

Press Statement

National Statistics Board

Report notes increasing importance of statistics

According to a report published today, statistics have an increasingly important role in the development of economic and social policy. This reflects the growing tendency, at national and EU levels, to put greater emphasis on evidence-based policy development. The report *Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002: Progress Report 2001* was issued by the National Statistics Board.

The report reviews the activities and achievements of the CSO during 2001 in pursuance of Board priorities. The Board has been aware for many years of the growing need for Ireland to develop social statistics. Accordingly, the Board strongly supported the CSO's request for additional resources to develop social modules in the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), as well as the commitment to undertake the new EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The Board has proposed that an inter-departmental social statistics "scoping" study be conducted to:

- ◆ identify areas of existing and expected social policy statistical needs
- ◆ identify and evaluate existing sources of administrative data in terms of their comprehensiveness, comparability, coverage, timeliness, and accessibility

A growing appreciation of the interdependency of discrete policies in promoting national well-being is focusing increased attention on the need for data coordination and integration. In this context, the Board considers it important that the CSO also develops a partnership with government departments and agencies in the collection and dissemination of other newly developing statistical areas (e.g. environment, new economy).

The Board commended the increased customer focus adopted by the CSO which has led to significant improvements, such as the design and presentation of data in CSO publications, the development of the CSO website, and the production of data series on diskettes.

The major effort of the NSB during 2002 is being directed towards developing its next Strategy for Statistics. In preparing its next Strategy, the Board plans to provide to Government its broad view of how our statistics need to develop, so that the CSO and other data producing agencies may address data issues strategically and comprehensively rather than reactively and incrementally.

For further information, contact Gerry Brady (NSB Secretary), at 01 498 4006 or nsb@cso.ie

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