

**Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Economic Accounts
Supply and Use Tables (SUTS) User Group Meeting**

16th February 2017

Netherleigh

Name	Organisation
Attendees	
1. James Gillan	NISRA
2. Darren Hetherington	NISRA
3. Chris Ganley	NISRA
4. Gerard Colgan	NISRA
5. Suzanne Bradley	NISRA
6. Jonathan Harvey	NISRA
7. Ziping Wu	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
7. Shane Murphy	Department for the Economy (DfE)
8. Neil Gibson	Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC)
9. Seamus McErlean	Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Introduction and Overview of Meeting

1. JG welcomed everyone and outlined the objectives of the meeting; to update on progress, present key draft results, gather initial feedback and outline future steps. Attendees were reminded that the SUT tables contained potentially disclosive material and were asked to sign confidentiality agreements.
2. GC explained that there is an NISRA Agency objective to produce 2013 Economic Accounts for NI by the end of the financial year. 2012 SUTs were produced in-house in May 2016. Experimental Multipliers for 2012 were also produced. NISRA have now produced 2013 SUTs and further revised 2012 figures. NISRA have engaged with users throughout the process.

Planned developments

3. GC gave an overview of the planned developments regarding the Economic Accounts projects: NISRA are currently developing a new IT system for developing the SUTs. CG noted that work was underway to transform the system of interlinking spreadsheets into SAS code and employ a database management system to maintain the input and output data tables.
4. GC explained that the SUTS currently use UK purchasing information from 2004, but that initial results from the UK wide Purchases Inquiry (PI) were now being quality assured. It is anticipated that these results will form the basis for a NI purchasing matrix in the future. He noted that NI was the only region with a boosted sample (c. 3,000).

5. The sample for the Living Costs and Food Survey has been boosted to 1000 cases and will help improve estimates of Household Expenditure.
6. GC explained that NISRA plan to devote further resources to the Economic project.
7. NISRA also plan to investigate the production of quarterly GDP.

Constraints

8. GC explained that there were a number of constraints which meant that the publication of the SUTs are behind schedule.
9. The main constraint was that the Economic Accounts team experienced staff shortages throughout the year.
10. The compilation of the SUTs require GVA (I) figures from ONS which are published in December each year. It was necessary to incorporate these revised estimates into the SUTs.

Improvements

11. SB highlighted improvements made during the compilation of the 2012 and 2013 SUTs. She explained that two years of data are now available and this facilitated more in depth quality assurance.
12. The series of spreadsheets used to compile the SUTs was refined and extra validation checks included.
13. Additional/more up to date data sources have also been included. Detailed sense checks were undertaken on the data, which resulted in many improvements. In particular, the quality of the energy variables was improved, and double counting was eliminated for some parts of public expenditure.
14. Following feedback from users the process for calculating Gross Capital Formation was also refined.

Presentation of the 2013 Experimental Supply and Use Table Draft Results

15. SB presented a number of tables summarising the key results for the 2012 and 2013 SUTs, including comparisons with the UK and Scotland.
16. She explained how data from the SUTs could be used to calculate GDP using the three different approaches: the production, income and expenditure approaches.
17. The group noted the complex nature of the tables and asked for a detailed explanation of the results. SB took the group through some of the detail.

Gross Capital Formation

18. The group discussed the value of the Gross Capital Formation within the summary tables, and noted that the low value was not surprising.

Trade

19. The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using the Broad Economy Sales and Export statistics (BESES) and the Regional Trade Statistics (RTS). JG explained the SUTS used the HMRC estimates for estimating exports. Several members of the group noted that they thought that HMRC underestimated the value of goods, and that underreporting trade could have large consequences going forward.
20. There was a discussion around the fact that there was no legislative gateway to access to HMRC data

Gross Operating Surplus and Mixed Income

21. The group noted that the values for Gross Operating Surplus (GOS) and Mixed Income (MI) for the Government were high and this was probably due to Non Market Capital Consumption.

Agricultural Data

22. One member of the group suggested that there may be scope to get more detailed data for measuring Intermediate Consumption in the Agricultural Sector.

Limitations of SUTs

23. The group discussed the current limitations of the SUTs.
24. The NI purchasing pattern is currently based on UK data from 2004. It is intended that data from the PI will be used to compile the SUTs in the future.
25. Household expenditure is currently based the Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF) which prior to 2016 had a limited sample size of around 170 addresses per year. This is not robust enough to measure consumer expenditure. The sample for the 2016 survey has been boosted and this will increase the robustness of the measure. NISRA also wish to develop a quarterly consumer expenditure measure to track changes in this key area.
26. Analysis of the SUTS showed a 12% increase in Intermediate consumption (IC) from 2012 to 2013. The Use table is comprised mainly of IC figures by Industry. NISRA officials are currently undertaking detailed quality assurance of the variables used to compile Intermediate consumption.

Publication plans

27. There was a discussion around whether the SUTS should be published taking into account possible changes in trade figures and Intermediate Consumption. It was agreed that the

main purpose of these experimental statistics was to refine the methodology used to compile the tables in advance of specific NI purchasing data and improved expenditure data becoming available.

28. The group noted that the project had a wide audience including MLAs, the private sector, industry bodies, academic community and government economists. It was agreed that communication of the results to the public is very important. Any publication of results should include clear explanations and worked examples.
29. SB explained that the next step was to compile a set of Industry by Industry multipliers. This will be carried out when the revised data for intermediate consumption is available.

Developing NI Economic Statistics Priority Areas

30. JG outlined a number of options for developing NI Economic Statistics. These included development of the following work areas:

Labour Market Statistics

- LFS Survey boost
- Multi-Survey Pooled sample
- Better Jobs Index
- Vacancy Statistics
- Consumer Expenditure Development
- Household Income
- Household Indebtedness

Business Activity (for Economic Accounts)

- NI component of New Business Register
- Foreign Direct Investment data
- Output of products and services in Northern Ireland

Administrative Data Sources for Economic Statistics

- Tax Revenue statistics
- Banking/Finance Statistics
- Administrative data
- Sectoral Accounts

31. Members of the group expressed which areas they thought should be prioritised.

Contribution to Economic policy

32. Users were unanimous in their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Economic Accounts team. They also highlighted the importance of this work for future economic policy development and fully backed the continuation of the development of economic accounts for Northern Ireland.
33. James Gillan and Gerard Colgan both thanked users for their valuable contribution to the meeting prior to closing.

END

If you require more information about any of the topics discussed above, please contact NISRA via the details below. In addition, if users have any views on DFP statistical services, official statistics data quality or the format and timing of reports, please provide your comments via the details below:-

Email: suzanne.bradley@nisra.gov.uk