



The Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002

Progress Report, 1999-2000

National Statistics Board

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Editorial Note

Because of publication delays, much of the manuscript of this report was finalised well before the publication date. The opportunity has been taken to update some references to events after the end of 2000, but not all references have been updated.



Designed and printed by the Central Statistics Office.



Preface

I have great pleasure in presenting to the government the report of the National Statistics Board (NSB) covering the two-year period, 1999 and 2000. This report monitors the progress of the CSO in achieving the strategic objectives of the NSB as set out in the *Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002*. As in the case of the report for 1998, Chapter 2 summarises the Board's own views on how the CSO has succeeded in meeting the strategic objectives and targets set. In subsequent chapters the CSO sets out developments in a range of areas in some detail.



The National Statistics Board has existed on a statutory basis since 1995. Prior to that, an interim board developed a series of documents that set out and monitored the implementation of a strategy for statistics in Ireland for the two five-year periods: 1988-1992 and 1993-1997. When the present Board was established it inherited an existing strategy document and developed the present strategy. In the case of both the interim and statutory boards, progress in meeting the objectives of these strategies was recorded in annual or occasionally biannual reports.

At the time when these reports were instituted, the CSO as an organisation did not report directly on its activities in the public domain. Now under the SMI and in accordance with the 1997 Public Service Man-



agement Act, the CSO publishes its own three-year organisational strategy document *Statement of Strategy* and also publishes annual progress reports. In the light of these recently introduced public reporting mechanisms, it is timely for the NSB to review its role in producing strategy documents and in reporting annually. This process is now underway and in the future a much shorter annual report will be issued by the Board at the same time as the CSO issues its annual report, so that these can be read in tandem. The first report in this new form will cover 2001 and will be finalised in April-May 2002.



While the rhetoric that we are in a new world (the new economy / the information society / globalisation) is all pervasive, the reality is that Ireland, along with most of its fellow member countries in the EU, has a long way to go in developing the body of official statistics required to monitor properly changes in our individual and collective economies and societies. Economic statistics in the EU have not fully tracked these changes (the growth of services, the increased prevalence of globalized production, the integrated nature of world markets) and social statistics are generally regarded as being inadequate for monitoring and policy making purposes. In Ireland, the absence of well-developed social statistics is a problem in the context of the rapid rates of growth and social change that have occurred over the past decade, and particularly in the context of the approach we take to national economic management through social partnership.

As chairperson, I believe that it is timely for the Board to engage in a strategic review of the best overall approach towards the development of Ireland's statistical infrastructure, involving the CSO and relevant other government agencies in this process. As a country, we need to set ourselves appropriate targets to ensure



that the relevant economic and social data are available for evidence-based policy making, and that these data are fully analysed. While more of this analysis should take place within the various organisations that collect the data, much of it will still be undertaken by others and it is of paramount importance that those who need the data have access to it. In preparing its next strategy document during the coming months, the Board will consider how Ireland should progress on these fronts. In particular, the Board will focus to a much greater extent on the wider national statistical requirements, beyond those currently produced by the CSO.

The year 2000 also marks a change in the management of the CSO. At the end of the year, Donal Murphy completed his term as head of the Office, and has been succeeded by Donal Garvey. As chair of the Board for much of this period, I wish to acknowledge publicly the huge contribution that Donal Murphy made to the CSO during a difficult organisation period, as the Office became bi-located in Dublin and Cork. Under his direction, and with the support of his fellow directors and staff, the Office has extended the range of its activities and improved on the quality and timeliness of many of its major statistical series, at a time when demands for statistics have been rising rapidly. While much remains to be done in terms of improving data quality and coverage and increasing the level of statistical analysis, it is important to recognise how much has been achieved over the past decade.

Frances Ruane
Chairperson



Summary

The main function of the National Statistics Board, as specified in the *Statistics Act, 1993*, is to guide the strategic direction of the Central Statistics Office (CSO). In September 1998, the Board published its five-year strategic plan *Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002* after extensive consultation with the users and suppliers of statistics.

This report describes progress made by the CSO during the years 1999 and 2000 in meeting the objectives set out in the Board's Strategy.

It is divided into two parts.

Part I gives the perspective of the Board. Chapter 1 (*Background*) explains the functions and work of the National Statistics Board and summarises its 1998-2002 Strategy. Chapter 2 (*Review*) discusses the main topics on which the Board focused during 1999 and 2000, describes what the Board sees as the most significant statistical developments during this period, and outlines the progress made by the CSO in a range of areas. It also comments on the implications of the continuing increases in EU statistical demands, particularly those arising in the context of EMU.

The key developments in Irish statistics during 1999 and 2000 include:

- ◆ introduction in November 1999 of quarterly national accounts
- ◆ completion of an extensive revamping and expansion of detail of the balance of payments results
- ◆ introduction of a new annual series of regional and county household incomes
- ◆ establishment of the Quarterly National Household Survey as the primary source of regular labour market statistics
- ◆ planning and completion of the fieldwork of a Household Budget Survey

- ◆ updating and rebasing of several of the short-term business statistics series
- ◆ completion of a Census of Agriculture
- ◆ preparation for the planned 2001 Census of Population (deferred to 2002 because of the national foot and mouth disease alert)
- ◆ improvements in the CSO's arrangements for dissemination of results.

Part II of the Report details the specific developments made by the CSO during 1999 and 2000 in *macro-economic statistics* (Chapter 3), *social & demographic statistics* (Chapter 4), and *business statistics* (Chapter 5). *Other statistical aspects* are reviewed in Chapter 6, and *CSO organisational developments*, designed to meet more effectively the increasing demand for statistics, are summarised in Chapter 7.

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Part I

National Statistics Board

Review of Developments

This part of the report explains the functions and work of the National Statistics Board, summarises the Board's 1998-2002 Strategy, and highlights some key developments during the years 1999 and 2000.





Background

Introduction

The main function of the National Statistics Board is to guide the strategic direction of the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The functions and work of the Board are detailed in this chapter, which also outlines the main features of the statistical legislation under which both the Board and the CSO operates.

National Statistics Board

The *Statistics Act, 1993* provides the statutory basis for the collection and compilation of official statistics in Ireland.

The Act established an institutional structure consisting of the CSO itself, the post of Director General (independent in statistical matters), and the National Statistics Board.

Section 19 of the Act states that the function of the Board, in guiding the strategic direction of the Office with the agreement of the Taoiseach, includes

- a) establishing priorities for the compilation and development of official statistics;
- b) assessing the resources of staff, equipment and finance which should be made available for the compilation of official statistics;
- c) arbitrating, subject to the final decision of the Taoiseach, on any conflicts which may arise between the Office and other public authorities relating to the extraction of statistics from records or to the co-ordination of statistical activities.

An interim Board was established in 1986 pending the drafting and enactment of the new legislation. The Board was established on a statutory basis on 1 November 1994 when the *Statistics Act, 1993* came into operation. The membership of the Board during the period covered by this report is given in Appendix 1.



Central Statistics Office

The CSO is the primary provider of statistical information in Ireland. The Office has been in operation since 1949. Its mandate, as defined in the Statistics Act, covers the collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State.

Board's Five-year Strategies for Statistics

The Board operates on the basis of five-year Strategic Plans. A timescale of five years was chosen to allow for the CSO's cyclical resource requirements: major statistical activities such as the Census of Population and the Household Budget Survey require very large year to year variations in its staffing and expenditure levels.

The Interim Board prepared two five-year Strategies for Statistics covering the periods 1988-1992¹ and 1993-1997². The statutory Board's first Strategy for Statistics covers the period 1998-2002³. Progress by the CSO in implementing the strategic plans is assessed in a series of annual or biennial Board reports. The most recent of these related to 1998⁴.

Summary of the 1998-2002 Strategy

This strategy was developed after detailed consultation with the users and suppliers of statistics, in line with the Board's concern to ensure an increased user focus and the need to minimise the reporting burden on respondents. It took particular account of developments in the EU statistical system, notably the emerging statistical requirements for managing the EMU.

The main thrusts of the Plan were to provide the high quality statistics required for making and assessing policy, to fill the gap in the underdeveloped area of social statistics, to improve the coordination of the statistics being produced by Government Departments and agencies, to ensure that the statistics are used as widely as possible, and to alleviate the reporting burden placed on respondents.

The Strategy identifies objectives under five headings as follows:

Macro-economic statistics

- ◆ compilation of the extensive additional Balance of Payments detail required, beginning in 1999, to meet the needs of the European Central Bank (ECB)
- ◆ publication of quarterly national accounts beginning in 1999
- ◆ improvement in the quality of the constant price estimates in the National Accounts in the context of the EU Stability and Growth Pact



- ◆ publication of the Balance of Payments statistics within 12 weeks for the first quarter of 1999
- ◆ publication of detailed External Trade statistics within 14 weeks (global estimates in 10 weeks) by 2000
- ◆ continued development of the EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) in collaboration with Eurostat and other member states
- ◆ updating of the CPI and HICP weights in December 2001 (based on the results of the 1999-2000 Household Budget Survey) and 5-yearly thereafter

Social and demographic statistics

- ◆ operational consolidation of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) by 1999 so that its full potential is realised as an invaluable source of information on labour market and social issues
- ◆ completion of a comprehensive review of the presentation and coherence of labour market statistics in 1999 once the QNHS results are on stream
- ◆ conduct of a Household Budget Survey (HBS) in 1999-2000
- ◆ introduction of administrative procedures for the compilation of statistics on divorce to an international standard
- ◆ conduct of a Census of Population in 2001 following extensive consultation with users, the advance piloting of any changes, and the full use of modern technology

Business statistics

- ◆ implementation of the new EU annual structural and short-term business indicators Regulations giving priority to the expansion in the range of statistics available for the Services sector
- ◆ expansion of short-term earnings series to cover all sectors of the economy
- ◆ improved timeliness of business statistics
- ◆ conduct of a Census of Agriculture in 2000 or 2001

Other statistical aspects

- ◆ more active CSO role in improving environmental statistics in co-operation with the relevant Government Departments and agencies
- ◆ collaboration by the CSO with relevant Departments and agencies in the publication of a more comprehensive and coherent body of energy statistics

- ◆ continued liaison with Forfás on R&D and innovation statistics
- ◆ continued priority on minimising the statistical reporting burden on businesses, especially SMEs
- ◆ establishment of user liaison groups for the main statistical subject matter areas by the end of 1998
- ◆ finalisation of arrangements to give researchers access to anonymised Census of Population microdata

CSO organisational developments

- ◆ full implementation of the Government's Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) modernisation programme in the CSO
- ◆ development of the CSO Information Technology (IT) function to maximise efficiencies and produce added value to statistical products
- ◆ implementation of the CSO's Customer service Plan
- ◆ implementation of the organisation change recommended in the 1997 consultancy report commissioned by the Board

1 Strategy for Statistics, 1988-1992 (Stationery Office, Dublin; May 1998; P1. 5616)

2 Strategy for Statistics, 1993-1997 (Stationery Office, Dublin; July 1993 P1. 9629)

3 Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002 (Stationery Office, Dublin; September 1998; Pn. 5990)

4 Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002; Progress Report, 1998 (Stationery Office, Dublin; July 1999, Pn. 7468)

Introduction

In this chapter, the major issues considered by the Board during 1999 and 2000 are discussed. Central to these discussions is the policy-making requirement in a modern democracy for well-developed and timely statistics. In Ireland, a growing source of new demands arises from the social partnership process, in the context of its broadening role in Irish policy making. This is particularly evident in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) published in 2000. Additionally, there are increasing demands for official statistics from the European Union (EU), in the context of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The EU is also focussing on social statistics requirements to better inform the European social agenda and monitor social change.

The implications of these demands for better statistics on the resources required by the CSO are very significant and these led to a request during 2000 for substantial additional funding. The Board recognises and welcomes the additional resources made available to the CSO in the 1999/2000 period, but sees the need for significant continuing investment in our statistical infrastructure in the context of its relatively under-resourced state.

Increasing Demand for Statistics

Modern Democracy: The information needs of modern democracies are growing systematically. It is vital that the CSO, as the source of official statistics, has complete statistical independence and produces statistics to the highest standards and on internationally comparable bases. These dual objectives form a core principle of the Statistics Act, 1993.

While governments from time to time may wish the CSO to generate particular statistical variants for specific policy purposes (for example, different measures of unemployment, or price indices



which exclude certain products), the Board believes that these special variants must not be undertaken at the expense of the production of standard (internationally comparable) measures for economic and social variables. Furthermore, the Board believes the CSO should play a significant consultative and advisory role in the determination of any programme of development of economic or social statistics in the State, as recognised in the Statistics Act.

Social Partnership: The Board is conscious of a growing demand for a much improved statistical base to support the development of social aspects of policy. It keenly appreciates the vital importance of developing Ireland's statistical capability, both to monitor social change more extensively and to provide as firm a basis as possible for appropriate policy formulation.

As is the case in many countries, economic statistics have been more fully developed in Ireland than those bearing on social policy. The Board believes that the CSO can contribute significantly in the period ahead to social policy development by broadening and deepening the statistical base for social policy. This would assist the further development of a framework to support social partnership as a key element in sustaining economic progress. As part of that process the Board believes that the CSO, in view of its statistical expertise and its special access to administrative data (on which the production of many relevant statistics may depend), has a role to play in assisting the identification and specification of appropriate new social statistics. The Board would encourage those who have mandates to propose programmes for appropriate "monitoring" or other social statistics - for example, the National Economic and Social Council, the National Economic and Social Forum, the PPF Plenary Group - to avail of the CSO's expertise in drawing up cogent programmes. The Board firmly believes that this approach would aid a more rapid and successful implementation of the desired statistical enhancements necessary to underpin social policy formulation, and stands ready (with the Directorate of the CSO) to provide every assistance possible to those efforts.

EU Requirements: Over the past two years there has been a significant increase in the demand for macro-economic and business statistics in connection with the operation of the Single Market and the creation of EMU. As anticipated by the Board in previous annual reports, the additional statistical requirements necessary to support complex EU administrative procedures have placed a greatly increased burden on the CSO. The Board recognises that the pressures from Eurostat and the European Central Bank for

more economic data are legitimate, and it is pleased that the government is now committing itself to making the relevant resources available to meet these new needs. While some of the demands emanating from the EU for statistics seem to require rather too much detail, it is nevertheless true that most of the statistics originally developed for the EU have proven to be invaluable as a support to the development of national policy also.

Statistical Developments and Achievements

The main specific developments in the CSO's output in 1999 and 2000 are described in some detail in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. For reference, they are briefly summarised here:

in macro-economic statistics (Chapter 3):

- ◆ introduction in November 1999 of quarterly national accounts
- ◆ incorporation in the balance of payments and national accounts statistics of improved coverage and methodology for measurement of the activities of the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)
- ◆ completion of an extensive revamping and expansion of detail of the balance of payments results, including in particular new breakdowns of services, and specific series for the IFSC
- ◆ continued improvement in timeliness of the external trade and balance of payments statistics
- ◆ completion of the programme of methodological improvements in the estimates of GNP to meet the requirements of the EU GNP Directive
- ◆ commencement of work on improvements in the deflators and price indices for national accounts and external trade, and in the measurement of output and trade volumes
- ◆ introduction of a new annual series of regional and county household incomes
- ◆ introduction of a series of quarterly public finance statistics for EU purposes
- ◆ introduction (in conjunction with the Revenue Commissioners) of improved editing of the trade statistics

in social and demographic statistics (Chapter 4):

- ◆ establishment of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) as the primary source of regular statistics on the labour market

- ◆ convening in 2000 of a user liaison group on labour market statistics. This group is examining the presentation and consistency of the current statistics
- ◆ completion of fieldwork on the latest Household Budget Survey in July 2000
- ◆ acceptance by the civil registration authorities that the provision of divorce statistics is an issue which should be addressed in the modernisation of the civil registration system which is currently underway
- ◆ preparations for the 2001 Census (now deferred until 2002)

in *business statistics* (Chapter 5):

- ◆ introduction of a regional dimension in the annual services surveys (necessitating increased sample sizes) to meet a newly emerged need for regional statistics at EU NUTS 2 level
- ◆ completion of a substantial programme of updating and rebasing of the short-term production, turnover and earnings series, including the widespread adoption of the revised version of the EU economic activity classification (NACE Rev 1), albeit with some temporary disimprovement in timeliness
- ◆ extension of the coverage of the short-term earnings series to include additional services branches
- ◆ completion of a census of agriculture
- ◆ commencement of planning for coverage of e-commerce developments
- ◆ preparatory work for quarterly turnover series for some services branches, and for the extension of the quarterly stocks series to the retail and wholesale distribution branches
- ◆ new surveys of tourism infrastructure and of expenditure on tourism by households.

The Board welcomes and appreciates the substantial progress made by the CSO in the two years, as evidenced by these lists. Two areas in which it would add some specific comments are the Census of Population, and the plans for the introduction of statistics on divorces.

Census of Population: One of the key planning operations of the CSO over the two years involved preparation for the 2001 Census

of Population, which was to have been taken in April 2001. There was widespread consultation of users and a number of new questions were pilot-tested and ultimately included in the Census questionnaire. A major project was undertaken, involving outside contributors, to develop an integrated system to scan, automatically recognise and process the completed census forms, and a contract to out-source these processes was awarded to an international consortium. This will improve the efficiency of the processing and should speed up the production of the results.

The Board is disappointed that it proved necessary to defer the Census because of the restrictions caused by the Foot and Mouth alert, but fully accepts the Government's decision that undertaking it would have involved too great a risk in rural areas. The information deficit caused by the deferral makes it important that the census be rescheduled quickly, but for administrative reasons it was simply not possible to do this immediately after the restrictions were lifted. It is also desirable that it be taken at a time of year that retains comparability with previous censuses. For these reasons, the Board agreed with the CSO's decision to reschedule it to 28 April 2002.

The deferral of the Census draws attention to the crucial role which official statistics play in national planning. At a time when our population is growing rapidly and changing in composition, and when the government is engaged in a major spatial planning exercise, the deferral of the Census is particularly unfortunate. It points to the importance of having the Census results processed as quickly as possible in 2002, an objective to which the CSO is strongly committed. It also emphasises the importance of optimising the use of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) in the meantime to minimise the adverse impact of the absence of Census data to support economic and social planning.

Divorce Statistics: The Board is pleased that the government has agreed to the modernisation of the civil registration system which will cover all areas of vital statistics. In particular, it will help to meet the Board's concern that divorce statistics are not readily available for Ireland on a basis similar to that for other EU countries. This system is expected to come on stream during 2002.

Developments in the IT area

Web Site: The Board welcomes the continuously increasing use of technology by the CSO in the dissemination and collection of statistics. The CSO's web site at <http://www.cso.ie>, which has re-

cently been redesigned, has become an important vehicle for the access by users to statistical releases, and has received very favourable comment. The site was one of only eight (of about a hundred government and other public sector sites) to achieve the highest possible rankings in a review by the magazine *dot.ie* in March 2001. There are now about 160,000 hits per month on the CSO site. This facilitates use and saves on some staff time for routine issues, releasing staff to handle more complex queries from users.

External email: The CSO is now receiving about 20,000 and issuing about 18,000 external emails per month. The Office standard is that all email queries should be answered within 24 hours – although this is not always achieved.

Electronic Access to Data: The Board also welcomes the CSO policy of making an ever-increasing range of statistics available to users for direct access in spreadsheet or database form. Significant progress was made on this in conjunction with the redesign of the CSO website in June 2001. The ability of users to download data directly from the CSO website should greatly enhance the productivity both of users and of staff within the CSO. In addition, it is expected that a menu-driven interactive registry system (PC-AXIS) for use with the time series downloaded from the website will become available towards the end of 2001.

More Progress Needed

Response Burden: As the Irish economy has grown in recent times, there has been, not surprisingly, a considerable dynamic in the business statistics sector. As part of its restructuring, the CSO is committed to switching to a process-based system for business statistics. This commitment arises from the implementation of the recommendations of a major organisational review in 1997 of the CSO's activities, which the Board had commissioned. The review, which looked at best practice in the production of official statistics in several countries, saw the introduction of a process-based system as being key to bringing about greater efficiency within the CSO. Furthermore, it was seen that such a system would help to minimise the burden on businesses by reducing or eliminating the inconvenience arising from the current product-based system, under which they are sometimes asked to provide the same information in returns to several different CSO surveys. The Board is disappointed that the progress to date in this area of change has been slow, and is keen to see evidence that implementation will occur soon.

The Board is aware that some businesses have made complaints



about the burdens placed on them in connection with providing statistics to the CSO. However, the Board believes that it is vital for the management of a dynamic economy that such data are collected, even though they inevitably place burdens on the data suppliers. The Board and the CSO are committed to minimising the burden of collecting statistics on individual companies. In addition to adopting the process-based approach, the CSO is investigating the increased use of electronic processing to reduce costs and further reduce the potential for duplication of response. It is also aware of the potential for increasing efficiencies through liaison with other arms of government which collect information from companies. The recently introduced Revenue Online System for submission of tax returns and the cross-departmental BASIS initiative may yield some benefits here. The Board has urged the CSO to make as much progress as it can in this regard.

User Focus : A key role of the Board is to ensure that the needs of all users of Irish statistics are catered for as well as possible. Traditionally, in Ireland as elsewhere, the primary users have been agencies of the state such as government departments and the central bank, as well as international agencies. Increasingly, as the information age progresses, there is a rapidly growing demand from all areas of society for statistics, and these requirements extend beyond those of the traditional users.

While Board membership serves to provide user focus to the CSO, further contact between the CSO and its users is necessary to ensure that users' needs are fully catered for. The Board has determined that a crucial part of meeting these requirements is that there should be active liaison groups working in all major areas of statistics, involving the CSO, key users and, where relevant, key data suppliers (e.g. for business statistics). While this has been a key element of Board policy for several years, in practice progress on establishing these groups has been very slow and not in keeping with the importance which the Board attaches to it. Liaison groups have now been established for four areas (Agriculture; Census of population; Labour market; Macro-economics) and a fifth group, for Earnings Statistics, was due to be set up in 2001. Details of representation are set out in Appendix 3. The Board expects that these groups will meet at least twice yearly, and that it will receive feedback on their activities annually. The Board has suggested to the CSO that, where it proves appropriate, some of the activities of the liaison groups might take place electronically in future, in the light of the difficulties of arranging meetings.

Resource Requests

In 1999 the effective authorised CSO core headquarters staffing level was 550. A number of developments have resulted in an increase in the staffing since then.

The Government agreement with the European Commission to recognise two NUTS2 regions for the purpose of EU Structural Funds allocations led to a significant demand for additional regional accounts and for regional statistics for the services sectors. Some statistics which previously had to be compiled only at national level now have to be compiled for the two new regions. Early in 2000 the Minister for Finance sanctioned an increase of 13 staff for this purpose and an additional 12 (on a temporary basis) to implement a new IT strategy in the Office. The statistical and IT developments referred to previously have been greatly assisted by these additional resources.

In the light of the continually increasing EU and social partnership requirements for additional statistics, the Board instructed the CSO in June 2000 to put together a further proposal for additional resources. Given the importance of both developments, the Board was strongly of the view that the Government should be fully aware of the data requirements and costs associated with them. The Board would wish to emphasise that it is in Ireland's long-term interest to invest adequately in the essential statistical infrastructure. In the Board's view, these costs are small relative to the economic and social implications of EMU membership and social partnership.

In January 2001, in response to the CSO proposal, an additional 28 staff were sanctioned to bring (temporarily) the sanctioned core authorised staffing level to 603 - an increase of 10% over the period since 1999. The new posts include both professional statistical and other grades. They are being deployed as follows - Balance of Payments and Financial Accounts (14 staff); Labour Costs and Earnings (6); Analysis of the QNHS (2); Quality Assurance (2); Administrative Records (2); National Accounts (1); and Human Resources (1).

Some other elements of the proposal were not approved. Those in relation to the development of integrated social statistics (10 staff) were not sanctioned, although the importance of this proposal was acknowledged and it was agreed that the matter would be reviewed when the social partners had drawn up their list of statistical priorities. A proposal in relation to improving the estimation of price and



volume trends of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) products (8 staff) was refused. The Board sees this development as a very high priority in view of the importance of the modern sector to the Irish economy and believes that this decision should be reconsidered. Finally, the Board acknowledges that the other proposals that were rejected - for a Time Use Survey and a more frequent Household Budget Survey - while important, were nevertheless of a lower priority.





Part II

Central Statistics Office

Statistical & Organisational

Developments



This part of the report describes the progress made by the CSO during 1999 and 2000 in meeting the Board's objectives set out in its 1998-2002 Strategy, and describes organisational developments in the Office.





Macro-economic Statistics

Overview

The Board's strategy for the period 1998-2002 was developed at a time when entry to Monetary Union was imminent and when Ireland had experienced a number of years of strong economic growth. The needs of the EU and the ECB, especially in the context of EMU, took priority in determining the development of macro-economic statistics. All countries in the EMU had to contribute to the compilation of detailed, accurate and harmonised statistics for the Euro area. In Ireland's case this meant a substantial acceleration and deepening of the existing statistical programmes. In the context of the wider EU-15 area, compilation of GDP and GNP according to the new European System of National Accounts (ESA95) also meant, for Ireland, a substantial review of methodology, and was accompanied by a considerable improvement in the detail and timeliness of statistics. Domestically, the strong growth of recent years gave rise to demands for statistics that would enable a better understanding of the processes driving the economy.

In that context, the Board's priority objectives for macro-economic statistics over the period 1998-2002 are:

- ◆ compilation of the extensive additional Balance of Payments detail required, beginning in 1999, to meet the needs of the European Central Bank (ECB)
- ◆ publication of quarterly national accounts beginning in 1999;
- ◆ improvement in the quality of the constant price estimates in the National Accounts in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact
- ◆ publication of the Balance of Payments statistics within 12 weeks for the first quarter of 1999
- ◆ publication of detailed External Trade statistics within 14 weeks (global estimates in 10 weeks) by 2000

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- ◆ continued development of the EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) in collaboration with Eurostat and other member states
 - ◆ updating of the CPI and HICP weights in December 2001 (based on the results of the proposed 1999-2000 Household Budget Survey (and 5-yearly thereafter)).

Considerable progress has been made towards the achievement of these objectives. In the case of the quarterly Balance of Payments series (BOP), a major development programme was undertaken to provide the level of detail needed in the new circumstances of EMU. A major milestone was reached with the publication, in May 2000, of a new and more detailed presentation of the series. Another significant step in providing more timely information on developments in the economy was reached with the introduction of quarterly national accounts in November 1999. The fieldwork on the 1999-2000 Household Budget Survey (HBS) was completed in 2000, thus laying the foundations for the updating of the CPI and HICP weights.



Two of the Board's priority objectives involved demanding targets for the timeliness of BOP and External Trade statistics. In both these cases, timeliness has improved greatly and is now broadly satisfactory. A substantial effort is also now underway to improve the timeliness of the quarterly National Accounts. This in turn depends on improving the timeliness of many of the series produced by the Office that feed into the overall accounts.



The sophisticated nature of the economy continues to pose major challenges for statistics. This is especially evident in the case of constant price estimates, where value increases must be broken down into their price and volume components. A considerable amount of work remains to be done in this regard. For External Trade, this improvement of the volume/price breakdown will be the most important factor in improving quality. For BOP, concentration will also be on the quality of the data being produced, now that the basic survey infrastructure has been put in place and the results are being produced in an acceptable timeframe.

Demands on the EU front have intensified since the Strategy was developed. In September 2000, the Ecofin Council adopted an EMU Action Plan for statistics aimed at improving further the timely availability of statistics needed for functioning of EMU. Improved timeliness of the quarterly national accounts is one element in this plan. Quarterly public finance statistics have been estab-

lished and need to be further developed. Furthermore, Eurostat are now proposing to remove or modify many or all of the derogations which permit member states to delay or forgo certain series. The results of this exercise may carry further repercussions for priorities in national accounts.

At national level, the Board set an objective of establishing a number of user liaison groups, including one for macro-economic statistics. This group met for the first time in 2000 and quickly established as a clear priority the development of consistent retrospective series for the main national accounts aggregates.

National Accounts

Timeliness

The annual national accounts for 1999 were published in July 2000, some three weeks later than the corresponding release in 1999. This slight delay resulted from the need to incorporate the results of a detailed examination of the financial services sector and, in particular, of the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) which built on the new Balance of Payments estimates issued in May 2000. While it is planned to return to a June publication date for the annual accounts in 2001, the focus will in future be on improving the timeliness of the quarterly accounts. The target to be reached by April 2002 is to publish within four months of the end of the reference quarter, resulting in first estimates of the main annual aggregates being available for each year by end-April of the following year. When this has been achieved, the more detailed annual accounts may for practical reasons be published somewhat later than at present. In the context of the EMU Action Plan, there will be continued pressure to reduce the quarterly timeliness even further.

Quality

With the incorporation of new estimates for the financial sector in 2000, the programme of work that was required to ensure harmonisation of the measurement of GNP at current prices in compliance with GNP Directive 89/130 has now been completed for Ireland to the satisfaction of Eurostat. All EU member states were required to undertake work programmes to ensure the estimates of GNP were comprehensive and comparable.

A Commission Decision (98/715/CE) has set new standards for the compilation of output volumes to ensure uniform measurement, es-

pecially for difficult areas such as non-market health and education. The CSO is participating in Eurostat task forces investigating these methodologies and work has begun on identifying suitable national methods. The Office is also working on the development of improved price deflators in areas such as IT where the measurement of quality change is especially problematic.

Scope

There will be a gradual increase in the level of detail provided to meet the requirements of EU Regulation 2223/96 on the introduction of the European System of Accounts (ESA95). Full implementation is not required until 2005 (although there is renewed pressure from the EU to accelerate this), but certain aspects are scheduled for earlier dates. In February 2000, a new annual series of Regional and County Household Income estimates was published. Later in 2000, in accordance with the acceptance of additional requirements in the EMU Action Plan for statistics agreed during 2000, new quarterly public finance statistics were provided to the EU.

New elements over the next few years will include detailed accounts on the allocation of primary income of households (showing sources of earned income in aggregate such as wages and salaries and profits) and secondary distribution of income of households (showing the transition from primary income to disposable income via the redistributive effects of taxes and social benefits). In addition, supply and use tables will be developed, and the range of quarterly statistics for the government sector must be further extended.

Balance of Payments (BOP)

The publication in May 2000 of a new and more detailed presentation of the quarterly BOP series was the culmination of a major development programme extending over a number of years. The aim for the next few years will be to build on this progress by further improving the quality of the estimates while also extending the range of analyses provided.

Timeliness

In 1999, the quarterly BOP estimates were published on average 13.3 weeks after the end of each reference quarter. This was a significant improvement on the average of almost 19 weeks in 1998. While the scale of the developments involved delayed the first

publication of the new BOP series to May 2000, some six weeks outside the targeted three month publication schedule, this delay has been substantially reduced, with the release for the third quarter of 2000 being published less than two weeks behind target. It is intended to achieve the three-month deadline during 2002 and to maintain that performance thereafter. This will always be an extremely demanding target, given the continually expanding level of detail being requested to meet the needs of users such as Eurostat and the ECB.

Quality

The new BOP series is compiled on the basis of the most up to date international recommendations and standards. It uses information from new surveys introduced in 1998, directed in particular to enterprises operating from the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), and from other surveys revamped to give additional detail. Overall, some 3,500 entities are now covered by CSO surveys for BOP purposes.

The BOP results are an integral component of the national accounts compilation. A special unit has been established to ensure the consistency of the returns made by major enterprises to CSO inquiries. This has been of great benefit in helping to correctly capture transactions having a major impact on both the national accounts and BOP.

Scope

The new surveys of the financial services sector have greatly extended the scope of the BOP system and have facilitated the provision of much more detailed information. Exports and imports of services are now given in more detail with nine categories (e.g. transport, financial services, computer services) being distinguished. Four functional categories of investment are distinguished (direct investment, portfolio investment, other investment and reserve assets) along with some information on the instrument involved (e.g. equity capital, reinvested earnings and other capital in the case of direct investment). Summary information is provided across all accounts on both EMU/non EMU and EU/non EU transactions. Transactions of IFSC entities are also shown separately.

External Trade Statistics

Timeliness

One of the Board's priority objectives is to improve the timeliness of the detailed Trade statistics. The CSO set a target of publishing these within 14 weeks of the end of the relevant month by the year 2000 and reducing this to 13 weeks by the year 2002. The corresponding deadlines for the global estimates (total imports and exports, published a month earlier than the detailed figures) are 10 weeks by 2000 and 9 weeks by 2002. The determining factor here is the timeliness of the returns made by intra-EU traders to the monthly Intrastat survey. The year 2000 targets were achieved with the March detailed release. Since then, timeliness has improved further, substantially through the efforts of the VIMA Office of the Revenue Commissioners who undertake the Intrastat survey, and recent releases have been published within the targets which had been set for 2002.

Quality

There was a need to improve the detailed commodity by country detail where deficiencies in trader returns and the need for estimation can affect quality. This information is of considerable interest to the majority of users of the trade data, who are interested in specific markets. VIMA, with the co-operation of the CSO, introduced a new data editing system in 1999 to manage this problem. Improvements have been made, but continued monitoring and vigilance will be required. The other major and complementary aspect of quality is the estimation of price trends for imports and exports to allow the breakdown of total value into volume and price components. A specific target now is to improve the quality of these estimates, especially in relation to products in the chemical and computer sectors where traditional approaches to pricing can be difficult to implement. These products constitute a significant part of overall exports and so can have a major effect on the overall aggregates. This work will be carried out in conjunction with other relevant CSO sections, especially National Accounts and Prices.

Scope

Traditionally, the scope of the external trade statistics system has been extremely comprehensive. Information is available at a fine level of detail, both on the products involved and on the partner countries. However, although there has been pressure for some time to cut back on this detail, no agreement has been reached at EU level. It will also be necessary to monitor developments with regard to Internet trading to ensure all relevant trade continues to be captured.

Prices

Consumer Price Index

The 1999-2000 Household Budget Survey was carried out on schedule from June 1999 to July 2000 (for more details see Chapter 4). As indicated in the Board's Strategy, one of the reasons for reducing the interval from the previous survey to five years (from the traditional seven) was to increase the frequency of re-basing of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), for which the HBS provides the weighting basis. The results of the new HBS were scheduled to be incorporated in the CPI from late 2001.

On the EU front, the CSO continues to participate actively with other member states and Eurostat in further harmonisation of the HICP (the EU-wide Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices). During 2000, the focus was mainly on the methodological issues of sampling and quality adjustment. Despite extensive consideration, owner-occupied housing continues to be excluded from the HICP coverage because of the difficulty of agreeing an appropriate methodology at EU level. Further development work is being undertaken in this area.



4

Social & Demographic Statistics

Overview

The Board's priority objectives for social and demographic statistics over the period 1998-2002 were framed at a time when considerable developments were taking place, or were expected, in the CSO's programme for social and demographic statistics. These included the launch of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) in September 1997, the successful completion in a timely manner of the processing of the 1996 Census of Population and an improvement in the frequency of the Household Budget Survey (HBS) from every seven years to every five years. The Board was anxious to ensure that these major developments were consolidated and that the full potential for meeting the needs of users was realised in practice. On another level, the Board was concerned at the difficulties in compiling adequate statistics on divorce from the Civil Registration system.

These concerns were reflected in the Board's priorities as follows:

- ◆ operational consolidation of the QNHS by 1999 so that its full potential is realised as an invaluable source of information on labour market and social issues
- ◆ completion of a comprehensive review of the presentation and coherence of labour market statistics in 1999 once the QNHS results are on stream
- ◆ conduct of a HBS in 1999-2000
- ◆ introduction of administrative procedures for the compilation of statistics on divorce to an international standard

- ◆ conduct of a Census of Population in 2001 following maximum consultation with users, the advance piloting of any changes, and the full use of modern technology.

Progress has been made over the period 1998-2000 towards these objectives through

- ◆ establishment of the QNHS as the primary source of regular statistics on the labour market
- ◆ convening of a user liaison group on labour market statistics in 2000 which is now examining the presentation and consistency of the current statistics
- ◆ completion of fieldwork on the latest Household Budget Survey in July 2000
- ◆ acceptance of the provision of divorce statistics as an issue to be addressed in the modernisation of the civil registration system which is currently underway
- ◆ preparations for the 2001 Census which have included wide consultation of users, the pilot testing of new questions, and the awarding of a contract to an international consortium for a system to scan and recognise the completed census forms.

Since the preparation of the Board's Strategy, the demand at both national and EU levels for social statistics has increased significantly. At national level, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) has emphasised the need to monitor and benchmark the implementation of agreed policies, particularly in the areas of poverty, social exclusion, gender and equality. Similarly, with the adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam, social issues are now firmly on the EU policy agenda with consequential demands for more and better social statistics. The CSO, with the support of the Board, has identified the need for it to develop its capacity to respond to these emerging demands. Dedicated additional resources will be required and structures will have to be put in place to involve both users and producers of social statistics in responding in a comprehensive and effective manners.

Quarterly National Household Survey

The QNHS was launched in September 1997 and is now into its fourth year. Approximately 39,000 households are interviewed each quarter by a team of 130 interviewers who record the replies on laptop computers. A high response of over 90% has been maintained over the period. This electronic recording of the information has facilitated the rapid processing of the data with the result that the main labour market results are now published within three

months of the reference quarter. This timely production of results is welcomed as it provides an up to date and comprehensive picture of developments in the labour market. The priority now is to ensure that the full range of labour force analyses can be produced on a regular and timely basis.

While progress with the survey has been very satisfactory, it has become clear that there is considerable scope to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the fieldwork and data processing procedures. Accordingly, a major internal review of the organisation of the survey has been completed and the recommendations are being considered. The objective will be to implement any necessary changes before the first five-year cycle of the survey is completed in August 2002.

In addition to the standard labour force topics, the QNHS is also designed to include special topic modules on an ad hoc basis. Special EU modules on the labour market (for which there is a legal obligation) were included in the second quarters of 1999 and 2000. These related to *Occupational Illnesses and Injuries* (in 1999) and *Transition from School to Work* (2000). For national purposes two full-scale modules, on *Housing* and *Crime and Victimisation*, were covered in the survey in the last two quarters of 1998. Unfortunately, staff turnover, unfilled vacancies, and the urgent need to consolidate the technological basis of the overall survey resulted in the suspension of the planned programme of major modules at the end of 1998. However, smaller modules on *Recycling and Energy Conservation*, *Travel to Work*, and *Home Computing* were undertaken during 1999 and 2000. Furthermore, a major module on *Health* has been prepared for inclusion in the second half of 2001.

There has been a very positive public response to the modules undertaken to-date and also an increasing interest and demand amongst users in having a variety of social issues covered in the survey. In recognition of this demand, the CSO, on foot of a submission to the Department of Finance, has obtained approval to deploy additional professional resources on the QNHS and this should go a long way towards ensuring that it realises its potential to a fuller extent.

Review of Labour Market Statistics

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards were introduced as the primary means of presenting statistics on employment and unemployment in 1998. User response has been positive and, in particular, the Standardised Unemployment Rate (SUR) is now accepted to a much greater extent as the most relevant measure of the level of unemployment.



The Labour Market Statistics User Liaison Group was convened in 2000 and its first focus is on the presentation and consistency of labour statistics in general. The availability of a full range of labour market results from the QNHS on a timely basis will be a major improvement. However, it will be important to enhance the survey data through integration with other labour statistics and to resolve any inconsistencies between sources. A key issue here is the degree of emphasis that should be placed on the Live Register as a socio-economic statistical indicator.

1999-2000 Household Budget Survey

Fieldwork on the HBS commenced in June 1999 and was concluded in July 2000. About 7,500 households participated in the survey, a response rate of 55%. This was about 2% lower than in 1994/95 survey, reflecting an increasing resistance to participation in surveys of this nature, particularly in urban areas. However, the less clustered sampling design, coupled with a close alignment with the QNHS sampling structure, should ensure that the accuracy of the grossed results is comparable with that of previous surveys.

It is expected that processing will be completed in the first half of 2001 and first results should be available in the autumn. In addition to the standard outputs from the survey a report on Income Redistribution, based on both the 1994/95 and 1999/2000 surveys and data from administrative sources, will be prepared for publication in late 2001/early 2002.

Vital Statistics

Despite the excellent progress in previous years, the target of clearing the backlog in the production of the annual vital statistics reports by the end of 1999 has not been realised. Staff shortages and continuing delays in the registration system have been the main problems. In current circumstances it is now considered that the backlog will not be cleared until 2003, and then only if there is an improvement in the timeliness of the data received from the registration system. The inter-departmental programme currently underway to modernise the civil registration system will have a major bearing on the latter.

The provision of divorce statistics will also be addressed under the modernisation programme as it is proposed to register divorces under the new system. CSO is represented on the inter-departmental steering committee and will endeavour to ensure that statistical issues are given priority.

Census of Population

The next census was due to be taken on 29 April 2001¹. An extensive canvass of users was undertaken in early 1999 and a pilot test was conducted in September of that year to test a number of new questions and to examine the possibility of using mail back as an option in collecting the completed forms.

Results from the mail back test were encouraging but it was decided that further testing would be required before it could be adopted as an alternative to the current enumerator system. On the basis of the pilot test and further consultations new questions on disability, carers, Irish travellers, nationality, and PC ownership and Internet access will be included in the Census questionnaire. In addition, a new approach to the labour market questions is being introduced to align the Census results with the ILO recommendations. On the basis of the findings of the pilot test, questions on income, fertility and ethnicity were not included on this occasion.

After an intensive tendering process an international consortium has been awarded a contract worth over £5 million to provide a sophisticated scanning and character recognition system to be used by CSO staff for processing the completed census forms. This should speed up the processing significantly and enable the results to be produced earlier than in the past.

Arrangements for making census results more widely available in electronic form are also being examined.

New Developments

The focus of the increasing demand for more and better social statistics has been on the development of a comprehensive range of social indicators, regular social reports, more frequent surveys on income and living conditions, and periodic surveys on time use. In response the CSO, with the support of the Board, prepared a submission to the Department of Finance in mid-2000 seeking resources for the following developments:

- ◆ inclusion of regular social modules in the QNHS and the preparation of more comprehensive analyses
- ◆ a further increase in the frequency of the HBS, from every five years to every three years
- ◆ establishment of a new statistical division dedicated to the development of a comprehensive series of social indicators and reports and
- ◆ conduct of Time Use Survey in 2002/2003.

Approval was received for the allocation of additional resources to the QNHS, while a decision on the other issues was deferred pending an elaboration of the statistical needs arising from the commitments agreed under the PPF. In regard to the latter, the National Economic and Social Council is due to issue a report on information requirements stemming from the PPF in mid-2001.

On the EU front, Eurostat are currently preparing draft legislation to cover the conduct of an annual survey on income and living conditions to commence in 2003. This mandatory survey will replace the smaller voluntary European Community Household Panel survey, which is currently undertaken by the ESRI and heavily funded by the Commission. It is intended that the new survey should be fully integrated into the national statistical systems and, in line with normal practice, should be funded by the member states alone. Adoption of this legislation will therefore have significant resource implications for the national statistical budget.

¹Because of the disruption caused by the national foot and mouth disease alert, the census was postponed until 28 April 2002.

5

Business Statistics

Overview

When the Board was developing its 1998-2002 strategy the key drivers for the business statistics area included:

- ◆ mandatory new EU and ECB statistical requirements
- ◆ the need to improve the timeliness of business statistics
- ◆ the need to develop more statistics for the services sector
- ◆ the response burden placed on business by new surveys.

It was also recognised that many of the requirements in relation to the improvement of National Accounts can only be achieved by extending the range of business statistics, and by producing them more quickly.

In its 1998-2002 strategy the Board recommended as priorities:

- ◆ implementation of the new EU Regulations on annual structural statistics and on short-term business indicators, giving priority to the expansion in the range of statistics available for the services sectors
- ◆ expansion of short-term earnings series to cover all sectors of the economy
- ◆ improved timeliness of business statistics
- ◆ carrying out a Census of Agriculture.

Subsequently, as mentioned in the 1998 progress report, the Government decided to distinguish two Irish regions at the EU NUTS 2 level, and the sample sizes of the annual services inquiries were increased from the reference year 1998 to meet the resulting more demanding statistical requirements. The results are scheduled for publication with the 1999 results in the first half of 2002.

Since the 1998 progress report there has been further pressure from the European Central Bank (ECB), supported by the Council of Finance Ministers (ECOFIN), to produce more short-term statistics even more quickly. These indicators are required to monitor and manage the performance of the Euro currency on the financial markets. It is expected that this will translate into EU legislation, which will extend the statutory obligations on the CSO in relation to the provision of short-term business statistics.

EU Business Statistics Regulations

A significant amount of work (additional to that on earnings mentioned below) has been done to meet the requirements of EU Regulation 1165/98 on short-term business indicators. The revised classification of economic activities, NACE Rev. 1, has been applied for the monthly Retail Sales Index, the monthly Industrial Production Inquiry and the quarterly Industrial Earnings Inquiry; and all the associated indices have been rebased to 1995=100.

The work involved in rebasing to a 1995 base year required the drawing of updated and expanded samples for all three inquiries. A lot of work was necessary to give reasonably consistent estimates for earlier time periods.

Short-term Earnings

The extension of the quarterly average earnings series for all sectors of the economy is a Board and CSO priority. The long-standing series for the industrial and building sectors have been complemented in recent years by series for the banking, building society and insurance sectors and the public service.

As mentioned in the 1998 progress report, work was underway to develop a quarterly earnings series for some services sectors. This work came to fruition in February 2000, with the publication of new data for the six quarters to June 1999. By early 2001, this new information had been extended to the June 2000 quarter, which was published with a time lag of about 5 months and covered sectors totalling just under 300,000 persons. This work has also served to meet certain requirements of the EU short-term business indicators Regulation 1165/98.

Improved Timeliness

Improving the timeliness of statistical releases and publications is an ongoing Board and CSO priority. As mentioned earlier, it is also a high-level priority for the European Central Bank (ECB) in relation to the monitoring of EMU. The IMF also maintains an internet Bulletin Board (<http://dsbb.imf.org>) incorporating desired timeliness targets for certain statistical indicators.

The introduction of NACE Rev. 1 and the rebasing exercise had a significant adverse impact on the timeliness of the Monthly Production Index and Quarterly Earnings data. However, significant progress was made in the final months of 2000 to recover the lost ground. For the monthly Industrial Production Index, the final data for November 2000 and a provisional global index for December were due to be published by end-February 2001. In the case of Industrial Earnings, the target was to publish data for the September quarter by end-February and the December quarter by end-March.

Census of Agriculture 2000

A Census of Agriculture was conducted in June 2000 in compliance with the EU Farm Structure Survey (FSS) Regulation 2467/96. The Census was conducted on a postal basis, giving rise to considerable expenditure savings (about £1.5m) by comparison with the traditional local enumeration approach.

The response rate eventually reached was 93%, although this was achieved only after five reminders. Non-respondents have been included in the normal December postal survey. Administrative data will be used to impute for non-response.

It was essential the Census was a success as it will provide critical up to date benchmark information to support the various sample postal surveys over the next ten years.

Business Statistics & E-Commerce

Statistical surveys, definitions and data collection mechanisms will have to take account of E-Commerce and Information Society developments. A few limited questions relating to E-Commerce were included in the 1999 questionnaires for the Census of Industrial Production and the Annual Services Inquiries. A more extensive E-Commerce pilot survey was to be conducted in the first half of 2001. The responses to these surveys and the issues raised will have to be assessed with a view to developing more complete surveys.

Other Business Statistics Developments

Preparatory development work was carried out to establish the feasibility of compiling a quarterly turnover index series for a number of services sectors during the early months of 2001. It was also expected that a new quarterly stocks survey would be published later in 2001, covering the retail and wholesale sectors, to supplement the existing survey of stocks in the industry sector.



Work has been continuing for some considerable time to provide additional information on the level and occupancy rates of tourism infrastructure in Ireland, as well as on the demand for domestic and overseas tourism by Irish residents. New surveys have been set up for this purpose, but both have been hit by poor response rates. In the case of the infrastructure survey, directed at hotels and similar businesses, the CSO is working with the respondents and their software providers with a view to incorporating CSO requirements in their ordinary business reporting systems. Results from the household tourism consumption survey are expected to be published during 2002.

There is an increasing level of interest in the income situation of farm households. Income from off-farm activities is of growing importance and this is of significant interest in the context of rural development policy. The available information is patchy and new methodologies need to be developed. During 2001 it was proposed to examine the income situation of farm households using the 1994 and 1999 Household Budget Surveys (HBS) in conjunction with data on agricultural activity, with a view to identifying a methodology for making estimates in non-HBS years.

6

Other Statistical Aspects

Environmental Statistics

The CSO's work in the field of environmental statistics has mainly been concerned with coordinating the development of Environmental Satellite Accounts as part of the system of national accounts. These satellite accounts aim to show in a systematic manner how economic development impacts on the environment and on the economy as a whole. They allow a comparison to be made between the environmental and economic impacts of developments in different sectors of the economy. The presentation of the accounts in this way forms part of a system known as NAMEA (National Accounting Matrix including Environmental Accounts).

The CSO, on behalf of Eurostat, contracted the ESRI to compile pilot environmental accounts in respect of 1994 and these were published by CSO in 1999. Building on this partial framework developed for 1994, the ESRI has compiled a further set of accounts in respect of 1996, and these were due to be published by the CSO on behalf of the ESRI by mid-2001. It is intended that the CSO would then become more involved in the ongoing preparation of the statistics. In general, the future intention is to expand this work in order to gradually make the accounts compliant with the NAMEA system both in terms of coverage and content.

The CSO also has a role in collecting relevant environmental information in its ongoing business and household surveys and in ensuring the use of standard classifications. It has become clear from discussions with interested parties that the further development of these accounts will require a more coordinated approach to the compilation and publication of Energy Statistics and this has been one of the main reasons for taking steps to develop new liaison arrangements in this field in order to integrate with existing surveys such as the Census of Industrial Production.



Energy Statistics

To put in place the new liaison arrangements for energy statistics, the CSO, following discussions with the Irish Energy Centre (IEC), has proposed the establishment of a formal co-ordinating group on energy statistics. Options being considered include the addition of questions to existing CSO inquiries and the organisation of new joint CSO/IEC inquiries.

The CSO has already added questions on purchases by type of fuel to its structural inquiries in industry and services, and will repeat the exercise every 2 or 3 years.

Statistical Reporting Burden on Business

In an effort to reduce the burden on Small and Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) in the industrial sector the CSO offered to accept monthly management accounts instead of monthly production and turnover returns. The take-up has been disappointingly low. Many of the reporting difficulties involved would be avoided if businesses would provide for the automatic extraction of statistical information from their computerised records as they do for their administrative returns for other Government requirements.

One of the main advantages of the process approach which is being introduced in the industrial statistics area (see *Organisational Change* in Chapter 7) is that by making one CSO staff member or team responsible for handling a number of different inquiries for a firm, duplication of queries to the firm can be reduced or eliminated.

For the Census of Industrial Production the questionnaire has been re-designed and questions have been re-ordered to correspond as closely as possible with the typical layout of company accounts.

The use of electronic transmission also offers prospects for reducing the burden and speeding up the timeliness of response. The CSO is closely monitoring the development of these new electronic reporting techniques. The return of data on diskettes is already extensively used for financial services firms in the compilation of Balance of Payments statistics. In the area of tourism statistics, the Office is currently researching the software used by hotels for their front office operations, with a view to having the software modified to incorporate statistical reporting requirements.

The prospects continue to be low for a significant expansion in the short term in the CSO use of administrative records. For example, the consolidation of tax heads under unique business enterprise tax registration reference numbers is still not complete, the finalisation



of tax accounts can take longer than the receipt of statistical returns, and the existence of the zero rate undermines the statistical potential of the VAT system.

A business register system with powerful functionality has been installed. However, a lot of work is still necessary to improve the quality of the content. This will facilitate the more structured selection of samples of businesses for inquiry purposes and, thereby, spread the reporting burden more evenly on SMEs.

Statistical Liaison Groups

Formal liaison groups for consultation with users have been established for Macro-economic statistics, including external trade and prices, Census of Population, Earnings Statistics and Labour Market Statistics, to complement the Agriculture Statistics liaison group that has existed for some time. A further group is planned, dealing with Business Statistics.

The primary purpose of the groups will be to assess ongoing statistical activities in the relevant areas and to advise both the CSO and the Board on emerging and new needs. The groups are chaired by the CSO and will generally meet once or twice a year. Each will have ten to fifteen experienced members, representative of interests in the particular topics, nominated by Government Departments, state sponsored bodies, representative organisations, third level institutions and some individual experts.

Details of membership and meetings of the liaison groups are given in Appendix 3.

Access to Anonymised Microdata

The long-standing method of disseminating the results of statistical inquiries is through the provision of statistical tables either in hard copy publications or, increasingly, in electronic form. While this satisfies the majority of users, a demand has emerged, mainly from the academic and research community, for direct access to samples of anonymised microdata for special analysis purposes.

In Ireland the legal provision to supply such data is covered by Section 34 of the Statistics Act, 1993. This legislation allows the CSO to provide sets of anonymised microdata to researchers from surveys of households and individuals under special contractual arrangements.

Business microdata cannot readily be similarly anonymised, but for special analysis purposes researchers can access databases within the CSO that do not contain direct identifying details. For example,



anonymised microdata from the 1995 Structure of Earnings Survey are being made available by the CSO and by other EU national statistics offices for a study being coordinated by the London School of Economics. The CSO is participating in this exercise, having satisfied itself that the safeguards for confidentiality are adequate.

In respect of household surveys, samples of anonymised data will be provided in due course from the 1999-2000 Household Budget Survey (HBS), in the same way as from the 1994-5 survey, and from the Quarterly National Household Survey, in the same way as from the Labour Force Survey which it has replaced. The use of this facility for the earlier surveys and the feedback from researchers have been very positive. Major value has been added to the results of both surveys through the range of special analyses that have already been undertaken.



Samples of anonymised microdata have yet to be provided from the Census of Population. Discussions to date with the user community have identified the need for two separate samples - for households and persons. Furthermore, the sample of persons from the census should complement the samples made available from the LFS/QNHS by providing finer geographic detail but at the expense of the level of detail made available for the classificatory variables.



The CSO fully supports the initiative of University College Dublin and the Economic and Social Research Institute in establishing the Irish Social Science Data Archive which will facilitate and support access by researchers to microdata. The CSO has committed itself to lodging its anonymised household survey data in the archive.

7

CSO Organisational Developments

Strategic Management
Initiative

The CSO continued to implement the Government's Strategic Management Initiative and Delivering Better Government projects (SMI/DBG) through the continuation of some initiatives and the introduction of new initiatives. A Progress Report for 1999 on the implementation of the Statement of Strategy 1998-2000 was published in March 2000, and the report for 2000 was published in June 2001. The next edition of the Statement of Strategy, covering the years 2001 to 2003, was published in May 2001.

Local business plans are prepared in all sections of the Office on an annual basis. These are being increasingly used and referred to in the day-to-day planning and running of the work of the Office.

The Partnership Committee established in January 1999, which is representative of management and all staff interests, held a number of meetings during the period. Reporting arrangements and relationships to the Partnership process were reviewed and re-structured for a number of established working groups and committees. These concern such areas as safety, health and welfare; flexi-time; staff placement and mobility; communications; training and staff development; customer service; and the matters relating to survey field staff. The committee has contributed to the preparation of the Statement of Strategy for 2001 to 2003 and will have a role in monitoring its implementation.

Substantial progress has been made in establishing the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), which

aims to achieve excellence through performance. PMDS gives a framework that defines how the CSO can advance towards improved performance, greater job satisfaction and better service delivery by recognising achievements and developing skills. It is the link between the objectives of the Office as set out in the Statement of Strategy and the local business plans and the everyday work of staff. All CSO staff will have participated in three phases of PMDS training and implementation. Each staff member will have completed, in agreement with their supervisor, a detailed Role Profile Form, which sets out the content of each role, the agreed expectations for short-term and longer term results, and a personal development plan.

Information Technology

Closer Alignment of IT with the Business Needs

A new IT strategy was prepared by March 1999 with the prime objective of promoting a closer alignment of IT with the Business requirements of the Office. The agreement of the new strategy involved extended discussions with unions. Phase 1 of the strategy, which involves the establishment of a client-server network, was agreed in late 1999 and implemented during 2000. Agreement on Phase 2, dealing with data management and migration of legacy systems to the new client server environment, was reached in October 2000. Work on progressing the strategy has been ongoing since then.

The rollout of a formal Project Management approach for major developments began in earnest in 1999 with an end to end review of the business and IT processes of one of the major surveys conducted by the Office, the Quarterly National Household Survey.

The recent appointment of a Project Office manager will lead to the adoption of formal project management techniques being applied on a much wider scale than heretofore. Additionally, during 2000 the Office adopted the Capability Maturity Model (CMM) developed by the Software Engineering Laboratory of Carnegie-Mellon University to assess the current maturity of project management practices in the Office and to identify how the Office might move to level 2 - the repeatable level of the CMM.

Migration to an Open Systems Architecture

This migration is not as advanced as had been envisaged when the 1998-2002 Strategy for Statistics was published. However, some of the major preparatory steps have been put in place. As mentioned

above, the client-server network was put in place during 2000. This has provided the necessary infrastructure and has facilitated the roll out of Lotus Notes groupware to all CSO staff in the spring of 2000 and more recently to some field staff. The agreement to Phase 2 of the strategy has allowed planning to commence for the establishment of the necessary corporate databases and has allowed migration of existing legacy systems to this new Relational Data Base Management System (RDBMS) environment.

Development of Integrated Data Management Systems

As mentioned earlier, agreement was reached in late 2000 on Phase 2 of the IT strategy, which involves the agreement of a data management strategy and the establishment of a Data Warehouse and a Web-linked Dissemination Database. The development of a clear strategy was one of the fundamental requirements for moving forward in this area. As part of the provision of an appropriate set of tools for integrated data management, a classification server for the central storage and access of classifications has been acquired.

While long-term strategies are being put in place for the management of all stages of the statistical process, development measures to provide a better service to users are continuing. In this regard, there has been successful development of the Eirestat Spreadsheet Service to give users access via the internet to all the main statistical series published by the Office.

Support Move to Process Approach in the Business Statistics Directorate

IT Support for the process approach being developed for surveys in the business statistics area will concentrate on migration of the relevant processing systems to the new client server environment using a generic approach to system re-engineering.

Customer Service

The CSO published its first customer service plan at the end of 1998 covering the period 1998 to 1999. A second plan, for the period 2001-2002, was published in June 2001. The successful completion of most of the features of the first plan has made a marked difference to our customers, has raised the profile of the Office and has expanded our customer base. Some of the enhanced features are as follows.

Web Site

The CSO web site is being continually enhanced and developed with much more statistical content. A particularly important feature is the availability on the web of all statistical releases at publication time. A redesigned web site was launched in June 2001 incorporating on-line access to all the main statistical series.



Publications

Service to the CSO's customers is being continually improved through the addition of a range of new regular statistical releases. Two special publications attracted particular interest:

*That was then, This is now: Change in Ireland, 1994 - 1999*¹ marked 50 years of statistics from the CSO;

*Ireland North and South, A Statistical Profile*² produced in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The annual Statistical Abstract publication has been redesigned and its content improved; the first of the new style yearbooks was published in the autumn of 2001³.

Other

Other improvements of note have included

- ◆ the introduction of a formal complaints service;
- ◆ the introduction of direct dial in telephone service and voice mail facilities; and
- ◆ the availability of credit card payment facilities.

New Customer Service Plan

In line with other Government Departments and Offices the CSO published (in June 2001) a new customer services plan for the period 2001-2003. While recognising the importance of continuing to serve the external customers well, this plan gives greater emphasis than before to the internal customer.

The multi-grade customer service working group continues to operate to monitor and to make proposals for improvements in this area. The office also participates in the Quality Customer Service Interdepartmental Officer Network under the guidance of the Department of the Taoiseach. In addition, customer service focus now forms an integral part of the Statement of Strategy, the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and the Staff training and development programme.

As indicated in the CSO Statement of Strategy 2001-2003, a comprehensive user survey was undertaken towards the end of 2001. This will allow CSO and the Board to assess progress in meeting user needs since the last such survey (in 1997), and will help to set priorities for the next 5-year plan of the Board.



Organisational Change

One of the major recommendations made by the Deloitte and Touche consultants in their 1997 report commissioned by the National Statistics Board was that the CSO should move from a product-based structure in the business statistics area to a process-based structure. A pilot exercise started during 2001. This exercise, involving the Census of Industrial Production, the PRODCOM inquiry and the Monthly Industrial Production inquiry, would separate data collection and editing from data analysis and publication for that group of inquiries. The advantages would include the streamlining of contacts with a particular firm, the more effective use of staff resources and improved data analysis.

Due to continued union objections this pilot exercise was very slow to get started and a considerable amount of planning and negotiation was necessary. The Board is disappointed at the slow progress on this front, particularly since there was an emphasis throughout on openness and communication and in having staff at all levels involved in the discussions.

1 That was then, This is now: Change in Ireland, 1949-1999 (Stationery Office, Dublin; February 2000; Pn 8084, ISBN 0-7076-1934-3)

2 Ireland North and South, A Statistical Profile (Central Statistics Office and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency; December 2000; ISBN 0-7076-1970-X)

3 Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2001 (Stationery Office, Dublin; October 2001, Pn. 10455, ISSN 1649-1408, ISBN 0-7557-1080-0)





Appendices





Appendix

1

Publication Timeliness

The Board's 1995 Annual Report contained a table giving the timeliness (lag from end of the reference period) and the target set for statistical releases and publications issued by the CSO. This information is repeated here along with the timeliness at the time of the 1998 report, and the timeliness 2 years later. Information is given here only for regular surveys that are undertaken annually or more frequently.

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Target in 1995	Timeliness for 1998 report (Spring 1999)	Current timeliness (Spring 2001)
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Industry

Production (<i>monthly</i>)				
Release	14 weeks	11 weeks	13 weeks	8 weeks
Early global estimates	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	7 weeks	6 weeks
Turnover (<i>monthly</i>)	15 weeks	11 weeks	14 weeks	14 weeks
Employment (<i>quarterly</i>)	17 weeks	12 weeks	32 weeks	33 weeks
Stocks (<i>quarterly</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	17 weeks	19 weeks
Capital Assets (<i>quarterly</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	17 weeks	18 weeks
Earnings & Hours (<i>quarterly</i>)	21 weeks	16 weeks	18 weeks	27 weeks
Census (<i>annual</i>)				
Local Units Release	34 months	22 months	18 months	16 months
Enterprises Release	41 months	23 months	18 months	16 months
Publication	31 months	27 months	21 months	20 months
Early broad results	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	11 months
Prodcom (<i>annual</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	14 months	11 months

Services employment & earnings

Financial Services (<i>quarterly</i>)	12 weeks	10 weeks	21 weeks	31 weeks
Public Sector (<i>quarterly</i>)	17 weeks	12 weeks	30 weeks	35 weeks

¹ "na" represents "not applicable". This applies to new series introduced since 1995.

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Target in 1995	Timeliness for 1998 report (Spring 1999)	Current timeliness (Spring 2001)
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Building & construction

Employment (<i>monthly</i>)	4 weeks	4 weeks	9 weeks	17 weeks
Earnings (<i>quarterly</i>)	24 weeks	15 weeks	20 weeks	22 weeks
Quantity Surveyors (<i>quarterly</i>)	10 weeks	10 weeks	16 weeks	<i>Discontinued</i>
Planning Permissions (<i>quarterly</i>)	16 weeks	13 weeks	8 weeks	39 weeks
Census Release (<i>annual</i>)	21 months	20 months	19 months	29 months

Services

Retail Sales (<i>monthly</i>)	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks
Advertising Agencies (<i>annual</i>)	19 months	15 months	28 months	<i>Discontinued</i>
Services Inquiries (<i>annual</i>)	34 months	24 months	20 months	18 months
Tourism & Travel				
Quarterly	13 weeks	7 weeks	9 weeks	12 weeks
Annual	5 months	5 months	4 months	4 months
Road Freight (<i>annual</i>)	18 months	12 months	29 months	21 months
Port traffic (<i>annual</i>)	7½ months	7 months	6 months	8 months
Vehicle Licensing				
Monthly	12 weeks	11 weeks	15 weeks	10 weeks
Annual	7 months	7 months	7 months	3 months

Prices

CPI (<i>quarterly</i>)	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	8 to 18 days
WPI (<i>monthly</i>)	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks

Labour market

Live Register				
Statement (<i>monthly</i>)	1 week	1 week	1 week	1 week
Flow Analysis (<i>monthly</i>)	1½ weeks	1½ weeks	1½ weeks	1½ weeks
Area Analysis (<i>monthly</i>)	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks
Age by Duration (<i>half yearly</i>)	11 weeks	11 weeks	10 weeks	9 weeks
Industrial Disputes (<i>quarterly</i>)	17 weeks	9 weeks	9 weeks	13 weeks
Labour Force Survey/QNHS (<i>quarterly</i>)				
Release	6 months	6 months	5 months	3 months

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Target in 1995	Timeliness for 1998 report (Spring 1999)	Current timeliness (Spring 2001)
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Vital statistics

Release (<i>quarterly</i>)	24 weeks	13 weeks	17 weeks	20 weeks
Publication (<i>annual</i>)	48 months	24 months	40 months	46 months

Population & migration estimates

Release (<i>annual</i>)	6 months	6 months	7 months	5 months
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Agriculture

Prices

Release (<i>monthly</i>)	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks
Preliminary (<i>annual</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	-5 weeks	-5 weeks

Land Sales (<i>quarterly</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	16 weeks	21 weeks
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Fishery Statistics (<i>annual</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	11 months	11 months
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Output, Input & Income (*annual*)

December Estimates	-1 month	-1 month	-1 month	-3 weeks
January Estimates	1 month	1 month	1 month	5 weeks
Final Estimates	7 months	7 months	6 months	6 months

June Survey (*annual*)

Provisional	3 months	3 months	3 months	3 months
Final	13 months	10 months	7 months	6 months
Labour	18 months	12 months	11 months	7 months

Crop Production (<i>annual</i>)	35 weeks	21 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks
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December Livestock (<i>annual</i>)	2 months	2 months	2 months	2 months
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Pig Survey (<i>annual</i>)	6 weeks	6 weeks	7 weeks	18 weeks
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Slaughterings (<i>monthly</i>)	4 weeks	4 weeks	6 weeks ¹	6 weeks
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Milk Statistics (<i>monthly</i>)	2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks ¹	8 weeks
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Supply Balances (*annual*)

Meat	11 months	10 months	9 months	9 months
Milk	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	7 months	8 months
Cereals	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	8 months	8 months

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Target in 1995	Timeliness for 1998 report (Spring 1999)	Current timeliness (Spring 2001)
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External trade

Release (<i>monthly</i>)				
Non-EU	10 weeks	8 weeks	7 weeks	8 weeks
Total	20 weeks	16 weeks	16 weeks	13 weeks
Publication (<i>monthly</i>)	32 weeks	25 weeks	18 weeks	21 weeks

Balance of payments

Release (<i>quarterly</i>)	22 weeks	12 weeks	13 weeks	16 weeks
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National accounts

Summary results (<i>annual</i>)	6 months	5 months	5½ months	6½ months
Publication (<i>annual</i>)	6½ months	6 months	6½ months	7½ months
Quarterly results (<i>new publication</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	6 months
Regional accounts (<i>annual</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	25 months
Household accounts (<i>annual</i>)	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	26 months

Meetings & Membership of National Statistics Board during 1999 & 2000

The Board had two meetings in 1999. After re-constitution it met again in April 2000, and had four further meetings in that year.

Membership

Professor Frances P Ruane,

Associate Professor of Economics, Trinity College (Chairperson)

Ms Paula Carey

Research Officer, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Mr Frank Cunneen

Chairman, Health & Safety Authority

Mr Ciarán Dolan

General Secretary, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association

Ms Marian Harkin

Secondary School Teacher, Sligo

Mr Dermot McCarthy²

Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr Cathal O'Loughlin

Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance

Mr Donal Murphy

Director General, Central Statistics Office (*ex officio member*).

Secretary to the Board:

Mr Adrian Redmond (Senior Statistician, CSO) until April 2000;

Mr John O'Hagan (Senior Statistician, CSO) from April 2000.

¹ Appointed in July 1999

² Resigned in December 2000 and replaced by Ms Mary Doyle, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach



Appendix

3

Statistics Liaison Groups

Agricultural Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 1999 and 2000: Once per year

Membership (at late 2001):

Ms Wila Bruce, Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

Mr Cathal Buckley, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association

Mr Liam Connolly, Teagasc

Mr Ciaran Dolan, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association

Mr David Eiffe, An Bord Bia

Ms Eilish Finnerty, Teagasc

Mr James Kelly, Macra na Feirme

Mr Con Lucey, Irish Farmers' Association

Mr Seamus O'Donoghue, Irish Co-Operative Organisation Society

CSO staff: Tom McMahon, Jane Lenehan, Keith McSweeney, Gregg Patrick, Gillian Wall

Secretary: Carol Duffy

Census of Population Advisory Group (Census Liaison Group)

Number of Meetings in 1999 and 2000: Five

Membership (at March 2000):

Ms Paula Carey, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Prof Pat Clancy, University College Dublin

Mr David Croughan, Irish Business and Employers' Confederation

Mr Niall Crowley, Equality Authority

Mr Frank Doheny, Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Mr Tom Duffy, Dept of Social Community and Family Affairs

Ms Mary Dunne, Dept of Education and Science

Mr Liam Kenny, General Council of County Councils

Mr Hugh Magee, Dept of Health and Children

Mr Eoin O'Leary, Dept of the Taoiseach

Mr Phil Ryan, Dept of Finance

Prof Jerry Sexton, Economic and Social Research Institute

Mr Owen Shinkwin, Dublin Transportation Office

Mr James Stone, Midland Regional Authority

Ms Margaret Taheny-Moore, Dept of Environment and Local Government

Prof James Walsh, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

CSO staff: Gerry O'Hanlon, Aidan Punch, Damian Malone, Catherine Finneran, Pat Thornberry, Pauline Reynolds

Secretary: Gerry Walker

Earnings Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 1999 and 2000: None (met for the first time in 2001)

Membership (at late 2001):

Mr Mark Cassidy, Central Bank of Ireland

Mr George Hennessy, Construction Industry Federation (CIF)

Ms Cliona Ryan Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment

Ms Cliona Ryan Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment

Mr Barra O'Murchadha, Department of Finance

Ms Kathleen Connolly, Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

Mr David Duffy, Economic and Social Research Institute

Mr John Mc Grath, FAS

Mr Aebhric Mc Gibney, Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Mr Manus O'Riordan, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Mr Jim Curran, Irish Small and Medium Enterprises

Mr Colm O'Reardon, National Economic and Social Council

Prof Patrick T. Geary, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

Ms Avine McNally, Small Firms Association

CSO staff: Joe Treacy, Ger Healy, Bernadette Cabry, Mairéad Coughlan, Margaret Kinsella

Secretary: Tony Kelleher

Labour Market Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 1999 and 2000: One

Membership (at late 2001):

Mr Brian Carroll, Dept of Finance

Mr Gerry Cribbin, Dept of the Taoiseach

Mr Laurence Bond, National Economic and Social Forum

Mr David Dillon, DSCFA

Mr Frank Doheny, Dept. of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Mr Colm Harmon, National University of Ireland, Dublin

Ms Orla Lane, National Economic and Social Council

Ms Camille Loftus, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

Ms Marie Mackle, Dept. of Finance

Mr John McGrath, FAS

Mr Aebhric McGibney, Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Mr Tony Monks, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

Mr Barry O'Brien, Dept. of Finance

Ms Margaret O'Brien, Dept of the Taoiseach

Ms Sile O'Connor, National Economic and Social Council

Ms Philip O'Connell, Economic and Social Research Institute

Ms Donal O'Neill, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

CSO staff: Gerry O'Hanlon, Joe Treacy, Nicola Tickner

Secretary: Noel Ryan

Macro-economic Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 1999 and 2000: One

Membership (at late 2001):

Mr David Croughan, Irish Business and Employers' Confederation

Prof John Fitz Gerald, Economic and Social Research Institute

Mr John Frain, Central Bank of Ireland

Mr Austin Hughes, Irish Intercontinental Bank

Dr Anthony Leddin, University of Limerick

Mr Eoin O'Leary, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr Manus O'Rordan, SIPTU

plus representatives from

Department of Finance (formerly Mr Robert Watt)

National Economic and Social Council (formerly Mr Cathal Guiomard)

CSO staff: Bill Keating, Mick Lucey, Paul Morrin

Secretary: Annette Hayes