Update on the Development of a Set of Supply-Use Tables for Northern Ireland - 31st March 2015

**Background**

The aim of this short paper is to provide users of economic and labour market statistics with an update on progress made by NISRA regarding the development of a set of Supply and Use Tables (SUTs) for Northern Ireland.

**Progress**

1. NISRA has been working with an expert consultant from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) over the last two years to assess the feasibility of developing SUTs for Northern Ireland. The initial period entailed assessing the available data and the feasibility of developing a set of SUTs for NI.

1. A detailed scoping exercise was undertaken which assessed all available data sources from government departments in NI, the UK and the ROI. During this phase of the project pilot, SUTs were developed for the 2010 reference year based on the existing data sources available. This report can be found at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/index/what-we-do/deti-stats-index/economy_statistics.htm>.

***Stakeholder engagement***

1. Over the last year (since March 2014) NISRA has engaged with users and other relevant stakeholders to inform the development of the project.
2. In March 2014 an expert user group meeting was held with a selection of key stakeholders to provide information on the progress of the exercise and also to gather their views on the project.
3. In April and November 2014 representatives from NISRA, as well as the ONS consultant, met with the Scottish Government National Accounts team to discuss issues such as data sources, systems requirements and methodologies. These bilateral meetings are planned to continue.
4. During May 2014 NISRA invited users of economic statistics from across 40 different organisations to gather their views on the value of developing SUTs for NI following the publication of the scoping report. All respondents (n=16) considered it useful for NISRA to develop a set of SUTs and associated measures for NI (similar to those available for Scotland). Key findings from the user engagement have been analysed in a [summary report highlighting users’ feedback](http://www.detini.gov.uk/users_views_on_the_development_of_supply-use_tables_-_research_findings_oct-2014.pdf?rev=0).
5. During June 2014 NISRA met with representatives of the Public Spending Directorate, Central Expenditure Division (CED), to discuss NI public sector expenditure data sources and analysis of the data. This informed the analysis of the OSCAR data held by the HM Treasury. Further discussions with CED will be needed to ensure accuracy throughout future analysis of the public expenditure data.
6. A number of meetings have also been held with colleagues in the Department of Finance of Personnel (DFP) to discuss the methodology used in the development of the Net Fiscal Balance Report (NFBR). This enabled a better understanding of the data used and processes involved in developing the NFBR tables.

***Output***

1. Over the last 6 months the NISRA team has produced a draft set of SUTs for the 2012 reference year. The process has involved NISRA staff sourcing, modelling and analysing raw data as well as developing a system of integrated spreadsheets in order to produce a set of experimental SUTs.
2. Throughout the process feedback has been sought from the expert ONS consultant whilst also taking into consideration any suggestions for improvement when analysing the data.
3. There have been a number of improvements made during the compilation of the 2012 tables. These are listed below:

***Additional Resources***

* 1. NISRA has expanded the Economic Accounts Team which now consists of 4 staff dedicated to the project: 1 Grade 7, 0.75 Deputy Principal and 1.5 Assistant Statisticians.

***Improvements in Data Sources***

* 1. The experimental [Broad Economy Exports](http://www.detini.gov.uk/index/what-we-do/deti-stats-index/economic_output_statistics/stats-broad-economy-exports-link.htm) (BEE) dataset, not previously available, has been included in the compilation of the 2012 tables. This dataset provides detailed data on the value of exports by 4-digit SIC code and is used to calculate the demand for products within the NI Demand Table.
  2. More robust data has been acquired for the non-profit sector. Specifically, data relating to expenditure of the community and voluntary sector has been sourced from [NICVA](http://www.nicva.org/resource/state-sector-vi).
  3. Additional data has been sourced for the NI Universities.
  4. In 2010, specific information for Northern Ireland was not available to estimate imputed rents (the amount an owner occupier would need to pay to rent their own property). This was calculated taking into account rental levels in Northern Ireland and UK data from the consumer price index. The [Northern Ireland Housing Executive](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/performance_of_the_private_rental_market_in_northern_ireland_jan_june_2014.pdf) has recently published research regarding the performance of the private rental housing market in Northern Ireland. This data has now been used to give a more direct estimate of imputed rents.

***Process improvements***

1. A system of integrated spreadsheets has been developed which has streamlined the analysis process. This has made the analysis more transparent and facilitates traceability of the output figures back to the source data, thereby aiding the quality assurance process.
2. A new approach has been adopted for calculating the output of membership organisations.
3. Documentation has been produced for each step of the analysis which will assist with the development of future SUTs.
4. NISRA have now developed an initial draft set of SUTs for 2012 and are currently in the process of quality assuring the tables as well as undertaking the balancing process. This is a complex procedure and involves robust data interrogation, checking against internal data sources, and validating findings with other comparable research findings.

**Next steps**

1. NISRA are working to complete the quality assurance and balancing of the draft tables. NISRA plan to meet with expert users in May 2015 to present key findings and seek their views on the results. Summary results are scheduled to be published in summer 2015.