

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO A PUBLIC CONSULTATION SEEKING USERS VIEWS ON OFFICIAL TOURISM STATISTICS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

	PROPOSAL	RESPONDENTS RESPONSE	PROPOSED ACTION	ACTION TAKEN
1.	<p>NISRA proposed moving from the existing separate monthly publications of the main tourist sources:-</p> <p>a) Direct overseas visitors (NI Passenger Survey (NIPS));</p> <p>b) Direct overseas visitors (above) plus indirect visitors ('VIAS') departing via the Republic of Ireland (RoI), from Bord Failte's Survey of Overseas Travellers (SOTs);</p> <p>c) NI residents' overnight trips within NI (from NISRA's Continuous Household Survey);</p> <p>to quarterly publications including all of the above plus a quarterly measure of RoI residents' overnight trips to Northern Ireland (from the Central Statistics Office's Household Travel Survey (HTS)). In addition, the quarterly report would include the main quarterly summaries of previously published (monthly) occupancy statistics.</p>	<p>Respondents agreed with the proposal to move from separate monthly publications to quarterly publications. The main theme throughout the responses was the production of timely, quarterly, complete publications.</p>	<p>NISRA will publish all main sources (direct overseas, 'VIAS', domestic NI and RoI visitors and quarterly summaries of occupancy statistics) in a quarterly publication.</p>	<p>Tourism statistics publications for quarter 1, quarter 2 and quarter 3 of 2013 have been issued in the revised format. These publications are available here http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics.htm</p>
2.	<p>NISRA proposed continuing the monthly publication of Hotel/Guesthouse and B&B occupancy figures as a lead indicator.</p>	<p>Respondents supported the continuation of the occupancy publication on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>NISRA will continue to publish monthly occupancy statistical bulletins for hotels, bed and breakfast, guest</p>	<p>NISRA has continued to publish Hotel/Guesthouse and B&B occupancy figures on a monthly basis. These</p>

			house and guest accommodation statistics to provide a lead indicator of tourism trends that will complement the quarterly publications.	publications can be found here http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics/stats-accomm-6.htm
3.	NISRA sought user opinion on the appropriateness of existing statistical margins of error	Respondents reported that they would like to see the statistical margins of error reduced but recognised that current resources would not enable this.	Significant improvements in precision would require marked increases in the NISRA and RoI visitor survey sample sizes which would require significant additional resources. Should such resources not become available, NISRA will report on a rolling annual basis, and will limit the level of disaggregation at which quarterly results are reported to maximise the use of the existing sample. It should be noted that NISRA is only responsible for administering NI based surveys and is not responsible for establishing resourcing levels which impact on the sample size of RoI surveys.	While it is not possible to increase sample sizes within current budgetary limits, developmental work has been carried out on combining confidence intervals for the surveys that NISRA administers directly. These combined confidence intervals have been included in publications produced since November 2013 and better inform users of the margin of error associated with the estimated figures.

4.	Opinion was sought on the proposal to report tourism visitor survey estimates for the latest 12 months against the previous 12 months, as well as quarterly and year to date results.	Respondents supported this proposal provided that quarterly and year to date statistics were still made available.	NISRA plans to publish statistics comparing the most recent 12 months data with the previous 12 months data along with quarterly and some year to date results. The publications will highlight any sample size limitations as surveys based on smaller sample sizes will likely exhibit greater degrees of volatility. Annual publications will include data on the self-catering occupancy and visitor attractions as these are conducted on an annual basis.	The first quarterly publication in the revised format issued in September 2013, followed by quarter 2 and quarter 3 statistics in November 2013 and February 2014 respectively. Feedback from a user group meeting in December 2013 indicated that users were content with this aspect of the format of the publications.
5.	Sub-Northern Ireland annual estimates will be limited to combinations of District Councils and based on 100 or more visitors. NISRA sources for overseas and domestic tourism will also be combined to provide rolling bi-ennial (or tri-ennial) estimates.	This issue generated a large number of responses with users reporting that they were very keen to get local authority information as soon as possible. The most recent local authority estimates were published in 2009 and users reported that they need these statistics in a timelier fashion. Respondents urged NISRA to prioritise the availability of these statistics,	NISRA recognises the demand for local authority information and is currently investigating possible methodologies to produce these statistics. There are however inherent limitations in disaggregating demand side measures (surveys of visitors at ports, or in	An initial meeting with some local authority representatives was held in September 2013 (minutes are available here http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics/user_engagement.htm) that has informed the contents of a bulletin of Local Authority

		<p>not only to enable the production of timely headline data but also to enable users to further develop this area.</p>	<p>households) to even provide annual measures at District Council level, because of sample size constraints. NISRA will investigate the use of (i) rolling annual surveys for District Councils and (ii) grouping of District Councils. NISRA will also examine the feasibility of providing other information at sub-regional level such as employee jobs in respect of the tourism characteristic industries. NISRA has held a user group meeting with some local authorities at which a way forward on the provision of appropriate local authority statistics was proposed. These data will be provided to the meeting attendees with the aim of distributing to all District Councils once format is agreed.</p>	<p>information. This bulletin was published in early December 2013. Feedback from a user group meeting in December 2013 indicated that users welcomed this publication.</p>
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6.	<p>Changing pre-announced publication dates if external sources are significantly delayed. For example, if statistics from Rol sources are expected within 6 weeks of the pre-announced NISRA publication date NISRA is proposing to delay its publication date to include these. Alternatively, if the external sources are not available within 6 weeks NISRA propose to publish the remaining sources in the quarterly publication with a clear indication that this is a partial picture. The alternative is to delay publication of all quarterly tourism statistics until the external sources are available.</p>	<p>With the exception of one respondent, all others reported that while they would prefer to get complete data, they believed that greater timeliness and adhering to pre-announced publication dates took priority.</p>	<p>NISRA is committed to the publication of statistics in a timely manner. To ensure completeness, and to reflect user views that a 6 week delay was too long, NISRA will consider delaying publication for up to 3 weeks from the pre-announced publication date if there is a delay in the availability of any of the external data sources. However, any delay will be balanced against the need for timeliness, completeness and adherence to pre-agreed publication dates where possible.</p>	<p>NISRA has published the schedule for tourism statistics and will adhere to these dates where possible. Should it be necessary to change the publication date, NISRA will clearly indicate the reason for the delay on the publication schedule as soon we are made aware of it.</p>
7.	<p>NISRA propose publishing Failte Ireland (Survey of Travellers (SOT)) estimates of GB and overseas visitors to NI who depart through the Rol in NISRA's quarterly publication, while making it clear the sample size limitations.</p>	<p>Respondents agreed that NISRA should publish the SOTs as they are viewed as fit for purpose by Rol. Tourism Ireland reported that they welcomed more investigation into using PCI from the beginning of 2014 as a possible alternative to SOTs.</p>	<p>NISRA will continue to include SOT visitor numbers in its quarterly bulletins on the basis of a rolling 3 year annual average for the relevant quarter, to address volatility issues in this source. NISRA will keep under review the potential</p>	<p>SOT figures have been included on this basis in NISRA's quarterly and LGD publications, as part of the estimates of external visitors.</p> <p>NISRA will review the appropriateness of PCI</p>

			<p>use of PCI results when these become available next year for NI visitors, from CSO. Although NISRA recognises the volatility issue with the SOTs, it is also aware of other limitations regarding the use of the PCI, not least the absence of NI expenditure data. CSO plan a significant revision of the methodology of the PCI and the associated Country of Residence survey to address methodological issues. NISRA will take this into account when deciding whether to publish next year's CSO data from the PCI as an alternative or additional source of information regarding visitors to NI.</p>	<p>data relating to NI when CSO release such data.</p>
8.	<p>NISRA is seeking views on whether to publish CSO's (Household Travel Survey) estimates of RoI overnight visitors to NI who depart through the RoI in its annual publication, rather than its quarterly publication. This is because the annual</p>	<p>The majority of respondents supported NISRA's suggested annual publication of the HTS. However, some would still prefer quarterly publications of the HTS whereas others would like</p>	<p>The RoI's Central Statistics Office is currently publishing HTS, including NI results, quarterly. NISRA's quarterly tourism</p>	<p>HTS figures have been included on this basis in NISRA's quarterly and LGD publications.</p>

	sample size may be too small for robust quarterly estimates.	<p>a commitment to enhancing the sample size which in turn would increase confidence in the statistics.</p> <p>It was noted that the source for NI resident's overnight and day trip data is based on a small sample. There was a suggestion that NISRA should focus their resources on increasing the sample size and, in turn, the confidence around the domestic travel statistics.</p>	<p>publication will therefore continue to include data from the HTS, though noting the relatively small sample size. This will also limit the extent of disaggregation of quarterly results from the CHS and HTS sources, though rolling annual series will be available for this purpose. There are currently no additional resources available to increase the CHS sample size for tourism statistics purposes.</p>	
9A.	Other suggested areas for development	<p>Feedback was received on NISRA's intentions to publish cruise ship data. Those who commented were keen to see the data included in NISRA's future publications, with the recognition that the results would include crew and passengers who may not necessarily disembark in NI. Derry Visitor Convention Bureau also highlighted that they hold some information on cruise activity on Lough Foyle and also on other marine passengers</p>	<p>NISRA will publish information on cruise ship numbers received from the Belfast and Derry Visitor Centres in NISRA's quarterly publication. It recognises the interest in obtaining statistics on caravan, camping and other non-serviced accommodation, including at a lower level of geographical detail. However, given that key users' policy focus is on</p>	<p>An initial meeting between Visit Belfast, DETI, and NISRA officials took place in January 2014 to explore what information is currently available for cruise ships visiting Belfast and Londonderry. Further meetings will be arranged with the appropriate contacts in due course.</p>

		<p>such as those on yachts/superyachts.</p> <p>Respondents highlighted other sources of accommodation data (for example caravanning and other non-serviced accommodation) and requested that NISRA investigate these sources of information. A lower geographical level would be of particular interest to users as each destination area can offer different types of accommodation. Respondents also expressed an interest in NISRA analysing the impact of tourism at sub-regional level (direct/indirect employment, value of services etc).</p>	<p>external visitors NISRA will continue to prioritise developments in this area, rather than committing resources at this stage to the measurement of the caravan and camping sector. NISRA will undertake to disaggregate data to a lower level geography (District Council) where possible. A user group meeting has been held with some local authorities to discuss a way forward on the provision of appropriate local authority statistics. Summary minutes will be published on the NISRA web site when these are available.</p>	<p>An initial meeting with some local authority representatives was held in September 2013 (minutes are available here http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics/user_engagement.htm) that has informed the contents of a bulletin of Local Authority information. This bulletin was published in early December 2013. Feedback from a user group meeting in December 2013 indicated that users welcomed this publication.</p>
9B.	Timeliness of results	<p>In general, there were some points highlighted by all respondents, notably that timely statistics should be a priority. The perceived delay in publishing 2012 statistics caused some concerns to users. Also, if or when revised statistics</p>	<p>To ensure completeness, and to reflect user views that a 6 week delay was too long, NISRA will consider delaying publication for up to 3 weeks from the pre-announced publication</p>	

		<p>are published, it was requested that any 'old' publications be removed from the website when revised statistics are published to avoid any confusion.</p>	<p>date if there is a delay in the availability of any of the external data sources. However, any delay will be balanced against the need for timeliness and adherence to pre-agreed publication dates where possible.</p> <p>When NISRA publishes any data, it will be marked 'provisional' or 'revised' as appropriate. It will remove any older publications that have been subsequently revised and follow the 'Tourism Statistics Branch Statistics Revisions Policy' as detailed on the following link - http://www.detin.gov.uk/tourism_statistics_branch</p>	<p>NISRA has reviewed its website and removed any Tourism statistical publications that have been subsequently revised. This is in line with the Tourism Statistics Branch Revisions policy.</p>
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