

Survey Review: Sawmill Survey

Introduction

Summary reviews are undertaken each year for our regular surveys. These consist of:

- Establishing the continuing need for the survey;
- Reviewing the questionnaire to be used; and
- Updating the distribution list of businesses to be approached.

A new programme of full reviews of annual surveys has been introduced from 2012, with each survey to be reviewed every 5 years. These are more detailed than the summary reviews. In 2012, the sawmill survey (detailed and short questionnaires) has been reviewed, and the findings are summarised here.

There is a parallel process for methodology and outputs reviews.

The sawmill survey is one of a series of annual surveys and data requests used to produce statistics on the UK timber industry. The survey is run by the Forestry Commission (in association with the Forest Service in Northern Ireland) to collect data from sawmills in the UK that are believed to use UK-grown logs.

More information on the survey is available from the sawmill survey quality report, available at [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/qrsawsur.pdf/\\$FILE/qrsawsur.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/qrsawsur.pdf/$FILE/qrsawsur.pdf).

Methodology

The review was conducted using the Quality, Methods and Harmonisation Tool (QMHT), a self-assessment questionnaire developed by the Office for National Statistics and the Government Statistical Service:

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/harmonisation/index.html

The questionnaire covers the entire surveying process and helps identify potential issues and suggest improvements. The following areas were examined in this review:

- Establishing user requirements (QMHT Section 3)
- Design of survey data collection (QMHT Section 6)
- Editing and imputation (QMHT Section 8)

- Confidentiality (QMHT Section 14)
- Triennial and quinquennial reviews (QMHT Section 19)

Other areas (that are also relevant to this review) are covered in the methodology review for UK wood production, available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/ahen-589ddl :

- Regular analysis in the production of statistical outputs (QMHT Section 10)
- Regular or repeated statistics (time series) (QMHT Section 12)
- Confidentiality (QMHT Section 14)
- Dissemination (QMHT Section 15)

The Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics (EGTTS) was also consulted as part of the review process, at the November 2012 meeting and in follow-up correspondence. More information on the EGTTS can be found at:

www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-5rabj3 .

Areas for action

No major issues were identified in this review, but the following improvements were suggested:

Survey data collection design (QMHT Section 6)

1. Documentation on the justification for every question asked in the survey questionnaire should be published;
2. More explanations should be provided in the survey questionnaire on how the data supplied by respondents will be used, with assurance that it will not be used in any other way;
3. Documentation on the methods and processes involved in data collection should be published.

Editing and imputation (QMHT Section 8)

4. Documentation on the editing and imputation performed on the survey data should be published.

Action plan

We plan to address these areas for action as follows:

Points 1 and 2 will be addressed for the next run of the sawmill survey in February 2013.

Points 3 and 4 will be addressed by December 2013.

Sheila Ward / Jeremy Darot
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