



**Implementation of Strategy for Statistics  
2003-2008  
Progress Report**

**National Statistics Board**

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## Abbreviations

ASI	Annual Sales Index
CBFSAI	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland
CRS	Client Records System
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAST	Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism
DES	Department of Education and Science
DHC	Department of Health and Children
DJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
DSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU-SILC	EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions
GRO	General Registrar's Office
HPPI	House Purchase Price Index
HSE	Health Services Executive
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
ISDI	Irish Spatial Data Infrastructure
ISME	Irish Small and Medium Enterprises
ISS	Irish Statistical System
NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
NCPP	National Centre for Partnership and Performance
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NPPB	National Postcodes Project Board
NTS	National Travel Survey
NUI	National University of Ireland
OMC	Office of the Minister for Children
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number
QNHS	Quarterly National Household Survey
SEI	Sustainable Energy Ireland
SGSES	Steering Group on Social and Equality Statistics
SOGSI	Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion
SPAR	Statistical Potential of Administrative Records
SPAR BES	Business and Environment Administrative Records

## Chairperson's Preface

The main function of the National Statistics Board is to guide the strategic direction of the Central Statistics Office in meeting Ireland's needs for official statistics in economic, social and other areas. The main way in which the Board has sought to develop official statistics is through a series of strategies, which established priorities for official statistics in Ireland. This report presents a review of the progress that has been made over the period 2003-2005 in implementing the Board's 2003-2008 strategy<sup>1</sup>.

The Board is seeking to develop a whole-system approach to the collection and dissemination of statistics through greater collaboration between the key producers and the key users of statistics. In particular, the Board has encouraged the CSO to become more involved with all areas of the public sector where administrative records are maintained that could be used to generate official statistics. This report cites many examples of increased interaction between the CSO and the broader public sector. This interaction has become more important as policy-makers have become increasingly aware that good quality data contribute to the development and monitoring of policy and planning.

The report identifies some areas where progress has been slower than expected particularly in relation to a system-wide approach to the identification of important statistical information gaps. As the demand for ever-more up-to-date statistics continues unabated, so does the need for long-term work prioritisation and long-term development of a broader national statistical data infrastructure. Clearer identification of data priorities by Government Departments, the development of unique identifiers and a central business register, and the introduction of postcodes will greatly assist this work and contribute to ensuring that new data needs can be met in a timely and cost-effective manner. The Board is particularly hopeful that the introduction of a well-structured system of postcodes will significantly improve the information available across a broad span of areas of public interest.

The Board would like to thank and congratulate the CSO on the significant investment made in developing a whole-system focus and in supporting the evidence-based policy information needs of other departments - the "SPAR" reports were a very useful first step. During this period, great progress was also made in the ongoing macro-economic, business and social statistics work programmes.

**Professor emeritus Brendan Walsh**  
**Chairperson**

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<sup>1</sup> NSB (2003), "Strategy for Statistics, 2003-2008", Stationery Office, Dublin.



**Chapter**

**1**

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**Implementation of the  
Board's Strategy**

## 1.1 Introduction

This report examines the progress made on the statistical and organisational objectives outlined in the Board's 2003-2008 strategy. The NSB strategy focussed more comprehensively and cohesively on the challenge of developing the Irish Statistical System. The Board examined the progress made to-date in the implementation of the 2003-2008 strategy in the context of the four strands that were set out in the strategy:

- ◆ A comprehensive set of statistical frameworks covering three broad areas - economic, social and environmental;
- ◆ A networked infrastructure for developing statistics in Government Departments and Agencies;
- ◆ A mechanism for determining statistical priorities; and
- ◆ The development of statistical competence within the public service.

The progress made on developing these four strands is discussed in the remainder of this chapter. While considerable progress was made, there are a number of areas where the Board would like to see even greater advances. The most important of these have been highlighted in the conclusions and future priorities section.

As well as developing the potential of data holdings in Government Departments, there is also a need to review and further develop the data holdings within the CSO. A number of CSO social and economic surveys were launched or enhanced during 2003 to 2005. This progress and other developments within the CSO are reported on in the CSO's annual Statement of Strategy Progress reports<sup>2</sup>. The CSO also published a number of new key and thematic indicator reports as requested by the Board<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2 Statistical frameworks

There are various, broadly similar, national and international frameworks in use for examining and presenting social statistics data needs and data outputs. The principal value of such frameworks is to ensure that the data sources that are required to present a comprehensive picture of Irish society, the economy and the environment either exist or are being developed as part of a strategic approach to the implementation of the Board strategy. The report of the Steering Group on Social and Equality Statistics (SGSES) used a twelve-domain framework to analyse Irish social and equality data needs and data sources:

1. Health and Access to Health Care
2. Labour Market and Working Conditions
3. Income, Wealth and Poverty
4. Education and Training
5. Households and Families
6. Housing
7. Safety and Security
8. Social Relationships and Integration
9. Environment
10. Transportation
11. Lifestyles and Consumer Expenditure
12. Population

<sup>2</sup> CSO (2005): *Statement of Strategy 2004-2006: Progress Report 2004*

<sup>3</sup> CSO (2006): *Measuring Ireland's Progress*; CSO (2005): *Women and Men in Ireland 2005*; and CSO (2006): *Construction and Housing in Ireland*



In presenting information for the domains of critical interest, the CSO used an adapted form of this framework for the national progress and gender indicator reports. Domains used by other National Statistical Institutes and international organisations were also examined to increase the international comparability of the indicator reports. The work of the CSO teams that examined enterprise data needs and data sources, as part of the cross-departmental administrative records study, concluded that the existing economic and macro-economic frameworks in use by Eurostat, and other international Agencies, were sufficiently comprehensive and balanced for an Irish context. These frameworks are both well established and widely used.

While the Board considers that national frameworks covering the economic, social and environmental domains have now been adequately developed by the CSO, there are concerns about the lack of data available under certain domains, for example housing, safety and security, and transportation. The recent formal involvement of the CSO in crime and poverty statistics is welcomed, and the Board would like to see developments in other domains, such as education and health, where the existing body of statistics and administrative data are not at present sufficiently developed to meet priority data needs.

### **1.3 Statistics network**

A central objective in the 2003-2008 NSB strategy was to develop a networked system of statistical users and producers across the public sector with the CSO playing a strong co-ordinating role. The Board has encouraged the CSO to increase its representation on inter-Departmental Committees, and to increase the level of informal contact between the CSO, statisticians working in Government Departments, and other public sector data providers and data users.

The Board has directly supported some developments. Members of the NSB were directly involved in the SGSES and enterprise SPAR reports. The approach used by the Board in the SGSES report was to bring together data users and producers across the Civil Service onto one Committee that was convened by the Board chairperson. This approach resulted in the clearer identification of data gaps and of the required next steps to address these data gaps. The SGSES process very significantly raised awareness across Government Departments of the advantages in progressing a whole-system approach to statistics and information. The Board was involved in preliminary discussions concerning the establishment of a cross-departmental group to examine the benefits to be gained from establishing a unique business identifier and a central business register. The Board was represented on the National Postcodes Project Board and published a paper outlining the wide range of statistical benefits that would accrue from their introduction<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Increasing the value of existing data holdings**

The Board concentrated its efforts in 2003-2005 primarily on the development of social statistics. In 2003, the Board published the so-called SGSES report that outlined the issues involved in developing Irish social and equality statistics<sup>5</sup>. The CSO progressed the Board's report with a more detailed analysis of the social data holdings in Government Departments and Agencies (SPAR report)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> NSB (2005): "Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises, Appendix 2"

<sup>5</sup> NSB (2003): "Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics to meet Policy Needs"

<sup>6</sup> CSO (2003): "An Examination of Data Holdings in Six Government Departments"

The social SPAR effort involved the CSO setting-up six teams of senior CSO statistical staff. Each team was assigned a Government Department and tasked with making an in-depth analysis of the available administrative and survey data in that Department. As part of the process, the teams collected information on data needs to supplement what had already been collected in the SGSES work. The SPAR work involved the CSO teams working with individual owners of administrative data. This direct contact has made these data producers more aware of support services available from the CSO such as classifications coding, and user-friendly web-based dissemination tools. The Board strongly recommends that the CSO continue this work with Departments to encourage and facilitate the wider use of consistent coding standards and classifications.

A subsequent SPAR exercise undertook a similar examination of the enterprise data needs and data holdings in Government Departments and their Agencies. The Board initiated this study to identify the priority business and environment data needs and data sources. A report containing the findings of an Expert Group that the Board established to look at these issues, along with a summary of the findings of the CSO teams that assisted this Expert Group<sup>7</sup> was published in November 2005. A more detailed CSO report that examined the principal enterprise data holdings across the public sector is available on the CSO website<sup>8</sup>.

The potential for the census to provide sample frames for further CSO surveys has largely been untapped to-date. However given the difficulty of selecting a more-focussed sample for topics that only have relevance for a small proportion of the population, the need for such extended usage of the census is being supported by the Board. A particular case in point is the National Disability Survey. The 2002 Census of Population estimated that 8.3% of persons had a disability. The disability data from the April 2006 Census of Population was used to select a targeted sample for a CSO National Disability Survey (NDS) being conducted in September-October 2006. Without a nationally representative frame or register to identify persons with a disability before commencing interviewing, a very significant cost and effort would be extended in calling to households where no person had a disability.

### Inter-Departmental Committees

The CSO is increasingly involved in a very wide range of inter-departmental committees that typically also include other administrative and statistical data producers and data users. Appendix 3 contains a summary of some of the inter-departmental and other national committees that CSO staff made a significant contribution to. In aggregate, these committees represent a substantial and increasing investment of CSO senior management resources. Much of the CSO involvement has arisen following on from the SGSES and SPAR discussions. The Board is strongly supportive of this involvement despite the significant impact that it has on the time of senior CSO staff. The remaining part of this Section briefly reviews some of these committees.

The Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion (SOGSI) is one of the highest level inter-departmental committees on social issues within the public sector. This Committee generally meets in advance of the monthly Cabinet meetings on Social Inclusion. The CSO has made a number of presentations to SOGSI, particularly on statistical issues associated with measuring income and poverty indicators. This forum presents a unique opportunity for the CSO to be involved in a broad range of issues as policies are being formulated.

7 NSB (2005): "Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises"

8 CSO (2006): "Statistical Potential of Administrative Records: An Examination of Enterprise Data Holdings in Government Departments"

The CSO has been using liaison groups for well over a decade. Initially these groups had a broad focus on all issues within a particular CSO Division. In recent years, the work of liaison groups has been largely supplemented, and partially replaced, by project groups focussed on specific issues and by cross-departmental groups.

The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) includes at least three major modules and a larger number of update modules in the annual survey workload cycle. For most modules, a project group of key users/sponsors of the module is formed. These groups hold a small number of meetings with the specific purpose of developing a questionnaire based on the statistical output required from the module. Contacts made during these discussions are often continued on an advisory basis, and typically bring the CSO into contact with staff in policy areas not regularly covered by the ongoing CSO statistical releases.

The Census of Population combines a variety of consultative mechanisms to agree the questionnaire that is presented to Government for approval. Census project groups are established as required, particularly in relation to the development of new questions. Such groups ensure that the output from new modules and new questions meet the needs of the main users of such data. An example of such co-operation was the process for agreeing the wording of the ethnic or cultural background question in the 2006 census.

Examples of other committees that the CSO contributes to include: various Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland committees; a Department of the Environment House Purchase Price Index group; Standing Committee on Health Statistics; an Office of the Minister for Children project team for the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland; and a Department of Justice gender pay gap group.

#### **1.4 Statistical priorities**

As part of the enterprise SPAR study, the Board set-up an Expert Group comprised of key users of enterprise-based data from the public and private sectors. This group identified five priority areas for statistical development:

1. Construction
2. Transport and Travel
3. Energy
4. Environment
5. Research and Development and Innovation

The Board endorsed these five areas as requiring further statistical development and recommended that the CSO work, in conjunction with the relevant Government Departments and Agencies, to advance the specific proposals of the Expert Group. The recommendations from the Expert Group and the CSO teams are listed in Appendix 5.

## Data/statistics strategies

A key recommendation from Government, arising from the SGSES report, was that each Government Department should develop a formal data/statistics strategy. The Board published guidelines, developed by the CSO, to assist Departments in this process<sup>9</sup>. Each Department was asked to establish an appropriate committee bringing together data users (including appropriate outside experts and data users) and data producers to design and deliver its statistics strategy. This broadly involved four tasks:

- ◆ Determine how, and to what extent, the Department's data needs can be met from within;
- ◆ Establish what information not internally available is required;
- ◆ Identify the data needs in respect of complex and cross-cutting issues with which the Department is concerned; and
- ◆ Identify how the skills of its staff in using data as a tool for policy evaluation and development can be enhanced.

This has turned out to be quite a challenging task and Departments have had mixed results in progressing this process. The Department of Social and Family Affairs has made outstanding progress reflecting the central importance of their data holdings, and the extensive use being made of their data both internally and externally. The Department of Health and Children has also made significant progress building upon earlier work undertaken as preparation for the establishment of a Health Information Quality Authority. The Board congratulates these Departments on the progress they have already made as outlined in their Statements of Strategy but stresses that much more commitment is needed from government departments generally. The development of these strategies will greatly assist the Board in identifying priority areas for statistical development.

## Data matching

The SPAR social report mapped the existing situation with regard to the availability and demand for social statistics. The recommendations from the CSO teams are listed in Appendix 4. A key recommendation, in terms of maximising the value of administrative and survey data on persons, is the recommendation related to integrating data at the individual record level. In an Irish context, that effectively means more widespread collection of the PPS Number to facilitate cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses of data for statistical purposes. The Board is strongly in favour of the use of the PPSN identifier across data sources rather than any alternative approach such as maintaining a register that would attempt to reconcile an increasing number of unique identifiers.

The CSO directly collects the PPSN in a number of surveys (National Employment Survey, Statistics on Income and Living conditions, National Disability Survey). The QNHS is also examining the issues involved in collecting the PPSN. However the risk of an adverse effect on response rates is more significant, in a statistical context, when the interviewer will be calling back to the same household for four more quarters. The EU-SILC has largely overcome these issues by offering the householder a 'lighter' interview in cases where they provide the CSO with their PPSN to enable the CSO to collect that data directly from public sector administrative data sources.

<sup>9</sup> These guidelines were published on the NSB website in March 2004 as "*Best Practice Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of formal Data/Statistics Strategies in Government Departments*", [http://www.nsb.ie/pdf\\_docs/Data\\_Strategy\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.nsb.ie/pdf_docs/Data_Strategy_Guidelines.pdf).

A new Division was established within CSO, in late 2005, to focus more specifically on adding statistical value to data sets through processes such as data matching. This work is consistent with seeking to efficiently meet new EU demands for more statistics in areas such as health and education while minimising the need for new data collection. In some instances, modifications to the associated administrative data forms and IT systems may be necessary to add additional key information items in order to solve priority unmet data needs. Such work is expensive and can only really occur in conjunction with the need for other administrative amendments being made to the data source. Hence the sequence in which the CSO examines the major administrative data holdings should be determined by a combination of statistical data priorities and the timing of IT developments within departments.

### Unique business identifier and central business register

The Board's enterprise SPAR report included two recommendations on cross-organisation issues that are fundamental to efficient statistical data collection and use of enterprise data:

- ◆ In order to reduce the burden on respondents and to add significant value to data collection, a cross-Departmental group should be established to investigate the introduction of a unique business identifier and registration system; and
- ◆ The cross-Departmental group dealing with the unique business identifier should also consider the best solution for the ongoing maintenance of a central business register.

The existing situation has created a multiplicity of similar data collections because of the lack of adequate mechanisms to make efficient statistical use of administrative enterprise data. The CSO is also engaged in an ongoing onerous task of attempting to maintain a central business register using indirect mechanisms such as changes in the electricity supply customer register. A central business register would help the CSO to assign business sector codes to various administrative registers – the need for such coding was expressed by some departments when outlining their data needs.

### Data protocol

In conjunction with encouraging the increased usage of a single unique identifier, the Board has approved a protocol outlining how the CSO will use and protect external data holdings made available to it by Government Departments and Agencies. The CSO data protocol, which has been approved by the Data Protection Commissioner, primarily covers any work undertaken within the CSO to match the individual records contained in two or more data holdings, at least one of which originates outside the Office (including data holdings that are a by-product of the administrative system). It covers any assistance the CSO may give to other public authorities to enable them to link data holdings under their control for statistical purposes. In all cases the sole purpose of such linking is to produce a consolidated data file that can serve as the basis for more extensive statistical analysis.

The Board has drafted a data protocol that would cover situations where Departments were directly trying to match data holdings for the purpose of enhanced statistical analyses. The draft protocol was discussed at SOGSI and will be brought to the Data Protection Commissioner before being finalised.

## 1.5 *Statistical competence development*

The CSO is pursuing a twin strategy to promote the level of statistical competence across Government Departments. Statisticians are now directly seconded to a number of Departments<sup>10</sup>. In addition the CSO, through formal and informal contact with staff in Departments, is providing advice on classifications, coding systems, and dissemination methods. The CSO is also giving advice on the structuring and accessibility of data systems. The Board has encouraged the CSO to build up its own internal resources primarily tasked with undertaking work for Departments (two new CSO Divisions have been established). Much of this work arises from the next steps following-on from the identification of key data holdings in the SPAR reports. Local Authorities and other Agencies have made extensive use of the SPAR reports and approach as a means of examining their own statistical situation. In a number of cases, the CSO has provided assistance and advice to these Bodies.

Statistical data competence varies across Departments. In some cases, it is embedded in particular individuals while in a small number of Departments, it has been formalised in statistical and information unit sections. A number of new Agencies have been established (often with direct links to a parent Department), e.g. the Office for Social Inclusion, the Office of the Minister for Children, and the Health and Quality Authority. These new Bodies typically have more responsibility for, and take a more direct involvement in, the gathering and interpretation of statistical data than their parent Departments, and they tend to quickly establish good relations with the relevant units within the CSO. This co-operation is vital to ensure that the Irish Statistical System develops and operates efficiently, and that the statistical value of data is fully gleaned.

The new statistical indicator reports being developed by the CSO are primarily aimed at providing ready-access to user-friendly statistical reports. These reports are a follow-on from the development of user-friendly statistical releases that was undertaken by the CSO during previous Board strategies. The indicator reports focus on the most important indicators, provide time-series and international comparisons, and include definitions of the statistical concepts behind the data. The metadata aspects are encouraging more sophisticated debates nationally on the quality and appropriateness of different data measures. This has been particularly true in the context of the EU SILC survey. The initial publication of results from this survey by the CSO sparked a very active national discussion on the statistical measurement of poverty.

These statistical debates have been assisted by the wider availability of CSO data. All releases and publications are available free of charge from the CSO website, and typically extra work is undertaken to make the tabular data in reports also available in excel format. The wider availability of the EU SILC data is a good example of the CSO systematic approach to dissemination. In addition, the CSO has been advising other public-sector Agencies, through workshops and bilateral discussions, on the use of web-based tools such as PC-axis.

<sup>10</sup> Education and Science; Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Health and Children; Revenue Commissioners; and Social and Family Affairs. A number of other Departments are in discussion with CSO..

## 1.6 Conclusions and future priorities

The work of the CSO teams with government departments highlighted two critical issues that would increase the value and use of data currently being collected and reduce the data collection burden on individual persons and on enterprises. The first is the introduction of a unique business identifier that would result in a more integrated and efficient data collection system. It would permit consistent measurement of the actual response burden on business and the distribution of that burden by business size and type. It would also be possible to reduce duplicate data collections of some variables by making use of data collected in another government funded survey rather than collecting the same data again. Given the very broad policy and statistical value that a unique business identifier would result in, the Board recommended in the SPAR enterprise report that a cross-Departmental Group should be established by Government to consider the issues involved in the creation and ongoing maintenance of a unique business identifier. Such a cross-department approach will ensure that all of the needs of the various users and collectors of data on enterprises can be considered in a co-ordinated manner.

The data protection laws in Ireland strictly limit the potential use of the PPS Number for sharing of administrative information between departments. While these limitations seek to protect the rights to privacy of citizens, they may sometimes operate to the disadvantage of individual citizens in certain circumstances. They also result in a higher burden of administration and repetitive form filling than would be the case if the statistical aspects of this information could be shared. A wider use and automated capture of the PPS Number would avoid the current situation where departments, for different purposes, are separately duplicating effort and increasing the response burden on individuals in order to maintain their own databases. The Board recommends that the CSO continue to work with government departments and their agencies, at national and local level, to further develop the statistical potential of existing administrative data including the possibility of the CSO matching data files across different departments for the purposes of comprehensively analysing cross-cutting issues. In some instances, there needs to be significant development of individual social data sources and the Board would like to see more progress being made by departments on some of the more specific recommendations in the SPAR reports (see Appendix 4).

Further progress needs to be made in the development of data/statistics strategies across government. This will be a key component of the Board's work during the 2006-2008 period. Effectively the Board needs each Department to identify and prioritise their statistical data gaps and to maintain an ongoing inventory of their data sources. The Board will use this information to determine whether unmet needs should be addressed through new statistical data collection or through the enhancement of existing survey and administrative data holdings. In this manner, both Government and data providers can be assured that new data collection is only being recommended after an in-depth analysis of the existing data situation.

The two SPAR reports contained many important and necessary recommendations, one of which related to improved information on travel in Ireland. While recognising that it would have significant resource implications, the Board recommends that the establishment of a National Travel Survey should be a priority for the CSO. The survey should cover all modes of travel for all purposes (work, school or college, business, recreation, etc.). It would present an opportunity to establish a comprehensive and wide-ranging data series across all transport modes, and provide regular information linking place of residence and place of work.

The introduction of postcodes will greatly facilitate the capture of detailed small area geography in such a survey, as well as providing many opportunities for increased data management and analysis particularly at sub-national level. The availability of a web-based national postcodes address database that would readily allow data users to aggregate their data to electoral division and administrative county levels would greatly improve the Irish information infrastructure both for policy-makers and for the public and business in general.





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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1      Board Functions under the Statistics Act, 1993**

### **Section 10 - Functions of Central Statistics Office:**

- (1) The functions of the Office shall be the collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State.
- (2) The Office shall have authority to co-ordinate official statistics compiled by public authorities to ensure, in particular, adherence to statistical standards and the use of appropriate classifications.
- (3) The Office shall have authority to assess the statistical potential of the records maintained by public authorities and, in conjunction with them, to ensure that this potential is realised in so far as resources permit.

### **Section 19 - Function of National Statistics Board:**

Section 19 of the Statistics Act, 1993 describes the function of the Board:

- (1) The function of the National Statistics Board in guiding, with the agreement of the Taoiseach, the strategic direction of the Office shall include in particular:
  - (a) establishing priorities for the compilation and development of official statistics;
  - (b) assessing the resources of staff, equipment and finance that should be made available for the compilation of official statistics;
  - (c) arbitrating, subject to the final decision of the Taoiseach, on any conflicts which may arise between the Office and other public authorities relating to the extraction of statistics from records or to the co-ordination of statistical activities.

## **Appendix 2      Membership of the Board**

### **Board Members (current membership)**

Professor emeritus Brendan Walsh  
Economics Department, University College Dublin (Chairperson)

Mr. Frank Cunneen  
Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Mr Ciarán Dolan  
General Secretary, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association

Ms. Mary Doyle  
Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr. Derek Moran  
Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance

Ms. Pat O'Hara  
Policy Manager, Western Development Commission

Mr. Paul Sweeney  
Economic Advisor, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Mr Donal Garvey  
Director General, Central Statistics Office (ex officio member)

**Secretary** Mr Gerry Brady (Senior Statistician, CSO)

## Appendix 3 CSO participation in Public Sector Committees

Committee/Project	Lead organisation	Description
Tourism Research Advisory Co-ordination Group	Arts, Sport and Tourism	Arising from the Report of the Tourism Policy Review Group "New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action" a Research Advisory Co-ordination Group, with representatives of the industry, Tourism State Agencies, relevant Government Departments and the research community was established. This group met for the first time on December 15, 2005.
Joint Institution Tourism Group	Arts, Sport and Tourism	First convened in October 2005, this group is focused on North-South co-operation and cross-border development relating to Tourism. The group includes: the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism; CSO, Tourism Ireland; Fáilte Ireland; NISRA; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment; and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. It is envisaged this group will meet at least twice a year.
Tourism Liaison Network	Arts, Sport and Tourism, Tourism Ireland, and Fáilte Ireland	CSO has very active contact with DAST and agencies (Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland). Meetings are held at 2 levels: Annual Steering Group Level which usually includes Director level participation and tends to be strategic in nature and more regular Working Group Level which is generally more focused on specific data issues/needs.
Sports Facilities Audit Working Group	Arts, Sport and Tourism	This group is tasked with developing, and advising on the conduct of, an audit of national and regional sports facilities.
CSO-CBFSAI Statistics Liaison Committee (SLC)	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland, and CSO	Strategic direction of co-operative work and other relationships between the CSO and the CBFSAI in all statistical matters.
CSO-CBFSAI Working Group on Data Collection and Compilation (WGDCC)	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland, and CSO	Managing and implementing co-operation between CSO and CBFSAI on data collection and compilation aspects of mutual interest (including but not confined to financial enterprises)
CSO-CBFSAI Sub-Group on BOP and IIP (SGBOP IIP)	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland, and CSO	Managing and implementing co-operation between CSO and CBFSAI on data collection and compilation aspects of mutual interest, in particular the new security by security data collection system and implementation of the SPAR recommendations.
CSO-CBFSAI Sub-Group on Financial Accounts (SGFA)	Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland, and CSO	Management of all aspects of co-operative work and matters of mutual interest between CSO and CBFSAI in the compilation of annual and quarterly financial accounts statistics.

<b>Committee/Project</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Common Purpose Group	Common Purpose Group	Substantive presentation around the theme of “Statistics - who do you trust and why ?”, to leadership training group for business and social and voluntary organisations. Course organised by Common Purpose which is an international non-profit making organisation now represented in Dublin and Cork
National Postcodes Project Board	Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	<p>Membership comprises representatives of: Fingal County Council (Chair); Commission for Communications Regulation (Secretariat); CSO; Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources; Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; An Post; Communications Workers Union; ESB Networks; Irish Association of International Express Carriers; Irish Bankers Federation; and the Irish Direct Marketing Association.</p> <p>The purpose of this Board is to bring the proposal to introduce a public postcode system in Ireland to the point where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a technical specification agreed by the National Postcode Project Board;</li> <li>a cost benefit analysis quantifying the impact on the postal sector and the national economy compared with a “do nothing” option;</li> <li>a project plan for the delivery of the postcode system, and;</li> <li>an agreed structure for the ownership, management and funding of the system.</li> </ul>
Business Services Statistics Liaison Group	CSO	<p>This group meets infrequently but as needs arise. The purpose is to inform users about developments and try and address their data needs/concerns. Group is comprised of industry reps (Small firms, Chambers of Commerce, IBEC, Banks, Retail representatives, Department of Finance, Central Bank, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment) etc.</p> <p>Developments in the ASI have been discussed with this group, and in particular future developments such as SERVCOM.</p> <p>Following SPAR-BES several unilateral meetings have been held (or are requested) with agencies or industry groups. For example there have been meetings held with Forfas to discuss developments in Business Services statistics.</p>

Committee/Project	Lead organisation	Description
Public Sector Statistics Network	CSO	<p>The Public Sector Statistics Network is a working title for the initiative undertaken by CSO Database Dissemination Unit to share its standards, tools and expertise with other Public Sector organisations.</p> <p>The initiative is marketed as providing an organisation with a 'one stop shop' for managing and disseminating statistics.</p> <p>The overall benefits to the Irish Statistical System include the cost savings and added value from organisations using the same toolkit, standards, classifications and methodologies to manage and disseminate their statistics.</p> <p>The benefits to a public sector organisation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a simple and proven standard methodology for managing and disseminating statistics; and</li> <li>a software toolkit to support this methodology (including the dissemination of interactive tables on the internet) provided free of charge.</li> <li>a framework from within which organisations can develop and fulfil their respective data requirements.</li> </ul>
Earnings Statistics Liaison Group	CSO	Liaison Group initiated by CSO to meet to discuss issues concerned with the production of earnings statistics.
Labour Market Statistics Liaison Group	CSO	This group meets infrequently but as needs arise. The work of the group helps to ensure that new developments meet the needs of the key users of statistics and helps the National Statistics Board to formulate the direction of statistical policy. The group is comprised of representatives from the Departments of the Taoiseach, Enterprise Trade and Employment, Finance, Social and Family Affairs, Justice Equality and Law Reform, ESRI, Fás, NESC, NESF, IBEC, NUI Maynooth and NUI Dublin.
QNHS module Liaison Groups	CSO	Liaison groups are set-up for each QNHS module as appropriate. Membership varies depending on the topic but will always include the module sponsor organisation, relevant Government Departments and any other relevant third parties. The work of the group concentrates on identifying the key data needs for the module in terms of statistical outputs and subsequently designing the module questionnaire.
Pensions Group	CSO	An informal group of CSO and the Pensions Board exists. We meet irregularly but occasionally frequently (as needs arise). The purpose of the group is to establish how best to measure Pensions Activity in Ireland. The Pensions Board often facilitate meetings with industry groups or other Pension Associations.

<b>Committee/Project</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Retail Sales Liaison Group	CSO	<p>This group meets infrequently but as needs arise. The purpose is to inform users about developments and try and address their data needs/concerns. Group is comprised of industry representatives (Small firms, IBEC, Banks, Retail representatives, Finance, Central Bank, DETE) etc.</p> <p>The current layout of the RSI release, and methodological book was agreed by this group. Other developments underway, such as additional Motor Trade Sector data is as a result of demands presented by this group.</p> <p>Following the establishment of Retail Ireland, CSO now attends their meetings on occasion to present papers, discuss developments etc</p>
Transport Liaison Group	CSO	<p>Arising from SPAR-BES project, CSO and DoT are now in regular contact. Topics of discussion vary as do other participants (other Depts and Agencies).</p>
Informal awareness campaign around development of earnings and related statistics	CSO	<p>Meeting and consulting various groups (IBEC, ISME, ICTU, DETE, NCPP) explaining the “new vision” for earnings and workplace data and how this vision could be concentrated in 2 distinct surveys (NES, EHECS) while discarding historical short-term inquiries. Awareness campaign ongoing and now being driven by staff of Earnings and Employment Costs and Business Statistics Integration division.</p>
SPAR and SPAR BES presentations to management groups in Departments	CSO	<p>Many tailored presentations given - most extensive was to Principal Officer and higher grades in Education and Science about SPAR DES report. Very positive reaction to talk.</p>
Irish Spatial Data Infrastructure	Environment, Heritage and Local Government	<p>The ISDI encompasses all of the activities involved in the capture, maintenance and usage of spatial data. This includes promoting the usage of consistent spatial data tags, and coordinating the use of electronic Ordnance Survey maps to illustrate data. The project also has an EU dimension. The first meeting of this Committee was held in September 2003. There were around 12 meetings during the 2003-2005 period.</p> <p>The Committee comprises: Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; CSO; Department of the Taoiseach; Land Registry; Local Government and Computer Services Board; N.U.I. Maynooth; Ordnance Survey; Revenue Commissioners; and U.C.C..</p> <p>Two sub-Committees were set up to examine issues relating to the creation and usage of new small data output areas for Ireland. These areas will comprise around 65-350 households. They would be built up from a combination of Census of Population and GeoDirectory data.</p>

<b>Committee/Project</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>
House Purchase Price Index	Environment, Heritage and Local Government	DoEHLG have been involved in compiling a HPPI for the past number of years. During 2005 CSO were asked to get involved as the index was not performing as expected. The consultants involved in the project - Mazars and FD systems – have been involved in these meetings.
SPC Partnership Group	Eurostat/Member States	CSO Paper entitled “Measurement of hours worked, earnings, labour costs and some related labour market themes - Are we following a coherent, consistent approach in the EU?”
Standing Committee on the impact of investment on the General Government Balance (GGB)	Finance	Arising from a Government Decision of 4 February 2003 the Standing Committee was established to clarify and develop further the understanding of the way in which infrastructural projects including private sector/NDFA financed projects impact on the General Government Balance and to advise Departments on this as issues arise. Membership consists of civil servants from the Department of Finance, the Department of the Taoiseach, the CSO and relevant spending Departments, one private sector expert and a representative from the National Development Finance Agency.
Standing Committee on Health Statistics	Health and Children and CSO	<p>The role of the Standing Committee on Health Statistics is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide focus and give strategic direction to the improved collection, dissemination, analysis and use of health statistics;</li> <li>Monitor the implementation of the Data and Statistics Strategy in the context of the Department’s National Health Information Strategy and the strategic requirements of the two organisations;</li> <li>Identify and assess the statistical resources required;</li> <li>Provide a forum for the discussion of areas of mutual interest and concern in the area of health statistics; and</li> <li>Involve other organisations, as required, in the work of the Committee, and to establish subgroups to deal with specific issues and/or to progress specific areas.</li> </ul> <p>The first meeting was held in November 2005. The Committee includes representatives from the Department of Health and Children, CSO, Health Research Board, Health Services Executive, and the Health Information Quality Authority.</p>



Committee/Project	Lead organisation	Description
Research Sub-group of the Working Group on NAPS and Health	Health and Children, and Institute of Public Health in Ireland	<p>The first meeting attended by the CSO was June 2005. The Research Sub-group comprises: Health and Children; HSE; Finance; Social and Family Affairs (OSI); Institute of Public Health in Ireland; Combat Poverty Agency; Health Research Board; Pavee Point; and ESRI.</p> <p>In the context of targets 16-18 and Part C of the Report of the Working Group on NAPS and Health, the Research Sub-group will report to that working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extent to which the targets of the Report can be monitored with available information;</li> <li>to identify gaps in the information necessary to monitor progress towards the targets and to recommend which body should take the lead on the collection and analysis of the necessary information;</li> <li>to recommend a research programme to increase understanding of the relationships between key indicators and guide further targets, indicators and implementation strategies;</li> <li>to recommend on the basis of available information and best practice, health targets and indicators to the next phase of NAPS.</li> </ul>
National Drug Related Deaths Index	Health and Children, and Justice, Equality and Law Reform	<p>Committee overviewing and advising the work of the Health Research Board in establishing an index of drug-related deaths, and deaths among drug users in Ireland.</p>
National Cardiovascular Information System (NCIS)	Health and Children, and the Institute of Public Health of Ireland	<p>The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and the National Cardiovascular Information Systems (NCIS) Working Group plans to test some of the proposed data standards related to demographic and socio-economic data of cardiac patients in specific modules of the National Cardiovascular Information System currently being developed. These data standards should also be meaningful in other settings where similar types of data are collected, e.g. national surveys, population census and social welfare. A pilot survey has been conducted in a number of hospital settings. If the pilot study is successful the next step will be to consider their possible use in other health information systems, particularly patient care settings. The Working Group hopes that by doing this work, it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the methodology to assess the NAPS target in relation to cardiac disease by using the NCIS and also to assess other health information systems in relation to other NAPS targets; and</li> <li>Stimulate a more comprehensive research programme into demographic and socio-economic issues in the health services and its health information systems.</li> </ul> <p>The Working Group includes representatives from the Department of Health and Children, CSO, IPHI and the Royal College of Surgeons</p>

<b>Committee/Project</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>
OMC Research Development Advisory Group	Health and Children (Office of the Minister for Children)	<p>The main purpose of the group is to provide an information sharing and discussion forum for researchers and persons involved in policy-making. One of its functions is the development of indicators to be used in a State of the Nation's Children report.</p> <p>The group includes representatives of the Department of Health and Children, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, academic researchers from a number of universities and institutes of technology, and CSO.</p>
Contract committee of the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland	Health and Children (Office of the Minister for Children)	<p>Committee with responsibility for the drafting of the contract for the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland. In 2000, at the request of the Departments of Health and Children and of Social and Family Affairs, the Health Research Board oversaw the tendering of a design brief which would guide the commissioning of a longitudinal study. As a result of this exercise, a design brief was submitted in July 2001. The Government decided to establish a National Longitudinal Study of Children in 2002 based on the Design Brief. The Central Statistics Office is formally associated with the Study under Section 11 of the Statistics Act, 1993, but will have no on-going operational involvement in the Study other than providing advice on issues of confidentiality in the context of the Statistics Act (1993). The aim of the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland is to study the factors which contribute to or undermine the wellbeing of children in contemporary Irish families, and, through this, contribute to the setting of effective and responsive policies relating to children and to the design of services for children and their families. The study will include two cohorts: Birth cohort (9 month olds) which will be a sample of not less than 10,000 children; 9 year cohort which will be a sample of not less than 8,000 children. There will be two data sweeps (at aged nine months old and at three years) for the birth cohort and two for the nine year cohort (at the time of enrolment and at thirteen years).</p>
Project Team for the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland	Health and Children (Office of the Minister for Children)	<p>The CSO will be represented on the Project Team for the National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland which will be set-up once the contract for the Study has been signed. The Project Team will be a team established by the Minister to monitor progress on the Study and to ensure its implementation in line with the terms of the contract.</p>

<b>Committee/Project</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Irish Marine Development Organisation	Irish Marine Development Organisation	Following the SPAR-BES project, IMDO approached CSO (Transport) during 2005 to discuss a proposal to establish a new frontier survey of hauliers. CSO met with IMDO on June 10 2005 and with IMDO and DoT on July 5 and October 20 2005. Since the last meeting, IMDO has now formally moved from DCMNR to DoT and at this stage it is not clear if this project will continue or not.
Gender Pay Gap group	Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Group set up as a response to partnership agreement. Involved all the usual partnership participants. Various papers prepared and explanations delivered around factors influencing pay gap and its measurement. Member of sub-group to select consultant for further research and reviewer of output. Many meetings attended.
Forum on the workplace of the future	National Centre For Partnership and Performance	Forum involved four panels. The CSO was a member of the "Policy and Supports" panel. The Report contains recommendation concerning the need to support NSB strategy and noting the promise it holds for data on/about workplace issues. Follow up work in progress involving CSO and "National Implementation Group" for driving forward report recommendations.
National Anti-Poverty Strategy Technical Advisory Group	Social and Family Affairs	Committee overviewing and advising the work of the Office for Social Inclusion in relation to technical issues (such as the appropriate strategy for the measurement of poverty etc.) in the context of the NAPS.
Energy Statistics Co-Ordinating Group	Sustainable Energy Ireland and CSO	The work of the Group involves the development of new statistics on energy across a wide range of surveys and sectors. The CSO has facilitated the work of the Group by providing access to data for analysis purposes and by modifying questionnaires to obtain more detailed energy data. This has made it possible for SEI to introduce a number of new reports (including those on the industrial sector). The Group is continuing to identify new data needs and how these can be met via additional questions and/or new surveys.
Assistant Secretaries Implementation Group on the Information Society (ASIG)	Taoiseach	The ASIG , as its name implies, is the group overseeing the implementation of the Information Society. There are representatives of all Government agencies on the group.
Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion	Taoiseach	To discuss important issues on social inclusion and to review documents for presentation to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion. All Government Departments involved in these matters are represented on the Group.

<b>Committee/Project</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Contact group for the Affordable Housing Initiative	Taoiseach	The Contact Group is involved in the implementation of the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) which was proposed as part of the Sustaining Agreement. It is chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach and also comprises civil servants from the Department of Finance, Office of Public Works and the Central Statistics Office to ensure that the model will not have any impact on General Government Balance (GGB).

## Appendix 4 Social SPAR<sup>11</sup> Recommendations

### General Recommendations

These recommendations are of a cross-cutting nature largely directed towards the development of an integrated and comprehensive approach to the production of statistics across the public service. Implementation of these recommendations will greatly facilitate the undertaking of cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses that explore more fully the complexity of society in Ireland.

**Recommendation 1:** Departments should ensure that related data sources are capable of being integrated at the individual record level.

**Recommendation 2:** There should be greater collaboration between government departments and the CSO to ensure that the statistical potential of administrative records is realised efficiently, and that duplication within the system is minimised.

**Recommendation 3:** Departments should establish mechanisms to regularly review their information needs as the statistical information available from official data sources develops.

**Recommendation 4:** Some social statistics are more meaningful at the individual, family or household level. Where relevant, data holdings should be structured so that case-level or event-based information can be aggregated to compile individual, household and family statistics.

**Recommendation 5:** All official data sources should use standard classifications and coding-systems. The CSO should take a lead role in promoting, maintaining and disseminating these classifications.

**Recommendation 6:** The CSO should work with departments to develop a core set of demographic and socio-economic variables. These could either be independently collected in administrative schemes and surveys or preferably, subject to meeting data protection restrictions, available via a central repository such as the CRS. Spatial information and nationality should be included in this core set.

**Recommendation 7:** Individual departments should develop a common look and content in the design of their administrative scheme application forms. This will ensure that the core information is collected in an identical manner across all schemes.

**Recommendation 8:** Departments should give priority to developing the data holdings that have information on persons not living in permanent households, i.e. the homeless and persons living in institutions, as these are outside the coverage of the CSO sample household surveys.

**Recommendation 9:** All statistics compiled in government departments should adhere to the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. In addition, where statistical reports are published from department data holdings, these should be published in a consistent format and adhere to a defined publication timeliness.

**Recommendation 10:** All departments should be aware of the emerging SDI initiative and take it into account when organising the spatial elements of their data. The ISDI should examine the policy needs for postcodes.

<sup>11</sup> Statistical Potential of Administrative Records – report available on [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie).

**Recommendation 11:** Departments should increase the level of statistical competency in data processing and analysis among their staff.

**Recommendation 12:** Departments should ensure that all statistical information of use to policy-making, collected in administrative schemes, is computerised.

### *Specific recommendations*

Although each of these recommendations is specific to an individual department, implementation of them would have cross-cutting benefits in many cases.

**Recommendation 13:** DES should take measures to develop an integrated individual pupil database covering first, second and third level cycles of education. The PPS Number should be included in the State examination databases.

**Recommendation 14:** The inclusion of the PPS Number in the Register of Electors should be considered.

**Recommendation 15:** The computerisation of the GRO should be completed as soon as possible, and the GRO should resume providing CSO with the data required for disseminating detailed statistics on marriages.

**Recommendation 16:** DHC should review the methodology of the Hospitals Waiting Lists, and in particular the definition of waiting time. The data should be captured at an individual level to allow analyses by age, gender, average waiting time, and other key characteristics. The DHC should examine whether waiting times could be captured in the HIPE system.

**Recommendation 17:** DJELR should urgently address the statistical quality and access issues identified with the Garda PULSE System.

**Recommendation 18:** Statistical information relating to the issue of visas should be computerised. This information could give an early indication of future immigration patterns.

**Recommendation 19:** The DSFA should give priority to addressing the statistical limitations of the CRS, with respect to local area statistics and full coverage, in order to improve its register value for statistical purposes.

**Recommendation 20:** Revenue should agree a mechanism with DSFA which would enable them to extend the coverage of low income earners in their income tax statistics and to present these statistics according to the key demographic and socio-economic variables.

**Recommendation 21:** The CSO and Revenue should jointly examine how the P35 records could be used to produce additional employment statistics.

## **Appendix 5**      **Enterprise SPAR<sup>12</sup> Recommendations**

### **Construction**

**Recommendation 1:** Current information on housing completions, which are derived from ESB connections, should be supplemented by:

- (a) Use of the application form for electricity connections to indicate if the property is a first or second/holiday home; and
- (b) Monitoring of terminations to identify obsolete dwellings; the potential of information on planning permission applications that involve the demolition of existing housing should also be investigated for this purpose.

**Recommendation 2:** The group welcomed the use being made of planning information on commencements and completions and recommend that this analysis should be continued.

**Recommendation 3:** Consideration should be given to asking an appropriate question on ownership of second homes at regular intervals in the QNHS or the EU-SILC although this will not capture information on houses owned by persons living outside the State.

**Recommendation 4:** Potential sources for more detailed house price indices should be examined by the Department of the Environment.

### **Travel and Transport**

**Recommendation 5:** The establishment of a regular National Travel Survey should be a priority for the CSO.

**Recommendation 6:** The possibilities for collecting and publishing regular information linking place of residence and place of work should be investigated by the CSO.

### **Energy**

**Recommendation 7:** CSO and Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) should have discussions with the energy regulator to ensure that data continues to be provided by utilities (generators/suppliers) with an emphasis on its further development, especially in the context of energy balance sheets.

**Recommendation 8:** Consideration should be given by the CSO to annual surveying of industry and commercial sectors as these data are the basic information source for annual sub-sectoral analyses of energy usage.

**Recommendation 9:** Energy price series by sector and by type of fuel should be compiled; a special exercise to produce a long run consistent price data series should be undertaken by the CSO.

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<sup>12</sup> Statistical Potential of Administrative Records – report available on [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie).

## *Environment*

**Recommendation 10:** Information on environmental performance and environmental expenditure should be compiled in a time series format and spatially referenced.

**Recommendation 11:** Detailed data on the operation of wastewater and solid waste plants should be compiled.

**Recommendation 12:** The CSO should publish an annual regional indicators report using variations in quality of life as a central theme to guide the selection of indicators.

## *Research & Development and Innovation*

**Recommendation 13:** The EU Innovation and R&D surveys should be jointly conducted by the CSO and Forfás.

## *Unique Business Identifier*

**Recommendation 14:** In order to reduce the burden on respondents and to add significant value to data collection, a cross-Departmental group should be established to investigate the introduction of a unique business identifier and registration system.

## *Access to Business Register*

**Recommendation 15:** The cross-Departmental group dealing with the unique business identifier should also consider the best solution for the ongoing maintenance of a central business register.

## *Rationalisation of Data Collection*

**Recommendation 16:** For efficiency and respondent burden reasons, the CSO should examine the issue of shared data collection and get appropriate advice on any legal impediments. A particular issue to be investigated is whether there would be any adverse effect on data quality or response rates.

**Recommendation 17:** The appropriate business groups should be consulted on the issue of sharing enterprise data.

## *Geography*

**Recommendation 18:** The postcode system should be sufficiently detailed, flexible, and spatially structured, to meet the needs of Government, business and society for economic, social and environment regional and spatial data.







