

Cross-cutting Programme

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Neighbourhood Statistics

The PAT18 published in April 2000 as part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal highlighted that, *“The absence of information about neighbourhoods has produced a series of failings at national, local and community level”, “..policies can easily be misdesigned or mistargeted”* and *“important trends have been missed by national and local government. Too often problems simply go unnoticed until they reach crisis point”*

The National Strategy demonstrated that turning around our most deprived neighbourhoods will not be achieved unless there is concerted action across Whitehall. Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS) is one of the key mechanisms by which central government can take forward their commitment to neighbourhood renewal. Over the coming months and years government policy will be able, increasingly, to make use of small area data in policy development. Alongside this will be pressure on all government departments to extend and develop the evidence base on which to make and judge policy decisions.

Multiple deprivation usually affects small, discrete areas. Without accurate data that can pinpoint these areas we are restricted in our ability to deliver neighbourhood renewal and regeneration activity where it is most needed and monitor progress effectively. For instance, lack of appropriate small area data means that at the present the Government can only set deprivation related targets at the equivalent of local authority areas.

It is not just central government that suffers. Local strategic partnerships need data to develop their local renewal plans; local service deliverers need data to make judgements about where to target their activity; and all need to understand whether they are making an impact.

Neighbourhood Statistics is being established to meet the needs of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Its content will be focussed on the needs of users of neighbourhood renewal. Having said this, the system developed will have potential benefits for the dissemination of data from all National Statistics (NS) themes.

An interim web-based system already exists which already carries a number of important data sets at ward level. Further data development from central and local administrative systems, and the full exploitation of routine government surveys, will ensure that the scope of data at ward level, and at sub-ward level in the future, will increase.

A first set of data priorities has been established which will cover:

- crime and community safety;
- health;
- housing;
- employment and economic deprivation;
- enterprise;
- the physical environment and quality of the public space;
- education, skills and training;
- income deprivation;
- transport;
- social capital and community well being;
- access to services; and
- the quality of public services.

2001 Census results for Census Output Areas (some 200,000 areas in England and Wales) will form the central core of a much extended system from 2003. Data available from the Census can provide important information for social exclusion policy.

The DTLR is leading a study on the development of urban and rural definitions. The classifications arising from this work will further assist the analysis of social exclusion for both urban and rural areas.

The new NeSS service will be a joint initiative involving all those responsible for NS in central government departments, the devolved administrations, local government and the wider public service, and the voluntary sector.

Service Development

In its full implementation, the NeSS Service will offer users ready access to a very wide range of social and economic data on a consistent small-area geography and supported by a range of powerful analytical tools with which to turn the raw data into comprehensible information. Where exact geographic locations are not confidential, for example the location of post offices or other

services, the aim will be to include precise locations via an underlying Geographic Information System (GIS).

It will take a number of years to reach the goal of full implementation, and the scope of statistics will depend on the commitment and support of organisations across the public sector. The service will be built steadily over that period in a series of phases, set out in more detail below. The initial databases will contain statistics at ward level. The detail and flexibility of analysis available will be enhanced by the inclusion of 'modelled' data to provide estimates at the small-area level.

The users of NeSS are expected to include local communities, local authorities, government administrations and departments, health authorities, police and fire authorities, other agencies and voluntary bodies, professionals and commentators, businesses and the individual citizen.

Phased development

The service will be built up over several years. The key phases will be:

- **Incremental phase** – through 2001 and into 2002 – additional datasets from existing sources will be added to the web pages;
- **Enhancements phase** – from 2002 – still mainly at ward level but with a range of new estimates (building on small area estimation techniques) and improved analytical tools;
- **GIS implementation phase** – in 2002 – a geographic information system will be incorporated and the first point-referenced data (location of services and social/physical infrastructure) added;
- **Census launch phase** – in 2003 – a large amount of new Census data, and some other statistics, will be added at the Census Output Area level;
- **Full service phase** – from 2003/2004 – further datasets added at the small area level and the point-referenced data extended as far as is consistent with confidentiality. The service will be developed further in time to allow users the maximum flexibility in the output geography.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Whilst the PAT18 report and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal apply only to England, the same broad needs for better small area statistics arise in the rest of the UK. The development of the UK service will be supported and complemented by related initiatives in the devolved administrations.

Much of the work will be the same across the UK. Users will need to have consistent access to high quality small area data wherever their interests lie. Developments in dissemination, methodology and sharing of data sources will be taken forward jointly between the administrations where possible. The administrations will continue the arrangements which they established in 2001 for sharing knowledge and developments. These arrangements provide the foundation for coherent and efficient development across the UK.

In Northern Ireland, a pilot version of NeSS has been developed by NISRA, and was launched on the Agency's website in summer 2001. In December 2001 the Northern Ireland Executive announced that funding would be made available to NISRA to develop the local Neighbourhood Statistics initiative. This funding will take the project through to spring 2004 and will encompass similar developments to those described for England, including the incorporation of the results from the 2001 Census.

Further information on the plans for the development of Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics will be provided in the third Statistical Plan for Scotland for 2003 which is being prepared. Two particular elements of the work in Scotland are:

- The commissioning of a programme of work to develop by 2003 a long-term strategy for a Scottish index or indices of deprivation which can be regularly updated, and to produce a short-term update of the 1998 Scottish index, in 2002.
- A review by the Executive, in Spring 2003, of the pilot work on Neighbourhood Definitions, commissioned in 2001-02 to assess how an alternative geographic unit of analysis to wards or postcode sectors might be defined. If the pilot work is successful, it will be extended to create units covering all of Scotland by mid-2002. This second phase

is expected to include community consultation on the concept of 'neighbourhood' and the use of information by community groups.

Confidentiality

Stringent procedures will be put in place to ensure that confidential information is not detectable from the statistics, either directly or through the comparison of data sources. The ONS will guide the work under the NS Code of Practice.

Key elements of the programmes

The NeSS Service is expected to offer some specialised technical support to help public bodies put their own data into a suitable format for Neighbourhood Statistics:

- **Geographic referencing tools** – it is planned that computerised tools should be developed centrally to meet the needs of data suppliers to enable them to automatically add consistent geographic references to any records containing postcodes or addresses. The primary use of these tools is likely to be within major administrative systems in central and local government. This will in turn allow information from many sources to be analysed on a consistent geography. The central development and distribution of these tools will be a large and important development for NS.
- **Small area estimation tools** – which will provide a consistent way to produce estimates for smaller areas than those for which directly collected statistics can be made available. The development work will include new statistical tools to optimise small area estimates, the production of new software, the establishment of a central service and the central production of key sets of estimates.
- **Small area population estimates** – which will provide the best consistent estimates of the resident population in each of the small areas used in the NeSS Service. As well being valuable in their own right, these estimates will enable users to standardise other figures and calculate rates.

- **Disclosure control protocols** – which will ensure that information about individuals cannot be seen in, or deduced from, the databases supporting the Neighbourhood Statistics Service.
- **Analytical package** – which will assist users in handling the vast amount of data available through the service.

National Statistics themes

The goal of consistent data for small geographical areas has implications for planning across all the NS themes. In some cases data systems are already able to provide the required level of detail. In others, estimation techniques will enable estimates to be drawn from existing sources. The 2001 Census will fill many gaps for a period. One of the Recommendations of the PAT 18 report being taken forward in 2003 is an evaluation of the merit in conducting a Census in 2006. But there are still many cases where statistical processes will need to be improved. The NS theme working groups will play a key part in identifying ways to develop the statistical base to support the compilation of NeSS. This is expected to be a significant element of theme group planning over the next few years. Additional and more specific consultation with users of neighbourhood statistics and data suppliers will take place also.

Contact and further information

Website

Further information on the Neighbourhood Statistics service can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk./neighbourhood>

Further information can also be obtained from:

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Sustainable Development

Introduction

Sustainable development is one of the key issues exercising governments around the world today, and the UK Government has said that consideration of sustainable development must be at the heart of its policies. Sustainable development is perhaps the most cross-cutting issue with which the government, and official statisticians, are dealing, encompassing as it does economic, environmental and human and social issues. The development of a set of indicators to monitor progress is an excellent example of the use of statistical information to inform, and even drive, the development of policies. It illustrates how official statisticians are well-placed to contribute to the policy process, not only through their professional skills, but also through their cross-departmental network.

The following describes the developments within the UK Government; separate work by the devolved administrations is summarised towards the end of the chapter.

1 Department of the Environment (March 1996). Indicators of sustainable development for the United Kingdom. HMSO, London

2 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (Nov 1998). Sustainability Counts. DETR, London (98EP0492).

3 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (May 1999). A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development in the United Kingdom. TSO, London (Command no 4345).

4 www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

5 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (Jan 2001). Achieving a better quality of life – Review of progress towards sustainable development – Government annual report 2000. DETR

6 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (Dec 1999). Quality of life counts: indicators for a strategy for sustainable development in the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment. DETR.

What is sustainable development?

World population has increased four-fold over the last 100 years, and is predicted to grow by a further 50% by 2050. The world economy has increased 5-fold in real terms over the past 50 years, yet still one quarter of the population of the developing world, over 1.2 billion people, live on incomes of less than \$1 per day. If we are to meet the aspirations of people in both developing and developed countries for a better quality of life, we need to find ways of uncoupling economic growth from consumption of resources, production of pollution and generation of waste. Some of the environmental impacts of global economic growth are already manifesting themselves; emissions of greenhouse gases, largely caused by energy consumption, are causing the global climate to change.

Reconciling these aspirations – social development, economic development, protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources – is called “sustainable development”.

The need for indicators

Most countries agree that a package of statistical measures or indicators will help them to see whether their development is sustainable. In the UK, a first sustainable development strategy was published in 1994, and preliminary set of indicators was published in 1996¹. While the work was generally welcomed, it was criticised in some specific areas, in particular for largely ignoring the social aspects of sustainable development, and the international dimensions of trade.

The Government consulted on a second strategy in 1998, and said that a revised set of indicators would be central to its implementation. In particular, the Government concluded that while a wide set of indicators was needed to measure the various dimensions of sustainable development, a much smaller “headline” set was needed to capture public attention, raise awareness of sustainable development issues, and provide a broad overview of progress. A public consultation, accompanied by a report *Sustainability Counts*², was launched in November 1998.

The idea of a set of headline indicators was generally welcomed, and as a result of the consultation, a set of 15 headline indicators, with a supporting 132 core indicators, was identified in the revised strategy, *A better quality of life*,

published in May 1999³. The headline indicators cover: economic growth, investment, employment, education, poverty, health, crime, housing quality, climate change, air and water quality, traffic, land use, wildlife, and waste. They are updated on the sustainable development website⁴ as and when new data become available. The Government publishes an annual report on progress on sustainable development, *Achieving a better quality of life*⁵, which also includes the headline indicators. The full set of core indicators, including data and time trends where available, was published in a separate statistical report, *Quality of life counts*, in December 1999⁶.

Owing to the cross-cutting nature of sustainable development, there was extensive discussion between statisticians in different departments to ensure that coherence was obtained and, where appropriate, the same indicators were used as in linked departmental initiatives – such as in health, education, employment, poverty and social exclusion, industry competitiveness etc.

As well as the overarching set of indicators, a number of sectors are developing indicators to highlight their particular contribution to achieving sustainable development. For example, a pilot set of indicators on “towards sustainable agriculture” was published in February 2000. During 2001/02 the Forestry Commission (FC) is consulting on Indicators of Sustainable Forestry, aiming to publish a pilot set of indicators by the summer of 2002. A set of sustainable development indicators for the construction industry is also under development. The UK water industry has also published a set of indicators “towards environmental sustainability”.

Consultation

The selection of indicators which the government is to use to report on progress towards sustainable development is clearly very important. Ministers have adopted the indicators but they were recommended by the professional statisticians, who have undertaken wide and open consultation with experts and the public in this country and abroad, and used already available frameworks from other countries and international organisations as “checklists” of issues. A major seminar was held with over 100 invited experts following publication of the 1996 preliminary indicators. Working groups – involving experts and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – were set up to review the indicators and there was a further experts seminar to discuss the revised

set of measures in 1998. There was also public consultation on the core and the headline indicators. Following the publication of *Quality of life counts*, the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development held a seminar to discuss the indicators, and concluded that while there were areas for improvement (generally because of methodological difficulties or lack of available data), overall they represented a good basis for monitoring progress⁷. Recommendations from the Round Table are being taken account of as the indicators are further developed.

Further developments

In the set of published indicators, a number of areas were identified where production of indicators is methodologically difficult, or where data are not yet available, and where further development work or data gathering is needed. There are a number of other indicators where some information was presented in *Quality of life counts*, but the indicator needs further development – some were based on proxy or partial information, some based on data from a one-off survey, some reflecting only process rather than outcome information (e.g. the indicator on Bio-diversity Action plans, which reflected the number of plans, rather than their impact). Development of the individual indicators will take place within the work programmes of the relevant themes. For example, a research project has been undertaken within the Natural and Built Environment (NBE) theme to estimate resource use and material flows in the UK economy, and a number of indicators are being updated or developed using information from a survey of public attitudes and awareness to the environment and sustainable development undertaken in early 2001. In particular the survey explored people's satisfaction with their overall quality of life, quality of the countryside, access to green spaces and willingness to undertake environmental actions, as well as understanding of sustainable development issues such as climate change. The full survey results will be published shortly.

Devolution

The SE is considering possible sets of indicators designed to reflect their own priorities and key policies. The NAW consulted on sustainable development indicators that might be used to track progress in Wales and determined an initial set of indicators in March 2001. Additional indicators are being considered and may be

adopted in future. In Northern Ireland (NI), there are plans to undertake a consultation on proposals for a Sustainable Development Strategy starting in late 2001, and this will begin the process of dialogue on an appropriate set of monitoring indicators. In the first instance these are likely to reflect the UK indicators. It is not yet clear whether they will form part of NS.

Subnational data

Regions of England have developed their own sustainable development frameworks, accompanied by indicators. These build on the national strategy and indicators, but it is not always possible to evaluate the national indicator at regional scale. In January 2001, the then Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) published regional data for each of the headline indicators (where available, or a close proxy where regional figures were not available), covering the English regions and Wales. The report largely drew together already available information, but a special analysis was commissioned from the Environment Agency (EA) of river water quality by standard economic region (formerly this was only available by EA region). The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Trust for Ornithology have been commissioned to provide regional analysis of the wild bird population data. *Regional quality of life counts*⁸ will now be published annually.

There is also interest in more local information. In response to a request from local authorities, a task force established under the auspices of the CLIP published in July 2000 a handbook *Local quality of life counts*⁹ containing guidance, definitions and sources of data for a menu of 29 indicators which local authorities might wish to use in reporting on sustainable development. Following a further period of testing of the indicators, the CLIP task force proposes to carry out research into the usefulness of the indicators and the guidance.

International initiatives

While there is much debate about the development of indicators, there is still no international consensus about which indicators should be used. The United Nations (UN) Commission on Sustainable Development has published a menu of indicators that has been piloted in a number of countries. OECD has also done work on indicators in various sectors and is developing a framework to measure sustainable

7 UK Round Table on Sustainable Development, (May 2000). *Indicators of Sustainable Development*

8 Department of the Environment of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (Dec 2000). *Regional quality of life counts. DETR*

9 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, (Jul 2000). *Local quality of life counts. DETR*

development. In Europe, the European Commission, in conjunction with Eurostat and the European Environment Agency, has developed or is developing indicators to monitor the integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policies on transport, energy, agriculture, fisheries, industry and other sectors. Indicators will also play a key role in monitoring progress following the establishment of a sustainable development strategy for the European Union. Statisticians from the UK have been involved with, and continue to be involved with, all these initiatives.

Contacts and further information

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www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

An International Strategy for National Statistics

Introduction

The aim of National Statistics (NS) is to ‘provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive picture of the economy and society’. With increasing international integration it is becoming ever more important to consider UK performance in the context of the rest of the world. This requires the UK to play an active role in the development of statistics internationally, standards for data collection, the provision of timely data to international organisations and ensuring statistics are disseminated in an efficient and user-friendly fashion.

If NS is to build on its already world-class reputation in a number of areas, active participation internationally is necessary. The search for and incorporation of best practice from around the world and, thinking and leadership in those areas we believe we are strong, needs to be engrained into NS culture.

This international context has beneficial implications for NS. It contributes to the development of new concepts and methodologies and the formulation of responses to questions posed by statistical institutes world wide; it helps to ensure public confidence through the implementation of international standards; and enables the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience through technical assistance.

Background to the current strategy

An International Strategy for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) was issued in 1996. Although the guiding principle of encouraging the development of international comparability in statistics remains the same, there have been a number of developments that require a re-focussing of effort in the international arena.

Over the last five years the major developments that have impacted on GSS participation in international statistics are:

- the creation of the Euro and the growing importance of the European Central Bank (ECB) as a customer of timely economic statistics;
- the provisional completion of negotiations between the EU and the current wave of candidate countries relating to provision of statistics;
- EU legislation relating to statistics being subject to co-decision following the enactment of the Treaty of Amsterdam;
- the launch of NS which gives the National Statistician specific responsibilities for promoting international co-operation and meeting international obligations, and has led to a NS strategy which focuses on working in partnership with other statistical offices to develop statistical capacity;
- e-Government developments, which have major implications for the way statistics are collected and disseminated;
- the impact of devolution on responsibilities and user forums for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; and
- greater attention to monitoring development outcomes, centred around poverty reduction in developing and transition countries, and evidence-based policy formulation; and the consequential increased focus on statistical capacity building.

The benefits of international participation to National Statistics

Actively pursuing an International Strategy will assist NS to:

- (a) put UK statistics in a wider world context on a comparable basis;
- (b) influence the international regulations and conventions which govern our statistics;
- (c) understand global influences better;
- (d) learn from our statistical partners;
- (e) help the development of statistical capability across the world; and
- (f) develop the breadth of vision, the consulting skills and technical competence of our staff.

International Statistics and Devolution

The relationship between UK Government and the devolved administrations is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding, with a supplementary Concordat on statistics. The National Statistician retains formal responsibility for fulfilling UK statistical obligations to the EU and international bodies and for EU/international liaisons and co-operation on statistical matters. The ONS will retain overall responsibility for management of relations between international statistical bodies and the UK statistical system.

In order that statistical international relations fully reflect the diversity of the UK statistical structure and governance, Heads of Profession in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will work with their Whitehall counterparts where statistics are required to be submitted on a UK basis to the EU or other international bodies. The NS (Economic) and NS (Social) committees together with the TWGs, with membership from the devolved administrations, will consider the implications of international commitments within the devolved administrations.

Components of an International Strategy for National Statistics

This strategy is divided into four pillars covering: the development of relations with international organisations; building strong links with other NSIs; actively participating in international conferences and the provision of support to developing and transition countries to help them build statistical systems to meet national, regional and international needs.

The four pillars are to:

- actively participate in and influence international organisations and provide high quality statistics to facilitate international comparisons;
- build bi-lateral relations with leading statistical institutes abroad to share best practice;
- actively participate in international conferences; and
- promote statistical development through providing technical assistance.

In each area the benefits to NS are identified together with the actions proposed to realise these benefits.

1. Actively participate in, and influence, international organisations and provide high quality statistics to facilitate international comparisons.

National Statistics is committed to meeting obligations to provide data to international organisations. Given the burden that supplying statistics poses, NS has a responsibility to ensure that these international organisations collect appropriate statistics, operate efficiently and there is no duplication of requests for statistical data.

The National Statistician and senior NS colleagues participate in appropriate high-level committees to ensure the work programmes of international organisations coincide with UK priorities. Annex A lists the regular high-level meetings the National Statistician plans to attend.

When participating in initiatives commissioned by international organisations the benefit and relationship to the work of NS needs to be clearly identified.

Eurostat, with a budget of €192 m (£117m) for 2003-7 and responsibility for the specification and dissemination of harmonised statistics across EU Member States, has a significant impact on NS. To ensure comparability, Eurostat statistical requirements are frequently built into EU legislation, with resulting resource implications across NS. For these reasons, relations with Eurostat are treated separately from other international organisations.

European Union

National Statistics' relationship with Eurostat and the NSIs of EU member states must be strong to ensure that the UK participates fully in influencing the direction of EU legislation on statistics, and to ensure that UK statistical practices adhere to EU standards.

Eurostat's work programme

Eurostat operates on a five-year planning cycle, with the next programme covering 2003-7. This sets out the key developments envisaged across 20 Titles, with detailed annual work programmes produced each year. Due to the lengthy process of obtaining agreement for the 2003-7 programme from both the European Parliament and Council still to be gone through, the period of consultation is coming to an end. During this process ONS International Branch consulted the Chairs of TWGs on two occasions. A number of proposed amendments submitted to Eurostat have been incorporated within subsequent drafts. ONS International Branch will represent NS during discussions of the Work Programme by the Commission and European Parliament.

Annex B to this chapter summarises the proposed statistics legislation either currently under discussion or likely to be proposed by the Commission in the near future.

The Commission has identified the following three areas as key drivers of EU policy over the next decade.

- Economic and monetary union
- European Union enlargement
- e-Europe

These priority areas form the key elements of the next Eurostat 5-year Work Programme. In addition Eurostat have identified the development of a range of 'Structural Indicators' as being a particular challenge to the European Statistical System (ESS). The declaration following the EU Lisbon summit of Heads of State (March 2000) asked the Commission to develop a set of annually updateable Structural Indicators that will be used to measure progress in the areas of employment, innovation, economic reform and social cohesion¹⁰. ONS Economic Analysis Division represents the interests of NS in the development of these indicators.

¹⁰ More details of the structural indicators can be found at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Publicdatashop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=1-structur-EN&mode=download>

¹¹ The Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) is the Eurostat committee comprising the Directors of the EU Member States National Statistical Institutes.

Within this 5-year programme, a draft Annual Work Programme is issued for consultation in May/June of the preceding year, and agreed by the SPC¹¹ in September. During this consultation period ONS International Branch consults TWGs and represents the UK at an Eurostat meeting to discuss amendments proposed by Member States.

Incorporating Eurostat Work Plans into National Statistics planning round

The TWGs are responsible for ensuring the 5-year and annual work programmes are incorporated within the theme's planning round. Each TWG has, as part of its terms of reference, something similar to "To take account of international developments in work planning across the theme". As described above, the Chairs are consulted on the draft 5-year and annual work plans. ONS International Branch is consulting on ways of strengthening the terms of reference to consider more comprehensively international issues.

Statistics subject to co-decision

With the implementation of the Treaty of Amsterdam (May 1999), statistics was added to the areas of EU decision making that are subject to co-decision. This means new statistical legislation, or certain amendments to existing legislation, need to get approval from both the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers. This is a complex process involving the scrutiny by sub-committees, preparation of opinions on the legislation and the tabling of amendments. On the EP side, the legislation is referred to one of the sub-committees for detailed scrutiny, with the appointment of a rapporteur to co-ordinate and draft the report for presentation to the EP plenary. NS will need to ensure UK Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are appropriately briefed on the UK position. ONS International Branch can provide advice on briefing MEPs.

On the Council side, NS needs to be represented at Council Working Groups. The role of officials is to attempt to get the Council to adopt a position that they can advise Ministers to vote in favour of at the appropriate Council meeting.

With EU legislation binding on the UK, the Government has given an undertaking that Ministers will not agree to proposals in the Council of Ministers until Parliament has had an opportunity to scrutinise the potential impact on

the UK. A scrutiny committee of each House decides if the proposal is significant enough to require debate by the full House. Officials need to prepare an Explanatory Memorandum (EM) for the relevant Minister to send to the committees, summarising the proposed legislation and its impact on UK law. The request for an EM will be sent from Cabinet Office (CO) to the Parliamentary Unit of the lead Department. ONS International Branch can provide advice on the implications of proposed legislation across NS.

Effective participation at Eurostat

Eurostat holds in excess of 200 subject-specific meetings each year discussing statistical developments. In common with the other larger EU Member States the UK participates in the majority of meeting. These are the international meetings that statisticians across NS are most likely to attend. It is important to actively participate, considering at an early stage implications of statistical developments on the UK and shaping developments to be consistent with UK priorities.

Effective participation is only possible if delegates are adequately briefed on Eurostat procedures. ONS International Branch has produced a Guide to Eurostat meetings in Luxembourg, which attendees are encouraged to read.

Work is currently being undertaken by a sub-group of the SPC looking at producing material to assist national delegates participate more effectively in Eurostat meetings. ONS International Branch will disseminate appropriate material across NS.

In a drive to improve efficiency and reduce the considerable cost of holding large numbers of face-to-face meetings, Eurostat are considering new ways of working. Ideas being discussed include increased use of internet news groups, expansion of tele-conferencing and a reduction in the number of working groups. NS, through participation in the group considering these ideas, actively supports these objectives. Resulting infrastructure requirements will need to be reflected in NS work plans.

Eurostat are reviewing arrangements for administering grants to NSIs. Currently, each grant to an NSI to undertake work on Eurostat's behalf is covered by a separate detailed contract. To simplify the system, an overarching framework agreement with the NSI will set out the details

common to all grants. A much shorter agreement will then be issued for each grant. It is unclear whether under the decentralised UK statistical system ONS will be asked to sign an agreement covering other Departments.

Training of European Statisticians

An important component in engaging staff across NS in international developments is participation in the Training of European Statistician (TES) programme sponsored by Eurostat. Courses covering a wide range of statistical areas lasting between 2 to 5 days are run across Europe, with participants from all Member States. The cost of TES courses is substantially subsidised by Eurostat. With the benefits of learning from international experts and sharing best practice, ONS Human Resources Division will publicise the programme across NS with Departments encouraged to release staff to attend. The GSS hosts several TES courses each year.

Regional statistics

With the increased requirement to provide Eurostat with data at a regional and sub-regional level, a recent Eurostat initiative suggests NSIs appoint a co-ordinator to act as a focal point for the large amount of regional data supplied to Eurostat from across subject areas (Regional Statistics Co-ordination Officer). ONS Regional and Local Statistics Division (RLSD) will undertake this role, co-ordinating regional data provision to Eurostat from across NS. One of the first tasks of this group of national co-ordinators will be to adopt a single data structure for the provision of regional level data. This may require some investment to implement a uniform data transmission structure for information coming from a range of sources across NS. However, there are likely to be benefits in adopting a single data standard across a number of Departments.

The future of European statistics

On the eve of EU enlargement, which over the next few years will see membership rise from the current 15 to nearly 30 countries, Eurostat has launched a consultation on the future of the ESS. The ESS, broader than just the EU to include European Free Trade Area countries, has Eurostat at the centre. With the recent re-focussing of UK official statistics around the launch of NS, the UK is well placed to contribute to the debate. The questions which will need to be addressed include:

- How is such an expanded system run and governed?
- To satisfy demand from the ECB, how should the timeliness of short-term economic indicators be improved?
- How should EU requirements for statistics be financed?
- How should quality be measured in a diverse ESS?
- What should the boundaries of the ESS be in terms of coverage?
- What should be the relationship between the ESS and the Commission?
- What arrangements should be put in place so the ESS can respond quickly to the changing needs of users?

Beyond the European Union

The UK should use its unique position as both an active member within the European Statistical System and enjoying continuing close ties with other English speaking countries, to ensure consistency in the development of statistics world-wide.

The National Statistician will normally attend the annual UN Statistics Commission Conference with the Chief Statistician from DFID, and has agreed to join a newly formed group to advise the Director of the OECD Statistics Division on strategic issues.

There are a number of subject-specific international organisations that NS belongs to. The degree of participation will be the responsibility of the appropriate Head of Profession.

Across NS a large number of questionnaires are received requesting UK data. These requests can be time consuming and divert resources from core work. Heads of Profession should ensure appropriate resources are committed to such requests. The data supplier has a responsibility to ensure adequate metadata is provided to facilitate meaningful international comparisons. Where practical the data supplier should ensure the data is used appropriately.

2. Build bi-lateral relations with leading statistical institutes abroad to share best practice

Although NS is a leader in many areas of statistics, there are areas where we can learn from others. Bilateral relations with other NSIs, which offer a lead, are central to their development. Visiting these institutes and welcoming their experts to the UK provides a vital opportunity to discuss ways of developing methodologies, the use of technology and statistical concepts, which can form a basis for improving statistics in the UK. Ties with key NSIs are being strengthened at a strategic and working level to facilitate the exchange of best practice and jointly take forward statistical developments.

In the preparation of major projects, and for reducing risk, NS should be seeking to gain from experiences and practices elsewhere, with other NSIs a valuable source of experience. This contact should be recognised as one element of development costs. It is only by developing bilateral relationships across a number of countries and at a range of levels will NS be well placed to take advantage of this network.

The National Statistician together with senior colleagues recently visited the National Statistical Office of France. A similar visit to Germany is due to take place in early 2002, with a visit to the ONS by the Director of Istat (Italy) planned for early 2002. This is the start of a rolling programme of contacts with key statistical partners.

The aim of these high-level contacts are to:

- provide an umbrella for more bilateral contacts at the working level;
- open up regular channels of communication between our offices, so that there might be more informal dialogue on issues; and
- gain more from the considerable similarity in our institutional arrangements, in looking at new options for NS development.

The National Statistician will nominate a member of the team to minute agreed actions. ONS International Branch will co-ordinate a report to the National Statistician after 6 months reporting progress.

3. Actively participate in international conferences

With the UK playing a leading role in official statistics, it is expected NS actively participate in relevant international conferences. For those with a professional leadership role, they should be recognised among their peers for their strategic leadership, contribution to new thinking, quality of research and analysis. For less experienced staff, presenting work, alongside the opportunity to meet and form relationships with peers doing similar work elsewhere, is an important component of professional development.

Attendance at the highly recognised conferences of professional significance will usually involve a mix of someone with a professional leadership role, and at least one person for whom the conference will be a development opportunity, presenting a paper resulting from work undertaken. ONS International Branch will establish a Lotus Notes database containing details of relevant international conferences and meetings. To ensure appropriate GSS representation, an ONS Executive Director, or a Head of Profession from another Department, will co-ordinate attendance across the GSS. ONS International Branch will circulate conference details to Heads of Profession, who in return will be expected to provide details of those planning to attend and the papers to be submitted.

For the more specialised conferences the Heads of Profession will be expected to agree an appropriate level of attendance.

4. Promote statistical development through providing technical assistance

Over the past few years the UK government has strengthened its commitment to international development and, as part of this, has placed more importance on helping to improve official statistics capability and performance. DFID works in partnership directly with a number of developing and transition countries and with other bilateral and international development agencies. DFID are seeking more engagement from NS to this recently expanded development agenda.

Supporting transition countries and developing countries will continue to be a priority. If EU expansion is to continue beyond the current list of candidate countries (the majority of whom have satisfied the statistical requirements for EU

membership), a programme of statistical capacity building is required. NS can provide technical assistance and be central to the efforts to ensure enlargement is undertaken effectively. In a similar sense, it is also important for NS to play a part in strengthening the statistical offices of developing countries in order to provide the basis for evidence-based policy and its implementations and monitoring, in support of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Providing technical assistance at a domestic level will in turn ensure that international statistics produced by international organisations are of a high quality and comparable. We aim to help partner countries address the issue of developing sustainable statistical capacity, institutional strengthening and national commitment to statistics. To achieve these objectives the following principles apply and actions include:

- **country driven, strategic statistical development plans** which recognise the need for a demand-driven approach that addresses longer-term institutional and systemic problems;
- **co-ordination by partner countries** to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of international support;
- **direct budgetary support and sector-wide Approaches** which address the statistical and analytical capacity needed in key policy and line ministries;
- **poverty monitoring** – information is needed on the characteristics of poor people to formulate policies and programmes to tackle the most pressing issues;
- working **multilaterally** and **bilaterally** with other donors; and
- **advocacy** – in providing support to build statistical capacity, recognising that the contributions made by partner countries are the most important and that success depends on the level of country ownership, resources and effort that they are prepared to devote.

To manage the increased resources committed to statistical capacity building, DFID is increasingly working with, and through, the multilateral agencies and, bilaterally, establishing 2–4 year projects with a range of countries covering a number of subject areas. The management,

implementation and monitoring of these projects are being put out to competitive tender. However, UK Government is considered 'indivisible', so DFID can nominate another Government Department as project manager without the need to tender. Consistent with good practice, DFID will either test the market periodically or compare fee rates with similar projects awarded competitively.

As the focus is on developing systems of official statistics, it is inevitable that providing technical assistance will draw heavily on staff from across the GSS to undertake both short and long-term secondments. As part of career development, staff should be encouraged to undertake such activities which require strong interpersonal skills. It is also generally agreed that working in a development environment requires thinking more widely about the context of the subject and an appreciation of the fundamental concepts.

NS is only changing slowly to integrating the provision of resources to undertake development assistance work within longer-term planning. If statistical development projects are to be managed, there is a need for staff with appropriate expertise in managing development work. This can be addressed by either direct recruitment or collaboration with private sector providers.

DFID and ONS International Branch are exploring ways of ensuring staff are adequately briefed before going to a developing country. This is likely to include background information on the key issues and activities of other organisations in the country concerned.

The UK played an important role in the establishment of PARIS 21⁽¹²⁾, and is committed to its continued working. This is a major collaborative drive by the key donors of international aid and developing/transition country partners. It exists in part out of a need to give clearer focus to the work of international bodies (IMF, UN, World Bank, Eurostat) and provide the environment for more collaboration.

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between DFID and ONS is being developed, outlining a strengthened relationship between the two Departments. This will facilitate the National Statistician's commitment that the ONS will bolster its capacity to support the UK government's international development initiatives. ONS International Branch and DFID

¹² PARIS21. PARTnerships In Statistics for Development in the 21st century The PARIS21 Consortium was set up in November 1999. Its founding organisers are the UN, OECD, World Bank, IMF and EC. It exists to promote the boosting of statistical capabilities, especially in poor countries. <http://www.paris21.org/>

Regional Advisory Team will be responsible for managing the SLA, and engaging other areas of NS if they fall within the requirements of specific projects.

The UK continues to support a strong programme of receiving visitors from developing countries. This should be seen as a vital complement to longer-term co-operation. Inviting visitors to present a paper or lead a discussion to a wider audience is a valuable way of learning from other NSIs. It enables the learning from the experiences of other institutes and provides a forum in which initial relationships can be formed as a basis for longer term working relations. Presentations from developing and transition countries can prompt ideas that would not necessarily arise when discussing similar issues with representatives from the developed world.

Annex A

**Regular international meetings to be attended by the National Statistician
or other senior members of the GSS**

United Nations Statistical Commission	March each year in New York
Conference of European Statisticians (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Conference of European Statisticians (CES) annual meetings and CES Bureau meetings	June each year
Annual EU DGINS conference	September each year
Eurostat Statistical Programme Committee	Quarterly
International Labour Organisation 4 yearly conference	Next is Oct 2003
5 yearly Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians	Next is 2005
International Statistical Institute Conference 2-yearly	Next is 2003 (Berlin)
International Association for Official Statistics Conference 2-yearly	Next is 2002 (London)

EU statistical legislation either currently under discussion or to be introduced for discussion during the planning period

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Classification of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)	Commission Regulation (EC) further clarifying Annex A to Council Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 on the European system of national and regional accounts in the Community as concerns the principles for the measuring of prices and volumes.
Commission Regulation (EC) on granting access to confidential data for scientific research	
Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Community Statistical Programme 2003-2007	Commission regulation concerning minimum standards for sampling
Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Reg. (EC) No 2223/96 of the reclassification of settlements and under forward rate arrangements	Commission regulation concerning minimum standards for quality adjustment
Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 as concerns the use of ESA 95 in the determination of Member States' payments to the VAT – based own resource	Commission Regulation concerning the treatment of seasonal items in the HICP
Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quarterly non-financial accounts for general government	Commission Regulation concerning minimum standard for sub-indices of the HICP
Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quarterly financial accounts for general government	Commission Regulation concerning the treatment of newly significant goods and services in the HICP
Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 with respect to the delays in the transmission of quarterly non-financial accounts, the abrogation of derogations and transmission of hours worked.	Commission regulation consolidating implementing measures for Council Regulation (EC) No 2494/95 on HICPs
Commission Regulation (EC) No 1920/2001 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 2494/95 as regards minimum standards for the treatment of service charges proportional to transaction values in the harmonised index of consumer prices and amending regulation (EC) No 2214/96	Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on price statistics for purchasing power parities
Commission Regulation (EC) No 1921/2001 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 2494/95 as regards minimum standards for revisions of the Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP) and amending Regulation (EC) No 2602/2000	Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of Community Statistics on International Trade in Services, Foreign Affiliates Trade, Foreign Direct Investment and Balance of Payments
	Commission Regulation (EC) No 2020/2001 on the nomenclature of countries and territories for the external trade statistics on the Community and statistics of trade between Member States
	Commission Regulation (EC) No 2150/2001 amending Regulation (EC) 1901/2000 with regard to the simplification of the statement of net mass.
	Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual programme for the production and development of Community Statistics on science and technology (2000-2004)
	Regulation (EC, Euratom) of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 58/97 concerning structural business statistics

Commission Regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3037/90 on the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE)

Commission Regulation (EC) amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3696/93 on the statistical classification of products by activity (CPA) in the European Economic Community

Commission Decision on the implementation of Council Decision 1999/297/EC establishing a Community statistical infrastructure relating to the industry and markets of the audio-visual and related sectors

Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the production of Community statistics on steel for the reference year 2003-2009

Regulation of the Council on the prolongation of the European coal and steel community statistics system after the expiry of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty.

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on rail transport statistics

Commission regulation (EC) No 2163/2001 concerning the technical arrangements for data transmission for statistics on the carriage of goods by road

Commission Regulation (EC) concerning the dissemination of statistics on the carriage of goods by road.

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on statistical returns in respect of carriage by passengers freight and mail by air.

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of labour cost index.

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98 on the organisation of labour force sample survey in the Community

Commission Regulation (EC) implementing Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on labour cost index.

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on job vacancy survey.

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the council concerning community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)

Commission Regulation (EC) on time-related underemployment and labour reserve

Commission Regulation (EC) amending the labour force survey list of variables.

Commission Regulation (EC) on the 2003 labour force survey ad-hoc module on life-long learning

Commission Regulation (EC) on the 2004-2006 programme of labour force survey ad hoc modules

Commission Regulation (EC) concerning the quality report on 2002 structure of earning statistics

Directive of the European Parliament and of the council concerning statistical surveys in order to determine the production potential of plantations of certain species of fruit trees.

Commission Regulation (EC) adapting Annex 1 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88 in view of the organisation of the Community surveys on the structure of agricultural holdings in 2003.2005 2007

Commission Decision approving the 2002 technical action plan for improving agricultural statistics

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Decision No 96/411/EC on improving Community agriculture statistics

Commission decision relating to the definitions of the characteristics regarding the surveys on the structure of agriculture holdings.

Commission Decision laying down the criteria of the surveys, the standard code and rules governing the transcription into a machine readable form of data of surveys of plantations of certain species of fruit trees.

Commission Decision establishing deadlines for the communication of the results of the 2003 surveys on the structure of agriculture holdings to the Statistical Office of the European Communities

Regulation (EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council on Waste Management Statistics

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