each statistical survey
- 5.5 International Cost Comparisons
- 5.6 Emerging needs and implications for resources

5.2 Budget and Staffing of the Directorate

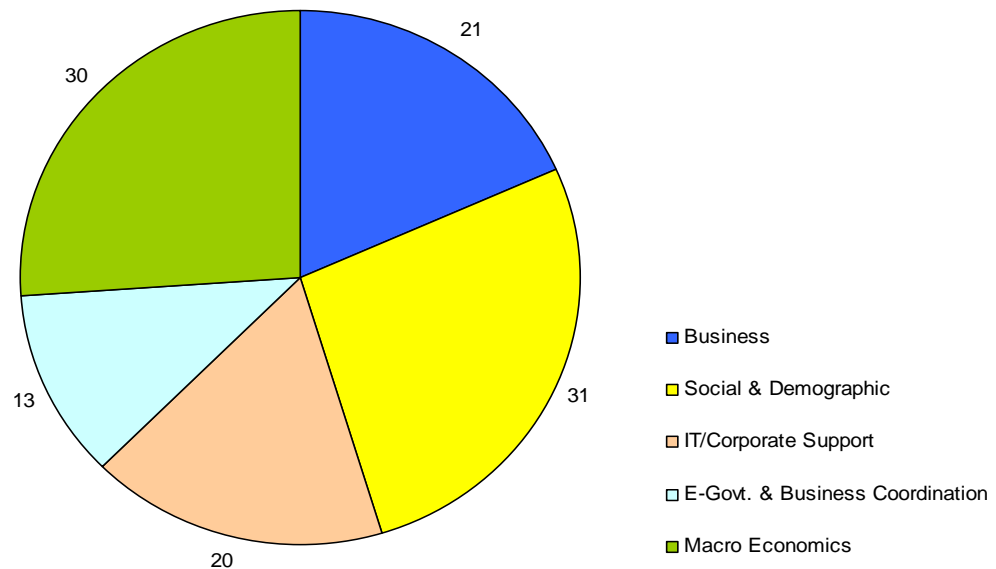
The Business Statistics Directorate had a direct gross expenditure of almost €8.3m in 2007 and a staff of just under 196²⁹ persons. This does not include the €3.6m³⁰ gross expenditure and 66³¹ staff accounted for by the *Central Business Register*, the *Business Integration* and the *Employment & Earnings* divisions. The bulk of the expenditure was on wages and salaries. Some of the expenditure is recouped from EU contracts, mainly in the area of Agriculture statistics. When indirect consumption of central corporate resources is taken into account then expenditure was €16.4m (32% of total CSO €51.2 million budget). The Directorate employed approximately 30% of all core CSO staff, including 18% (21 persons) of all Stat/APs.

²⁹ These are Full Time Equivalent units as of 31st January 2008

³⁰ Gross Expenditure for 2007

³¹ As of 31st January 2008

Figure 5.2 – Sanctioned Stat/AP staff by Domain, 31/01/2008



5.3 Costs incurred by each Statistical Division

Sections 5.3.1 – 5.3.4 analyse the staff numbers and direct staff costs of each division in the directorate in 2007. Other support costs, such as central IT, finance and administration along with consumption of buildings, electricity and heating are not included as they cannot easily be allocated below the Directorate level in any meaningful way. The total costs do not include the costs incurred by the director (salary, expenses and overheads).

A detailed internal accounting system is in place to measure expenditure on a monthly basis. It should be noted however that this system measures expenditure by “work area” rather than by specific survey or statistical output. AP/Stat Work areas or cost centres in the Business Statistics Directorate are typically responsible for processing several surveys simultaneously. In other cases a particular survey may be processed across different AP/Stat cost centres. In general, within the directorate, records of the time allocated by staff to particular surveys within a cost centre or across different cost centres are not maintained.

Table 5.3.1 – Core staff employed directly in Business Statistics, 31/01/2008

Grades	SS	S	AP	HEO	EO	SO	CO	Total
Industry & Building	1	3.6	1	4.5	9.8	2.9	41.8	64.6
Services	1	6.6	0	5	5.7	2.6	47.5	68.4
Agriculture	1	3.5	0	3	4.7	1	13.9	27.1
Prices	1	4.9	0	4	4	1	20.7	35.6
Total	4	18.6	1	16.5	24.2	7.5	123.9	195.7

On the 31/01/2008 the Business Statistics Directorate as it is now composed employed 195.7 persons or just over 30% of the total core staff employed by the CSO on that date. This of course does not include a large number of field-force staff primarily employed by the household surveys but does include a number of small, permanently employed field staff who work as tourist enumerators in the airports or business field force collecting forms from the manufacturing sectors.

Table 5.3.1 and Figure 5.3.1 analyse the staff numbers by division, and Table 5.3.1 further analyses them by grade.

Figure 5.3.1 – Percentage of staff employed directly by Divisions in Business Statistics

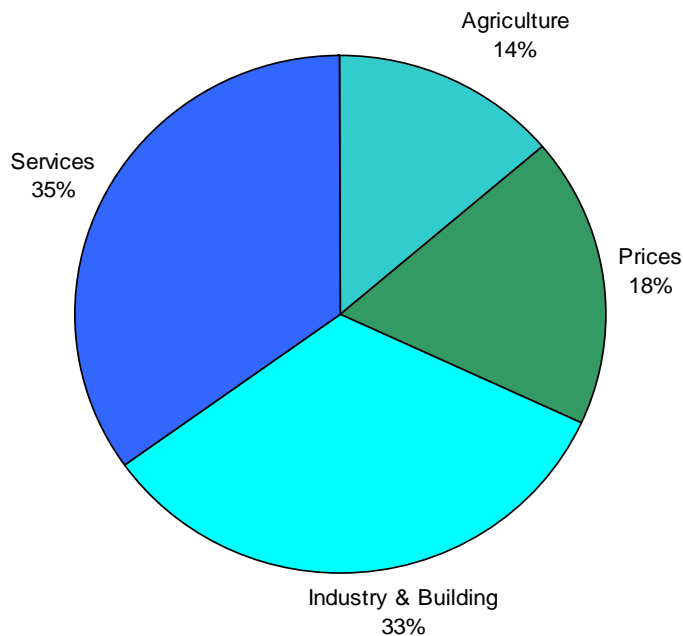


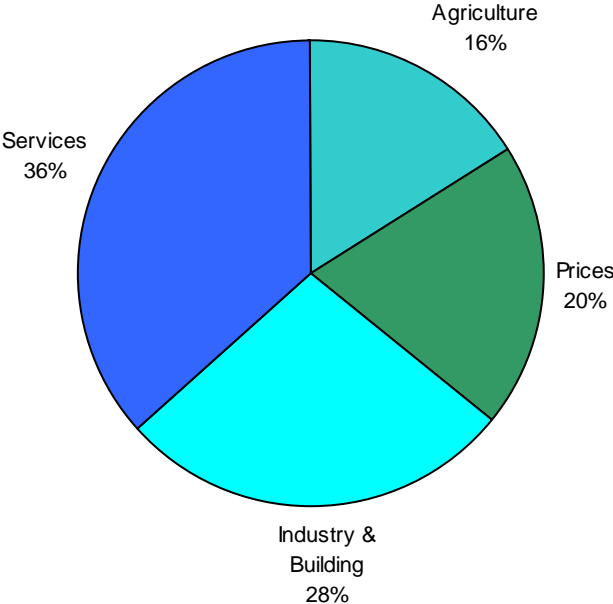
Figure 5.3.1 shows that Agriculture accounts for the lowest share of staff employed within the Directorate. The relative shares are likely to change in the coming years as the Prices Division, which is relatively new and will need to expand in future years as the Services Producer Price Index (SPPI) and the House Purchase Price Index (HPPI) come on stream.

Table 5.3.2 and Figure 5.3.2 analyse the direct costs of the directorate by division, 2007.

Table 5.3.2 – Direct Costs by Division

Division	€ 000's	%
Agriculture	1,339	16
Prices	1,642	20
Industry & Building	2,289	28
Services	3,046	36
Total	8,316	100

Figure 5.3.2 – Percentage of Total Costs by Division



5.3.1 Industrial and Building Statistics

As Table 5.3.2 show, the direct cost of Industrial and Building statistics was €2.3 million in 2007, accounting for 28% of total direct costs on business statistics. The Industry and Building division has a centralised generic Data Collection Unit (DCU) which collects and compiles all the data for short term, structural and enterprise ICT statistics. These data are analysed and published by the Results, Analysis and Publications (RAP) section.

Table 5.3.3 – Direct Costs for Industry and Building Statistics, 2007

	Industry RAP	Industry DCU	Building Field Force	Total 2007
Salaries & Wages	396,206	1,061,860	686,376	2,246,911
Travel and Subsistence	11,661	-554	66,095	77,399
Postal and Telecommunications			3,010	3,030
Other	-669	20		-37,922
Total 2007	407,197	1,061,326	755,481	2,289,418

Note: Total costs include Head of Division costs

Table 5.3.3 clearly highlights the relatively high cost of data collection and field force maintenance compared with data analysis and publication. The Head of Division costs were excluded from the individual business activities, as it is very difficult to distribute their activity across all sections in any meaningful way. Their costs are included in the totals.

5.3.2 Services Statistics

Services statistics cost just over €3 million to produce in 2007 and accounted for 36% of total business statistics spending. Unlike the Industry and Building division, Services continues to collect, compile and disseminate statistics using a more traditional “stove pipe” approach. This is partly because the very fragmented nature of services needs a range of specialist knowledge and specialised approaches.

Table 5.3.4 – Direct Costs for Services Statistics, 2007

Sub Head	Tourism	Retail Sales	Annual Services	Transport	Total 2007
Salaries & Wages	887,664	380,501	687,024	407,812	2,437,041
Travel and Subsistence	15,883	4,878	7,762	5,149	48,905
Postal and Telecommunications	1,916				1,916
Office Machinery & Supplies	14,611				14,611
Office Premises Expenses	8,683				8,683
Collection of Statistics	120,182		408,032		528,214
Other	6,147	354	409	590	6,691
Total 2007	1,055,085	385,732	1,103,227	413,550	3,046,061

Note: Total costs include Head of Division costs

5.3.3 Price Statistics

Prices Division spent €1.6 million in 2007 which accounted for 20% of the total Business Statistics spend (see Table 5.2.2). Most of this expenditure was accounted for by the established surveys like the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Wholesale Prices (WPI), which between them accounted for 96% of the total divisional expenditure. Agriculture price statistics are produced by the agriculture division, and the costs are shown there rather than under prices

Table 5.3.5 - Direct Costs for Prices Statistics, 2007

Sub Head	Consumer Prices	Wholesale Prices	House Prices	Service & PPP Prices	ISI 2011 Project Executive	Total 2007
Salaries & Wages	778,341	490,047	13,110		7,393	1,319,773
Travel and Subsistence	40,153	5,138	1,111	5,196	108	56,604
Collection of Statistics	308,813					308,813
Other	-44,670	1,174				-43,496
Total 2007	1,082,637	496,359	14,221	5,196	7,501	1,641,695

Note: Total costs include Head of Division costs

As noted above the development of new price index series such as the SPPI will require additional resources once they move into production phase.

The ISI 2011 project is not related to price statistics. It is included under price statistics as the Senior Statistician for prices and one of the price statisticians is also responsible for project managing the 2011 International Statistical Institute (ISI) biennial conference in Dublin. Consequently part of the staff costs (excluding head of Division) are allocated to this project.

5.3.4 Agricultural Statistics

As Table 5.3.2 shows, Agricultural statistics cost €1.3 million in 2007 accounting for 16% of total business statistics spending. This is a long-established and well-developed statistical domain, making extensive use of administrative sources and registers held by the Department of Agriculture etc. It has a large-scale census every ten years, resulting in an expenditure spike for a year or two. The next Agricultural Census is scheduled for 2010.

Table 5.3.6 - Direct Costs for Agricultural Statistics, 2007

Sub-Head	Register	Prices	Accounts	Production	Census	Total 2007
Salaries & Wages	292,469	415,391	197,040	88,890	226,336	1,323,357
Travel and Subsistence		3,678	672	1,178	6,292	15,794
Other		220			100	220
Total 2007	292,469	419,289	197,712	90,068	232,728	1,339,472

Note: Total costs include Head of Division costs

5.4 Costs incurred by each Statistical Survey

The CSO's internal costing records allow monthly expenditure reports to be compiled by type of expenditure for each Assistant Principal / Statistician work team. However as noted in section 5.3 it is not a straight forward matter to allocate costs to specific surveys. Nonetheless an attempt has been made to use the CSO accounting system to compare costs between different surveys in the Directorate. The estimates are of course subject to certain assumptions and subjective assessments and the more complex the organisational structure in which a survey is compiled, the greater the need for subjective estimation. This is particularly true for the largest component of the survey cost, the expenditure on wages and salaries, where it was necessary to use survey managers' estimates on the proportion of their staff's time spent on each survey. It should also be noted these estimates make no provision for additional corporate or external activity not directly relating to the survey processing.

Once a cost per survey has been estimated, then the cost per questionnaire processed can be derived using data from the individual survey Respondent Management Systems. Table 5.4.1 gives the results for 2005. Because this exercise requires combining financial data and survey management data, reference year 2005 has been used. At the time of writing many of the structural surveys for reference year 2006 were still being compiled and the survey management data were not yet finalised.

An estimate of the cost per question is more difficult, as many surveys use customised questionnaires, tailored to particular economic sectors or size classes of enterprise. As noted in section 5.3 other support costs, such as central IT, finance and administration along with consumption of buildings, electricity and heating are not included as they cannot easily be allocated below the Directorate level in any meaningful way. The total costs do not include the costs incurred by the director (salary, expenses and overheads).

Table 5.4.1 – Costs of selected statistical outputs, 2005

	Total Cost €	Cost per completed questionnaire processed €
Prices		
Consumer Price Index	1,300,353	n/a
Wholesale Price Index	551,183	61
Services		
Annual Services Inquiry	1,028,710	103
Retail Sales Inquiry	378,208	21
Passenger Card Inquiry	546,611	2
Household Travel Survey	477,148	16
Country of Residence Survey	262,309	17*
Road Freight Transport Survey	420,516	35
Industry & Building		
Monthly Production Inquiry	718,268	46
Census of Industrial Production	589,359	140
ProdCOM Inquiry	325,121	112
Quarterly Survey of Construction	216,816	43
Census of Building & Construction	102,053	146
Employment in Construction	97,922	14
Planning Permissions	113,640	n/a
Earnings & Hours Worked	127,932	80
e-Commerce & ICT Usage survey	245,731	77
Agriculture		
December Livestock Survey	198,527	9
Farm Structures Survey	-44,191	14

* Not comparable

Table 5.4.1 highlights the high cost of producing structural business statistics compared with short term statistics.

The relatively high cost per completed questionnaire of the three structural surveys reflects the high number of reminders, telephone follow-ups and field force that are needed for such complex business surveys

Some of the specific cost features of individual surveys and groups of surveys are described in sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.4.

5.4.1 Industry and Building Surveys

Table 5.4.1 shows that Industry and Building statistics are compiled from a number of separate surveys. Reference has already been made to the relatively high cost per completed questionnaire of the annual structural surveys.

Data collection is clearly the most expensive aspect of compiling most statistics based on surveys, especially those based on the large annual surveys, such as the Census of Industrial Production (CIP) or the Census of Building and Construction (CBC). To illustrate this point, Table 5.4.2 breaks down the CIP costs into the two functional teams, the Data Collection Unit (DCU) and the Results, Analysis and Publication unit (RAP).

Table 5.4.2 – CIP, costs broken down by Collection and Analysis functions

	DCU	RAP	Total
	€	€	€
Salaries, Wages & Allowances	293,430	118,110	411,540
Travel & Subsistence	843	1,967	2,810
Incidental Expenses	12,673	3,168	15,841
Postal & Telecommunications Services	8,191	349	8,540
Office Machinery & Other Office Supplies	25,257	6,314	31,571
Office Premises Expenses	20,752	5,188	25,940
Collection of Statistics	56,832	0	56,832
Appropriation-in-Aid	0	0	0
IT Systems Support	29,027	7,257	36,284
Total	447,005	142,354	589,359

About three quarters of the cost is incurred in data collection. Although such an analysis would be more difficult for the Annual Services Inquiry (ASI), (since the ASI team is not formally organised into functional units in this way), the distribution of costs is broadly similar.

In addition to normal collection and processing costs, further costs arise, particularly in respect of individual large industrial multi-national enterprises, in ensuring that the CIP returns are consistent with returns filed in other CSO surveys (for example the Balance of Payments surveys) or administrative returns such as the trade statistics and other returns to the Revenue Commissioners, CRO filings etc. This work also involves staff from the other divisions of the office, and it is not possible to allocate these in any formal way at present.

5.4.2 Services Surveys

As with the industrial surveys and for the same reasons (longer and more complex questionnaire, necessity for a high response rate) the annual structural surveys for services have a much higher cost per survey return than the short term indicators such as the Retail Sales Index.

Care should be taken interpreting the costs associated with the Country of Residence Survey, as the cost per questionnaire is not really comparable with the other surveys. For this survey, approximately one fifth of passengers on a sampled flight (or sailing) are interviewed in person at the port of entry (or departure) using a rather simple questionnaire. The cost per survey reported in table 5.3.1 (€17) refers to the cost per flight/sailing. Since about 600,000 passengers are interviewed per year, the cost per passenger is about €0.45.

The costs per survey or per respondent in the Services Division reported above overstate the true average. This is because several new surveys and statistical outputs that have been introduced in recent years, and that have been funded from the existing resources in the division, have not yet been included in the analysis, as it is too early to estimate their full steady-state costs. Examples are aviation and rail transport statistics, the international sourcing survey, the ServCOM survey³² and the outward foreign direct investment survey and the monthly index of turnover for the services sectors.

5.4.3 Price Surveys

The Prices Division is also developing rapidly. As with Services Division, some new or developing projects have not been included in the analysis. Examples are the house purchase price index and the services price index. It is virtually impossible to compare the Consumer Price Index with other surveys on a cost per questionnaire basis. The CPI collects over 53,000 prices per month, of which some (mainly goods) are collected directly by personal recording by a field officer in shops around the country, whereas many others, especially those for many specialised services, are obtained from postal (or email) questionnaires to service providers, and some are even collected from accessing printed or website price lists. As can be seen from Appendix 1, the operation of 200 price field officers makes the collection of consumer prices expensive (reported under the item “Collection of Statistics”). However the cost is justified by the necessity to ensure the high quality of the price observations for this very important index that can only be ensured by personal and independent verification of the recording.

5.4.4 Agriculture Surveys

The Agriculture Division makes extensive use of administrative data. Consequently, for this analysis costs have been estimated only for the two surveys that involve traditional-style data collection from respondents. For the other statistical outputs of the division, it is not meaningful to relate the costs to the number of entities covered in the results.

³² ServCOM is a survey of activity at commodity or product level.

The CSO carries out a Farm Structure Survey (FSS) every two to three years in compliance with EU legislation. Usually this is a sample survey (as in 2003, 2005 and 2007, but a full census is required for 2010, reverting to sample surveys in 2013 and 2016. These activities have been heavily funded by the EU in the past, but the amount has been reduced for the recent surveys (from €1.08m for the 2003 survey to around €0.64m for 2005³³) and to an expected €0.49m for 2007

The EU will pay no more than €1 million for the 2010 Census of Agriculture, and probably no more than €0.37 million (at 2007 prices) for each of the 2013 and 2016 surveys.

5.5 International Cost Comparisons

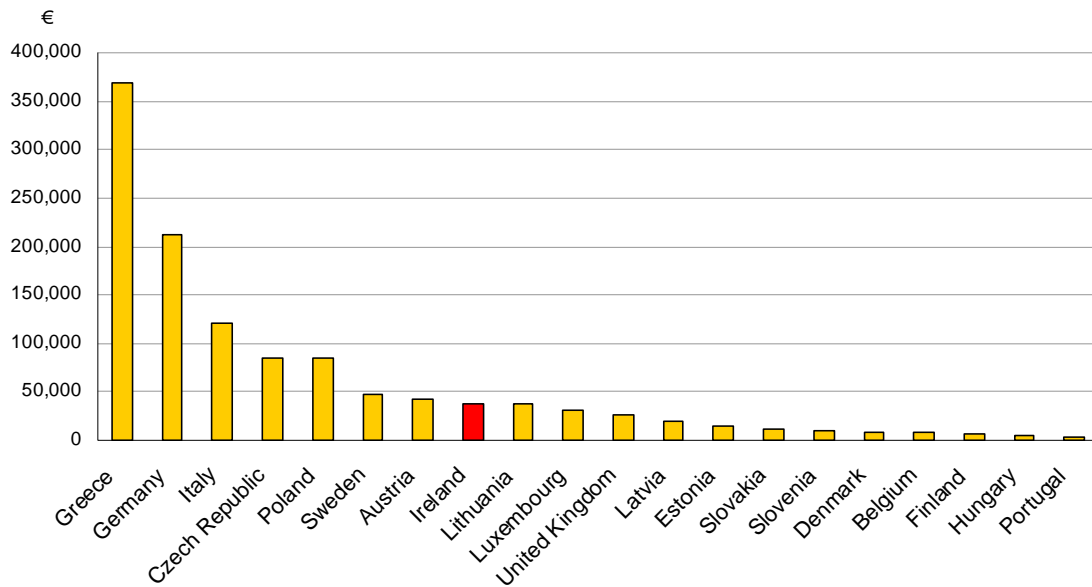
Cost comparisons with other countries, particularly other EU member states subject to the same EU legislation, should ideally provide comparative metrics on performance. However international comparative studies are fraught with difficulties and such comparisons have not been very instructive. Differing economy and market sizes, sectoral dominance, degree of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), spatial or geographic distribution, physical and statistical infrastructure (i.e. postal or spatial codes, unique business identifiers or availability of registers or other administrative data for statistical purposes) all influence how statistics are compiled. Other issues such as differing institutional arrangements for statistics, economies of scale, variations in population densities and wage levels also add to the difficulties in interpreting international comparisons. The same factors also influence the relative cost of collecting data. Notwithstanding these difficulties, an attempt is made in this section to make some tentative comparisons of the cost of the main components of business statistics in Ireland compared with a number of other countries.

For the reasons noted above very few international comparisons are available. However, in recent years the European Commission has become increasingly interested in conducting cost-benefit analyses on new statistics compiled under EU legislation. Some analysis was done in 2006 and 2007 (Eurostat, 2006b, 2007e) for the new Rail and Aviation transport statistics and for the Short Term Statistics (STS). In a subsequent review of the methodological framework for cost-benefit analysis, Eurostat concluded the studies did not produce harmonised or plausible results (Kaiser, 2008: 6). Nevertheless a summary of these analyses has been presented for information.

Figure 5.5.1 shows the cost of producing rail statistics for twenty of the twenty-seven EU countries in 2006. (Missing countries include those with no rail services (Malta, Cyprus) but also unfortunately some that have well-developed rail networks and also well-developed statistical systems, such as France and The Netherlands.).

³³ This is an approximate figure as 2005 figures have not yet been finalised with Eurostat.

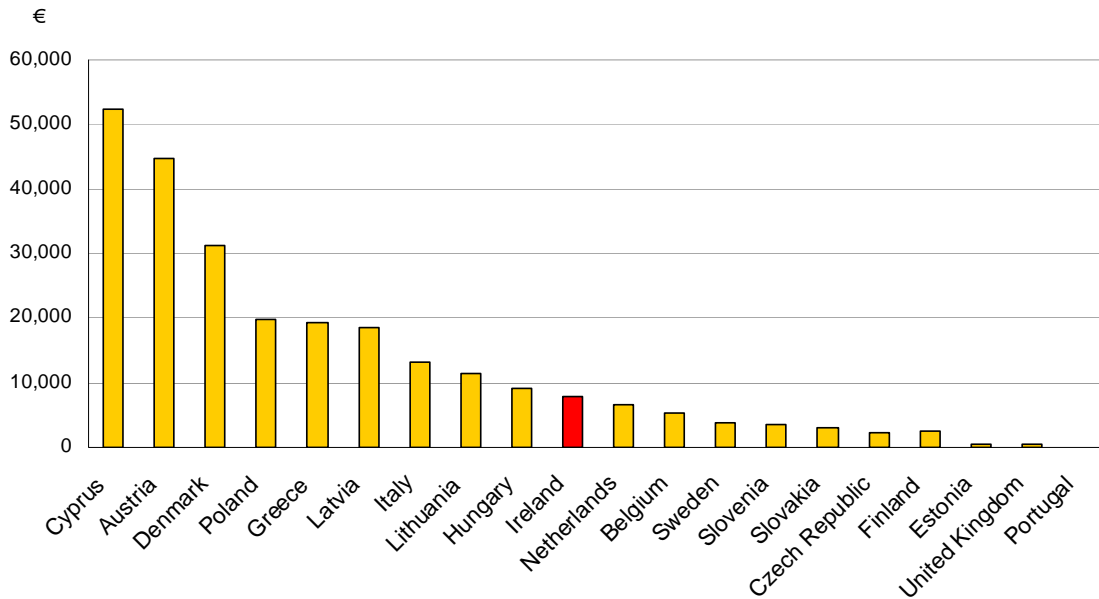
Figure 5.5.1 – Total Annual Costs of Producing Rail Transport Statistics (Euros) - 2006



As can be seen, the absolute cost of compiling rail statistics in Ireland is higher than for some larger countries with much more extensive rail systems, such as the UK. This is perhaps even more surprising as all the data for Ireland are obtained from a single reporter, the state-owned monopoly rail service. What is evident is that some countries such as Finland and Denmark, which are comparable to Ireland in size, population etc, and that also have high-cost economies, but that also have a highly-developed statistical infrastructure, do nevertheless succeed in keeping down the cost of producing rail statistics.

For aviation statistics, more direct comparisons can be made, as the results (in Figure 5.4.2) are reported on a cost per airport basis

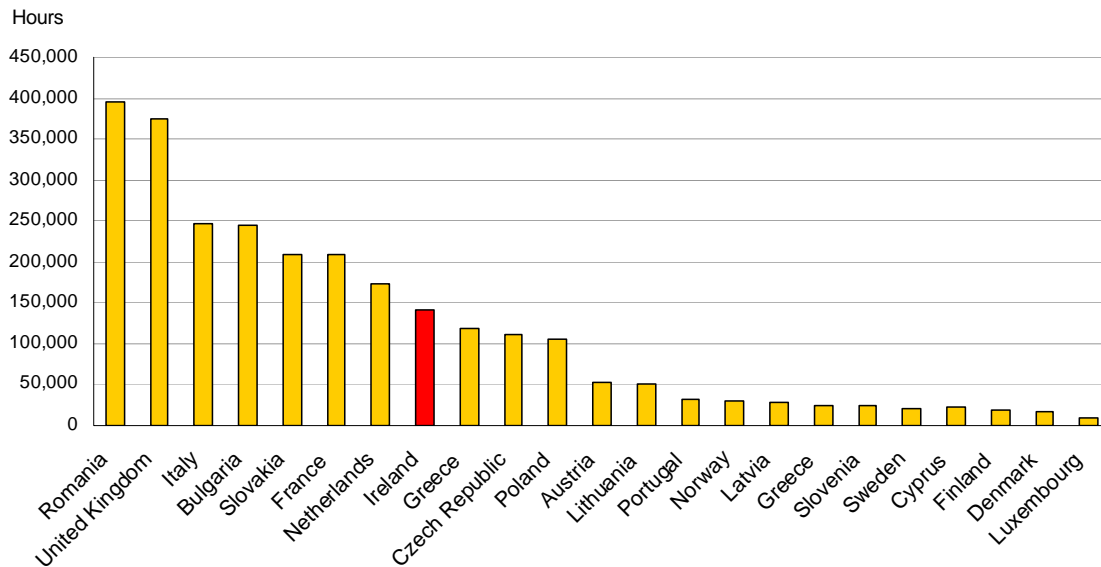
Figure 5.5.2 – Total Annual Costs of Producing Aviation Transport Statistics per Airport (Euros) - 2006



For airport statistics, Ireland is the median value for those member states that responded. Figure 5.5.2 highlights member states with developed statistical infrastructure, such as Finland and Sweden tend to have relatively low statistical compilation costs for relatively high cost economies. Overall it is very hard to draw any real hard and fast conclusions from Figures 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 other than to acknowledge the difficulty in deriving meaningful comparative costs across countries.

For the Short Term Statistics the EU’s analysis was a comparison of work effort (expressed in person-hours) required to compile the statistics, rather than the cost in monetary terms. This approach overcomes some (but not all) of the problems of cost base or purchasing power effects. The STS is one of the few domains in business statistics where Ireland is graded VG by Eurostat. Figure 5.5.3 shows that most of the countries that are compiling STS with less input or time than Ireland are those countries with developing economies, such as Latvia, Lithuania and Poland etc. Or they are countries with developed statistical infrastructures, where many data can be matched, thus enabling the derivation of data or can be taken from existing register systems without recourse to a survey, such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Austria.

Figure 5.5.3 – Cost to Competent National Authority of Producing Short-Term Statistics (Hours)



Given the range of approaches taken by countries to compile their business statistics, it is very hard to draw any meaningful conclusions, other than the likely impact of available registers on costs. Section 6.2 also draws attention to this problem.

5.6 Emerging Needs and Implications for Resources

As already noted in chapter 2, the breadth of data requirements, both internationally and domestically is steadily increasing, particularly for services activity. If CSO is to meet these demands then additional resources will be required. The Chambers of Commerce Ireland highlighted this issue in their submission to the 2007 – 2013 NDP (CCI, 2006).

“The public sector must significantly ramp-up the skills and resources available to the Central Statistics Office so that it can deliver relevant statistical analyses to inform government and industry of issues of concern such as productivity measures, immigration and statistical analysis of key Government plans such as Transport 21”

Chapter 6 - Scope for Alternative Approaches

6.1 International Comparisons with Business Statistics in other NSIs

Comparing Ireland's business statistics model with those in other National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) is not an easy task. The statistical approach taken in different member states reflects their legal and government structures, geographic size and location, market openness and size, and the relative development of their statistical infrastructure such as availability of registers, shared business identifiers and spatial codes.

This chapter will also summarise important issues regarding alternate data collection methodologies (6.3) and dissemination (6.4).

6.2 CSO Survey of NSIs

As part of this expenditure review, a questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was designed by the CSO and sent to the National Statistical Institutes of 27 European countries in July 2006. Only eight countries responded: Portugal, Italy, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Spain, Norway and Cyprus (See Appendix 3). Countries were asked to indicate which activities from a standard list their business statistics division is responsible for; and, for the others, which division of the office, or which other agency, is responsible. The results are shown in Table 6.2.1.

Table 6.2.1 – Summary of Business Statistics from responding NSI

Domains within Business Statistics	Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Other Agency
Short Term Statistics	6	2	1	-
Structural Business Statistics	7	1	1	-
Producer Prices	4	4	2	-
Construction	6	2	1	1
Transport	6	2	2	1
Tourism	5	3	4	1
Retail Sales	5	3	2	-
Other Industrial Statistics	7	1	1	-
Other Services Statistics	6	2	2	-
Agriculture	4	4	3	1
Business Register	4	4	2	-

Source: CSO Survey of NSIs, 2006

For most of these countries, Structural business statistics, short term statistics, other industrial statistics, other services statistics, construction and transport fall within the umbrella of business Statistics. For domains like tourism, retail sales, prices, agriculture and business register the pattern is less clear cut: in some countries they are handled by the business statistics division, but in others, the statistics are compiled by other units within the NSI or by outside agencies.

The questionnaire also asked (in an open-ended question) for details of other tasks for which the business statistics division is responsible. Several countries reported such responsibilities, including several types that are done in other divisions in most countries, including Ireland, but also including types of business statistics that Ireland does not compile, such as entrepreneurial statistics. Indeed none of the respondent countries has the same mix as Ireland. It is therefore very difficult to make comparisons, and accurate benchmarking has not been possible.

The resources (staff and budget) allocated in each of the respondent countries are shown in table 6.2.2, in absolute terms and as a percentage of the whole office. At one extreme (41% of staff), Norway's figure reflects the inclusion of national accounts statistics, environmental statistics and labour market statistics; at the other (2% of staff), Portugal's business statistics division is responsible only for the register. Finally, the relative shares of staff and budget within and between countries may also reflect the mix of clerical and more highly-qualified analytical staff. In Ireland, for example, the division has 30% of the staff, but accounts for only 16% of the budget of the office, as a low proportion of the staff in the division are in the professional and management grades (21 out of 196).

Table 6.2.2 – Staff and Budget Allocated to Business Statistics

NSI	Number of Staff	% of Total	Business Statistics Budget	% of Total
			€'000	
Cyprus	60	15	1,487	22
Norway	370	41	17,232	27
Spain	195	4	19,844	9
Hungary	-	10	-	7
Greece	86	12	449	9
Czech Republic	122	7	-	-
Portugal	13	2	379	1
Italy	592	25	57,000	31
Ireland	196	30	8,300	16

Source: CSO Survey of NSIs, 2006

6.3 Data Collection Methodologies

The CSO is considering two main approaches to reducing its own cost of producing the statistics: more efficient use of technology, and making greater use of administrative records. These initiatives might also enable the CSO to produce results or analyses that would not otherwise be possible. The two approaches are discussed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2. Both approaches can also be expected to reduce the burden on respondents. Section 6.3.3 briefly describes a third development: the pooling of efforts with other agencies to conduct joint surveys.

6.3.1 Harnessing Technology

Developing technology is impacting on every aspect of life. Possibly more than any organisational change, harnessing technology to compile statistics may have the biggest impact on future developments. Over the past five or six years the efficiency of internal CSO processing of survey forms has been substantially improved by making increased use of scanning technology to eliminate the costly keying stage of processing paper returns. Now all significant business postal surveys have adopted scanning technology. But several new approaches are being examined in the business statistics area. Some affect only the internal processes in the CSO, and can be expected to lead to efficiencies and cost reductions, and perhaps additional types of analysis or output. Others will be of direct benefit to respondents, by making it easier or less costly for them to make their returns.

One of the most promising in the longer term is the streamlining of data collection by the use of software and communications that allows enterprises to extract information, especially financial information, from their internal records, and forward it to the CSO, in a standardised and more efficient way. XBRL (*eXtensible Business Reporting Language*) is slowly becoming the international standard in this area. Although the CSO, in cooperation with Fujitsu Software Corporation and PricewaterhouseCoopers, successfully piloted the use of XBRL for compiling the Quarterly Accounts in Industry in 2005³⁴, no further progress has been made, due largely to the low take-up of XBRL in Ireland. This in turn reflects the absence of a harmonised accounting taxonomy here. In a number of countries, such as the UK and the Netherlands, mandatory taxonomies are being introduced in order to capitalise on the potential of XBRL. If such a harmonised accounting taxonomy were adopted in Ireland, XBRL could be used extensively to collect business data in a manner that is more efficient and cost-effective for both the CSO and the respondents. The main accountancy firms have established Business Reporting Ireland Ltd. with the purpose of introducing a harmonised taxonomy. However, since companies will not be obliged to adopt it, it remains to be seen if this work will have any significant impact in the short term. The support given by the High Level Group on Burden Reduction (HLGBR, 2008) may give the project some added impetus.

In one area, employment and earnings statistics, there has been significant progress, using an approach not unlike XBRL but one that overcomes the shortcomings of an un-harmonised taxonomy. The requirements of two of the main surveys in this area, the National Employment Survey (NES) and the Earnings, Hours and Employment Cost Survey (EHECS), have been embedded in the standard payroll software packages of nineteen of the main business software providers. This facility, which went live in 2008, enables a businesses using one of these off-the-shelf packages to compile the data required for the NES or EHECS surveys quickly and easily. Approximately 20% of EHECS data are now compiled via this facility. The Steering Committee welcomed this development. It recognised that there might be an initial cost to enterprises to embed the CSO requirements into their systems, but that this would probably be more than offset by subsequent savings.

³⁴ This was the first live implementation of XBRL in Ireland. See joint Fujitsu Software Corporation and PricewaterhouseCoopers news release “*CSO leads the way with new business reporting technology*”, July 2005.

A similar approach is now being investigated for the major annual structural and short term business surveys. This will be a larger and more complex exercise in terms of data requirements, and will take a longer time to roll out as accounting systems are not updated systematically every year whereas payroll systems are usually updated annually following the budget.

For other domains, such as prices, tourism and transport, technology also offers enormous potential for efficiencies or improved data quality. The CSO is currently involved in a joint project with University of Limerick to test the possibility of using mobile phones and Bluetooth technology as a survey instrument. For the Consumer Price Index (CPI), paper-based data collection is being replaced by electronic data collection using Personal Digital Assistant's (PDAs), (this project will be fully implemented by end 2009). This will allow much greater flexibility for compiling new sub-indices from the CPI dataset, such as outlet indices.

Potential data sources are emerging from the increasing use of technology in business and society. CSO is working in close co-operation with the Irish Bankers Federation to access credit/debit card data for the purposes of improving estimates for cross-border spending, internet purchases, tourism consumption and testing the feasibility of compiling an electronic retail sales index.

There are other possibilities that have not yet been explored by the CSO. GPS and tachograph technology offer significant potential for generating transport statistics, while the use of mobile phone roaming data may yield new sources for estimating cross-border or international travel. The Revenue Commissioners are introducing an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system on a pilot basis at the Europort in Rosslare and similar technology has been installed on the M1. This technology may yield new and very useful data streams for estimating cross-border flows and in particular for non-Irish inbound freight.

A fully integrated e-filing solution (such as Revenue On-Line Service (ROS)) for enterprise statistics could also yield significant benefits for CSO, not only in terms of cost savings but also in terms of more consistent data returns and the reduction in perceived respondent burden. It could also be used to link respondents with the outputs or results they have contributed to, potentially allowing respondents to better understand their contribution to the wider system. This would be quite a complex and costly project to implement and as the CSO currently has few web development skills, little tangible progress has been made in this arena.

6.3.2 Making more Use of Administrative Records

Across the EU there is a drive to make better use of administrative records to compile official statistics. The expectation is that this will reduce costs, to respondents immediately, and in the longer term to the statistical offices also. There is also potential to produce new analyses or statistical series by combining records from different sources.

The CSO has already been using administrative records of government departments for many years to produce statistical series. Examples include motor registration records, income tax and corporation tax files, and agriculture data. Recent additions include using passenger records from

airport authorities to generate an innovative Airport-Pairings database, which, as well as being of direct interest to many users, has also benefited the airport authorities themselves: they no longer have to respond to CSO questionnaires, and they can also use the new database to answer queries that they receive from third parties. The CSO is exploring whether this approach can be extended into other domains, such as maritime statistics.

The National Statistics Board recognised the importance of this approach in their “2003 – 2008 Strategy for Statistics” (NSB, 2003) where they articulated the need for a coherent “*whole-system*” approach to the compilation of official statistics, in which all useful administrative data holdings are harnessed to underpin improved evidence-based decision-making.

To this end, the CSO conducted a series of SPAR (Statistical Potential of Administrative Records) projects between 2003 and 2008, in which the records held by each department were assessed and classified from this perspective. This has yielded many potentially valuable datasets, but using them will not be easy, as many are not stored electronically, while others do not use standardised or compatible classification systems. A key finding was that several major elements of statistical infrastructure that many countries can rely on are missing in Ireland: a Unique Business Identifier (UBI), a Central Business Register (CBR), and a national spatial coding system. During 2007 a Cross-Departmental Group was set up, chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), to assess the feasibility of creating a UBI and CBR.

Even without these features, two initiatives are already underway in the CSO. During 2007 a large file of data from the Companies Registration Office records was bought from a commercial third party. It consists of standardised extracts from the annual accounts and certain other returns of companies. The quality and usefulness of the data are being assessed. Secondly, the potential for making more use of the data holdings of the Revenue Commissioners is being reviewed as a priority. The related SPAR report was published in February 2009 (CSO, 2009), to be followed quickly by an implementation programme for the recommendations.

While these approaches are promising, their full potential cannot be realised until a UBI system has been created and is in operation. In particular, combining the data relating to the same entity from different datasets may be prohibitively costly, as it will require intensive case-by-case matching, and thus can only be attempted for a small fraction of the cases. In addition, the lack of an agreed national spatial code greatly reduces the scope for integrated regional analyses.

Developing such infrastructure is costly, and can only be justified if viewed as a long-term investment. The Deputy Secretary General of the OECD alluded to the importance of developing such an infrastructure, at the launch of the OECD review of Ireland’s public service (OECD, 2008).

*“Increasing efficiency and effectiveness in an integrated Public Service means not just improving the performance of individual agencies and bodies, but improving the performance of the Public Service as a whole by identifying and putting in place **shared services**, better rationalising existing services, and freeing up resources to focus on the most difficult and pressing societal problems. Shared services have long existed for the local government sector, but they have been slower to appear in central*

*government. The Department of Justice will now provide financial support services to the Department of the Taoiseach. This is a first-step, but there is much more low-hanging fruit to be had! The use of ICT centres of excellence in the Netherlands, and of **shared registers** in the Netherlands and Nordic countries are all worthwhile examples for Ireland”*

(DSG De Geus, Dublin, 28 April 2008)

Two inter-departmental high level groups chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) are looking at these issues. The first one, the Cross Departmental Group on Central Registers and Unique Business Identifiers is specifically examining the development of a Unique Business Identifier and a Central Business Register. The second one, the High-Level Group on Burden Reduction (HLGBR) is looking at ways to reduce administrative burden to businesses. There is some unavoidable overlap between the work undertaken by the two groups. The HLGBR noted in their first report (HLGBR, 2008:22):

The High-Level Group regards the UBI project as important strategically in reducing the administrative burden on business. A fully functioning system could pave the way for agencies to access data from each other instead of seeking overlapping returns from business.

Nevertheless, some progress has been made within Business Statistics on the use of administrative data. The approach followed in creating the new database of airport pairings (mentioned above) is also being attempted for maritime port traffic. In a related project, CSO has secured permission from the Irish ports to share data with IMDO, the Irish Maritime Development Office, allowing them to discontinue their own quarterly data collection and take the statistics they need directly from CSO instead.

6.3.3 Sharing Data Collection with Other Agencies

Some examples exist in other divisions of the CSO of surveys conducted in conjunction with another agency (for example, some surveys of financial companies are effectively joint surveys by the CSO and the Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland). Some similar steps have been taken recently in the business statistics integration division. Results from a first joint CSO-Forfas Community Innovation Survey were published in June 2008. Each agency now compiles its own analyses from the jointly-owned dataset, and both have benefited. For example the analysts in Forfas now have a microdata database of better quality than before, allowing them to improve their statistical analyses of innovation in Irish business.

This approach has also now been used for the joint CSO-Forfas R&D (BERD) survey. The scope for extending this approach to other joint surveys with Forfas or other agencies is also being considered. In particular, a joint Energy survey between CSO and Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) is planned for 2009 in order to comply with the new energy regulation (already noted in section 2.2.2). For the joint surveys, the CSO has borne the costs from within existing resources.

While the main benefit of pooling of effort in this way probably accrues to the agencies concerned, respondents should also benefit, by being spared the task of completing part or all of one or other of the former surveys.

6.4 Dissemination

In 2007 the CSO agreed a new Dissemination Strategy³⁵ for the office. One of the key features will be a move towards increased electronic dissemination of data, and in particular the use of PC-AXIS (a software package, available free of charge on the CSO website, that allows users to create their own tables from the stored data). The first fully interactive electronic release was piloted by CSO in April 2009 (Vehicles Licensed for the first time – March 2009). User reaction is currently being assessed before an office wide solution is rolled out.

The move towards greater electronic dissemination will be complemented by a continuation of a recent CSO trend to produce paper-based reports that provide more context and analysis, by bringing together data from several surveys into what are called “thematic” reports. The Business Statistics Division has produced or contributed to several of these in the last few years:

- (CSO, 2006c) Construction and Housing in Ireland;
- (CSO, 2006d) Domestic Tourism in Ireland, 2000 – 2005;
- (CSO, 2008k) Transport 2007 (Latest – annual);
- (CSO, 2008a) Family Business in Ireland – Services Sectors 2005;
- (CSO, 2008b) Information Society and Technology, 2007 (Latest - annual);
- (CSO, 2008h) Small Business in Ireland – 2008 Edition (Latest – annual);
- (CSO, 2008i) Tourism Trends 2007 (Latest – annual);
- (CSO, 2008j) International Sourcing – The Movement of Irish Business Activity Abroad.

³⁵ Report of the Dissemination Strategy Working Group (May 2007).

Chapter 7 – Performance Indicators

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter an overall assessment is offered of the performance of the Business Statistics Division in meeting the needs of users, in terms of the main criteria that have been proposed in chapter 4.2. Many elements of the assessment have been implicit in the descriptions in the earlier chapters, and they are brought together more explicitly but in more summary form here.

7.2 Serving the Needs of Users

7.2.1 Relevance

As noted in Chapter 4, there are significant gaps in the range of business statistics being produced, particularly for services and transport statistics. Although a number of new products have been developed over recent years, this has not adequately met user demands. In the view of the committee short-term services indicators, in particular a services price index and a services turnover index should be developed as a priority.

7.2.2 Reliability

Most of the business statistics compiled by the CSO is done to comply with EU legislation and generally speaking these statistics are within the quality parameters specified under that legislation. While some reports publish information on response rates and sampling errors, there are very few systematic, objective measures applied and published across all statistical outputs that allow users to assess reliability. However the Quality Assurance Unit of CSO began implementing a Standard Report on Methods and Quality template during 2008 to begin formalising the quality management practices within CSO. To date the Retail Sales Index, the Monthly Production Inquiry, the Annual Services Inquiry and the Consumer Price Index have been audited. The HICP (which is the European harmonised CPI) was also audited by the European Commission and ECB in the spring of 2009³⁶. The Quality Assurance unit has also developed an office wide revisions policy which was published internally in February 2009. It is expected this policy will be published on the CSO website before year end.

7.2.3 Timeliness

Appendix 4 sets out the timeliness currently being achieved for each of the regular statistical releases or publications from the division. In this context, timeliness is defined as the time (days, weeks, months) from the end of the reference period to the date of the national release. For most series the “International Standard” is also shown. This usually refers to the deadline set by EU legislation for transmission of the results to Eurostat. In some cases, most notably the ASI and CIP, the definitive national publication takes longer than the transmission to Eurostat, usually

³⁶ The final report from this audit is not yet available. However the draft report suggests that the Irish HICP was deemed to be of good quality, with only a few minor issues to be addressed.

because the national printed publication contains additional cross-tabulations and because it takes longer to set up the printed version.

The table compares the performance in 2002 and 2008. With very few exceptions, it has improved. It can also be seen from the table that many new series or reports have been introduced since 2002 (examples are detailed CPIs, Regional Agricultural Accounts, the Transport compendium, Overseas Travel, the Household Travel Survey and Production in Building & Construction), while several series have been discontinued (all in the Agriculture statistics area).

7.2.4 Accessibility

In addition to all published reports being made available on the CSO web page, there are 272 large datasets available on Database Direct³⁷ that allows users to construct their own tables to download. All of these data are provided free of charge. In addition, a number of new cross-cutting reports that bring together multiple sources have been published in an attempt to better contextualize data for users. In an effort to maximise transparency, the CSO also makes available other information via the website, such as dissemination calendars, methodological information and other corporate reports, such as the EU Code of Practice Peer Review.

³⁷ See Chapter 4 for more detail.

7.3 Future Indicators

This report has presented an extensive range of performance indicators or data that could be used to construct such a set of indicators. For future performance monitoring and assessment a potential set of performance indicators is recommended. Many of these could be compiled annually, whereas others (e.g. customer satisfaction) might only be compiled as part of regular NSB survey.

Table 7.3 – Suggested for Indicators for future Performance Indicators

Indicator Type	Indicators
Inputs	Costs (overall & by division or survey) Staff numbers (overall & by division or survey) Staff/grade mix (e.g. % in each grade)
Outputs	Number of surveys/inquiries Number of releases/publications/databases Number of datasets provided to Eurostat Number of datasets provided to internal customers Number of tables posted on Database Direct Number of thematic reports compiled/contributed to Response rates New surveys produced
Impacts	Level of EU compliance by statistical domain Customer satisfaction levels Response burden metrics (absolute levels and % change) Timeliness (within International targets/improvements)
Efficiencies	Unit cost per survey/questionnaire Number of releases/publications per head of staff Proportion of forms being scanned Proportion of forms with electronic/web data capture Datasets compiled using admin data

Chapter 8 – Summary & Recommendations

8.1 Summary

The Business Statistics Directorate produces statistics on a wide range of topics, including retail sales, tourism and travel, transport, business services, building and construction, industry, consumer prices, producer prices and agricultural output. The results are disseminated in over 200 regular paper-based releases and publications every year, and in a range of additional electronic databases. In addition, the CSO constantly strives to improve the quality of the statistics and to make them more accessible.

When central corporate services are taken into account the Directorate consumes almost 33% of the total CSO budget. Between 2001 and 2008, despite a fall in resources, output from the directorate has increased, both in terms of quantity and quality, yielding a demonstrable productivity gain. A significant number of innovations and new data-streams are currently being developed from within existing resources, which will yield further productivity gains.

The quality of the outputs and of the work of the directorate has been assessed under four criteria: relevance, reliability, timeliness and accessibility and improvements have been noted throughout the report.

Yet despite the improvements and efficiency gains, the CSO's business statistics output still lingers towards the bottom of the EU-27 league table in terms of compliance with the EU regulations. However, while the CSO does provide the "right" data when available (i.e. the data required under EU law) Eurostat have identified and highlighted a number of important data gaps that challenge CSO's ability to deliver relevant data (for example, the lack of data for small and micro enterprises in the structural business statistics). The timeliness of some series is also behind best international practice. Many of these concerns have been echoed by domestic users. In the short term, as many new regulations come into force, this situation is likely to worsen.

The rapid evolution of the globalised economy and the special importance of multinational enterprises for the Irish economy pose particular challenges for CSO. In addition, the poor statistical infrastructure in Ireland (e.g. the lack of post codes or unique business identifiers) makes it difficult or impossible for the CSO to make full use of administrative data or to fully exploit the statistical value of existing survey data holdings. Despite these obstacles, it seems from the available evidence (for Structural Business Statistics, for example) that the statistical burden imposed by CSO on businesses is low by EU standards.

In summary, as economies become more complex and an increasing number of EU statistical regulations are enacted, the CSO is likely to continue to struggle to deliver, with its current resources, robust high quality business statistics that meet all the needs expressed by users.

8.2 Assessment of Overall Value for Money

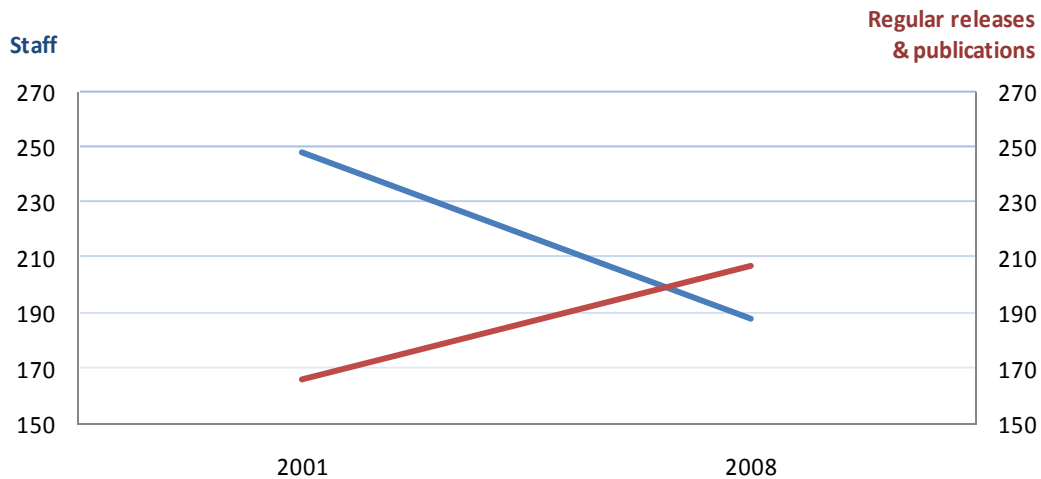
It is very hard to make a robust, independent assessment on the value for money that business statistics deliver. Over a long period of time the CSO has developed very good quality industrial and agricultural statistics. However, in recent years, business statistics has struggled to meet the challenges posed by globalisation and the shift from a manufacturing to a services-based economy.

As noted in Chapter 5, it is very difficult to allocate exact costs directly to individual outputs, in part because some of the inputs (staff in particular, but also overheads) are deployed in complex arrangements that produce several different outputs. It has been possible, however, to measure broad trends over time. On this measure there has been a demonstrable increase in productivity within business statistics, approximately coinciding with and probably at least in part resulting from the introduction of the process approach for industry statistics. The number of regular releases and publications has increased by 25 per cent (from 166 in 2001 to 207 in 2008). Some of these relate to new statistical domains, while others are additional types of analysis or report that complement the traditional outputs. In the same period, the number of staff (headcount basis) has fallen by about 25 per cent (from 248 to 188³⁸). These headline figures are shown in Figure 8.2.1. In simple terms, this is an improvement from 0.67 reports per staff member in 2001 to 1.10 reports per staff member in 2008. This is a simple headcount change and doesn't take into account grade substitution. For example, although the overall headcount declined the number of statisticians has increased from 17 to 20.

Other less quantifiable improvements should also be taken into account. For example, the quality and content of many of these reports has also been continually developed and improved during the period. In addition, the timeliness of many reports has also improved. For example, the monthly vehicle licensing results are now published four weeks after the end of the month, compared with ten weeks in 2002. Other examples can be seen in Appendix 4. The business statistics division has also contributed to several ad hoc or regular thematic (i.e. cross-cutting) reports that are not explicitly credited to any single division in the lists of CSO outputs. Finally, the division also now answers a much greater range and quantity of ad-hoc queries on a day to day basis than in the past.

³⁸ As of 17 September 2008

Figure 8.2.1 – Change in Staff and Regular releases, 2001 - 2008



If anything, therefore, Figure 8.2.1 probably underestimates the real productivity increase in the division.

In addition, many new developments are underway, and the division will be expected to complete these from within its existing resources. During 2009, for example, the following new statistical series are scheduled: outward Foreign Affiliate Activity (FATS), Product Turnover statistics (ServCOM) and Services Producer Price Indices (SPPIs). The feasibility of compiling House Purchase Price Indices from administrative sources is also being tested. In addition, as seen in earlier chapters there are several gaps and shortcomings in a number of existing series, Unfortunately, the pressure on resources is likely to intensify in the near-term as the new data demands arising from the new SBS, STS, FATS, HICP, PPP, R&D, Innovation, Energy, Tourism and Transport regulations all begin to impact and compete for contracting resources.

Overall, the business statistics directorate does appear to offer good value for money at present. In simple terms, the division generates 64 per cent of the regular output (i.e. excluding ad-hoc thematic reports) of CSO with 30 per cent of the staff and 32 per cent of the overall budget of the CSO. Compared with many EU member states, Ireland has a relatively small industrial base but a high concentration of inward direct investment makes compilation and dissemination of business statistics relatively complex. Ireland also has quite a poor statistical infrastructure compared with many other states. This unusual mix requires a relatively large number of surveys and a lot of micro-editing and consistency work to ensure that results are robust, fit for purpose and that no confidential data is disclosed. Despite the poor statistical infrastructure, the CSO has managed to keep the response burden quite low by EU standards.

A perhaps more interesting question is the following: will the current model for compiling business statistics continue to offer value for money in the future? In the context of an increasingly complex business environment, where the distinctions between manufacturing and services are increasingly blurred, the answer to this is likely to be no. The report by the High Level Group on Manufacturing (HLGM, 2008) highlights this problem.

“The traditional distinction between manufacturing and services, both in relation to products and indeed, the actual companies themselves, is becoming less clear. Many successful manufacturers now combine a product with a value-added service and provide tailored solutions to meet a customer’s specific needs. In relation to products [...] it is no longer obvious whether these are service-enhanced products or product-enhanced services. While a manufacturing product may be at the centre of business, often there will be more people working on service support, technical information and a range of other services that add value”

In the future, compilation of business statistics will need to continue the transition from the vertical production system, in which each individual survey is conducted from beginning to end by its own team, to a more integrated system, focusing instead on a whole economy perspective. More short term indicators of economic activity will also be required, particularly for the services sectors. Business statistics will need to be able to respond to changes in institutional settings and in business and consumer behaviour, For example, the growth of internet shopping will challenge the relevance of the Retail Sales Index (which measures sales in physical shops). A demand for more and improved regional statistics may have to be met by making more use of administrative data, as the cost (to the CSO and to respondents) of expanding sample surveys to produce robust regional estimates would be prohibitive. The weaknesses in the statistical infrastructure that have been mentioned earlier in the report - the absence of a harmonised accounting taxonomy, a unique business identifier and a standardised spatial code - are a serious obstacle.

8.3 Recommendations

The Steering Committee makes the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The data gaps highlighted in this report are acknowledged and it is recommended that these are addressed as soon as possible. In particular, critical gaps such as a services price index and a services turnover index should be prioritised and established before the end of 2010. Responsibility for addressing these gaps should rest with the Director of Business Statistics.
2. Business statistics should be re-organised or restructured to better align our production and outputs with user needs i.e. away from a sectoral approach towards an economy wide view. The Services, Industry & Construction divisions should be amalgamated and streamed into two groupings, with responsibility for structural business statistics and short-term statistics respectively. Resources permitting, Tourism and Transport should be formed into a separate division, perhaps also including energy.
3. The CSO in general and business statistics in particular should continue to make all efforts to minimise respondent burden. Sample sizes should be continually monitored and adjusted to give the best trade-off between burden on respondents, cost of processing and quality of results. The Committee accepted that the increasing demand for business statistics may result in additional surveys if no alternative administrative data sources can be identified.
4. The Committee supports the replacement of the paper-based ASI, CIP and CBC publications by primary publication in the form of electronic datasets (tables or time series) that are accessible via the internet. There should also be a complementary single annual report on the enterprise economy. Such a report would allow a better overview of changes in the business economy and will facilitate the use of “megaclusters” classifications. This report should be introduced for reference year 2007.
5. Efforts should be continued to make more use of administrative data. The Committee recognises that a lot of preparatory work has already been done, and notes in particular the SPAR-BES report. While the CSO and the Revenue Commissioners are jointly assessing the potential for using Revenue holdings to compile official business statistics, the Committee acknowledges that several weaknesses in the Irish statistical infrastructure, in particular the absence of a Unique Business Identifier and a national Spatial Codification System, seriously inhibit the wider sharing and linking of enterprise data. The Committee strongly supports the recommendations of the National Statistics Board (NSB) in this matter.
6. Linking the various CSO business datasets together to provide additional analyses should be encouraged and developed. In order to maximise the potential accruing from this effort, sample selection and sample rotation must be carefully planned so that response burden and survey overlap are properly balanced. This should be coordinated between the Central Business Register and the business areas.
7. The CSO should consider developing a single, office-wide field force that is flexible enough to collect CPI, Tourism, Enterprise and Household statistics. The aim would be to achieve increased efficiency by reducing the cost of travel and subsistence payments and increasing productivity by improving the allocation of work.

8. The CSO should develop as soon as possible a system to allow survey respondents to submit their returns via an e-filing system, similar to the Revenue On-line System (ROS). This has the potential to reduce costs for both the respondents and the CSO. It could also enable respondents to see the links between their responses and the resulting statistics.
9. The Committee recognised that estimating the costs of individual surveys was a time-consuming and somewhat subjective exercise. Consequently consideration should be given to recording time allocation sheets, as this would facilitate cost analysis (an increasingly important aspect of EU contracts) and assist in future international cost comparisons.
10. The Committee notes the growing convergence between domestic data requirements and the new regulations on SBS, STS, FATS, Energy, Prices, Tourism and Transport. Despite this, given the range of demands now facing business statistics, coupled with the need to reduce response burden, a permanent Business Statistics Liaison Group should be established to help CSO to choose priorities among the statistical demands that are not required under EU legislation. Formal liaison groups could also be considered for statistics on Tourism, on Transport and on Prices.
11. A set of performance indicators should be agreed upon and compiled on a regular basis (most likely annually) to track performance against targets and to support international comparisons.

Appendix 1 – SMC Response to Recommendations made by the Steering Committee of the Business Statistics Expenditure Review

The final Business Statistics Expenditure Review was presented to the SMC on 22nd June, 2009.

The SMC would like to put on record their appreciation for the effort and time invested by both the steering committee and the CSO review team in producing the report. Overall the SMC feels this effort has been worthwhile, as the review has contributed to the wider internal organisational review, as well as focusing attention on a number of important issues such as response burden and performance metrics.

While the Business Statistics Expenditure Review has been progressing since 2006 (completion was delayed by a restructuring of work programmes in 2007), SMC has of course discussed elements of the report prior to seeing the final version. Consequently, some recommendations have already been acted upon or commenced.

Overall, the SMC endorse and support the recommendations made by the steering committee. In some cases, this support may not be enough as budgetary constraints will not allow full implementation. Specific SMC responses to each recommendation are given in italics.

The Steering Committee makes the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The data gaps highlighted in this report are acknowledged and it is recommended that these are addressed as soon as possible. In particular, critical gaps such as a services price index and a services turnover index should be prioritized and established before end of 2010. Responsibility for addressing these gaps should rest with the Director of Business Statistics.

The SMC support this recommendation. In particular, the prioritisation of services price and turnover indices is stressed. As these gaps have been recognized for some time, work has already begun in the compilation of these new series.

2. Business statistics should be re-organised or restructured to better align our production and outputs with user needs i.e. away from a sectoral approach towards an economy wide view. The Services, Industry & Construction divisions should be amalgamated and streamed into two groupings, with responsibility for structural business statistics and short-term statistics respectively. Resources permitting, Tourism and Transport should be formed into a separate division, perhaps also including energy.

As noted above, earlier drafts of this report have informed discussions surrounding the optimal organizational structure of a modern statistical office. In broad terms, the recent organizational review endorsed this recommendation and work has begun on implementation. However, as also noted above, the resources to create a separate Travel, Transport and Energy Division are not available, irrespective of how desirable and timely such a move might be.

3. The CSO in general and business statistics in particular should continue to make all efforts to minimise respondent burden. Sample sizes should be continually monitored and adjusted to give the best trade-off between burden on respondents, cost of processing and quality of results. The Committee accepted that the increasing demand for business statistics may result in additional surveys if no alternative administrative data sources can be identified.

The SMC support this recommendation and draw attention to the fact that this is a high level corporate goal. The SMC note the progress made to date (as reported in the "Report on Response Burden"). The SMC would also like to put on record that, over the next year, most actions within the remit of CSO, such as reducing sample sizes or reducing questionnaire sizes, will have been taken. Thereafter, no significant reductions to burden are likely to arise unless alternate administrative sources can be found. CSO are actively working to achieve this in cooperation with organizations such as the Revenue Commissioners.

4. The Committee supports the replacement of the paper-based ASI, CIP and CBC publications by primary publication in the form of electronic datasets (tables or time series) that are accessible via the internet. There should also be a complementary single annual report on the enterprise economy. Such a report would allow a better overview of changes in the business economy and will facilitate the use of "megaclusters" classifications. This report should be introduced for reference year 2007.

The SMC support this recommendation. It is in line with the overall CSO dissemination policy and international developments.

5. Efforts should be continued to make more use of administrative data. The Committee recognises that a lot of preparatory work has already been done, and notes in particular the SPAR-BES report. While the CSO and the Revenue Commissioners are jointly assessing the potential for using Revenue holdings to compile official business statistics, the Committee acknowledges that several weaknesses in the Irish statistical infrastructure, in particular the absence of a Unique Business Identifier and a national Spatial Codification System, seriously inhibit the wider sharing and linking of enterprise data. The Committee strongly supports the recommendations of the National Statistics Board (NSB) in this matter.

The SMC support this recommendation and draw attention to ongoing developments and achievements in this area. For example, CSO are in the process of signing memorandum of agreements with the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Agriculture, which will facilitate the flow of administrative data to CSO. The SMC reiterate the importance of UBI and post codes for the development of the Irish Statistical System.

6. Linking the various CSO business datasets together to provide additional analyses should be encouraged and developed. In order to maximise the potential accruing from this effort, sample selection and sample rotation must be carefully planned so that response

The SMC support the optimization of sample sizes. Any developments that increase the potential of existing data by better rotation of samples are to be welcomed. The SMC note however, this must be carefully managed so that full account is taken of respondent burden, data quality requirements and other opportunities to improve processes.

7. The CSO should consider developing a single, office-wide field force that is flexible enough to collect CPI, Tourism, Enterprise and Household statistics. The aim would be to achieve increased efficiency by reducing the cost of travel and subsistence payments and increasing productivity by improving the allocation of work.

Broadly speaking the SMC support this recommendation. Some tentative moves have already begun with regard to integrating the Household Budget Survey and Business Field Force recruitment.

8. The CSO should consider the development, if practicable, of a web based e-filing system to allow survey respondents to submit their statistical returns. This may have the potential to reduce costs for both respondents and the CSO. It could also enable respondents to see the links between their responses and the resulting statistics.

The SMC acknowledge this recommendation. CSO already provide a secure deposit box that facilitates electronic responses for a number of business surveys. To date, take up of this facility has been very poor. Some further consideration on this issue is required before additional resources are invested in this area.

9. The Committee recognised that estimating the costs of individual surveys was a time-consuming and somewhat subjective exercise. Consequently consideration should be given to recording time allocation sheets (at least on a sample basis), as this would facilitate cost analysis (an increasingly important aspect of EU contracts) and assist in future international cost comparisons.

The SMC acknowledge this recommendation. A time allocation recording system is being piloted for a select number of business areas. This pilot project will be assessed before any final decision is made.

10. The Committee notes the growing convergence between domestic data requirements and the new regulations on SBS, STS, FATS, Energy, Prices, Tourism and Transport. Despite this, given the range of demands now facing business statistics, coupled with the need to reduce response burden, a permanent Business Statistics Liaison Group should be established to help CSO to choose priorities among the statistical demands that are not required under EU legislation. Formal liaison groups could also be considered for statistics on Tourism, on Transport and on Prices.

The SMC support this recommendation as it believes the communication of efforts made by CSO to reduce burden or meet users need requires constant management. A formal Tourism Statistics

Liaison Group has been established which includes institutions from Northern Ireland. A similar model is currently under consideration for transport statistics. A National CPI Review Group is currently in operation and expects to make recommendations to the Director-General of CSO before year end. A wider business statistics liaison group may be useful but some thought needs to be given to whether this encompasses national accounts and balance of payments issues or not.

11. A set of performance indicators should be agreed upon and compiled on a regular basis (most likely annually) to track performance against targets and to support international comparisons.

The SMC supports this recommendation and have asked the Business directorate to compile the proposed set of indicators for 2009, before consideration is given to developing a similar set for other areas of the office.

Appendix 2 – Cost by Statistical Output

The staff numbers detailed in this appendix is not given in full time equivalent units but merely a simple head count

Table 6.7a - Estimated Direct Costs for Industry Surveys, 2005

	Census of Industrial Production	PRODCOM Inquiry	Monthly Production Inquiry	e-Commerce & ICT Usage survey
Sample Size	5,200	4,500	2,000	6,500
Frequency	A	A	M	A
Staff	14	7	18	7
	€	€	€	€
Salaries, Wages and Allowances	411,540	205,770	548,720	205,770
Travel and Subsistence	2,810	1,405	3,747	1,405
Incidental Expenses	15,841	7,921	21,121	7,921
Postal and Telecommunications Services	8,540	6,295	19,620	7,595
Office Machinery and Other Office Supplies	31,571	15,785	42,094	15,785
Office Premises Expenses	25,940	12,970	34,587	12,970
Collection of Statistics	56,832	56,832		
Appropriations-in-Aid				-23,857
IT systems support	36,284	18,142	48,379	18,142
Total	589,359	325,121	718,268	245,731
Total (excluding appropriations-in-aid)	589,359	325,121	718,268	269,588
Questionnaires issued per annum	5,200	4,500	24,000	6,500
Questionnaires processed per annum	4,200	2,900	15,600	3,500
Cost per completed questionnaire processed	140	112	46	77

Table 6.7b - Estimated Direct Costs for Building Surveys, 2005

	Employment in Construction	Earnings & Hours Worked	Planning Permissions	Census of Building & Construction	Quarterly Survey of Construction
Sample Size	700	550	n/a	900	2,000
Frequency	M	Q	Q	A	Q
Staff	2	2	2	4	5
	€	€	€	€	€
Salaries, Wages and Allowances	66,118	88,157	88,157	66,118	132,235
Travel and Subsistence	351	468	468	351	703
Incidental Expenses	2,620	3,493	3,493	2,620	5,239
Postal and Telecommunications Services	1,380	3,190	841	1,530	7,810
Office Machinery and Other Office Supplies	5,221	6,961	6,961	5,221	10,442
Office Premises Expenses	4,290	5,720	5,720	4,290	8,580
Collection of Statistics	11,942	11,942		15,923	39,806
Appropriations-in-Aid IT systems support	6,001	8,001	8,001	6,001	12,001
Total	97,922	127,932	113,640	102,053	216,816
Total (excluding appropriations-in-aid)	97,922	127,932	113,640	102,053	216,816
Questionnaires issued per annum	8,400	2,200	n/a	900	8,500
Questionnaires processed per annum	7,200	1,600	n/a	700	5,000
Cost per completed questionnaire processed	14	80	n/a	146	43

Table 6.8 - Estimated Direct Costs for Services Surveys, 2005

	Retail Sales Inquiry	Annual Services Inquiry	Road Freight Transport Survey	Passenger Card Inquiry	Household Travel Survey	Country of Residence Survey
Sample Size	2,000	18,000	30,000	100,000	13,000	685,000
Frequency	M	A	A	Q	Q	M
Staff	9	22	9	11	10	4
	€	€	€	€	€	€
Salaries Wages and Allowances	280,732	643,055	316,188	385,868	342,994	128,623
Travel and Subsistence	3,769	4318	3,731	3,975	3,533	1,325
Incidental Expenses	10,514	26,869	10,923	13,143	11,682	4,381
Postal and Telecommunications Services	20,940	18,750	25,000	981	38,872	327
Office Machinery and Other Office Supplies	20,954	53,549	21,769	26,193	23,282	8,731
Office Premises Expenses	17,217	43,998	17,886	21,521	19,130	7,174
Collection of Statistics	0	176,627	0	52,569	0	97,629
Appropriations-in-Aid	0	0	0	0	0	0
IT systems support	24,082	61,544	25,019	42,362	37,655	14,121
Total	378,208	1,028,710	420,516	546,611	477,148	262,309
Total (excluding appropriations-in-aid)	378,208	1,028,710	420,516	546,611	477,148	262,309
Questionnaires issued per annum	24,000	15,000	30,000	386,000	52,000	15,300*
Questionnaires processed per annum	18,000	10,000	12,000	310,000	29,000	15,300*
Cost per completed questionnaire processed	21	103	35	2	16	17*

* Not comparable

Table 6.9 - Estimated Direct Costs for Prices Surveys, 2005

	Wholesale Price Index	Consumer Price Index
Sample Size	1,000	3,000
Frequency	M	M
Staff	14	22
	€	€
Salaries Wages and Allowances	401,959	755,471
Travel and Subsistence	10,524	27,045
Incidental Expenses	16,355	25,701
Postal and Telecommunications Services	8,465	46,477
Office Machinery and Other Office Supplies	32,595	51,221
Office Premises Expenses	26,782	42,085
Collection of Statistics	17,042	293,485
Appropriations-in-Aid	0	0
IT systems support	37,461	58,868
Total	551,183	1,300,353
Total (excluding appropriations-in-aid)	551,183	1,300,353
Questionnaires issued per annum	12,000	n/a
Questionnaires processed per annum	9,000	n/a
Cost per completed questionnaire processed	61	n/a

Table 6.10 - Estimated Direct Costs for Agricultural Surveys, 2005

	Farm Structures Survey	December Livestock Survey
Sample Size	85,000	30,000
Frequency	Biennial	A
Staff	22	6
	€	€
Salaries Wages and Allowances	496,473	124,118
Travel and Subsistence	6,536	1,634
Incidental Expenses	26,168	6,542
Postal and Telecommunications Services	96,100	33,600
Office Machinery and Other Office Supplies	52,152	13,038
Office Premises Expenses	42,851	10,713
Collection of Statistics	0	0
Appropriations-in-Aid	-640,000	0
IT systems support	35,529	8,882
Total	115,809	198,527
Total (excluding appropriations-in-aid)	755,809	198,527
Questionnaires issued per annum	85,000	30,000
Questionnaires processed per annum	53,000	21,000
Cost per completed questionnaire processed	14	9

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Issued to International NSIs

Country:

Business Statistics

Total number of Staff employed in Business Statistics

Business Statistics staff as % of total staff in the NSI

Total budget devoted to Business Statistics

Business statistics budget as % of total NSI Budget

Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity

	Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics					
Structural Business Statistics					
Producer Prices					
Construction Statistics					
Transport					
Tourism					
Retail Sales Index					
Other Industrial Stats					
Other Service Stats					
Agricultural Stats					
Business Register					

Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit

Appendix 4: Individual Responses from International NSIs

Norway

Country: <input type="text" value="Norway"/>						
Business Statistics						
Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics					<input type="text" value="370"/>	
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI					<input type="text" value="41"/>	
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics					<input type="text" value="145mill Nkr"/>	
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget					<input type="text" value="27"/>	
Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity						
		Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Structural Business Statistics		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Producer Prices		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Construction Statistics		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Transport		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Tourism		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Retail Sales Index		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Other Industrial Stats		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Other Service Stats		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Agricultural Stats		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Business Register		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit						
National accounts, Environmental Statistics, Labour Market statistics, Public Finance Statistics, Credit Market Statistics, Income and Wage Statistics						

Please note that the figures comprise two departments; one for economic statistics and one for industry statistics. These departments also include some other areas as mentioned in the text to the table. It should also be noted that Statistics Norway has a relatively large research department. If this department was excluded the relative share would increase. The reason why the share of the budget is lower than the number of employee is that the common budgets (IT, buildings etc) are not distributed.

Spain

Country: SPAIN					
Business Statistics					
Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics (*)					195
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI (**)					3.8%
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics (*)					19,843,684
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget (**)					9.4%
Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity					
	Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics	X				
Structural Business Statistics	X				
Producer Prices	X				
Construction Statistics		X		X	Ministerio de Fomento
Transport	X (partly)			X (partly)	Ministerio de Fomento
Tourism	X (partly)			X (partly)	Instituto de Estudios Turísticos
Retail Sales Index	X				
Other Industrial Stats	X				
Other Service Stats	X				
Agricultural Stats	X (partly)			X (partly)	Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación
Business Register(*)	X				
Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit					
(*) These data only include the staff and budget of those Units that produce Business Statistics. It is not included the staff and budget of those Units that take part in the elaboration of the Business Register and the collection, treatment and dissemination of Business Statistics data.					
(**) The percentage has been calculated in the following way: the numerator only includes the staff / budget of the units that produce Business Statistics while the denominator includes the total staff / budget of the INE.					

Hungary

Country:

Business Statistics

Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics

Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI (without PRODCOM)

Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics

Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget (without PRODCOM)

Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity

	Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics	x				
Structural Business Statistics	x				
Producer Prices		x	x		
Construction Statistics	x				
Transport		x	x		
Tourism		x	x		
Retail Sales Index		x	x		
Other Industrial Stats	PRODCOM				
Other Service Stats		x	x		
Agricultural Stats		x	x		
Business Register		x	x		

Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit

Greece

Country: **GREECE**

Business Statistics

Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics	86
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI	12.3%
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics	448712 EUR
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget	9%

Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity

	Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics		X			
Structural Business Statistics	X				
Producer Prices		X			
Construction Statistics	X				
Transport	X				
Tourism	X				
Retail Sales Index		X			
Other Industrial Stats	X				
Other Service Stats	X				
Agricultural Stats		X			
Business Register		X			

Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit

Czech Republic

Country: **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Business Statistics

Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics	122
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI	6.7
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics	?
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget	?

Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity

	Yes	No	Collected Other NSI by other Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics	X				
Structural Business Statistics	X				
Producer Prices			X		
Construction Statistics	X				
Transport	X				
Tourism	X				
Retail Sales Index	X				
Other Industrial Stats	X				
Other Service Stats	X				
Agricultural Stats	X				
Business Register			X		

Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit

Portugal

Country:		<input type="text" value="Portugal"/>	
Business Statistics			
2006			
Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics			13
	Téc. Sup		5
	Téc. Prof.		8
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI			1.8
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics			379,228
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget			1.03
Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity			
	Yes	No	Collected Other NSI by other Unit Agency
			Further information
Short Term Statistics			x
Structural Business Statistics			x
Producer Prices			x
Construction Statistics			x
Transport			x
Tourism			x
Retail Sales Index			x
			Included in STS!
Other Industrial Stats			x
Other Service Stats			x
Agricultural Stats			x
Business Register	x		
Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit			

Italy

Country:

Business Statistics

Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics	592
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI	25%
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics	57 million €
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget	30.5%

Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity

	Yes	No	Collected Other NSI by other Unit	Agency	Further information
Short Term Statistics	X				
Structural Business Statistics	X				
Producer Prices	X				
Construction Statistics	X				
Transport	X				
Tourism	X		X ¹		
Retail Sales Index	X				
Other Industrial Stats	X				
Other Service Stats	X				
Agricultural Stats	X			X ²	
Business Register	X				

Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit
See the file "Organisational Chart - Sections".

1. As for tourism statistics, within Social Statistics, there is a Subsection dealing with this matter from the demand point of view.
2. Ministry for Agricultural, Food and Forest Policies.

Istat has 4 Divisions dealing with Business Statistics (BS). Not all the Sections of these Divisions deal specifically with BS. The total number of staff employed in BS is the total of the 4 BS Divisions.

Total budget devoted to BS; unfortunately it is not possible to have detailed figures by those sections specifically involved with BS. Therefore the total amount is at the 4 BS Divisions level. In this regard, the amount - 2006 budget - is connected to Istat financial accounting and it

corresponds to the allocation of the costs by objective that is the activities related to the production of economic statistics.

Cyprus

Country: CYPRUS						
Reference year: 2005						
Business Statistics						
Total No of Staff employed in Business Statistics						60
Total Staff employed in Business Statistics as % of total staff in the NSI						15.3
Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics						846,508.43
Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget						22
Which of the following is part of your Business Statistics activity						
	Yes	No	Other NSI Unit	Collected by other Agency	Further information	
Short Term Statistics	x					
Structural Business Statistics	x					
Producer Prices	x					
Construction Statistics	x					
Transport	x					
Tourism		x	x			
Retail Sales Index	x					
Other Industrial Stats	x					
Other Service Stats	x					
Agricultural Stats		x	x			
Business Register		x	x			
Please list other statistical domains which are organised under your Business Statistics Unit						
R&D, Innovation Statistics	x					
Energy Statistics	x					
Environment Statistics	x					

The Total Budget Devoted to Business Statistics refers only to the wages and salaries of the permanent and part-time staff employed in Business Statistics (in Cyprus Pounds (CYP)). The total NSI Budget used to calculate Business Statistics Budget as % of total NSI Budget refers only to the wages and salaries part of the total NSI Budget.

Appendix 5: Timeliness Monitor

Title	Frequency	Timeliness		
		2002	2008	International Standard
		T+	T+	T+
Industry				
Production & Turnover	M	7 W	6 W	9 W
Industrial Stocks	Q	20 W	16 W	n/r
Capital Assets in Industry	Q	20 W	16 W	n/r
CIP - Early estimate	A	14 M	12 M	10 M
CIP - Publication	A	23 M	23 M	18 M
ProdCOM	A	12 M	14 M	6 M
Building				
Employment	M	10 W	7 W	13 W
Earnings & Hours	M	12 W	10 W	13 W
Planing Permissions	Q	48 W	12 W	13 W
Census	A	29 M	18 M	18 M
Production in Building & Const.	Q	n/a	18 W	n/r
Services				
Retail Sales Index	M	9 W	7 W	9 W
Annual Services Inquiry	A	24 M	22 M	18 M
Overseas Travel	M	n/a	6 W	n/r
Tourism & Travel	Q	17 W	14 W	6 M
Household Travel Survey	Q	n/a	20 W	n/r
Road Freight Inquiry	A	25 M	8 M	5 M
Statistics of Port Traffic	A	10 M	6 M	8 M
Transport	A	n/a	12 M	n/r
Vehicle Licensing	M	10 W	4 W	n/r
Distribution & Services Earnings	Q	33 W	15 W	n/r
Agriculture				
Prices - Inputs/Outputs	M	10 W	8 W	7 W
Fishery	A	12 M	n/a	n/r
Land Sales	Q	25 W	n/a	n/r
Output, Input, Income - Final	A	10 M	6 M	9 M
Regional Accounts	A	n/a	11 M	n/r
June Crops and Livestock Survey - Final	A	6 M	12 M	10 M
Labour	A	7 M	n/a	8 M
Crop Production	A	7 M	7 M	9 M
December Survey	A	9 W	19 W	11 W
Size of Herd	B	7 M	n/a	23 W
June Pig Survey	A	5 W	5 W	11 W
Milk Statistics	M	36 D	30 D	45 D
	A - annual	M - monthly	D - days	BA - biannual
	Q - quarterly	W - weekly	B - biennial	T - triennial

Title	Frequency	Timeliness		
		2002	2008	International Standard
		T+	T+	T+
Agriculture (cont.)				
Earnings Survey	T	8 M	n/a	n/r
Slaughterings	M	6 W	5 W	8 W
Supply Balances - Meat	A	9 M	n/a	n/r
Supply Balances - Milk	A	8 M	n/a	n/r
Supply Balances - Cereals	A	8 M	4 M	n/r
Prices				
CPI	M	18 D	8 D	17 D
CPI - Detailed sub indices	M	n/a	8 D	n/r
CPI - Dublin and Outside Dublin	BA	n/a	19 D	n/r
WPI	M	24 D	24 D	30 D
	A - annual	M - monthly	D - days	BA - biannual
	Q - quarterly	W - weekly	B - biennial	T - triennial

Source: Statement of Strategy 2001 – 2003: First Progress Report
Statement of Strategy 2008 - 2011

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