

FORESTRY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT ON STATISTICAL SURVEYS IN SCOTLAND (COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN)

PURPOSE

1. This report provides details of the statistical surveys carried out or authorised by the Forestry Commission in 2005-06, sets out the programme of surveys proposed for 2006-07, and presents outline plans for the following two years. **Approval is now sought for the survey programme for 2006-07 to proceed in Scotland.**

BACKGROUND

2. UK Government Departments are required to provide Ministers with an annual "Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan" that reports on all the statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities carried out in the previous year and sets out the plans for the future.

3. This report covers regular and ad hoc statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities in Scotland. Some of these surveys run at the same time in England and Wales, so summary information for the 3 countries and GB totals are presented in an Annex.

RESPONSE BURDEN

4. The response burden is the estimated cost of the staff time required to fill in the survey questionnaires. The hourly rates supplied by the Survey Control Unit of ONS have been used. In calculating compliance costs, account is taken of expected response rates, with a minimal cost estimated for each non-respondent.

Outturn

5. For surveys that started in 2005-06, the total response burden was £6,340 for businesses in Scotland and £0 for local authorities. This is lower than the response burden 'budget' of £8,310 agreed at the start of the year. Two of the GB-wide ad hoc surveys planned for 2005-06 were postponed. The response burden for miscellaneous surveys was greater than the provision made in the plans, but this was more than offset by the postponement of the two ad-hoc surveys.

Plans

6. Approval is now sought for the programme of surveys to start in 2006-07, with an estimated response burden in Scotland of £11,910. Of this £1,180 is for the three regular surveys for National Statistics, £9,340 for six ad hoc surveys and £1,390 for miscellaneous surveys not yet identified.

7. Outline plans for Scotland suggest an estimated response burden to businesses

of £4,800 for 2007-08 and £5,000 for 2008-09.

REGULAR SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES

8. The Forestry Commission regularly carries out three voluntary postal surveys of businesses in Great Britain to gather information on sawmills, round fencing and private sector removals. Results from these surveys and other enquiries to wood processing industries are published in "UK Timber Statistics", "Forestry Facts & Figures", "Forestry Statistics" and other statistical publications available on the Forestry Commission Internet site. These statistical outputs became part of National Statistics from August 2001 and were included in a National Statistics Quality Review of forestry statistics, which was published in December 2002. Results from the surveys are also used in compiling UK statistical returns for international organisations.

9. In 2005/06, a total of 109 businesses in Scotland were approached, with an estimated response burden of £1,130. It is planned that the three surveys will continue to run each year with little change. The response burden is estimated at £1,180 for 2006-07, £1,200 for 2007-08 and £1,300 for 2008-09.

AD HOC SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES

10. Four ad hoc surveys were run in Scotland in 2005-06. As part of a study on Valuing Forest Recreation, surveys of local businesses were carried out to estimate the extent to which visitor spend remains in the local economy, to give LM3 local multipliers. Two surveys approached woodfuel suppliers and industrial users. The other ad hoc study was undertaken to examine the Scots Pine industry and approached growers/managers, processors and end users. In total these four ad hoc surveys approached 436 businesses, with 248 responses received, giving a total response burden of around £5,210. The planned GB surveys of Plant Health customers and National Inventory woodland owners were postponed.

11. Plans for surveys in Scotland in 2006-07 are presented in the Annex. Provision is included for the postponed Plant Health Customer Survey, three surveys related to the Forestry for People project, an update of the Woodfuel Industrial Users study and a Tourism Research study. Plans are yet to be finalised, but it is expected that in total, around 900 businesses will be approached, with a response burden of around £9,340. It is expected that other ad hoc surveys of businesses to run in Scotland in 2006-07 will approach no more than 200 businesses with a total compliance cost of no more than £1,390.

12. The field survey for the next National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (NIWT) is now expected to commence in 2009, so any linked survey of woodland owners is now outside the scope of this 3-year plan. Other miscellaneous business surveys in Scotland in 2007-08 and 2008-09 are expected to cover up to 500 businesses per year with an associated annual compliance cost of up to £3,700.

SURVEYS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

13. No surveys of local authorities were carried out in 2005-06 and none are planned for 2006-07, 2007-08 or 2008-09.

Simon Gillam
Head of Statistics
acting Survey Control Liaison Officer
Forestry Commission
Tel: 0131 314 6280
E-mail: simon.gillam@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
August 2006