

National Statistics: Agriculture, Fishing And Forestry Theme Working Group

Review of Forestry Statistics

Project Initiation Document

Introduction

The White Paper “Building Trust in Statistics” set out the framework for quality assuring National Statistics, through a programme of thorough reviews of key outputs at least every five years. This Project Initiation Document (PID) relates to the review of forestry statistics, which was agreed as part of the 2001-02 to 2003-04 National Statistics Workplan for the Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry theme.

Background

Prior to 2001-02, no Forestry Commission (FC) statistical outputs had a Government Statistical Service (GSS) or National Statistics (NS) logo. Proposals to bring the main outputs into the scope of National Statistics were approved by Ministers in August 2001. A programme of work from July 2000 to August 2001 aimed to bring all proposed NS systems up to NS standards. The NS scope now covers most FC statistical outputs that are annual (or more frequent), but excludes most that are on a longer cycle.

At present, all FC NS outputs are presented at GB or UK level, but may include statistics broken down by country: England, Scotland, Wales (and Northern Ireland).

Project Organisational Structure

The review has been set up under the umbrella of the National Statistics Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry Theme Working Group.

A Review Team will be led by a Review Manager, who will take responsibility for the day-to-day running of the review and will be the first point of contact for issues relating to this review. The Review Team members are:

- Review Manager: Sheila Ward, Statistician, FC Economics and Statistics Unit (ESU) (60 days)
- Vicky West, Assistant Statistician, FC ESU (20 days)
- Alister Henderson, FC ESU (15 days)
- Jackie Harper, FC ESU (5 days)
- external methodologist acting as consultant (£6000 budgeted).
- input from the FC ESU staff responsible for the statistical systems (30 days)
- input from other FC staff who are data providers or users (10 days).

Contact details for the Review Manager are:

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The Review Team will report to a Review Board who will provide overall management and guidance to the review and provide overall project strategy. The Review Board will be chaired by the FC Head of Profession for Statistics, who is also the Review Sponsor, and will include representatives of data suppliers and users of statistics. The membership of the Review Board is:

- Chair & Review Sponsor: Simon Gillam, FC Head of Profession for Statistics
- Colin Morton, FC Communications
- Graham Cullen, FC Country Services
- Paddy Harrop, Forest Enterprise
- Peter Wilson, Forest Industries Development Council
- Ray Wilson, DEFRA
- David Canham, ONS (correspondence member)

The Review Board will approve the final report before it is submitted to the National Statistician. His approval of the final report is required before it is put in the public domain.

Project Objectives, Scope and Outcome

The aim of this project is to carry out a Standard Review (as described in Annex B of the “Guidance On The National Statistics Quality Review Programme Version 1.2”) of all forestry statistics that are part of National Statistics (NS), and others that are proposed for addition to the scope, to confirm that they meet the standards in the NS Code of Practice¹ or recommend changes to meet the standards. The outputs to be covered by the review are listed below.

1. Current NS Outputs (70%)

The review will assess the following Forestry Commission NS publications against the standards in the NS Code of Practice and related protocols, and recommend any changes. This should include assessments of how well the outputs meet users’ needs, the quality of data from administrative systems, the conduct of statistical surveys, methodologies used to compile the statistics, documentation of the systems and the arrangements for publication.

- British Timber Statistics
- Forestry Commission Facts & Figures
- Forestry Statistics
- Sawmill Survey
- Standing Sales Price Index

2. Country Statistics following Devolution (20%)

For GB forestry statistics that have NS outputs, the review will assess the user demand and feasibility of making improvements to forestry statistics for Scotland, Wales and England, considering both the potential availability of data and changes to publications.

It is proposed that work to improve the integration of forestry statistics for Great Britain (produced by the Forestry Commission) with those for Northern Ireland (compiled by the Forest Service) be taken forward outwith the scope of this review.

3. Possible Additional NS Outputs (10%)

The review will make an initial assessment of the desirability and feasibility of extending the scope of NS produced by the Forestry Commission to include outputs from the following systems (any recommended for inclusion in NS would be subject to more detailed study and improvement, outside the scope of this review).

- Forest Employment Survey (5 year intervals, next 2003)
- Public Opinion of Forestry (2 year intervals, next 2003)

¹ The NS Code of Practice is currently under consultation and is not expected to be finalised until summer 2002.

Timescales

The main milestones for the review are provided below:

Date	Milestone	Undertaken by
February 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise first version of Project Initiation Document (PID) 	Review Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint members to Review Board 	Review Sponsor
March 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold first meeting of Review Board to formally approve PID 	Review Board
March – May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research and assemble draft report 	Review Team
April 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim report (incorporating emerging findings) to Review Board 	Review Team
June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present draft report to Review Board 	Review Team/ Review Board
July 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise report and issue for consultation to AFF Theme Group, ONS and Review Board 	Review Team/ consultees
September 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise report 	Review Team

A draft workplan is provided in Annex A.

Risk Log

The following have been identified as risks to the successful completion of the project as specified.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Countermeasure
Review Team members unable to devote sufficient time to project	High	High	Ensure Review is included as key task in forward job descriptions. Re-allocation of workload within Economics and Statistics Unit, if required.
Loss of key staff from the Review Team	Medium	High	Ensure adequate documentation is maintained in order to facilitate any staff changes with minimum impact.
Lack of co-operation from key stakeholders or inability to co-operate due to resources	Medium	Medium	Ensure early informing and involvement of key stakeholders via Review Board.

Quality Assurance of Review Process

Responsibility for the Quality Assurance of the review formally lies with the Review Board. The Review Board have agreed to delegate this function to David Canham, ONS.

Communication Plan

The following communications are planned in relation to the quality review:

Communication	Action
Announcement on FC website	Review Team
Publication of PID on FC and NS web sites, after approval by Review Board, and alert/ consult stakeholders	Review Team/ ONS
Publication of final report, after approval by Review Board and National Statistician	Review Team/ ONS
Publication of Departmental responses	FC

Further details on the proposed strategy for stakeholder involvement are provided in Annex B.

Project Controls and Management Issues

The day-to-day management of the review is the responsibility of the Review Manager, who will brief the Review Board on a regular basis and will be the primary point of contact for the review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Review Manager** is responsible for ensuring that the review produces the required products, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost. The specific responsibilities of the Review Manager are:

- plan and monitor the review
- manage the production of the required products
- produce and maintain the Project Initiation Document (PID)
- report to the Review Board on the progress of the review and on any problems encountered
- identify and obtain any support and advice required for the management, planning and control of the review
- arrange for appropriate review documentation to be put on the National Statistics website.

The **other Review Team members** work with the Review Manager in the planning and execution of the review. The specific responsibilities of the Review Team members are:

- undertake the planning, research and analysis required for the completion of the review
- with the Review Manager, prepare the draft report for presentation to the Review Board
- identify any risks or problems during the life of the review and raise these with the Review Manager

The **External Methodologist** will investigate the potential for increased use of the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) for forestry National Statistics. This will include:

- advise on the potential use of records from the IDBR to supplement FC sampling frames, confirming that IDBR cannot replace the FC sampling frames;
- investigate the IDBR classification of businesses in FC sampling frames that do not match with SIC 201 in IDBR, to improve the understanding of the classification of wood processing businesses in IDBR and ONS surveys;
- investigate the potential use of ONS surveys based on IDBR to provide statistics about a wider range of wood-based industries, including processing of imported timber and secondary processing.

This work may be undertaken by an ONS methodologist with good knowledge of IDBR, rather than someone from outside government.

The **Review Sponsor** acts for the Theme Working Group in an executive capacity and is primarily responsible for ensuring that the review has sufficient resources to meet its objectives. The specific responsibilities of the Review Sponsor are:

- create a review brief from the Theme Working Group's mandate
- recruit a Review Manager
- ensure that the key issues are addressed
- ensure that the review is managed effectively
- ensure that the consultation processes have been appropriate and that information from these processes has been addressed appropriately

The **Review Board** approves all major plans and authorises any major deviations from these plans. It is the authority which signs off the completion of each stage of the review and arbitrates on any conflicts within the review. It approves the responsibilities of the Review Manager and Review Team members and any delegation of its project assurance responsibilities. The specific responsibilities of the Review Board are:

- initial approval of the Project Initiation Document (PID) and any subsequent changes to this document during the life of the document
- provision of overall guidance and direction to the review, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints
- consideration of the potential sensitivity of the review's findings
- ensure that stakeholders are appropriately consulted throughout the review
- approval of the final review report
- decisions on recommendations for follow-up actions

Workplan

Task	Week beginning																														Time (person days)																
	February				March				April					May				June				July				August				September				All	Team Member												
	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	2	9	16		23	30	SW	VW	AH	JH							
0. Project Initiation																																					4	3			1						
Confirm Review Board members																																															
Draft PID																																															
PID to Sub-committee on S&D																																															
PID to TWG																																															
PID to Review Board: 1st meeting																																															
1. Existing NS Outputs																																						62	39	10	11	2					
Identify sources																																															
Administrative systems - procedures																																															
Survey methodology																																															
Processing, estimation, etc																																															
Survey strategy																																															
Publication Procedures																																															
User demand																																															
2. Country Statistics																																															
User Demand																																															
Feasibility																																															
3. Possible Additional NS Outputs																																															
Desirability																																															
Feasibility																																															
4. Reporting and Project Closure																																															
Interim Reports to Review Board																																															
Draft Report																																															
Report to Review Board: 2nd meeting																																															
Revise Report																																															
Report to ONS & TWG																																															
Finalise and Publish Report																																															
Total Time (person days)																																											100	60	20	15	5

Stakeholder Involvement

One of the key purposes of National Statistics Quality Reviews is to assess whether users' requirements are being met from the current set of outputs. In order to address this aspect of the review, a series of actions are proposed.

Website

The review will be publicised on the Forestry Commission and National Statistics websites, with a general invitation to comment.

Direct Contact

E-mail will be sent to a wide range of users and providers, notifying them of the review and inviting them to comment. Those to be contacted will include those currently being consulted on the proposed indicators for sustainable forestry, industry associations who are data providers and members of the Forestry Commission Advisory Panel Sub-Committee on Supply and Demand.

Stakeholder Interviews

The review team will conduct face-to-face interviews of key stakeholders.