



Department of
**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**
www.detini.gov.uk

Annual Report on Statistical Surveys to Businesses – Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To comply with instructions circulated from the Prime Minister's Office in May 1999 (Annex A) on the control and scrutiny of surveys, Departments must prepare a detailed annual compliance and quality improvement report covering all aspects of their survey programme. The plan is in two parts; Part 1 is a retrospective examination of surveys carried out in the previous calendar year, and includes an assessment of the compliance burden imposed on the relevant population, the timeliness of the results and the main uses government makes of these. Part 2 of the report is a detailed forecast of expected activity in the current year and a draft plan for the subsequent two years (which includes provisional costings).
2. The report and accompanying tables (Part 1) therefore documents all business surveys (sponsored by DETI and its affiliated agencies) for which fieldwork was conducted in Northern Ireland during 2009, including details of the burden on business, the nature of the survey (i.e. voluntary or statutory), the availability of results, the main uses of the statistical outputs of the survey and, for regular surveys, when each was last approved and when the next scrutiny is due.
3. The key points to note from the report are as follows:
 - In 2009, 45 business surveys were conducted, of which 22 were statutory in nature. In total, 119,158 forms were issued and, of these, 88,403 (74.2%) were returned.
 - The number of business surveys conducted in 2009 (45) was similar to 2008 (43^R).
 - Total compliance cost was estimated at **£1,816,858** for 2009 – up from **£1,321,494^R** in 2008. This is primarily due to the running of the biennial Census of Employment in 2009, which involved issuing just over 32,000 forms.
 - The compliance burden throughout the Government Statistical Service in the UK for 2008/09 (the latest available) was an estimated **£121.4 million**. Based on this, Northern Ireland accounts for approximately **1.5% of total UK compliance costs**, yet has approximately **3% of all businesses in the UK**.
 - 13 “complaints” were received from businesses but 10 ultimately agreed to participate in the inquiries. (In 2008 there were 26 “complaints” with 24 agreeing to participate.)

Action to reduce compliance cost burden in 2009

4. As well as trying to minimise the number of forms issued, other efforts have been made to secure reductions in burden last year.
- For the first time in 2009 the Census of Employment included a sample element of 50% of businesses with 0–5 employees. This provided a reduction in business compliance costs of approximately **£150,000**.
 - A large proportion of the data used in the calculation of the Index of Production continues to be collected through the Quarterly Sales Inquiry (QSI). Each quarter the QSI panel is checked against the sample for the Monthly Production Inquiry. Where appropriate, the QSI form is not issued and the data are taken from the alternative source. These measures produced a **saving of approximately £2,500**.
 - A portion of the data collected for the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) has continued to be done so through data sharing with the QSI. This, in turn, has reduced the number of forms issued by QES. This measure realised a **saving of approximately £3,000**.
 - The QES continued a scheme of ‘survey holidays’ for smaller businesses, whose employment levels did not fluctuate markedly over time. Around 50 companies per quarter are given a ‘survey holiday’ which has reduced the number of forms issued each quarter resulting in an **annual saving of approximately £800**. This will continue to be offered during 2010.
 - The QES also continued to offer the option of online form completion to help reduce the burden on businesses. The web based survey is fully integrated with the Government Gateway’s provision of online services.
 - The Survey of Bankrupts and company directors and the Survey of Creditors (6 monthly) were streamlined thus decreasing the amount of time required to complete it and also every bankrupt and company director was surveyed.
 - Companies contributing to the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry were again offered the opportunity to submit a copy of their annual accounts rather than completing the survey form. The form was constructed by DETI staff extracting the relevant information from the accounts. This approach to data collection will continue in 2010 and has produced a **2009 saving of approximately £1,000**. Completed surveys are also validated in-house with other DETI survey sources with the aim to reduce telephone chasing/queries.

- On a more general level, forms to businesses are designed to be as simple and straightforward to complete as possible. For example, the number of questions are kept to the minimum needed to obtain the necessary information and easy to answer tick boxes are provided to allow for speed in answering. DETI has continued throughout the year to offer employers greater flexibility in the way they supply the data requested. In many cases they now have the option of providing information electronically or by fax and respondents are increasingly taking advantage of these more efficient methods of data transfer. This option will be continued during the coming year.

Taken together these initiatives have resulted in an estimated reduction in compliance costs of just under £157,300.

Planned actions to reduce compliance cost burden

5. Planned actions have been made to secure reductions in future compliance costs.
 - The merging of the Annual Business Inquiry and The Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey in 2010 will result in a reduction on the burden on business.
 - DETI Statistics Research Branch is currently developing an Integrated Business Survey System. It is envisaged that this system will lead to a reduction in the burden on business by reducing duplication and maximising, where appropriate, use of external administrative data sources. It is expected that these reductions will take effect from 2012/13 onwards.

Measures taken to Improve quality of surveys 2009

6. In addition to reducing the compliance cost, measures were also taken to improve the quality of individual surveys.
 - The Census of Employment introduced a new sampling and estimation methodology created with a Quality Improvement Fund with Office for National Statistics.
 - In 2009 the Index of Services applied new weights derived from Regional Accounts. The annual weights from regional Gross Value Added (GVA) are more up to date and their use is in line with recommendations from the Office for National Statistics.
 - The Census of Employment, The Northern Ireland Manufacturing and Exports Survey, The Quarterly Employment Survey and The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings all produced results using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification of Industries (SIC 07) basis for the first time in 2009.

- InterTradeIreland Quarterly Business Monitor provided additional information on results and new weightings were applied.

Comparison of 2009 actual costs with last year's agreed limits

7. To comply with the guidelines, the Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan includes an assessment of actual costs versus previously agreed limits. Last year it was estimated that the total compliance cost to businesses for survey activity during 2009 would be £1,835,591. The actual compliance cost was estimated to be £1,816,858 which was 1.0% below the forecasted figure. The main factor contributing to this difference was that a number of surveys were not undertaken in 2009, these included the Industry Communication/Perception survey, Strategy for Northern Ireland Tourism and Invest NI Annual Client Satisfaction Survey - telephone survey. This resulted in an estimated saving of **£29,500**. There were also, two surveys carried out that were not included in the initial 2009 compliance cost, the TSS Customer Satisfaction Survey and the Business Tourism Barometer survey totalling an approximate cost of £900.

The 2009 estimated compliance cost of £1,816,858 is within the agreed upper limit for 2009 (£1,927,371) detailed last year.

Current and Future Compliance Costs

8. The compliance cost reporting procedures require that Departments "... must prepare an annual compliance and quality improvement plan on a three-year rolling basis." This should include the survey programme for the next year and, where available, plans for years two and three, along with the total estimated compliance cost to be imposed on business. Part 2(a) of the report provides details of the programme of surveys for 2010.
 - There are 44 surveys for 2010 of which 41 are regular and of these 21 are statutory. A number of new surveys have been added for 2010, such as the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) Motor Vehicle Repair Survey, the Occupational Pension Scheme Survey and the Volcanic Ash Survey. Further details are in the report below. **The total anticipated cost for the 2010 programme of surveys is estimated to be £1,402,759 (down £414,099 from the 2009 actual figure of £1,816,858).**

9. Part 2(b) provides an outline plan for the years 2011 and 2012. Although it is difficult to foresee all of the survey activity in these years so far in advance, an upper limit for total compliance costs for these years has been estimated at £2,060,820 and £1,615,271 respectively (2011 being a year in which the Census of Employment is again carried out). These upper limits have been agreed with the current agencies and any substantial deviations will need to be explained in future reports.
10. The survey control guidelines state that Ministers no longer need to approve each new survey nor in the future clear reviews of regular surveys. However, the National Statistics Quality Review Programme has been introduced to help ensure that National Statistics and other official statistical outputs are fit for purpose and that there is a process to support the continuing improvement in the quality and value of these outputs.
11. To comply with the Prime Minister's Office's instructions, an independent observer should be involved in the construction of the compliance and quality improvement plan where the annual total compliance exceeds £500K. The role of the observer is to authenticate the validity and integrity of the compliance planning process. The attached information was circulated to the Statistics Advisory Committee in November 2010 and members were happy to endorse the contents.

PART 1

STATISTICAL SURVEYS TO BUSINESSES CONDUCTED DURING 2009 BY DETI AND ASSOCIATED AGENCIES AND PUBLIC BODIES

Introduction

1. To comply with government instructions on the control and scrutiny of surveys, Departments are required to make an annual report on the business surveys carried out by, or on behalf of, themselves or associated public bodies whose activities are the responsibility of the Minister.
2. The attached tables document all business surveys (sponsored by DETI and affiliated agencies) for which fieldwork was conducted in Northern Ireland during 2009, including details of the burden on business, whether the survey was voluntary or statutory, the timeliness of results, the uses and statistical outputs of the survey and, for regular surveys, when each was last approved and when the next scrutiny is due.
3. In 2009, 45 business surveys were conducted. These included 22 statutory surveys, of which 21 were conducted under authority of the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and one under the Quarries (Northern Ireland) Order 1983. The total number of forms issued was 119,158 forms and of these, 88,403 (74.2%) were returned.
4. Ministers should be provided with a summary of any complaints received by commissioning Departments in connection with the conduct of their business survey activity. In 2009, 13 “complaints” (10 written and 3 telephoned) were logged by Statistics Research Branch, ranging from mild protest to outright refusal to comply. (The figure for 2008 was 26 - 20 written and 6 telephoned). As with previous years, the majority were received from individuals querying the basis of their selection for a particular survey and seeking information on the scope of the statistical legislation. Of the complaints logged, 10 (76.9%) had a positive outcome in that the complainant ultimately agreed to participate. Given the level of business survey contacts the Department has in any one year, the number of complaints received continues to be remarkably low.

2009 compliance cost

5. The aggregate compliance cost to respondents of all business surveys conducted by DETI and its associated bodies in 2009 was approximately £1,816,858 compared with £1,321,494^R in 2008. The increase in costs over the year is largely due to the biennial Census of Employment taking place in 2009.
6. The table below provides an apportionment of the total cost borne by businesses of various sizes. The fact that such a large proportion of the cost is carried by 'small' businesses reflects the structure of the NI economy at January 2010, where 88.0% of companies have fewer than 10 employees.

Estimated employee size-band	Forms issued	Forms returned	Response rate (%)	Compliance Cost (£)	Proportion of total cost (%)
0-24	78,847	58,406	74	£1,080,522	59
25-99	24,723	18,878	76	£415,900	23
100-249	8,449	6,493	77	£182,108	10
250+	7,139	4,627	65	£138,328	8
Total	119,158	88,403	74	£1,816,858	100

- Hourly rates used in the calculation of compliance costs are detailed on page 18.
7. To comply with the guidelines, the Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan includes an assessment of actual costs versus previously agreed limits. It was previously estimated that the total compliance cost to businesses for survey activity during 2009 would be contained within an upper limit of £1,927,371. The actual compliance cost was estimated to be £1,816,858, which was 1.0% below the forecasted figure. The main factor contributing to this difference was that a number of surveys were not undertaken in 2009, these included the Industry Communication/Perception survey, Strategy for Northern Ireland Tourism and Invest NI Annual Client Satisfaction Survey - telephone survey. The original costing for these surveys was approximately £29,500. There were also, two surveys carried out that were not included in the initial 2009 compliance cost, the TSS Customer Satisfaction Survey and the Business Tourism Barometer survey totalling an approximate cost of £900.

The 2009 estimated compliance cost of £1,816,858 is within the agreed upper limit for 2009 (£1,927,371) detailed last year.

Action to reduce compliance burden

8. As well as trying to minimise the number of forms issued, other efforts have been made to secure reductions in burden last year.
 - a. For the first time in 2009 the Census of Employment included a sample element of 50% of businesses with 0–5 employees. This provided a reduction in business compliance costs of approximately **£150,000**.
 - b. A large proportion of the data used in the calculation of the Index of Production continues to be collected through the Quarterly Sales Inquiry (QSI). Each quarter the QSI panel is checked against the sample for the Monthly Production Inquiry. Where appropriate, the QSI form is not issued and the data are taken from the alternative source. These measures produced a **saving of approximately £2,500**.
 - c. A portion of the data collected for the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) has continued to be done so through data sharing with the QSI. This, in turn, has reduced the number of forms issued by QES. This measure realised a **saving of approximately £3,000**.
 - d. The QES continued a scheme of ‘survey holidays’ for smaller businesses, whose employment levels did not fluctuate markedly over time. Around 50 companies per quarter are given a ‘survey holiday’ which has reduced the number of forms issued each quarter resulting in an **annual saving of approximately £800**. This will continue to be offered during 2010.
 - e. The QES also continued to offer the option of online form completion to help reduce the burden on businesses. The web based survey is fully integrated with the Government Gateway’s provision of online services.
 - f. The Survey of Bankrupts and company directors and the Survey of Creditors (6 monthly) were streamlined thus decreasing the amount of time required to complete it and also every bankrupt and company director was surveyed.
 - g. Companies contributing to the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry were again offered the opportunity to submit a copy of their annual accounts rather than completing the survey form. The form was constructed by DETI staff extracting the relevant information from the accounts. This approach to data collection will continue in 2010 and has produced a **2009 saving of approximately £1,000**. Completed surveys are also validated in-house with other DETI survey sources with the aim to reduce telephone chasing / queries.
 - h. On a more general level, forms to businesses are designed to be as simple and straightforward to complete as possible. For example, the number of questions are kept to the minimum needed to obtain the

necessary information and easy to answer tick boxes are provided to allow for speed in answering. DETI has continued throughout the year to offer employers greater flexibility in the way they supply the data requested. In many cases they now have the option of providing information electronically or by fax and respondents are increasingly taking advantage of these more efficient methods of data transfer. This option will be continued during the coming year.

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 - a. The merging of the Annual Business Inquiry and The Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey in 2010 will result in a reduction on the burden on business.
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Measures taken to Improve quality of surveys 2009

10. In addition to reducing the compliance cost, measures were also taken to improve the quality of individual surveys.
 - a. The Census of Employment introduced a new sampling and estimation methodology created with a Quality Improvement Fund with Office for National Statistics.
 - b. In 2009 the Index of Services applied new weights derived from Regional Accounts. The annual weights from regional Gross Value Added (GVA) are more up to date and their use is in line with recommendations from the Office for National Statistics.
 - c. The Census of Employment, The Northern Ireland Manufacturing and Exports Survey, The Quarterly Employment Survey and The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings all produced results using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification of Industries (SIC 07) basis for the first time in 2009.
 - d. InterTradeIreland Quarterly Business Monitor provided additional information on results and new weightings were applied.

Statistical Surveys to businesses conducted in calendar year 2009 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies.

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2009 Actual Compliance Cost to Business
Acquisition and Mergers	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2003/04		£192
Annual Inquiry into International Trade in Services	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business			£32,740
Annual Inward Foreign Direct Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,167
Annual Outward Foreign Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£2,265
Annual PRODCOM Inquiry (PRODCOM = PRODUcts of the European COMmunity.)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006/07	2011/12	£47,912
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006	2010	£100,310
Annual Survey of Visitor Attractions - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£602
Asbestos Awareness Survey (adhoc)	Ad-hoc	One-off	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£575
Business Tourism Barometer	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£426
Capital Expenditure Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2008	2011	£45,954
Census of Employment (biennial)	Regular	Biennial	Statutory	Business	2004	2009	£517,390
Coal Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£36
Community Innovation Survey	Regular	Biennial	Voluntary	Business			£96,466
Customer Satisfaction Survey (triennial) - HSENI	Regular	Triennial	Voluntary	Business	2002	2012	£3,352
E-Commerce Survey (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2005/06	2010/11	£3,980
Flour Millers' Survey (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£1,235
Import Prices Inquiry (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£27
Index of Services (IOS) (quarterly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business			£37,632
Industry Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£2,050
Inter Departmental Business Register Inquiry (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£21,639
InterTradelreland Quarterly Business Monitor	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2011	£34,315
Invest NI Monthly Transaction Surveys - telephone survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2007	2011	£5,691
Monthly Inquiry into the Production Industries (changed to Monthly Business Survey from Jan 2010)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	n/a for MPI 2011 for MBS	£46,355
Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2002		£275,382

Continued /Statistical Surveys to businesses conducted in calendar year 2009 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2009 Actual Compliance Cost to Business
Northern Ireland Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business			£34,019
Northern Ireland Occupancy Survey – Self-Catering Accommodation - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£4,284
Producer Prices Inquiry - recruitment (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£2,502
Producer Prices Inquiry (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£1,192
Productivity Innovation and Competitiveness in Northern Ireland - A Business Survey (One Off)	Ad-hoc	One-off	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£1,059
Promotional Events Survey (annual) HSENI	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2010	£613
Quarterly Employment Survey	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business			£165,805
Quarterly Inquiry into Electricity Generated	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2004	2010	£104
Quarterly Inquiry into Sales of Industry (Index of Production)	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2005	2010	£33,835
Quarterly Stocks' Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2007/08	2010/11	£33,411
RDA National Business Survey (to run 2008 and 2009)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2009	£24,244
Return of Output Value and Employment in Mines and Quarries	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£11,530
Survey of Bankrupts and company directors	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£727
Survey of Brewers, Distillers and Maltsters (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£618
Survey of Creditors (6 monthly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£529
Survey of Insolvency Practitioners (Annual)	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£331
Survey of Research and Development (R&D) within Northern Ireland (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1998		£205,938
Tourism Barometer (3 times a year; June, September and December)- NITB	Regular	Three times a year	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£5,686
TSS Customer Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	N/A		£442
UK Occupancy Survey of Serviced Accommodation (monthly) - NITB	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2005	2010	£11,254
Workplace Health Survey	Ad-hoc	One-off	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£1,041

PART 2(a)

DETI BUSINESS SURVEY ACTIVITY IN 2010

1. As previously stated, the reporting procedures include the survey programme for the current year and, plans for years two and three, along with the total estimated compliance cost to be imposed on business. In accordance with this, the attached tables provide details of the survey activity for 2010. This will involve 44 business surveys in total – 41 of which are regular (21 are statutory) and three conducted on an ad-hoc basis.
2. At this stage, two costs need to be prepared – (i) the estimated compliance costs of the surveys, which we know or are reasonably certain, will be conducted, and (ii) an upper limit for costs which are agreed with each agency and which have built in a residual amount to allow for unforeseen or unexpected survey activity. Next year's Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan will include an assessment of actual costs versus the agreed limits. Deviations above the limit need to be fully explained by the responsible Branch/Agency and reported to the Minister.
3. The **estimated cost of the 2010 inquiries** for which the Department is responsible is **£1,402,759**. It is important to note that these projections are based on assumptions regarding the sample size selected and the response rate. Even small fluctuations in these criteria can significantly affect the overall cost incurred.
4. The **agreed upper limit for compliance costs for 2010 is £1,472,897**.

Statistical Surveys to businesses to be conducted in calendar year 2010 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies.

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2010 Estimated Compliance Cost to Business
Acquisition and Mergers	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2003/04		£199
Annual Inquiry into International Trade in Services	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1999		£33,500
Annual Inward Foreign Direct Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,171
Annual Outward Foreign Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,370
Annual PRODCOM Inquiry (PRODCOM = PRODUcts of the European COMmunity.)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006/07	2011/12	£53,899
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006	2010	£106,558
Annual Survey of Visitor Attractions - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£683
Asbestos Phase II Dutyholder Survey	Adhoc	One off	Voluntary	Business			£2,288
Business Register Employment Survey (BRES)	Regular	Biennial	Voluntary	Business			£154,752
Business Tourism Barometer	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	NR	NR	£2,254
Capital Expenditure Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2008	2011	£47,543
Coal Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£37
E-Commerce Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2005/06	2010/11	£3,880
Flour Millers' Survey	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£1,277
Import Prices Inquiry	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£28
Index of Services (IOS) (quarterly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business			£38,909
Industry Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£2,122
Inter Departmental Business Register Inquiry (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£22,375
InterTradelreland Quarterly Business Monitor	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2011	£35,480
Invest NI Annual Client Satisfaction Survey - telephone survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	2007	2012	£20,529
Invest NI Monthly Transaction Surveys - telephone survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2007	2011	£6,569
Monthly Business Survey	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	n/a for MPI 2011 for MBS	£44,198
Motor Vehicle Repair Survey	Adhoc	One off	Voluntary	Business			£163
Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2002		£280,637

Continued /Statistical Surveys to businesses to be conducted in calendar year 2010 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2010 Estimated Compliance Cost to Business
Northern Ireland Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2003		£36,000
Northern Ireland Occupancy Survey – Self-Catering Accommodation - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£4,726
Occupational Pension Scheme Survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£1,400
Producer Prices Inquiry – recruitment (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£3,579
Producer Prices Inquiry (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£1,156
Promotional Events Survey (annual) HSENI	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2010	£650
Quarterly Employment Survey	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2002		£171,439
Quarterly Inquiry into Electricity Generated	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2004	2010	£108
Quarterly Inquiry into Sales of Industry (Index of Production)	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2005	2010	£33,689
Quarterly Stocks' Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2007/08	2010/11	£31,925
Return of Output Value and Employment in Mines and Quarries (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£11,921
Survey of Bankrupts and company directors	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£1,095
Survey of Brewers, Distillers and Maltsters (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£639
Survey of Creditors (6 monthly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£730
Survey of Insolvency Practitioners (Annual)	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£575
Survey of Research and Development (R&D) within Northern Ireland (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1998		£223,694
Tourism Barometer (3 times a year; June, September and December)- NITB	Regular	3 TIMES A YEAR	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£5,880
TSS Customer Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	N/A		£457
UK Occupancy Survey of Serviced Accommodation (monthly) - NITB	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2005	2010	£11,874
Volcanic Ash Survey (Ad hoc survey of industry businesses - voluntary basis)	Adhoc	One off	Voluntary	Business			£800

PART 2(b)

DETI PROPOSED BUSINESS SURVEY ACTIVITY IN 2011 AND 2012

1. The attached tables provide details of new surveys identified to date by DETI and its agencies, which are planned for the years 2011 and 2012. However, at this early stage, plans are not yet finalised and **thus only an agreed upper limit for total compliance costs has been provided**. These figures are **£2,060,820 and £1,615,271 for 2011 and 2012** respectively. The 2011 figure is largely due to the inclusion of the biennial Census of Employment in the survey programme.

Statistical Surveys to businesses to be conducted in calendar year 2011 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies.

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2011 Estimated Compliance Cost to Business
Acquisition and Mergers	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2003/04		£209
Annual Inquiry into International Trade in Services	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1999		£35,175
Annual Inward Foreign Direct Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,230
Annual Outward Foreign Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,439
Annual PRODCOM Inquiry (PRODCOM = PRODUcts of the European COMMunity.)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006/07	2011/12	£56,594
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006	2010	£111,886
Annual Survey of Visitor Attractions - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£717
Business Tourism Barometer	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	NR	NR	£2,366
Capital Expenditure Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2008	2011	£49,920
Census of Employment (biennial)	Regular	Biennial	Statutory	Business	2004	2009	£543,259
Coal Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£39
Community Innovation Survey	Regular	Biennial	Voluntary	Business			£112,433
E-Commerce Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2005/06	2010/11	£4,074
Flour Millers' Survey	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£1,341
Import Prices Inquiry	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£29
Index of Services (IOS) (quarterly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business			£40,855
Industry Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£2,228
Inter Departmental Business Register Inquiry (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£23,494
InterTradeIreland Quarterly Business Monitor	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2011	£37,254
Invest NI Annual Client Satisfaction Survey - telephone survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	2007	2012	£21,555
Invest NI Monthly Transaction Surveys - telephone survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2007	2011	£6,898
Monthly Business Survey	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011	£46,408

Continued / Statistical Surveys to businesses be conducted in calendar year 2011 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2011 Estimated Compliance Cost to Business
Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2002		£294,669
Northern Ireland Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2003		£37,800
Northern Ireland Occupancy Survey – Self-Catering Accommodation - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£4,962
Occupational Pension Scheme Survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£1,470
Producer Prices Inquiry - recruitment (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£3,758
Producer Prices Inquiry (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£1,214
Promotional Events Survey (annual) HSENI	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2010	£683
Quarterly Employment Survey	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2002		£180,011
Quarterly Inquiry into Electricity Generated	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2004	2010	£113
Quarterly Inquiry into Sales of Industry (Index of Production)	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2005	2010	£35,374
Quarterly Stocks' Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2007/08	2010/11	£33,521
Return of Output Value and Employment in Mines and Quarries (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£12,517
Survey of Bankrupts and company directors	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£1,150
Survey of Brewers, Distillers and Maltsters (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£671
Survey of Creditors (6 monthly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£766
Survey of Insolvency Practitioners (Annual)	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£604
Survey of Research and Development (R&D) within Northern Ireland (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1998		£234,879
Tourism Barometer (3 times a year; June, September and December)- NITB	Regular	3 TIMES A YEAR	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£6,174
TSS Customer Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	N/A		£480
UK Occupancy Survey of Serviced Accommodation (monthly) - NITB	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2005	2010	£12,468

Statistical Surveys to businesses to be conducted in calendar year 2012 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies.

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2010 Estimated Compliance Cost to Business
Acquisition and Mergers	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2003/04		£219
Annual Inquiry into International Trade in Services	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1999		£36,934
Annual Inward Foreign Direct Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,291
Annual Outward Foreign Investment Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2004/05	2010/11	£1,510
Annual PRODCOM Inquiry (PRODCOM = PRODUcts of the European COMmunity.)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006/07	2011/12	£59,424
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2006	2010	£117,480
Annual Survey of Visitor Attractions - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£753
Business Register Employment Survey (BRES)	Regular	Biennial	Voluntary	Business			£162,490
Business Tourism Barometer	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	NR	NR	£2,485
Capital Expenditure Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2008	2011	£52,416
Coal Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£41
Customer Satisfaction Survey (triennial) - HSENI	Regular	Triennial	Voluntary	Business	2002	2012	£3,520
E-Commerce Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2005/06	2010/11	£4,278
Flour Millers' Survey	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£1,408
Import Prices Inquiry	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£31
Index of Services (IOS) (quarterly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business			£42,898
Industry Satisfaction Survey-Conducted January 2009	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£2,340
Inter Departmental Business Register Inquiry (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£24,668
InterTradeIreland Quarterly Business Monitor	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2011	£39,117
Invest NI Annual Client Satisfaction Survey - telephone survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	2007	2012	£22,633
Invest NI Monthly Transaction Surveys - telephone survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2007	2011	£7,243
Monthly Business Survey	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	n/a for MPI 2011 for MBS	£48,728
Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2002		£309,402
Northern Ireland Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	2003		£39,690

Continued / Statistical Surveys to businesses be conducted in calendar year 2012 by DETI and associated Agencies and Public Bodies

Survey Name	Regular or Ad-hoc	Frequency	Statutory or Voluntary	Business or Local Authority	Date Last Review	Date Next Review	2010 Estimated Compliance Cost to Business
Northern Ireland Occupancy Survey – Self-Catering Accommodation - NITB	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£5,210
Occupational Pension Scheme Survey	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£1,544
Producer Prices Inquiry - recruitment (continuous)	Regular	Continuous	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£3,946
Producer Prices Inquiry (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2008/09	2011/12	£1,274
Promotional Events Survey (annual) HSENI	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business	N/A	2010	£717
Quarterly Employment Survey	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2002		£189,012
Quarterly Inquiry into Electricity Generated	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	2004	2010	£119
Quarterly Inquiry into Sales of Industry (Index of Production)	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2005	2010	£37,142
Quarterly Stocks' Inquiry	Regular	Quarterly	Statutory	Business	2007/08	2010/11	£35,197
Return of Output Value and Employment in Mines and Quarries (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	N/A	N/A	£13,143
Survey of Bankrupts and company directors	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£1,207
Survey of Brewers, Distillers and Maltsters (monthly)	Regular	Monthly	Statutory	Business	2009	2010	£704
Survey of Creditors (6 monthly)	Regular	Quarterly	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£805
Survey of Insolvency Practitioners (Annual)	Regular	Annual	Voluntary	Business			£634
Survey of Research and Development (R&D) within Northern Ireland (annual)	Regular	Annual	Statutory	Business	1998		£246,623
Tourism Barometer (3 times a year; June, September and December)- NITB	Regular	3 TIMES A YEAR	Voluntary	Business	N/A	N/A	£6,483
TSS Customer Satisfaction Survey	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	N/A		£504
UK Occupancy Survey of Serviced Accommodation (monthly) - NITB	Regular	Monthly	Voluntary	Business	2005	2010	£13,091

Note

Compliance costs are estimated in line with Office for National Statistics (ONS) practices. The calculation of costs is based on the length of time taken to complete a form which is recorded as part of the questionnaire response, the number of forms completed and average hourly rates for the relevant managerial level inter alia.

Average hourly rates used in construction of this report are detailed below:

Management level	Rate for 2009/10 financial year (£)	Rate for 2010/11 financial year (£)
Director	£88.24	£91.24
Senior Manager	£68.63	£70.96
Middle Manager	£47.38	£48.99
Junior Manager	£35.96	£37.18
Clerical	£22.85	£23.63

Further details are available on the ONS website (www.statistics.gov.uk).

PROCEDURES ISSUED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN MAY
1999 REGARDING THE CONTROL OF STATISTICAL SURVEYS



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

25 May 1999

Dear Peter

CONTROL OF STATISTICAL SURVEYS

The Prime Minister has agreed new procedures for the control of Government statistical surveys.

The necessary control of statistical surveys has hitherto been exercised through the detailed examination of individual surveys and clearance by the Survey Control Unit at the Office for National Statistics. The new procedures represent a significant change, with an emphasis on controlling the overall burden placed on businesses and local authorities. Only in the case of large-scale surveys will detailed reviews and clearance be required. These procedures replace those introduced by this office in August 1994.

Good statistics are vital for good decisions by Government, businesses and individuals and for public debate. Information may be required to determine, evaluate or monitor policy or action, provide social or economic indicators or measure customer satisfaction. The collection of data causes burdens on providers and it is important to keep these to a minimum, particularly for small firms. Statistical surveys account for only a fraction of the overall cost to businesses of complying with government administrative requirements. These costs can nevertheless be perceived by some businesses to be large and therefore deserve attention. Therefore controlling surveys is an important part of achieving the Government's overall aim of reducing the administrative burdens faced by business.

The detailed procedures to be followed are in annex A. This includes a summary of the responsibilities of Ministers, departments, the Survey Control Unit and independent observers under these revised procedures. Annex B lists the main changes from existing instructions.

Ministers should exert downward pressure on the compliance costs to businesses and local authorities and seek improvements to the quality of essential surveys. The aim of these instructions is to help them to achieve this without the need to be involved in the detail of individual surveys. They take account of the Osmotherly report '*Statistical Surveys: Easing the Burdens on Business*'.

Departments should make the necessary preparations for the implementation of the new procedures. The new procedures should be implemented no later than April 2000. Departments may wish to discuss interim arrangements for moving to the new system with the Survey Control Unit at the Office for National Statistics.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of members of the Cabinet and to Sebastian Wood (Cabinet Office).

yours ever

OWEN BARDER

OWEN BARDER

Peter Unwin Esq
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

CONTROL OF STATISTICAL SURVEYS INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

1. These instructions form the basis for controlling Government statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities. They create a framework for monitoring the compliance cost imposed by departments conducting statistical surveys.

2. The instructions provide Ministers and officials within departments with a mechanism for controlling the burden on business and local authorities without them necessarily being involved in the detail of individual surveys. In summary, control is to be achieved in the following way:

- Departments and agencies must keep records of surveys undertaken and their compliance costs;
- They must prepare an annual “Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan” that sets out the statistical surveys to be conducted, their estimated compliance costs and proposed improvements. The plan should also report on previous activity;
- Regular surveys must be reviewed at prescribed intervals. Detailed reviews are required for surveys with annual compliance costs exceeding £250,000. The level of detail required when reviewing less frequent large surveys should be agreed with Survey Control Unit.
- New, regular surveys of businesses, with compliance costs exceeding £50,000, must be cleared through the SCU.

3. The next section of the instructions outlines the scope of survey controls. This is followed by details of the survey control procedures and provides guidance on preparing compliance plans, reviewing regular surveys and dealing with proposals for new surveys.

Scope of survey controls

4. Survey controls apply to all statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities, conducted by, or on behalf of, Government departments or agencies where there is potentially a burden, or a perceived burden, on those approached to participate. This includes both regular and ad hoc surveys; both voluntary and statutory surveys. Surveys conducted by, or on behalf of, non-departmental public bodies are also covered. Such bodies may wish to report through, or combined with, parent departments.

5. Generally, surveys of individuals and households are outside survey control and do not form part of the reporting process. However, Survey Control Unit (SCU) will continue to record details of new regular surveys of individuals and households that exceed 5,000 respondents and 15 minutes completion time.

Definition of statistical surveys

6. A statistical survey is any structured inquiry designed to obtain aggregated data (which may be qualitative or quantitative) where the individual or corporate identities of the respondents are in themselves of little significance.

7. Statistical surveys in scope are not limited to those conducted by statistics divisions and do not necessarily involve completion of a form; telephone and personal interview surveys are also included.

8. The following are examples of statistical surveys of businesses or local authorities covered by these controls:

- Surveys designed to obtain aggregated data;
- Surveys where responses are solicited by means of a direct approach to potential respondents;
- Surveys carried out for departmental sponsors by consultants or private organisations;
- Customer satisfaction surveys designed to identify overall success of a product or service.

9. The following are examples of surveys **excluded** from survey control:

- Surveys where there is no direct approach made and where respondents clearly select themselves (e.g. web sites, readership surveys, some types of consultation exercises where there is an invitation to comment);
- Where information is required as an integral part of the operational management of a public service. Such returns will often be regulated under specific departmental controls;
- Surveys relating to the contractual obligations of potential respondents to the department or agency concerned;
- Surveys to respondents in central government and its agencies.

Any doubt about the inclusion or exclusion of particular surveys should be clarified with SCU.

Survey control procedures

10. The procedures are based around formal compliance planning, focussing on the larger surveys, supported by mechanisms for clearing new surveys and reviewing existing ones. Departments should nominate a Survey Control Liaison Officer (SCLLO), responsible for liaison with SCU, providing advice and guidance and monitoring survey activity within their department.

Recording surveys

11. Departments and agencies must keep a record of all the surveys of businesses and local authorities they undertake, including compliance costs; identifying those regarded as GSS surveys and those that are not.

The compliance and quality improvement plan

12. Departments and agencies conducting statistical surveys of business or local authorities must prepare an annual compliance and quality improvement plan on a three-year rolling basis. Plans should be submitted to departmental Ministers (or Chief Executives where appropriate) for agreement. These plans should include:

- A summary of the survey activity and compliance costs over the previous year (and a comparison with the previous plan);
- The total estimated compliance cost to be imposed on business or local authorities over the next three years (where firm information is not available, this may be limited to known regular surveys and any agreed ceiling; see paragraph 14 also);
- The survey programme for the next year and, where available, plans for years two and three. Where no firm details of years two and three are known, outline plans should be provided;
- A summary of the department's statistical outputs and their use;
- Details of reviews of regular surveys undertaken. These should include details of recommendations designed to improve quality and/or reduce costs over the planning period (see below for details of what these reviews involve);
- Details of other initiatives planned to improve quality and/or reduce running or compliance costs;

- Progress in following up initiatives (for example on the use of the Inter-Departmental Business Register or survey holidays arising from the Osmotherly report).

13. The gross burden to business should be used in the calculation of compliance costs. This can be defined as **all additional costs** to businesses arising from their inclusion in a survey. Further guidance on assessing compliance costs is given in the *SCU Guide to Best Practice*. Where some or all of these costs are clearly offset by benefits to respondents it is useful to include a reference to this in the plan, e.g. by using a footnote. Alternatively, surveys that offer a benefit to respondents may be highlighted by being grouped together within the plan. Costs in the Compliance Plan should be consistent with those used in departmental work plans and the GSS Annual report.

14. It is acknowledged that some departments may have difficulties in planning for ad hoc surveys, particularly where there are uncertainties over policy requirements and dynamic operational needs. In such cases a department's compliance and quality improvement plan should provide an overall upper limit for the compliance costs. Any limit will be for departments to agree with their Minister. Compliance costs for such surveys should be reported retrospectively, although full details of individual ad hoc surveys would not be necessary.

15. An independent observer should be involved in the construction of the compliance and quality improvement plan where the annual total compliance cost exceeds £500K. The role of the observer is to authenticate the validity and integrity of the compliance planning process.

16. Ministers or Chief Executives must be informed of potential changes to survey programmes that may result in the agreed limits being exceeded. An increase in the level of compliance costs in the year should be referred for ministerial agreement (or the agreement of the Chief Executive), most sensibly in the form of a revision to the compliance plan taking account of all known changes to the end of the year.

17. Compliance and quality improvement plans may be part of wider annual reporting procedures that take place in departments and agencies. Surveys of business and of local authorities may be reported separately as long as all relevant surveys are covered.

18. Copies of compliance and quality improvement plans (or departmental reports containing this information) should be provided to SCU to a specified timetable each year. It would be helpful if these were provided on a financial year basis.

Reviews of surveys conducted at regular intervals

19. All regular surveys must be subject to review. Annual (or less frequent) surveys must be reviewed at least every 5 years. More frequent surveys must be reviewed at least every 3 years. Surveys with annual compliance costs of less than £250,000 need only be subject to minor reviews. Such reviews should include a brief justification for their continuation, feedback from users of the data and a reassessment of the compliance costs. Sponsors should also consider obtaining feedback from data providers where it is appropriate. The reviews of larger regular surveys (with compliance costs exceeding £250,000 per year) should be comprehensive, including thorough consideration of the uses of the survey and options for change. In line with the recommendations of the Osmotherly report, they should involve an independent observer. The structure of reviews of large surveys is outlined in more detail in Appendix 2.

20. Reviews of related surveys should be synchronised where appropriate. Examples are:

- Related surveys for different countries of the UK;
- Surveys collecting essentially the same information at different frequencies.

New survey proposals

21. Departments should submit proposals for new regular surveys of business and local authorities with annual compliance costs that exceed £50,000 to SCU for examination; the appropriate (green) notification form should be used. Feedback will be provided to survey sponsors on the new survey in terms of both specific points and good practice. Departments should notify the SCU of new regular surveys of individuals and households that exceed 5,000 respondents and 15 minutes completion time using the appropriate (pink) notification form. Where practicable, as a matter of good practice, departments should refer their new surveys to any independent departmental body, user or advisory group for their information or approval.

22. The SCU *Guide to Best Practice* includes practical advice on reducing burdens. Although this is aimed at surveys of business, much of its content is equally applicable to surveys more generally. Copies of the guide are available from SCU. Survey sponsors should also make use of any departmental guides, the survey approval checklist, the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Code of Practice and the Statistical Quality Checklist. The SCU or departmental SCLO is available to offer further advice on good practice if required.

23. StatBase should serve as a useful tool to ensure that existing data sources are exploited and duplication of collection is avoided. Survey results should be readily accessible to GSS colleagues and deposited in StatBase and/or other archives where this is appropriate.

24. Compliance costs and benefits of all new survey proposals should be assessed by departments/agencies - including the impact on smaller firms. Guidance on determining compliance cost estimates is to be found in the SCU *Guide to Best Practice*. Further advice can be obtained from SCU or the departmental SCLO.

25. Where surveys are sponsored by more than one department/agency, the one providing the most resources for the survey carries the responsibility for ensuring survey control procedures are followed.

26. A summary of the responsibilities of Ministers, departments or agencies, independent observers and the SCU are outlined in appendix 1.

Appendix 1**Summary of Responsibilities under the New System*****Ministers (or Chief Executives):***

- To approve compliance plans and survey programmes by departments and agencies and any subsequent changes to these. Ministers should assure themselves that the surveys included in the plans are justified and properly controlled.

Departments and agencies:

- Departments and agencies must keep records of surveys of business and local authorities undertaken and their compliance costs;
- Departments commissioning surveys of business or local authorities must produce annual compliance and quality improvement plans. These should include an analysis of overall compliance costs, initiatives to reduce these costs and improve quality, and outline future plans within agreed compliance cost limits on a three-year rolling basis. Departments with total annual compliance costs exceeding £500,000 should involve an independent observer (where possible from outside the Civil Service) in the construction of their overall plan;
- For the purposes of compliance and quality improvement plans - all departments/agencies should assess compliance costs of all new surveys of business or local authorities. They should also review the compliance costs of regular surveys and obtain feedback from the providers and users of the data. Annual (or less frequent) surveys should be reviewed at least every 5 years. More frequent surveys should be reviewed at least every 3 years. Reviews of major regular surveys should involve an independent observer;
- Each department should have a Survey Control Liaison Officer (SCLO). SCLOs should submit to the SCU proposals for new, regular surveys of business and local authorities with compliance costs greater than £50,000;
- SCLOs should notify the SCU of new, regular surveys of more than 5,000 households or individuals and where the compliance time is 15 minutes or greater.

Independent Observers:

- In the preparation of the compliance and quality improvement plan, to authenticate the validity and integrity of the process;
- As a member of the survey review team, to ensure that questions on the need for the survey and on quality and compliance costs are properly considered;
- Ensure that the needs and views of business and that improvements of most value to business, are fully considered.

Survey Control Unit:

- To ensure compliance plans and annual reports are produced by departments/agencies and to publish annual summaries. To report on the total compliance costs imposed by central government statistical surveys of business and local authorities. SCU to inform Ministers/Chief Executives of departments or agencies not fulfilling these reporting and planning requirements;
- To monitor survey activity, provide advice to survey sponsors on best practice including the measurement of compliance costs on a consistent basis. To co-ordinate particular initiatives concerned with minimising burdens or improving quality and liaise with the Cabinet Office Better Regulation Unit as required;
- To examine proposals for new, large, regular surveys to business and local authorities and to record any new, large, regular survey of individuals or households.

Appendix 2**Reviews of Large Regular Surveys**

All regular surveys with annual compliance costs exceeding £250,000 should be subject to a thorough review. These major reviews should involve an independent observer and the report published, with a summary copied to the Minister (or Chief Executive). As good practice, such reviews should as a minimum consider the following:

- *The need for the information.* Internal to the department and external (distinguishing between Government and non-Government users);
- *The conduct of the survey.* Outline existing and proposed arrangements for conducting the survey, mentioning specifically any changes which have taken place since the last review;
- *Costs.* Include costs to both Government and respondents. Identify the burden on different size respondents, in particular small firms;
- *Respondents' views.* A small representative sample of respondents should be consulted and their views on the problems of supplying the information and resources involved in completing the survey should be indicated. In addition, departments may wish to consult representative bodies (e.g. trade associations);
- *Options for change.* Consider alternative data sources, also options for simplifying or reducing the survey and their implications;
- *Osmotherly/survey holiday report.* Progress on Osmotherly recommendations and survey holiday guarantees.

CHANGES TO SURVEY CONTROL PROCEDURES FROM 1994 INSTRUCTIONS

- Departments and agencies conducting statistical surveys of business or local authorities must prepare an annual compliance and quality improvement plan on a three year rolling basis for agreement with their Minister (or Chief Executive where appropriate).
- Departments with annual compliance costs exceeding £500,000 should involve an independent observer in the preparation of their plan. Copies of plans should be submitted to the Survey Control Unit at the Office for National Statistics (SCU).
- Departments should refer to their Minister, any revision that results in the compliance target being exceeded.
- Departments must continue to review regular surveys of business and local authorities. Those surveys with an annual compliance cost of more than £250,000 should be subject to a comprehensive review involving an independent observer; others a mini review.
- There is no longer a requirement to clear reviews with SCU or Ministers. However, a summary of reviews of major surveys should be submitted to Ministers for information.
- Ministerial approval of each new survey is no longer required.
- Departments need no longer submit each new survey to SCU for approval. New, regular surveys of business and local authorities, with annual compliance costs that exceed £50,000 should be submitted to SCU. SCU will provide feedback on specific points and matters of good practice.
- Departments should notify SCU of new, regular surveys of individuals and households, with a sample size greater than 5,000 and where the time taken to complete the survey form exceeds 15 minutes.