

Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI) Quality Report

Introduction

This report covers the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI) statistical bulletin and provides information on the quality of the data used to produce the publication and the statistical time series. This will allow users to be informed about the quality of the information upon which they may be drawing conclusions and making decisions.

The report is based on the nine quality dimensions of the European Statistical System http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-RA-08-015

From 1st April 2011, responsibility for the production of official statistics on the economy and labour market became the responsibility of Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). Those powers previously exercised by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) under the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 are now exercised by DFP from this date, as a result of the The Departments (Transfer of Functions) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011. While DFP exercise the powers of the 1988 Order, in practice the operational responsibility for statistics production will reside with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), an Agency of DFP.

In the short-term the statistics will continue to be published on the DETI website.

Publication Name: Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry

Department Responsible: Department of Finance and Personnel

Release Date: Reporting Unit (head office) based results in December and Local Unit (individual site) based results in Spring

Web link to main publication: <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-annual-business-inquiry.htm>

Quality report last updated: December 2011

Dimension	Assessment by the Author
Relevance	<p data-bbox="391 1382 1284 1438">The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1482 1236 1606">The Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI) provides information on the value of the economic activity that businesses generate and associated expenditure across the main industry sectors in Northern Ireland</p> <p data-bbox="391 1650 1300 1942">The NIABI provides a number of high level indicators of economic activity such as the total value of sales and work completed by businesses (Turnover), the value of the purchase of goods, materials and services and total employment costs. The contribution of different industries to the overall value of economic activity can be assessed and because estimates of employment are collected at the same time it is also possible to get a measure of value added and costs per head to allow better comparison between different sized industrial sectors.</p> <p data-bbox="391 1986 1173 2054">There are a variety of users of the NIABI data – government economic analysts, academics and the general public.</p>

	<p>At our most recent Economic & Labour Market Statistics User Groups meeting on 11th November 2011, the NIABI sample design and results were discussed. Users confirmed the importance of the data and that results at industry level were, by and large, more important than at results at geographical level.</p> <p>Within government the NIABI is used in policy formation and in responding to Assembly Questions.</p>
<p>Accuracy</p>	<p>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.</p> <p>The NIABI is designed to provide estimates of turnover and approximate Gross Value Added (GVA) for most sectors in the economy. The main exceptions are the public sector, most of agriculture and most of financial services.</p> <p>The NIABI sample is stratified by industry sector and size of business, with all large businesses being surveyed each year. However, not all businesses respond to the survey.</p> <p>The accuracy of the results is affected by a range of issues. Some of these are related to the fact that the estimates are based on a sample rather than a census of all businesses and that not all businesses respond to the survey. Some relate to the other processes involved in calculating the results.</p> <p>Coverage errors: The survey is designed to cover around two thirds of the NI economy. Full details of all sectors included for the NIABI can be accessed in the Background Notes section of the report. The sample is drawn from the Inter Departmental Business Register http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-inter-dept-bus-register.htm . As the IDBR is a continuously updated register it is possible that misclassified businesses may be included in the sample and that newly established businesses may be missed through not yet being recorded in the IDBR.</p> <p>Non-response errors: Not all businesses respond to the survey. The characteristics of these businesses may be different from those that do respond. The response rate for the 2010 survey was 80%.</p> <p>Processing errors: The data may be entered incorrectly into the system. Again, the validation procedures will highlight these and a check can be made to see if this is data input error or the provision of incorrect data. This has been considered to have a negligible impact on the results.</p> <p>Measurement errors: A business may provide incorrect data to the NIABI questions – for example providing the exact amount in £s rather than in £,000's. Validation checks are applied to the raw data and individual returns that are significantly out of step with previous values are queried with the data suppliers, and may be amended depending on the result of the check. Where a company has also provided information to another Northern Ireland survey, for example the Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey or the Index of Production or Services, the information can be compared to this survey. This information is used to understand and explain movements in the data. This has been considered to have a negligible impact on the results.</p>

	<p>Provision of revised data: Revisions to data occur for a number of reasons: late returned questionnaires, incorrect estimates or revised data. The NIABI revisions policy is published on the NIABI section of the website. http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-annual-business-inquiry.htm</p> <p>Significant revisions to recent data are highlighted in the report to bring them to the attention of users.</p>
<p>Timeliness and Punctuality</p>	<p>Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.</p> <p>The Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) publications schedule is available on the DETI website and provides twelve months advance notice of releases. http://www.detini.gov.uk/publication_schedule_10-18.pdf</p> <p>The Reporting Unit based NIABI is published in December each year, some eight months after the end of the financial year reporting period. Analysis on a Local Unit (individual site) basis is published the following Spring. In the unlikely event of a change to the pre-announced release schedule, public attention would be drawn to the change and the reasons for the change explained fully at the same time, as set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.</p>
<p>Accessibility and Clarity</p>	<p>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</p> <p>The NIABI statistical bulletin contains tables and text and conforms to the standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The publication contains a 'Background Notes' section which provides information on the scope of the survey, details of the data collection process, validation process and methodology.</p> <p>The NIABI statistical bulletin is available on the DETI website and free to download at 09:30 on the day of publication</p> <p>The ELMS Helpline can be contacted either by phone (028 9052 9475) or by email (statistics@dfpni.gov.uk)</p> <p>Enquiries from the media are directed through the DETI Press Office.</p> <p>NISRA operates a policy whereby publications are available on request in alternative formats such as Braille, large print and minority ethnic languages.</p>
<p>Coherence and Comparability</p>	<p>Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be</p>

	<p>compared over time and domain.</p> <p>The NIABI is available on a comparable basis from 2000 to 2007. With the move from Standard Industrial Classification 2003 (SIC03) to SIC07, 2008 data were produced on a SIC07 basis.</p> <p>Subsequently, for 2009 provisional data we introduced a new system of analysis and therefore revised the 2008 (SIC07) data. This has improved our estimates (and improved quality measures) but it means that data from 2008 onwards are not strictly comparable.</p> <p>For those businesses within NIABI which also fall within the sample for the Manufacturing Sales and Exports Survey a single survey form is issued, thus ensuring congruence of results for those companies.</p> <p>The Annual Business Survey (ABS), formerly the Annual Business Inquiry part 2 (ABI/2), is the Office for National Statistics (ONS) financial information survey covering approximately two thirds of the UK economy. The 2010 Annual Business Survey can be found at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/abs/annual-business-inquiry/2010-national-provisional/abs-2010---provisional-results-statistical-bulletin--nov-2011-.html#tab-Annual-Business-Survey--ABS-</p>
<p>Trade-offs between Output Quality Components</p>	<p>Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.</p> <p>The main users want the figures to be available as soon as possible after the period to which they refer. Estimates are published as soon as validation is finished and quality assurance is completed. As a result, revisions are an inevitable consequence of the trade-off between timeliness and accuracy.</p>
<p>Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions</p>	<p>The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.</p> <p>ELMS, NISRA has a programme of regular, scheduled Economy and Labour Market Statistics Users meetings. (The last meeting was 11 November 2011). The next meeting will take place in 2012. These meetings allow users to give feedback on their needs and perceptions of the NIABI.</p> <p>From attendance at the statistics users meetings it is clear that users are primarily government officials, academics and economic analysts. It is likely that members of the general public access our data via the website.</p> <p>The NIABI Quinquennial review is under way and this includes a voluntary survey of users. This should provide information on any unmet user needs. The results will be published in Spring 2012. Additionally NISRA runs an annual NISRA-wide customer satisfaction survey which incorporates ELM statistics.</p>
<p>Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden</p>	<p>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.</p> <p>The costs associated with producing the NIABI amount to £141,561</p>

	<p>of which seven tenths is accounted for in-house and relates to staff costs. The remaining costs are the result of outsourced work related to the survey. The estimated respondent burden for 2010 is £280,637. Full details on respondent burden for all formerly DETI surveys can be found at http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti_2009_report_to_ministers-2.pdf</p> <p>The Quinquennial review also includes a survey of businesses in the NIABI sample to identify any problems with the data collection element of the survey from the contributors' point of view. The aim is to improve the process to reduce respondent burden. The results will be published in early 2012.</p>
<p>Confidentiality, Transparency and Security</p>	<p>The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.</p> <p>The data are held on a network that is accredited to the security level of the data and is accessible only to staff involved in the production process. During the publication process all hard copies of interim results are locked away or shredded.</p> <p>The data are collected under the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988. http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/legResults.aspx?LegType=All%20Legislation&PageNumber=2&Year=1988&NavFrom=2&activeTextDocId=1014071</p> <p>This requires the Department to ensure the confidentiality of the data. Staff are trained and reminded of the protocols for ensuring the data remain confidential. This covers physical security, IT security and data disclosure issues.</p>