

Statistical Surveys of Businesses
Carried out By Northern Ireland
Departments During 2008



STATISTICS NOTICE

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STATISTICAL SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES CARRIED OUT BY NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENTS DURING 2008

Government surveys provide information for Government, business and society at large. They are needed, for example, for the successful management of the economy and to facilitate comparisons between Member States and the regions of Europe. They are also of prime importance in determining users' views on the quality of services that are provided by Government.

Some Government surveys are specifically addressed to households or individuals but a number of departments, particularly the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI), whose main clients are in the commercial sector, carry out surveys addressed to businesses. It is Government policy that good quality information to inform policy making and public debate should be obtained in such a manner that the burden placed on businesses responding to statistical enquiries is minimised.

This statistics notice provides summary details on Government statistical surveys of businesses in Northern Ireland during 2008.

A total of 82 surveys were carried out, the majority of which were initiated by DETI. The estimated number of forms issued by all Northern Ireland departments was just under one hundred and forty six thousand. The total estimated compliance cost to businesses was £1.8 million.

The summary details for each government department are:

Department	Number of surveys to businesses	Estimated number of forms issued (thousands)	Estimated compliance cost to businesses (thousands)
DARD	15	30.9	£252.7
DETI	42	95.6	£1321.1
DOE	13	4.6	£24.9
DE	2	1.3	£16.3
DRD	3	1.8	£19.2
DFP	5	4.0	£61.0
DEL	1	7.3	£59.9
DHSSPS	1	0.2	£3.5
All NI Departments	82	145.8¹	£1758.5¹

DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DOE	Department of the Environment
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

¹ Figures will not add due to rounding.

Measures being taken to reduce compliance costs

In addition to trying to minimise the number of forms issued, other efforts have been made to secure a reduction in the burden placed on businesses. A few of the specific initiatives employed by departments include:

- Incorporation of separate testing and licensing business elements of the Driver and Vehicle Agency customer satisfaction tests into a new joint survey;
- Use of on-line questionnaires where possible;
- Use of professional staff to advise on survey design and methodology;
- Limiting the length of Invest NI's Monthly Transaction Surveys;
- Data sharing between DETI's Quarterly Inquiry into Sales of Industry and the Monthly Inquiry into Production Industries; and
- Offering some businesses that contribute to the NI Annual Business Inquiry the option of submitting annual accounts data rather than completing inquiry forms.

Note to editors

Statistical surveys are conducted by a number of methods including post, telephone and face-to-face paper and computer assisted interviews. The phrase “number of forms issued” should be interpreted as relating to the number of respondents contacted, irrespective of whether physical questionnaire forms were issued.

Media enquiries should be directed to the DFP Press Office on telephone 028 90527374.

General information can be obtained from Marie Webb, NISRA Corporate Services Branch, telephone 028 90348152.