

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 2006-07, sets out the programme of surveys proposed for 2007-08, and presents outline plans for the following two years. **Approval is now sought for the survey programme for 2007-08 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 three 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 response burdens, account is taken of expected response rates, with a nominal cost estimated for each non-respondent.

Outturn

5. For surveys in 2006-07, the total response burden was £6,140 for businesses in Scotland and £0 for local authorities. This is lower than the response burden 'budget' of £11,910 agreed at the start of the year. The main reason is that surveys planned as part of research into Forestry for People and forests' contribution to tourism were delayed, with modified plans now included in the plans for 2007-08.

Plans

6. Approval is now sought for the programme of surveys to start in 2007-08, with an estimated response burden in Scotland of £17,730. Of this £1,490 is for the three regular surveys for National Statistics, £13,810 for seven ad hoc surveys described below, £990 for a survey of local authorities and £1,440 for miscellaneous business surveys not yet identified.

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

of £10,100 for 2008-09 and £6,000 for 2009-10. Further details are given below.

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 "Forestry Facts & Figures", "Forestry Statistics" and other statistical publications available on the Forestry Commission Internet site, and are also used in compiling UK statistical returns for international organisations. 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. The surveys are reviewed each year with the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics.

9. In 2006/07, a total of 125 businesses in Scotland were approached, with an estimated response burden of £1,440. It is planned that the three surveys will continue to run each year with little change. The response burden is estimated at £1,490 for 2007-08, £1,500 for 2008-09 and £1,600 for 2009-10.

AD HOC SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES

10. Two ad hoc surveys were run in Scotland, in 2006 and early 2007, to update estimates of the extent of industrial use of woodfuel, each obtaining figures for 130-150 businesses, with a total response burden of about £4000 over the 2 years. A pilot survey to develop a method to estimate "timber miles" for Scottish timber approached 80 businesses in Scotland (and a few in England), with a response burden of about £550 in Scotland. In addition, the GB-wide Plant Health Service customer survey included 14 businesses in Scotland, with a response burden of about £100.

11. In 2007-8, the following surveys are planned:

- The Forestry for People research project plans a survey to estimate the level of employment and volunteer activity related to woodlands in Scotland. This could go to around 435 "businesses", including community woodland groups, other NGOs, large woodland owners, large forest management companies and research organisations, with a response burden of about £6,400.
- The Forestry for People research project also plans a case study in Glasgow and Clyde Valley, exploring the contribution of green infrastructure (including woodland) to economic regeneration. This could include a survey approaching around 150 businesses, with a response burden of about £1,900.
- A GB-wide survey of forest business health, following similar surveys in 2004 and 2000, is planned to monitor trends in turnover, profitability and employment in forest sector businesses. Based on the previous surveys it could go to about 300 businesses in Scotland, with a response burden of around £3,000.
- A survey of timber haulage companies, to estimate "timber miles", is planned for calendar year 2008, with 300 approaches (some repeats) to businesses to report activity in a sample week. Response burden for the first quarter is around £1,300.

- The research project on forests' contribution to tourism now plans a more limited set of case studies, to approach around 70 businesses with a response burden of about £700.
- Two GB-wide surveys are planned in response to objectives in the Scottish forestry strategy, to assess the construction timber market and sales of genetically improved stock from forest nurseries. Together they are planned to go to around 50 businesses in Scotland, with a total response burden of under £500 (most of the response burden falls on businesses in England).
- As in last year's plan's, we propose to make provision for other miscellaneous business surveys in Scotland in 2007-08 to cover up to 200 businesses, with a response burden up to £1,440.

12. The outline plans for 2008-09 include the remaining three-quarters of the "timber miles" survey for calendar year 2008, with response burden of around £4000. They also include GB-wide customer surveys for Plant Health Service in 2008-09, to include around 90 businesses in Scotland with response burden around £700. The outline plans for 2009-10 include a follow-up to the construction timber market study, to include around 40 businesses in Scotland, with a response burden of around £400. In addition, we propose to make provision for other miscellaneous business surveys in Scotland to cover up to 500 businesses in each year, with a response burden up to £3,700 in 2008-09 and up to £3,900 in 2009-10.

SURVEYS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

13. No surveys of local authorities were carried out in 2006-07. In 2007-08, the Forestry for People research project plans to include all local authorities in the survey to estimate the level of employment and volunteer activity related to woodlands, with a response burden of around £1000. No surveys of local authorities are planned for 2008-09 or 2009-10.

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